



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
COMMISSION FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PERSONS**

Tuesday, May 13, 2014

State Bar of New Mexico

5121 Masthead NE

Albuquerque, NM 87109

3:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Mark Apodaca called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Mark Apodaca, Chair Deb Hambel, Vice-Chair
Dr. Ron Stern, Secretary Austin Welborn

Not in attendance: Luis Quinonez, Randy Gonzalez and John A. Johnson, Jr.

Eleven staff members from NMCDHH were present: Executive Director Nathan Gomme, Sam Martinez, Jason Siergey, Corina Gutierrez, Lisa Dignan, Deborah Romero, Cheryl Padilla, Lori Neubauer, Joyce Croker, Richard Bailey and Roger Robb. Five interpreters were present: Rhiannon Sykes-Chavez, Julayne Feilbach, Shaundra Sanders, SarahCady Sartorius and Bobbie Jo Post. Nineteen members of the community were in the audience.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Apodaca asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

14.32

Commissioner Austin Welborn made a motion to approve the agenda

Commissioner Deb Hambel seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 12, 2014 MINUTES

Commissioner Welborn noticed that on Motion 14.30 there was no space between the commissioners' names and their "yes" votes, which needed to be corrected.

14.33

Commissioner Ron Stern made a motion to approve the minutes with the aforementioned correction.

Commissioner Welborn seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF APRIL 10, 2014 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**14.34**

Commissioner Hambel made a motion to accept the minutes as presented

Commissioner Welborn seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. ACTION ITEMS**a. Relay Short-Term Contract**

Executive Director Nathan Gomme explained that CDHH needed to enter a new short-term contract with the current TRS provider until September 30, 2014 to keep uninterrupted service while the new RFP underwent some corrections. Commissioner Welborn asked who the current contractor is and Mr. Gomme responded that it was Hamilton Relay who had the current contract and the short-term contract would be with Hamilton to continue services until the RFP process was completed. Once that process was finished, the relay provider awarded the new contract would take over.

14.35

Commissioner Stern made a motion to approve the Relay Short-Term Contract

Commissioner Welborn seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. FORMER INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – LISA DIGNAN

Former Interim Executive Director Lisa Dignan began by thanking the board for entrusting her with CDHH and appreciated everyone's faith in her by allowing her that opportunity. She added that she would be happy to get back to her regular role as Director of Communication Access and Development. Ms. Dignan also commended the CDHH staff for working tirelessly to serve the constituents, and pulling together as a team during the transition.

Ms. Dignan announced that the FY15 state budget was passed and signed by the governor, and again the Commission has a flat budget. She added that some things ran a bit differently in the legislature, and the budget was Senate Bill 313 rather than House Bill 2. CDHH's flat budget of \$3,752,600 still includes a general fund allotment of \$300,000 which is earmarked for the Deaf-Blind and Deaf Plus services; \$25,000 that will be transferred to the Regulation and Licensing Department for the operation of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board; and \$466,000 that will be transferred to DVR for serving individuals that are Deaf and Hard-of Hearing. Ms.

Dignan reminded the Board that at a previous meeting she had talked about her conversation with Ralph Vigil at DVR to see about reducing that amount in the future, but for FY15 it will remain as it was in FY14. The Management Team has all worked with Deborah Romero to get the FY15 spending plan ready to go. Furthermore, the Management Team has already discussed that the Commission will be requesting additional funds and additional positions for FY16.

Ms. Dignan said that the vacant Service Coordinator position was posted twice without success; however, CDHH received permission to post outside of the NeoGov system and were successful. Executive Director Nathan Gomme will talk more about that in his report.

The lease for the CDHH's current office space expires in December, so Management has been working with Facilities Management to get an RFP in process to find a new location. Ms. Dignan said Mr. Gomme has allowed her to remain the lead on this since she has invested three years on this project. She was very excited to be able to announce that a new location has been found in downtown Albuquerque. She explained that the location was within walking distance to the courthouse, the Social Security office, and other agencies that CDHH works with will be in the same building. CDHH will have half of the 15th floor, which will be completely renovated to the specifications set including a conference room large enough for the Board Meetings to be held there. It is also centrally located along the bus line and close to the Rail Runner.

Ms. Dignan stated that in her last report there had been a discrimination complaint filed against CDHH. She was now happy to say that the complaint was dismissed as there was no probable cause.

The CDHH Albuquerque office now has a new data network, new VoIP phone system and Wi-Fi in the office. Now staff members are able to get operational video phones or captioned phones. Ms. Dignan added that this means a new phone number which is included in the report and the staff is getting that out to the public through social media and the website. The old phone number will continue to roll over to the new phone number for a period of six months.

The Service Coordinator contract position in Las Cruces was posted and there were no qualified applicants, but the Commission will continue to work with the State Personnel Office and may be able to get a temporary position rather than a contractor.

Commissioner Welborn asked if the cost for the new office space was included in the current budget and Ms. Dignan replied that it was. Management had planned that rent would increase because the market value is going up. However, there will be significant savings because it will not be necessary to rent space for Board Meetings and we can have on-site storage instead of renting a storage unit. Ms. Dignan added that Deborah Romero has worked everything into the budget plans and is well prepared for the new rental cost.

Chair Apodaca asked Ms. Dignan what major accomplishments were made during her time as Interim Director. She responded that there was a significant amount of clean up that needed to be done when she first took over, and that was accomplished. Also many relationships had been damaged that have been rebuilt. This put CDHH in a stronger position with good partnerships and collaborations with sister agencies, both within the state and with private and non-profit entities. Ms. Dignan added that the Commission is more fully staffed, we will have a new office, and many things seem to be falling into place. She felt confident that she is handing off the agency in a better condition than when she took over.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – NATHAN GOMME

The new Executive Director, G. Nathan Gomme, thanked those who came to the meeting today, but he wanted to thank Lisa Dignan in particular. Mr. Gomme said although she was asked to mention a few of her accomplishments, there were so many she couldn't name them all. He

stated that Ms. Dignan worked very hard during the interim to make sure everyone was taken care of and all were on task. It was not an easy feat.

Executive Director Gomme also wanted to mention two other individuals: Richard Bailey was hired as the new Service Coordinator, and Corina Gutierrez is the new Interim Director of Public Policy and Advocacy. Mr. Gomme had left that position open when he became Executive Director, and Ms. Gutierrez was a top choice.

Director Gomme shared his vision for the Commission. He stated that it is really a collaborative concept. People need to be willing to follow and help out and work together because that's how to make things happen. There are several agencies CDHH works with, and his job is to collaborate with all of these entities to make things more effective, transparent, and efficient. He wants CDHH to be the best it can be by utilizing our resources, experience working with interpreters and the Deaf Community and work on issues related to Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf-Blind. Mr. Gomme hopes to see more vlogs and more sharing of information related to language access. There is much happening now about VRS and the FCC changes for IP Relay. Issues like that are important to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing communities in New Mexico.

Director Gomme also said he would like to change the landscape of CDHH services. Town Hall meetings have been discussed before, but in order to make things more streamlined, it could be done virtually with the help of technology rather than traveling all over the state. He mentioned that some think technology, like the iPad program, is nice but too complicated. However the program is already being streamlined: the application process, the distribution program, the paperwork is already happening and should be ready to go soon.

Mr. Gomme mentioned that Sandra Williams has been working in the Las Cruces office for almost a year without any other full time staff and it is important that that is fixed. She is alone and is making sure everyone is getting services there. She needs support and another person there for her. Mr. Gomme's plan is to review everything and look at the budget and figure out some restructuring. He wants to listen to the staff's ideas and figure out ways to make things happen. This doesn't mean he will do what everyone wants, but he will listen, and that is his commitment to all.

Chair Apodaca said the meeting would be finished soon, but he wanted to invite people to stay and meet with the staff and the new director and share their thoughts.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

14.36

Commissioner Welborn made a motion to adjourn.
Commissioner Hambel seconded.
Motioned passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Lori G. Neubauer, Administrative Assistant


Mark Apodaca, Board Chair