



COLORADO
Department of Human Services

**COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
The Independence Center
729 S. Tejon Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
June 4, 2015**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order at 4:30 pm. The meeting started late start due to technical difficulties with CART.

2. Roll Call

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioners Kirk Neuroth (Chair), Mary Pat Graham-Kelly (Vice Chair), Amy Beckett (Secretary), Lucas Marquardt, Leslie Ralphe. Not present: Liz Konkell and Lisa Weiss

CCDHH STAFF PRESENT:

Cliff Moers, Administrator; Cheri Davis, Legal Auxiliary Services Manager; Timothy Chevalier, Outreach and Consultative Services Manager; JoAnne Hirsch, Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Coordinator; Candice Alder, Outreach Consultant

INTERPRETERS/CART REPORTER:

Interpreters: Stephanie Johnson, Chris Witzcak, Terje Goldston
CART Reporter: Claudette Mondragon

3. Approval of the Minutes

The December 4, 2014 minutes were approved. There was no Board meeting in March 2015.

4. Reports

Commission Chair's Report, Chair Neuroth

Chair Neuroth thanked the staff of Independent Living Center of Colorado Springs for hosting the meeting. He expressed appreciation to the interpreters and the CART provider for making the meeting fully accessible to everyone. Chair Neuroth noted that the CART captioner was working remotely and emphasized the need for people to speak in to the microphone for this meeting. He also noted that the room was looped with an induction loop system.

Chair Neuroth announced the state legislature recently passed bill 15-198, which establishes the Colorado Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing for another 9 years. Many people provided support and were part of the process to help pass the law. The Law provides for adding a Deaf-Blind representative to the Commission. We will now have the perspective of this group within the Commission.

Chair Neuroth announced that an ad hoc committee was formed for the purpose of examining the state government to determine the best placement of the CCDHH within the State system. Currently the

Commission is under the Department of Human Services, and this placement does not seem to be the best fit. Both Chair Neuroth and Commissioner Ralphe represent the Commission on this ad hoc committee. Everyone with an interest in this topic is welcome to provide feedback or ideas.

Chair Neuroth discussed the format of the meeting, the community forum, and various sign-up sheets available at the meeting. For the Community Forum, the speakers are Jennifer Pfau, Sara Kennedy, and Amy Novotny giving an update on “The Cultural Connection and More: Implementing Inspired Change” grant project. Also speaking is Karen Boyd regarding qualifications of ASL instructors in higher education and how to elevate the standards.

Administrator Report (Administrator Moers)

Administrator Moers continued the topic of the most feasible state host agency as the commission moves forward over the next nine years. Typically, Sunset Reviews recommend continuance of a commission in five-year increments. The fact that the Review recommended that the CCDHH continue for another five years is an indication of our success.

Sunset Review Summary

In addition, the Sunset Review recommended replacing the Commissioner representing the Public with a Commissioner representing the Deaf-Blind community. Thus, the Commission will continue with seven members. The Boards and Commissions of the Governor’s Office will be in the process of looking to appoint a Deaf-Blind representative. The current plan is for the Commissioner representing the Public (Commissioner Beckett) to finish her term in June 2016. The new Commissioner’s four-year term will begin July 2016. We have until July 1, 2016 to fill the Deaf-Blind Commissioner position. The Governor’s Office will also seek advice by the Commission to replace those whose terms are ending in June 2016. The Sunset Bill also changed the way Commissioners are added to the Board; these appointments no longer have to be confirmed by the Senate.

The Commission is required to submit an Annual Report to the Governor and the General Assembly by September 1, 2015. This is an opportunity to share information with the legislators and the governor about the needs for the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind communities. The report will contain data related to the work the administrative office performs as well as submit recommendations for the General Assembly to consider. The recommendations will focus on laws or programs to support our mission.

Commission Activities summary

Administrator Moers reviewed a handout summarizing activities of the Commission. The handout covered:

- Vision and Mission Statements
- List of Communication Barriers
- Ongoing System Advocacy Projects
- Information and Referrals
- Telephone Equipment Distribution Program
- Legal Auxiliary Services

- Outreach and Consultative Services
- Grant Program
- Data list of services provided
- Introduction of 6 Staff Members

Administrator Moers discussed in detail barriers that exist based on requests and feedback from the community. These include barriers at other agencies, such as County Social Services, Office of Civil Rights, Department of Labor and Employment, as well as emergency situations, law enforcement agencies, legal services, court systems and refugee services. The basic barrier is that these groups or agencies do not want to pay for auxiliary services they are legally obligated to provide. The Commission wants to improve the process with training and policies.

Administrator Moers reviewed some of the system advocacy projects.

- Advocacy Coalition for Equality or ACE. This group is a coalition of organizations or agencies providing technical assistance services to deaf, hard-of-hearing and deaf-blind individuals.
- Another project is for aging and residential services. The Commission is in the process of gathering data to find how many individuals living in residential services feel isolated for lack of services.
- Centralized auxiliary services for the Executive Branch is a project to have an interagency agreement with other departments to create a process to provide communication access.
- Communication Access Fund for legal counsel is a project seeking a central funding for people using private legal services with auxiliary services.
- The Colorado Daylight Project for mental health and substance abuse services is out of funds and has been turned down for future funding several times.
- Deaf-Blind Services has a task force. They are ready to go to the Legislature in January for the state to provide funding for Deaf-Blind Services.

Administrator Moers gave a summary of the services provided by the 6 staff members. This is an average per year over two years.

- Fielded 1,175 general inquires
- Distributed 405 telecommunications equipment and 255 accessories
- Responded to 3,420 auxiliary services requests and provided 8,400 hours of auxiliary services
- Conducted 100 workshops
- Consulted for 50 entities
- Issued grants totaling \$50,000
- Conducted 5 advocacy projects

The Commission strives to be an agent of change by being system advocates creating a sustainable network for resources with long-term solutions. The Commission's services are not just for individuals but for public and private entities, community organizations, and other stakeholders who want to collaborate on services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Ad Hoc Committee to Review Placement of the CCDHH

Administrator Moers provided some background for the need to change the placement of the CCDHH within the state agencies. The ad hoc committee to discuss and determine placement has or will have 11 representatives, including two commissioners, community representation, the Department of Personnel and Administration, the Department of Local Affairs, the Governor's Office, the Department of Regulatory Agencies. The first meeting was May 29, 2015.

Our Commission was previously placed under the Division of Boards and Commissions. This division was eliminated. With this change, the Commission was placed under the Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Community Access and Independence. While this may sound like a good fit, the Commissioners and staff disagree. The Office of Community Access and Independence is focused on individual services, whereas the current Commission vision is to also work collaboratively with other agencies to influence policy state-wide. Various stakeholders for the Commission encouraged the legislators to request that we be placed elsewhere. Therefore, our placement with the Office of Community Access and Independence is temporary while the ad hoc committee explores options for better placement.

The CCDHH wants to be identified as a centralized point of contact for the State for deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind concerns. We want the host agency to understand how we can become this contact and how they will help facilitate that. They will make the community more aware of the Commission. The host agency should have a clear understanding of our fiscal concerns.

Some ideas about what the CCDHH wants with a host agency can be explained by what we would do differently. One concern about the current placement has to do with the management style within the upper levels of the Department. It is a top-down approach with little input from the Commission. Also, the Commission is not a Department priority, as the CCDHH is a small unit serving a small community. Since we are small, we have to reeducate the DHS about our funding process frequently. This is time-consuming and unproductive.

We also want to be more proactive about providing resources by working on policy development and changes to legislation that will help the community. Currently, the Commission is reactive to requests and issues. We want to better collaborate with the community and with the legislature and improve our visibility. We need support to achieve these goals.

Commissioner Neuroth provided more information about the ad hoc placement committee. He emphasized that the Commission office is not physically moving; the discussion is in regard to the Commission being placed under a different department within the government. At the ad hoc meeting the attendees realized there are many options for placement, but the key stakeholders did not understand enough about the various agencies. At the next meeting, more in-depth information will be provided regarding other State agencies that might be available and may be a good fit. The ad hoc committee members also emphasized the need for the CCDHH to have a more direct contact with the legislature and with the Governor's office. Commissioner Neuroth encouraged the attendees to feel free to contact any member of the ad hoc committee with ideas, issues, and concerns. The meetings are open and meeting dates will be posted.

New Website Review

Administrator Moers showed the new web-site that is close to completion. The group agreed that the new web-site looks great so far.

Committees:

Legal Auxiliary Services Advisory Council (LASAC, Cheri Davis, LAS Manager)

Cheri Davis gave the report. The LASAC members recently attended a conference in New Mexico with other states managers responsible for providing interpreters for the court systems in their state. One item discussed was the National Center for Judicial Court Systems will be setting up a national database for court Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI). Colorado will be involved with these conversations but is in not mandated for Colorado. We have a lot of questions about a national database. The LASAC we will share information as they get it; however, this is coming. We have started using BEI for meeting situations in rural areas where the interpreter may not be readily available to have a meeting with, say, a probation officer. This is not decided by somebody on a national level, we decide whether or not it would be appropriate to provide BEI services. We will continue to control that in Colorado.

The Council added a new CART Representative member, Diane Humphrey. Two interpreter's terms have ended and the LASAC is seeking new representatives.

By-laws Committee (Commissioner Beckett)

The By-laws Committee had no report at this time. Updates to the By-laws will be discussed at the Commissioner Retreat.

Nominations Committee (Commissioner Weiss)

No report at this time.

Grant Program Sub-committee (Administrator Moers)

Administrator Moers announced that the Grant Applications forms had been disseminated June 2, 2015. The applications are due July 31, 2015. Administrator Moers reported that he has received several calls about the nature of the grant and has had to clarify that these moneys are for community organizations and are not for personal use. Members of the Grant Committee are Shirley Cassel, Stephen Wallin, Joe Benedetto and Susan Robinson

Deaf Education Liaison (Commissioner Weiss)

No report at this time. This information will be presented at the Community Forum.

Deafblind Services Liaison (Commissioner Graham-Kelly)

Commissioner Graham-Kelly reported the last Deaf-Blind Task Force meeting was very good. Rebecca Kahn, from Spark Policy Institute, presented a road map that the Task Force will present to the Legislature in January 2016.

5. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

6. New Business

There was no new business.

7. Announcements

Kanene Knox recently passed away. He was a member of our Deaf community and attended many Commissioner meetings. It was his recommendation that the driver's license have some sort of identification on it for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Commission will continue this effort.

8. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:50 pm.