



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

Wednesday, October 24th, 2012
Albuquerque NMCDHH Conference Room
2500 Louisiana Blvd. NE, Suite 400
Albuquerque, NM 87110
5:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Mark Apodaca called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Present: Mark Apodaca, Chair Dom Bonura designee of James DeBee
 Deb Hambel Dr. Ronald Stern

Chair Apodaca announced that Vice-President David Romine was on his way and that quorum was met.

Six staff members from NMCDHH were present: Sam Martinez, Deborah Romero, Nathan Gomme, Lori Neubauer, Ellen Roth and Lisa Dignan. Four interpreters were present: Helen Arenholz, Brian Rasmussen, Tommi Tejada and Michelle Rupanovik. Nine members of the community were in the audience.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

12-14
Commissioner Ronald Stern moved to approve agenda as presented.
Commissioner Deb Hambel seconded.
Motion passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Apodaca asked if there were any revisions to the minutes.

12-15

Commissioner Ronald Stern made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Commissioner Deb Hambel seconded.
Motion passed unanimously.

IV. BOARD REPORTS

Chair Apodaca stated that the Finance Committee met to review the year-end report. Everything looked good.

V. AGENCY REPORTS

Executive Summary

Executive Director Ellen Roth announced she had now been with the CDHH for four months and the agency was doing well. All departments were running efficiently. Ms. Roth said she would be approaching the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) regarding the FY14 budget plan.

TRS funds that go to the Commission are reduced because much of the public are giving up their landlines. We are not getting our fair share from the wireless companies, so she will be working on that. Ms. Roth met with former Executive Director, Tom Dillon, as well as Mark Apodaca, to get their input before discussing the situation with the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). Ms. Roth wants to make sure they will audit the telephone companies to collect the current lost revenues and work with lawmakers to revise the current legislation to increase the current .33% rate that CDHH is currently receiving from them.

Ms. Roth mentioned her concern for current lack of effective and efficient employment services for the deaf and hard of hearing in the state of New Mexico because of a recent report from the Department of Labor that show a national statistic of 78% unemployment rate for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, compared to 9% for hearing counterparts nationwide. She also was concerned that the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) does not really serve the Deaf, because all that is furnished for the Deaf clients are TTY's, which are rarely used anymore. The Commission have approved that the telecommunication department will initiate an iPad program. The iPads used will be locked so that they cannot be used to download apps since they are to be used as communication devices.

Ms. Roth announced that three new positions were approved by the State Personnel Office (SPO): the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Training and Development Coordinator, and a Financial Coordinator. The interviews are closed for Public Policy and Advocacy Director and the Training and Development Coordinator. Interviews will take place in November for the Finance position. Some current staff positions had to be reclassified, because those employees were not getting the pay that they deserved. Commissioner Hambel asked if CDHH was experiencing classification problems with the SPO. Ms. Roth responded that Shannon Smith, our Human Resources Representative is the one working with SPO, and she wasn't aware if that was a problem for the new positions, however, the current staff is having issues with equity in pay and salaries have been frozen for five years. Commissioner Hambel agreed that that was true for state agencies across the board. Ms. Roth said that it was her priority to get this straightened out, but she commended the staff of CDHH for working hard in spite of no increase in pay.

Executive Director Roth was asked about how many staff members there were. With the added positions, there will be 15 full time staff and 4 contractors for a total of 19. There was also a question as to whether any of the contractors could become FTE's. Ms. Roth said it depends on how much money there was in the budget. She would be travelling to Las Cruces to discuss this with Sandy Williams November 5th – 7th.

Within the next two years, there will be conferences coming to New Mexico pertaining to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Ms. Roth stated that the combined TDI-ALDA would be in Albuquerque in October 2013, the National Council of Hispano Deaf and Hard of Hearing will have a conference in New Mexico in the fall of 2014, and our Conference on Hearing Loss will be in April 2015.

Chair Apodaca asked if Executive Director Roth had recently attended a Domestic Violence Conference, and she responded that the Justice for Deaf Victims National Coalition took place in Denver and she attended with three of the Commission's front-line staff who provide services and talk to victims of sexual assault. It was a great opportunity to network and learn about services for Deaf people affected by sexual assault and a great opportunity to collaborate with certain agencies. Many of the shelters that are set up for women and children, who need to leave their house in an emergency, do not allow pets. A new shelter has been set up in Seattle that will allow pets as well, and hopefully we can have something like that in New Mexico.

Ms. Roth stated we need to get the community to be accountable to each other and make sure we have programs that changes the behavior that leads to domestic violence. Survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault need to be supported and educated to break the cycle, so our goal is to have some service established for that. The Deaf community has a 30% higher rate of domestic violence and sexual assault; they feel they have no one to call. If they go to a hearing agency for services, they need interpreters. It's important to make sure there is a place they can go because of the higher rate of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Finance and Administration

Ms. Deborah Romero, CDHH's Management Analyst, was asked if everything was ready for the audit. Ms. Romero stated that everything would be done by November 19th. Chair Apodaca said he noticed the MD&A which summarizes the highlights was missing. Ms. Romero replied that she did not believe that was requested, but that she would work on it with Chair Apodaca's assistance.

Communication Access and Development

Lisa Dignan, Director of Communication Access and Development, was asked about the RFP in her fourth quarter report. Ms. Dignan said that CDHH had a contract with both COPD and We Interpret for the last four years. One of the components in the scope of work has been to provide professional development for interpreters. It was decided that CDHH could make better use of that funding if it was opened up more broadly. So a little of the money from each contract was put in a pool to be used for an RFP for more creative, innovative ways to build interpreters in the state such as face to face mentoring in rural areas. Ms. Dignan stated that more detailed information will be in the 1st quarter report of FY13 since this took place in October.

Ms. Dignan stated that the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and CDHH have been collaborating for years on the New Mexico Interpreter Conference, and that conference recently took place at the Marriott. It involved spoken and signed interpreters in Legal, Medical, and Behavioral Health settings. Almost 200 interpreters from 16 different states attended representing 12 different languages. It was very successful and was another indication that New Mexico was leading the way in this approach to interpreter training and professional development.

Chair Apodaca asked that since interpreters need to be licensed in New Mexico, what happens to an agency using a non-licensed interpreter. Ms. Dignan stated that an interpreter can be fined and/or jailed for interpreting without a license, there is no statutory authority to do anything with that agency and CDHH has no particular role in that process. There would need to be a statute change to hold agencies accountable. CDHH has been involved in situations like this, making sure that the interpreter is not licensed and then the agency involved has made changes.

However, if no one comes to the Commission, then it's very difficult for us to make changes. The real authority for enforcement of the licensure statutes falls with the Signed Language Interpreter Practices Board which is under the Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD). CDHH has two roles related to licensure: First, it funds the operation of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board, and secondly, Ms. Dignan works as the liaison to the board.

A comment was made that there are some interpreters in the schools that are not licensed, but especially in rural areas, there are not enough interpreters. Ms. Dignan stated that interpreters in schools fall under the Public Education Department (PED). They are ignoring the law, and a complaint would have to be filed. Ms. Dignan clarified that educational interpreters are still required to be licensed. They can get a provisional license, an educational license, or a community license. There are school districts around the state who, in spite of the licensure law, are hiring interpreters who don't have a license. Commissioner Stern agreed that this is not a new situation. There are just not enough interpreters period. Ms. Dignan agreed that there wasn't a state in the country that didn't have a shortage of interpreters, and the Deaf children in the rural areas are not getting a good education, but we fail them if we do not set high standards to provide the education the children need.

Dom Bonura asked who developed the licensures. Ms. Dignan responded that the original people working on getting licensure in New Mexico were Dr. Barb Shaffer and Koko Chino. They brought bills to at least 3 legislative sessions. This took place before Ms. Dignan moved to the state; however she did recently speak to Dr. Shaffer about documenting the history of how this came about.

Mr. Bonura asked how the law could be improved and Ms. Dignan responded that it's too early to make any changes. Since it is within the first five years of the law, there still are provisional licensees working toward their licenses. September 30, 2014 will be five years, and then everything will be evaluated. There are basically two groups of provisional license holders: The group that has been working in the K-12 setting more than 20 years and the others that are graduating from the interpreting program. The grassroots interpreters, from the first group, are the ones with no formal training and are struggling to move up, and this is the case throughout the country. Chair Apodaca asked how many graduates there are in the interpreter training program and Ms. Dignan estimated about 18, clarifying that not all of them stay in the field.

Public Policy and Advocacy

Chair Apodaca asked if the Public Policy and Advocacy Department had made progress working with the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC). Nathan Gomme, Interim Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, responded that they were focusing on VRI, video phones and having captioning for their sound system. Also, the PPA Department has been talking with the MDC about providing interpreter and having them when someone is being brought into the booking process and filling out forms. The CDHH advocates also now have professional ID's that allow them access to the inmates currently there. They are educating them on interpreters as well, letting them know that one interpreter is not always sufficient. Overall, they are showing improvement.

There have been technical issues with VP's because they are not compatible with the prison system, but they have been working on that, speaking with Sorenson, Purple, and ZVRS. Right now they have Polycom, and have had progress with that, but there needs to be hardware that will work with their system.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Helene Bonura, from Rio Rancho, asked about VRI. She had a doctor's appointment and they had Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) set up. She was not happy with it, and was told she has the right to have an actual interpreter. The office said the board made that decision, so how can she resolve the problem? Lisa Dignan replied that in situations like that, Ms. Bonura should file a complaint with CDHH. Mr. Gomme's department or Ms. Dignan's department will work with medical centers and different providers. Ms. Dignan added that VRI is a great solution in certain situations, but it should not be used in every situation. Ms. Bonura agreed that in an emergency, VRI would be fine with her, but in this case, she had made the appointment six months in advance. Ms. Dignan suggested that we encourage the Deaf Community to call their doctor's office before the appointment to see if they have an interpreter. That would help the Deaf consumers to be aware of what is happening and go to the Commission before the appointment.

Ms. Roth commented that VRI is a fast-growing communication technology and for rural areas or last minute requests. Some love it, while others do not want it, but the field is still growing.

Dom Bonura recalled that a few years ago, he had gone to New Mexico Aging and Long Term Services to request an interpreter, but they gave him a phone number to contact an interpreter himself. When former Executive Director B. J. Wood got involved, everything was taken care of. It turned out that CDHH took \$5,000 for Aging and Long Term Services to pay for those interpreters. Recently, there was another conference put on by them, and Mr. Bonura was curious who paid for the interpreting services. Ms. Dignan responded that this time a member of the Commission staff, Sam Martinez, was on the planning committee, and all interpreting services were paid by the persons responsible for the conference.

Executive Director Ellen Roth made a comment regarding the high unemployment rate for Deaf in New Mexico, which is higher than the national average. Ms. Roth said she hasn't received clarification on the numbers from COPD, but the Commission's goal is to increase employment opportunities for Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers from entry level on up.

Charles Grote, from Corrales, wanted to bring up a few issues speaking as a board member of NMAD. Although he understood the financial reasons for not having board meetings out of Albuquerque, communities such as Roswell would still like to participate. Mr. Grote asked if we could use some type of video conferencing. People there are feeling left out as there has been nothing there for seven years. Nathan Gomme responded that in 2011, former Executive Director B. J. Wood did actually go to Roswell and he was just there on Monday. He wasn't hearing any comments like this.

Commissioner Stern stated that he sensed there was a lack of understanding within the Deaf community as to the Commission Board and the Commission Agency. So he clarified that the Board of the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing should be referred to as the Board, and the staff and their work is the Commission. New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD) has a board, but it has a separate function than the everyday work at the school. So the community needs to be trained as to what the different functions are of the Board and the Commission. Chair Apodaca stated that a town hall might be a good idea so that people could be educated on policy, operations and meet with Executive Director Roth. It was also suggested that CDHH staff attend NMAD meetings to inform them of what the Commission has to offer as far as ADA training, empowerment training, and other trainings to help the community to be able to engage in their lives as active citizens.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There were no items to be discussed in Executive Session.

Chair Apodaca called for a motion to adjourn.

12-16

Commissioner Stern made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Hambel seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lori G. Neubauer, Administrative Assistant



Mark Apodaca, Board Chair