



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

*Quarterly Board Meeting  
Thursday, June 6, 2024  
3:00pm*

*The meeting was in person and the public could view the meeting livestream on  
YouTube with interpreting and captioning at  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpVQQsdO7ml](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpVQQsdO7ml)*

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**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair John Hooper called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. Renee Bregar, Administrative Operations Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mr. John Hooper  
Dr. Jennifer Herbold  
Dr. Meena Mann  
Ms. Casey Stone-Romero  
Dr. Norm Dawson

Absent:

Quorum was met.

Seven staff members from NMCDHH were present: Executive Director, Nathan Gomme; Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Deborah Romero; Director of Community Engagement, Lisa Dignan; Director of Community Advocacy, Corina Gutiérrez; Communication Development Specialist, Jessica Eubank; Community Engagement Specialist, Trevor Brennan; Administrative Operations Specialist, Renee Bregar. Jessica Eubank interpreted the meeting along with Rhonda Hall, Jacqueline Trujillo, Amy Bourque and Melissa Leslie-Urist. Tracy Ukura from Partners Interpreting LLC. provided CART transcription. Assistant Attorney General, Leslie Padilla, was also present.

Executive Director Gomme introduced the new Administrative Operations Specialist, Renee Bregar during roll call.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

**24.11**

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to approve the agenda as written.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Stone-Romero - Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF March 7, 2024 MINUTES**

Commissioner Hooper asked if there were any changes to the minutes from March 7, 2024. Mr Hooper, made a correction to the statement that he attended the NMAD meeting in Las Cruces; which he did not attend.

**24.12**

Commissioner Mann made a motion to approve the minutes as amended.

Commissioner Dawson seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Commissioner Stone-Romero - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Welcome Deaf and Heard of Hearing Professional, Dr. Norm Dawson**

Commissioner Dawson stated that he became Deaf at age 27. He then learned ASL and has been involved in the community since that time. He received one Cochlear implant 25 years ago and the second 10 years ago.

Executive Director Gomme stated there is board position open for a Deaf or Hard of Hearing parent from southern New Mexico and discussion have begun with an individual who may fill the role.

**V. Welcome Assistant Attorney General, Leslie Padilla**

Ms. Padilla is recently back in state government and looks forward to working with the Commission. Ms. Padilla will be conducting training with the board in future meetings.

**VI. Discussion of the Evaluation of the Executive Director**

Commissioners discussed the ongoing development of a process to evaluate the executive director's performance, if the evaluation should be held in a closed or open meeting, and clarified when action should take place and what the next steps would be with Ms. Padilla joining as legal counsel. Completion of an evaluation for the Executive Director will be on the agenda for the September meeting.

**24.13**

Commissioner Herbold moved that the executive director's evaluation be added to the agenda for September meeting.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Commissioner Stone-Romero - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

**VII. REPORTS**

**a. Executive Director Report**

Mr. Gomme discussed the Support Service Providers (SSP) program and the current sole source procurement for a 4-year commitment being negotiated with the potential vendor. He confirmed additional funding will be available for communication facilitators to allow service expansion into Deaf senior and Deaf plus communities including rural areas. Mr. Gomme also discussed the Older Americans Act which will allow direct caregiver support, beyond interpreters, for seniors. There was some discussion among the commissioners regarding a communication access fund as a potential access solution in the future.

Mr. Gomme noted that Traditional Relay Service (TRS) numbers are consistent. However, Caption Telephone Service (CTS) is down 73%. CTS is based on analog technology. Current telephones lines do not support analog technology; they process information differently, via Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP). The funds received from TRS are mandated to be used for TRS. Those numbers continue to decline, which is concerning to Mr. Gomme. The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) needs to decide next steps. The legislative language for funding needs to be changed.

**b. Department Reports Q & A**

**Community Engagement**

Ms. Lisa Dignan complimented Mr. Trevor Brennan on all the work required for the hybrid meeting. She noted that he is responsible for much of the information technology within the Commission as well as training the new ASD staff on his former duties. She noted that Mr. Brennan has been named chair of the state licensure board.

Ms. Dignan mentioned that Mr. Gomme has now served 10 years as Executive Director of NMCDHH.

She said there are 4 new interpreter apprentices accepted to the program for the next Fiscal Year, one of whom is in Las Cruces.

The mentoring program was paused but is currently accepting applications for the fall 2024 session.

Ms. Dignan stated that NMCDHH has been in this building for about 10 years. She and the CDHH team are working with building management, Lotus, toward lease renewal. Lotus has made improvements and been very responsive.

Ms. Dignan also shared that several apprentices from recent years have become nationally certified.

In terms of human resource responsibilities, Ms. Dignan noted the onboarding of Ms. Bregar, the retirement of Ms. Rodriguez from the Financial Services Specialist position, and the subsequent promotion of Ms. Vaiera Rice to Financial Services Specialist. Interviews for the vacated Business Operations Specialist position are scheduled at the end of June.

Finally, Ms. Dignan confirmed that employee and manager evaluations are in process and will be completed by the June 30, 2024 deadline.

**Community Advocacy**

Ms. Corina Gutiérrez stated there was a significant increase in the number of support needs in the third quarter, with some of that increase coming from more rural areas of New Mexico.

Work with Vancro continued successfully, with referrals between them and NMCDHH based on the need defined. Vancro provided workshops and training sessions for SSPs.

The Commission continued to work with healthcare providers toward communication access. Work is in process with University of New Mexico Health (UNMH) system and Presbyterian health. Mr. Gomme mentioned UNMH's previous town hall and its impact on policies and the community. Communication barriers within Lovelace are being addressed. There was also discussion of work with St. Vincent's in Santa Fe. There was discussion among the commissioners about language access in healthcare settings. Mr. Gomme confirmed that NMCDHH has collaborated with Disability Rights of New Mexico to provide letters to organizations about addressing communication access issues.

Ms. Gutiérrez mentioned Mr. Roger Robb's continued to work with APD and the community on the placard project.

### **Administrative Services**

Ms. Deborah Romero said how glad she is to have two reliable people in her department.

She discussed the end of Fiscal Year 2024 budget. As previously discussed, revenue is an ongoing concern that she closely monitors. Without a change in the statute, an increase in the general funds will need to be requested.

Ms. Romero shared that the Commission is ready for the FY24 audit.

Commissioner Hooper commended Ms. Romero for her excellent work and handling of the Commission finances.

#### **c. Report from Community Engagement Specialist, Trevor Brennan**

Mr. Brennan summarized his duties in managing social media, the web site, highlighting the equipment available, and expanding information availability and access for more constituents.

He discussed his involvement with the multi-national AI taskforce. This included Automative Speech Recognition (ASR) technology, which is not currently able to replace CART services.

Mr. Brennan discussed the over 100-man-hours time requirement and effort that was required to setup this hybrid meeting and successfully stream it. This effort and time investment involved multiple members of the Commission. It required access to and testing of technology for cameras, audio, streaming, and software simultaneously; an FM Loop update was also needed for successful audio access.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

### **24.14**

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Commissioner Stone-Romero - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee F. Bregar

Renee Bregar  
Administrative Operations Specialist