



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
COMMISSION FOR DEAF & HARD OF HEARING**

*Quarterly Board Meeting
Thursday, March 10, 2022.
3:00pm*

*The meeting was held remotely via Zoom and the public could view the meeting
livestream on YouTube with interpreting and captioning at
<https://youtu.be/FoNOnGAKDcE>*

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Concha Dunwell called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. Trevor Brennan, Administrative Operations Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mrs. Concha Dunwell
Dr. Jennifer Herbold
Dr. Ronald Stern
Mr. John Hooper

Absent: Mr. Francis Vigil
Dr. Dan Drury

Quorum was met.

Six staff members from NMCDHH were present via Zoom: Executive Director Nathan Gomme, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Deborah Romero, Director of Community Advocacy Corina Gutiérrez, Director of Community Engagement Lisa Dignan, Community Engagement Specialist Jessica Eubank, and Trevor Brennan. Jessica Eubank interpreted the meeting along with Andrea Ginn and Amy Bourque. Assistant Attorney General Delilah Tenorio was also present. Jill Pesti from Partners Interpreting LLC. provided CART transcription.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Concha Dunwell asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

22.5

Commissioner Hooper made a motion to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes
Commissioner Dunwell – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Stern – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

III. **APPROVAL OF December 9, 2021 MINUTES**

Chair Dunwell asked if there were any changes to the minutes from December 9, 2021. There were no comments or changes.

Chair Dunwell asked for a motion to approve the minutes as written.

22.6

Commissioner Hooper made the motion to accept the minutes as written.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes
Commissioner Dunwell – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Stern – Abstained

Motion passed by majority vote.

IV. **REPORTS**

a. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Gomme shared that that some of the information for the 2nd quarter report has already changed in the 3rd quarter, such as changes to the statewide mask mandate, CDC COVID-19 guidelines, and testing metrics.

Commissioner Stern, Chair Dunwell, Executive Director Gomme, and Assistant Attorney General Delilah Tenorio discussed what this means for NMCDHH Board Meetings in the 3rd quarter and beyond: will they be in-person, virtual, or hybrid? As the COVID-19 pandemic is still on-going, there are questions that must be addressed in regard to capacity limits of the space used for board meetings, and ability for the general public to participate. The Commission has purchased some equipment, such as cameras and streaming equipment to facilitate a hybrid type meeting in the future if needed. This is a cyclical discussion that has been re-occurring when case numbers drop, and then subsequently rise, as was especially noted after the 2021 Holidays. The Commission also recognizes that we must be extra cautious given we serve some of the most at-risk individuals in our state. The Open Meetings Act (OMA) currently has an emergency resolution that allows for virtual meetings due to COVID-19, it is unknown if that resolution will remain in place, or for how long. If we do resume in-person meetings, or conduct hybrid meetings, the OMA must be followed, which includes making sure we clearly publish whether the meeting is online, in-person, or hybrid. Additionally, we must ensure that there is adequate space for safety of individuals involved, and adequate capacity to allow the public to participate. As we are still dealing with the ongoing pandemic, there is no further action on this item to be taken at this time.

During the legislative session, Executive Director Gomme attended the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) hearing, due to a computing error in the financial reports submitted to the LFC on the executive side, it appeared that the Commission was given double the amount of money than was actually proposed in the appropriation. In the end, the Commission was given the legislative recommendation, but this still included an increase from the State General Fund, which will allow us to open some vacant positions for hiring, however the Commission does not have final numbers at this time from the House Bill. We must also balance the need to fill these positions, while also dealing with the impact of salary raises on the existing budget, which is impacting all state agencies.

The Commission is currently working on a Request for Proposals (RFP) for relay services. The RFP has been submitted to the State Purchasing Office for review. Nationally we are seeing a drastic increase in the cost for relay services per minute, and we will have to see what impact that has.

On April 9th 2022, the Commission will be co-hosting a Town Hall meeting with the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) to address the concerns of the hearing loss community. This partnership with UNMH has gone well, and we are also discussing the expansion of mental health services within the hospital with them.

Executive Director Gomme has been involved with the broadband expansion effort in New Mexico, which has received grant money after the passing of a federal law related to broadband infrastructure. There are several different state organizations working on this process, one of them being the Statewide Education Network (SEN), which is working to examine the impact of broadband expansion on students. One of the technologies being looked at is Starlink, a satellite based broadband option. The Commission continues to work to ensure that the needs of the hearing loss community are considered.

Discussions continue with the state and local governments on Text to 911 service. The City of Santa Fe is testing a program called Smart 911, and another called AccessSOS. While these applications are helpful, they are not true text to 911 services as they require a smartphone application. The Commission continues to advocate for a 911 texting service in New Mexico that does not require an external application per FCC requirements.

b. Department Reports Q & A

Chair Dunwell complimented Commission staff member Roger Robb, for his work on the vlogs he has produced in American Sign Language (ASL), and their impact on communicating information to the hearing loss community.

Commissioner Herbold, Chair Dunwell, and Executive Director Gomme discussed a bill that did not pass committee during the Legislative session regarding a hearing aid fund for adults in the state of New Mexico. Executive Director Gomme had a conversation with the sponsor for the bill after he was informed of its existence regarding language, terminology, and the possibility of expanding the bill to cover all New Mexico residents. Due to the limited 30 day session, there was no time for these considerations to be included in the bill during this legislative session. More research is needed to determine how great the need is amongst the residents of New Mexico and the associated costs to cover the purchase of hearing aids.

V. ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

22.7

Commissioner Hooper made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Dunwell – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Stern – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Trevor M. Brennan

Trevor Brennan
Administrative Operations Specialist