

COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
September 18, 2020
Via ZOOM Video Conference

PARTICIPANTS: Council Members: Steven Birkby Chairing (Representing an organization of deaf individuals), Kate Savage (Representing Audiologists), Gretchen Fors (Representing parent of a hard of hearing child), Marva Kubalik (Representing hard of hearing individual over the age of 60). Valerie Player (Representing parent of a deaf child), Emilie Banasiak (Representing an organization of hard of hearing persons), Sonny Cabbage (Representing a Deaf individual)
Excused: Joelynn Ball (Representing Interpreters), Jacob Robison (representing physicians)

Ex Officio Members: Steven Snow, Brian Shakespeare, Julie Eavenson, Brian Darcy, Kelli Toohill, Lorraine Dennis, Charlie Silva

Others: Cindy Schreiner, Sierra McIver, Lauren Seale, LaVona Andrew, Erin Olsen, Melissa Bair, Raymond Lockary, Lea McElwee, Bianca Leon, Jill Radford, Lisa Doyon

INTRODUCTIONS:

The meeting was called to order by Steve Birkby and introductions were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE APRIL 24, 2020 MEETING

The minutes of the April 24, 2020 meeting were reviewed. Valerie Player motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Kate Savage seconded the motion. The motion passed.

PERFECTION OF AGENDA:

Kate Savage motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Marva Kubalik seconded the motion. The motion passed.

OPEN FORUM/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Erin Olsen said the Idaho Commission on Aging will be having a virtual seminar on fall prevention. Steven Birkby said he adopted a dog. Sonny Cabbage said he would be a grandfather for the first time.

OATH OF OFFICE:

Steven Birkby administered the Oath of Office to Sonny Cabbage appointed by the Governor who will be representing Deaf individuals on the Council.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT:

Steven Snow said the Council's offices have been opened during the CoVid 19 pandemic. Steven Snow said the staff has been busy providing information, training and other essential materials to the public, businesses, and Government agencies. Steven Snow said the staff has been able to keep up with the demand and he commended them on their excellent work ethic.

Federal Legislation:

Steven Snow said at the Federal level, Congress passed the "CARES" act which provided various funding resources for individuals, businesses, and government agencies. Steven Snow said some of the funds were used to purchase Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) among other items. Steven Snow said Governor Little announced \$150 million will be used to replace monies removed from Idaho's education services. Steven Snow said other Federal issues are basically on hold until more CoVid 19 funding is negotiated.

State Legislation:

Steven Snow said Governor Little called a Special Session of the Legislature on August 24, 2020. The legislature passed two bills regarding the election, which included allowing in-person voting even during a state of emergency. Steven Snow said one bill passed that gives schools, businesses, and governmental entities protection from being held liable from CoVid 19 litigation.

Steven Snow said the Legislative Services Offices (LSO) secured funding from the CARES act to provide captioning for all the committee meetings during the Special Session. Steven Snow said this is the first time that captioning was provided for all meetings. Steven Snow said the Council will be partnering with LSO to try to ensure that captioning will be provided during the 2021 Legislative session. Steven Snow encouraged board members to write their Legislators to express support for the captioning that has been and should be provided in the future.

Budget:

Steven Snow said because of the impact of CoVid 19, the Governor has ordered a 5% holdback in funding for all state agencies. Steven Snow said the Council must holdback \$18,535 from our budget. Steven Snow said the holdback will come from Operating Funds and not require holdback from Personnel thus preventing furloughs for staff. Steven Snow said the holdbacks will not impact what staff provides, however, there will be no travel and only necessary expenditures needed to operate the office.

Other CDHH Activities:

Steven Snow said because of the health emergency caused by CoVid 19, the Council has been involved in two emergency coalitions. Steven Snow said one coalition is the Idaho Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (Ida VOAD). Steven Snow said there are many groups involved in Ida VOAD including the American Red Cross, FEMA, the Office of Emergency Management, several religious organizations, and other government agencies. Steven Snow said the Council

represented issues that deaf and hard of hearing individuals are facing. Steven Snow said the group met weekly at first, but now is only meeting monthly. Steven Snow said one of the big issues is masks or face coverings. Steven Snow said the Council was involved in helping reduce communication barriers caused by masks.

Steven Snow said the second group the Council was involved with is the Access and Functional Needs Committee, organized by the State Independent Living Council (SILC) which is a committee that represents various disabilities in Idaho. Steven Snow said the Council focused on issues affecting the deaf and hard of hearing community including ensuring caregivers have PPE that they need while doing their jobs.

Steven Snow said the Council partnered with the Idaho State Department of Education to modify and update the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) to ensure deaf and hard of hearing students have accessibility to the test. Steven Snow said there is a separate group focusing on Blind/Visually Impaired access to the IRI.

Steven Snow said this is the 30-year celebration of the American's With Disabilities Act. Steven Snow said initially there was going to be an all-day celebration at the Cecil Andrus park, however, with CoVid 19, plans had to change. Steven Snow said now all events are virtual including some interviews, memes, videos, stories, etc. Steven Snow said all interviews are captioned and that the content is accessible. Steven Snow said Lauren Seale has worked diligently on editing and captioning the materials. Steven Snow said he interviewed two individuals, one is Senate Brisk, a high school senior from Oakley. Steven Snow said she was born after the passage of the ADA and wanted to share her experiences. Steven Snow said Senate was adopted from Africa and she shared her experiences from two different parts of the world.

Steven Snow said he also interviewed Greg Hlibok. Steven Snow said Greg Hlibok was instrumental in the Gallaudet University Deaf President Now movement in 1988, which had a direct impact on the passage of the ADA.

Steven Snow said Sorenson Video Relay has provided a videophone to the Council office which is available during office hours by appointment.

Steven Snow said Vocational Rehabilitation has hired a new deaf and hard of hearing Counselor, Marcus John, who uses sign language to communicate and will be available for clients in the future. Steven Snow said the offices of Vocational Rehabilitation have moved to office space across from CDHH, so it will be convenient to deaf or hard of hearing individuals to visit both offices without having to travel much distance.

Steven Snow said Governor Little signed an Executive Order to suspend some of the professional licensing requirements, however, the requirements for Interpreter licenses has not been changed.

Steven Snow said the Council is monitoring Governor Little's task force on Telehealth to ensure that deaf or hard of hearing individuals continue to have access to telehealth.

Steven Snow said the Council partnered with Idaho Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (IRID) and received a generous private donation of \$4,000 which was used to purchase 1,400 clear view masks which were distributed by the Council. Steven Snow said this program was so popular that the Office of Financial Management and the Office of Emergency Management has purchased an additional 15,000 mask that will be distributed to the community. Steven Snow said the Council has received request for close to 10,000 masks already. Steven Snow said the Department of Education will receive 3,000. Steven Snow said St. Alphonsus has applied for a grant to purchase masks and will partner with CDHH to disseminate those masks to the community.

Steven Snow said the Council has received funds from the CARES act to purchase iPad to be utilized in a temporary loan program to provide communication access to individuals who are isolated due to the CoVid 19 pandemic. Steven Snow said the Council received \$26, 640, which purchased 50 iPad, protective covers, training, and postage. Steven Snow said the criteria to receive the iPad have not been established but will be before the iPad are distributed as they have not been received by CDHH yet.

IDAHO HANDS AND VOICES UPDATE ON K-12 OPENING ISSUES:

Valerie Player said she is the liaison between hospitals and school for students who are medically fragile to guarantee the students have safe and accessible schools for their needs. Valerie Player said she is an advocate for the students and if parents or teachers have concerns, she is the contact person for information. Valerie Player said Hands and Voices have met virtually to give families an opportunity to ask questions or voice concerns. Valerie Player said they have three new Guides for the Guide by Your Side Program, including one parent who is a native Spanish speaker, one with a child with a cochlear implant and all have fundamental ASL skills.

Valerie Player said Hands and Voices has started a partnership with Zoo Boise to start ASL interpreting in their programs and providing home activities and materials for children.

Valerie Player said it has been easier to include families and others from northern Idaho because all meetings are on Zoom now which provides an opportunity to participate without leaving the area.

PRESENTATION OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES EXCELLENCE AWARD

Steven Snow presented virtually the Award for Legislative Excellence for Representative Melissa Wintrow. Steven Snow said Representative Wintrow has been an advocate for Idaho's Deaf and Hard of Hearing population. Steven Snow said Representative Wintrow has been instrumental in providing funding for the Council including funding to provide a full-time Executive Interpreter, making sure the Council has a stable budget, and being the "bridge" in helping the Council forge relationships with other Legislators. Steven Snow said because a of Representative Wintrow, the Council can provide a high quality of service to Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals throughout Idaho.

Steven Snow said the Board unanimously supported the nomination in April.

Representative Wintrow accepted the award and thanked the Council and Steven Snow for the opportunity for her to get involved with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Representative Wintrow said she will continue to support the Council's mission and if anybody had any concerns, to please contact her.

Steven Snow said he would make an appointment to present the award in person and to be able to take photographs.

ACTION ITEMS:

Revised FY 2020 Budget Request:

Steven Snow said the FY 2020 Budget Request had to be revised due to the Governor's request to remove specific line items. Steven Snow said the specific line item the Council had to remove was for an increase in lease payments.

Kate Savage motioned to approve the revised FY 2020 Budget Request. Gretchen Fors seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Revise 2020 Legislative Concurrent Resolution for Open Captions at Cinemas

Steven Snow said the Council voted to have a Concurrent Resolution by the Legislature to encourage movie theaters to have opened captions. Steven Snow said because of CoVid19, with the theaters being closed, it would not be a good time to present this Concurrent Resolution. Steven Snow said the Concurrent Resolution will be amended for public places including restaurants, bars, hospital lobbies or any place with a television to have captions turned on. Steven Snow said this would not be a law but would encourage entities to have captions always turned on. Steven Snow said this would not have any financial impact. Steven Snow said he is asking for the Board's support to be presented at next year's legislative session.

Sonny Cabbage motioned to accept the changes in the Concurrent Resolution. Kate Savage seconded the motion. The motion passed.

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:

Idaho Sound Beginnings/Infant Toddler

Brian Shakespeare said that CoVid19 did not affect Idaho's program as much as other states. Brian Shakespeare said only 12 babies were not screened in the hospital, however, 8 returned for outpatient screening. Brian Shakespeare said their Outreach Coordinator, Andrea Amestoy, will contact parents when audiologist open so that services can be provided. Brian Shakespeare said Idaho's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program has been funded for another four years through the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Brian Shakespeare said Idaho's program will shift to captioning early intervention data for the next four years.

Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind

Brian Darcy said after consulting with the state epidemiologist, the CDC, a local health district, the Governor's office, the State Department of Education, and others to start school entirely virtually. Brian Darcy said on September 28, preschool and elementary deaf and hard of hearing students will return to campus for in-person class and on October 12, high school and middle school students will return. Brian Darcy said the Independent Living Skills Group which is normally housed on campus will continue to be on-line as most of those students are employed in the community. Brian Darcy said PPE's are required. Brian Darcy said the Outreach program has started to go to schools, but only one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Brian Darcy said if Outreach personnel go on a home visit, then they will not go to a school on the same day. Brian Darcy said he is extremely happy and supportive of his staff and all the adjustments they have had to make for all the students who attend Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Brian Darcy said they have used the time with the campus being vacant to remodel the Cottages and moved the Health Center and Administrative offices to provide better access.

Brian Darcy said ISDB has a new Athletic Director, Ken Anderson, who is the first Deaf Athletic Director for ISDB.

PUC/Idaho TRS Administrator:

Kelli Toohill said currently Outreach is on hold due to CoVid19. Kelli Toohill said there has been a spike in relay usage. Kelli Toohill said Idaho Relay will start a Facebook page soon and new brochures have been created. Kelli Toohill said she will meet with other state administrators via Zoom and will determine how Idaho relay differs in usage.

Idaho State Department of Education:

Charlie Silva said she was happy to be included as an Ex-Officio member of the Council. Charlie Silva said the Idaho State Department of Education has resources on the website concerning CoVid19. Charlie Silva said there have been workshops about the Idaho Reading Indicator including how to ensure the test is accessible to deaf or hard of hearing or blind and visually impaired students. Charlie Silva said she has been in contact with Idaho Parents Unlimited to determine the needs of students with disabilities. Charlie Silva said the Idaho Department of Education has been diligently working on ways to have schools open safely and working on various activities including Visual Phonics, Director's webinars, the need for clear masks the Family Engagement Conference and others.

Idaho Department of Labor:

Lorraine Dennis said she was excited to be a part of the Ex-Officio members to the Council. Lorraine Dennis said she was observing the meeting as this was her first and wanted to get a feel of what the procedures were. Lorraine Dennis said there were limited openings currently available through the Department of Labor.

Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licensure:

Julie Eavenson said she was happy to be included as an Ex-Officio member, but since this was her first meeting, she had nothing to report.

Adjourn:

Kate Savage motioned to adjourn the meeting. Valerie Player seconded the motion. The motion passed.

NEXT MEETING: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2020