



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

*Quarterly Board Meeting
Thursday, March 27, 2025
3:00pm*

*The meeting was virtual on Zoom and the public could view the meeting livestream on
YouTube with interpreting and captioning at
<https://www.youtube.com/live/GMhiKpSeqZw>*

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair John Hooper called the meeting to order at 3:04pm. Renee Bregar, Administrative Operations Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mr. John Hooper - Chair
Dr. Jennifer Herbold – Vice-chair
Dr. Norm Dawson
Dr. Meena Mann
Designee Ms. Christine Fuller
Mr. Joseph Lopez, III (arrived at 3:14 p.m.)
Ms. Tiffany Gallegos

Absent:

Quorum was met.

Seven staff members from NMCDHH were present: Executive Director, Nathan Gomme; Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Deborah Romero; Director of Community Advocacy, Corina Gutiérrez; Director of Community Engagement, Amy Bourque, Communication Development Specialist, Jessica Eubank; Community Engagement Specialist, Trevor Brennan; Administrative Operations Specialist, Renee Bregar. Jessica Eubank interpreted the meeting along with Jessica Seiders-Martinez, and Barbara Shaffer. Jessica Spriggs from Partners Interpreting LLC provided CART transcription.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

25.7

Commissioner Mann made a motion to approve the agenda as written.
Commissioner Herbold seconded.
Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes
Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes
Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Lopez

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 5, 2024 MINUTES

Commissioner Hooper asked if there were any changes to the minutes from December 5, 2024.

25.8

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

Commissioner Dawson seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. WELCOME PARENT OF HARD OF HEARING CHILD

Commissioner Gallegos stated that she is a mother of a Hard of Hearing child, and is excited to be on the NMCDHH board.

V. DISCUSSION OF OMA TRAINING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioners held a discussion regarding the OMA training. Mr. Gomme stated there is a public session scheduled on April 15, 2025, at the State Bar Office located at 1521 Masthead Street NE in Albuquerque, 9:30a.m. – 12:45p.m. Several commissioners are unavailable on that date. Mr. Gomme explained the public session is only one option and others may be available in the future. Commissioner Herbold stated this discussion item, which does not need a motion, should be listed under discussion on the agenda.

25.9

Commissioner Herbold made a motion that the discussion is tabled until more information is available.

Commissioner Lopez seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. BOARD ELECTIONS

Mr. Gomme announced the officers elected today will begin their term at the next Board Meeting. He requested nominations for Chair and asked Commissioner Hooper if he would like to continue as Board Chair. There were no other nominations. Mr. Gomme thanked Commissioner Hooper for his invaluable support, particularly during the legislative session.

25.10

Commissioner Lopez nominated Commissioner Hooper for Chair.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.
Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes
Commissioner Hooper - Yes
Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes
Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Dawson for Vice Chair; Commissioner Dawson declined. Commissioner Hooper suggested Commissioner Lopez. Commissioner Lopez asked for clarification of duties, Commissioner Hooper explained the Vice Chair will step in to lead Board Meetings if the Chair is not available. Mr. Lopez accepted.

25.11

Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Lopez for Vice Chair.
Commissioner Herbold seconded.
Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes
Commissioner Hooper - Yes
Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes
Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hooper requested a nomination for Secretary. Commissioner Herbold asked for an explanation of what the role entails. Mr. Brennan explained it is a position required by Board rule and is related to the meeting minutes. However, there is a transcript provided and used for the minutes. Mr. Gomme further explained the position is secretary in name only. Commissioner Dawson accepted the nomination by Commissioner Hooper.

25.12

Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Dawson for Secretary.
Commissioner Herbold seconded.
Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson –Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes
Commissioner Hooper - Yes
Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes
Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

VII. REPORTS

a. Executive Director Report

Mr. Gomme explained that his report was written before the Legislative Session and that he was not comfortable waiting until the June meeting to discuss the Legislative Session. Chair Hooper had requested that Mr. Gomme mention the happenings at the Federal level which influence services in New Mexico.

Mr. Gomme prefaced the bill status with, though some bills have passed, none have been signed into statute by the Governor. He discussed House Bill 2, which has passed and is awaiting signature. Prior to the beginning of the session a budget proposal was submitted requesting that the special appropriation of \$200,000 during the last fiscal year request become a continued appropriation to support the Communication Facilitator Program, this funding request was approved in House Bill 2. We also pointed out that the TRS revenue continues to decline. Late in the process of budget request an additional \$200,000 was also requested, this was separate from the special appropriation becoming a permanent part of our budget and was specific to the needs of the Support Service Providers program. However, it was not added to our budget request for FY26. To address it, Mr. Gomme requested adjustments to the General Fund or Fund Balance, but there is no further action from the legislature to date.

Mr. Gomme also addressed Senate Bill 372 which was a request for a flat rate percentage increase to the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) billing. Senate Bill 372 was heard in its first committee but stalled in committee.

Senate Bill 535, related to Workers' Comp was introduced, which also created a funding source for the 988 service in New Mexico, as well as other additions later. In the bill, our funding from the TRS surcharge did increase from 0.33% to 1.66%. However, 80% of that fund will go to 988 and 20% of that is what is available to support the Telecommunications Access Fund, of which 3% will go to NM Tax and Revenue. The bill also allowed approval to remove the cap on telecommunications access funds and allow 100% expenditure, which was added by Senator Sedillo Lopez, since Senate Bill 372 the bill she originally sponsored would not likely be heard.

The Board discussed House Bill 49 (HB49), the Closed Captioning Act. Mr. Gomme noted that the bill made it as far as the Senate Judiciary but was not heard prior to the end of the Legislative Session. He commended Commissioner Hooper for his support and participation and Commissioner Herbold for the same. Commissioner Hooper suggested collaboration from the community, in the future. Commissioner Herbold agreed and suggested involving students from NMSD, stating there was significant interest from them regarding this session. HB49 was also supported by the AARP.

Mr. Gomme then mentioned House Bill 120 – State Office Accessibility and Web Site Accessibility (WCAG). After several amendments and the removal of an appropriation for the office, the bill did pass and will be housed under the Governor's Commission on Disability. If signed, it will be in effect beginning in July, next fiscal year.

Based on the passing of a member in the national Deaf community due to carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, it has been suggested that CO detectors may become part of the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP). In New Mexico, we already have the capacity for this, but several other states do not have the same capacity. This has become a national discussion thanks to the work of Sherri Collins at the Deaf Seniors of America.

Mr. Gomme mentioned the ongoing changes happening on the Federal level, per Commissioner Hooper's request. Those changes and potential challenges are happening in Social Security, Special Education and ADA Guidelines.

Mr. Gomme introduced the new Director of Community Engagement, Amy Bourque, and thanked them for their commitment to the community. Commissioner Hooper welcomed them as well.

b. Department Reports Q & A
Community Advocacy

Based on the Community Advocacy report, Commissioner Hooper reported that he was impressed as to how Community Advocacy Specialist, Myra Sandoval, handled a situation with a constituent who worked in the medical industry. Commissioner Hooper asked if that individual is required to use the phone. Myra's supervisor, Ms. Corina Gutierrez, did not have access to the full detail in Myra's report at that moment. Mr. Gomme also commended Myra and suggested that there are challenges in explaining current options to employers with the rapid changes in technology.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

25.13

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Absent

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee F. Bregar

Renee Bregar

Administrative Operations Specialist