

COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

January 21, 2021

Via Zoom

(Draft minutes to be approved at the April 23, 2021 Council meeting)

PARTICIPANTS: This meeting was chaired by Steven Birkby (Representing an organization of deaf persons)

Council Members: Gretchen Fors (Representing parent of hard of hearing child), Valerie Player (Representing parent of a deaf child) Sonny Cabbage (deaf individual), Emilie Banasiak (Representing a hard of hearing individual who represents an organization of persons who are hard of hearing) Kate Savage (Representing Audiologists), and Jacob Robison (Representing Physicians) Excused: Joelynn Ball (Representing Interpreters), and Marva Kubalik (Representing hard of hearing over the age of 60)

Ex-Officio Members: Steven Snow, Dr. Charlie Silva, Brian Darcy, Julie Eavenson, Kelli Toohill, Erin Olsen, and Lorraine Dennis

Others: Raymond Lockary, Krista Kramer, Andrea Cronrath, Turner Lumpkin, LaVona Andrew, Lauren Seale, Sierra McIver, and Cindy Schreiner

INTRODUCTIONS:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2020 MEETING:

There 1 typographical error in the minutes. Jacob Robison motioned the minutes be approved with the correction noted. Valerie Player seconded the motion. The motion passed.

PERFECTION OF AGENDA:

Kate Savage motioned to accept the agenda as presented. Emilie Banasiak seconded the motion. The motion passed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT:

Federal Legislation: Steven Snow said with inauguration of President Biden, and happenings in Washington, D.C., Federal Legislation has been put on hold. Steven Snow said the Council will monitor upcoming legislation that might be proposed during the next session.

State Legislation: Steven Snow said on November 6, 2020, the Legislative Council met and voted to propose a supplemental request for live captioning for all legislative session and committee meetings. Steven Snow said the Legislative Council voted to approve a \$250,000 supplemental request for fiscal year 2021. Steven Snow said the request was approved by the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee and will be ongoing.

Steven Snow said the Concurrent Resolution regarding closed captioning being available on televisions in public places will be going forward. Valerie Player said Idaho Hands and Voices will be the entity requesting the Concurrent Resolution. Valerie Player said she was notified by Senator Jeff Agenbroad will be sponsoring the bill at the Legislature. Valerie Player said Senator has support from some House members. Steven Snow said the next step is to get the bill printed and then there could be testimony regarding the bill. Steven Snow said the Council will keep members informed when the bill moves forward.

Budget: Steven Snow said the Council's FY 2021 budget has no additional line items requested. Steven Snow said the 2021 budget had a 5% holdback recommended by the Governor. The budget before the holdback was \$373,700 and with the holdback totaling \$18,500, the adjusted budget amount is \$355,200 for FY 2021.

Steven Snow said the budget for FY2022 will include the 5% holdback being restored. Steven Snow said there will be a transfer of \$13,000 from Vocational Rehabilitation to the Council's budget for direct payment to Information Technology Services for their technical support to the Council. Steven Snow said the Governor recommended a 2% Employee Compensation increase. Steven Snow said the requested amount for FY2022 for the Council is \$393,100. Steven Snow said Jane Donnellan, the Division Administrator of Vocational Rehabilitation included the budget request for the Council with the budget request for Vocational Rehabilitation to the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee.

Steven Snow said during the April board meeting, there will be more discussion for budget and line items for FY2023.

Activities:

Interview from Channel 6: Steven Snow said he was interviewed by Channel 6 News concerning the impact of COVID19 on Idaho's deaf and hard of hearing community. Steven Snow said Brian Darcy and other deaf individuals might be interviewed for the story. Steven Snow said the story should be broadcasted soon.

COVID 19: Steven Snow said the Council offices have remained opened with staff providing resources and consultation to the community. Steven Snow said he has sent comments to the Corona Virus Task Force to request that interpreters be classified in a higher priority to receive the vaccine since many interpreting situation cannot be conducted remotely. Steven Snow said the task force will be meeting today and the Council will keep the Board and interpreters updated on the results of the request.

Steven Snow said there have been some difficulties in procuring sign language interpreters for press briefings since the Governor's office has delegated the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) to provide future briefings. Steven Snow said the Council has been in contact with DHW to ensure that sign language interpreters are provided for future press briefings.

Vaccines: Steven Snow said the Council is monitoring vaccine disbursement to ensure that people who are deaf or hard of hearing have equal access to the vaccine. Steven Snow said if the Council hears of any deaf or hard of hearing individual that feels discrimination concerning the vaccine to please let the Council know.

Clear Masks: Steven Snow Council has kept approximately 1,000 to distribute as request come into the office. Steven Snow said we will distribute only small request so that the masks will not be depleted.

iPad Program: Steven Snow the Council has purchased 50 iPads through the CARES act. Steven Snow said the iPads will be loaned to deaf and hard of hearing individuals to help with communication needs and to be able to feel connected to family, friends, and other entities to help with the feeling of being isolated because of COVID 19. Steven Snow said the Council staff has met and discussed criteria and the application process for iPads. Steven Snow said the iPad loaner program should launch next week.

Christmas Family: Steven Snow said the Council sponsored 3 families for extra Christmas cheer. The families all had a child with hearing loss. The families were in Rexburg, Rupert and in the Treasure Valley. Steven said the Council received donations totaling more than \$2,000. Steven Snow thanked the members of the Board who donated to the families.

Public Library Design: Steven Snow said the Council has been asked to be involved with the design of a new Meridian Public Library being built. Steven Snow said the designers want input on Deaf space for the library ensuring the library is deaf friendly. Steven Snow said being involved with the design of the library will create a model for other libraries and buildings in the future.

Deaf Mentor Program: Steven Snow said the Council will be partnering with the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB) and Idaho Sound Beginnings to provide deaf mentors for families with deaf or hard of hearing children. Steven Snow said the program will be called Snapshot.

Meet and Greet Vendor Videos: Steven Snow said because of COVID19, the Council's usual Meet and Greet at the Capitol has been changed to this Board meeting. Steven Snow said the vendors who were previously invited to participate in the Meet and Greet have been invited by the Council to submit a 2-minute video highlighting their agency and what programs and services they provide. The Council will make the videos accessible through captioning and American Sign Language interpretation and then post the videos on social media. Steven Snow said the videos will be posted soon.

Transportation Department: Steven Snow said the Council is partnering with the Idaho Transportation Department to create the Idaho Driver's Manual in American Sign Language (ASL). Steven Snow said the driver's test is provide in ASL and when the manual is provided in ASL, the deaf community will benefit.

CDHH Library additions: Steven Snow said the Council is partnering with Hands and Voices to purchase additional materials for CDHH's lending library so the Council may provide additional

resources for deaf children and their families. Steven Snow said the Council will provide a list of books and other items.

Travel and training restrictions: Steven Snow said because of COVID19, the Council has not been able to provide on site training to many agencies that have requested training. Steven Snow said after the pandemic is over, the Council will be providing more training and travel will increase significantly.

30 Year Anniversary of CDHH: Steven Snow said that the Council will be hosting a 30-year anniversary celebration after July 2021. Steven Snow said further information will be coming later.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:

Idaho State Department of Education: Dr. Charlie Silva said the focus of the Department of Education will focusing on getting students back to schools with face-to-face education as soon as possible making sure all safety concerns are met. Dr. Charlie Silva said the Department of Education will be dealing with social and emotional learning along with literacy and potential learning loss and will provide additional supports for students.

Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind (IESDB): Brian Darcy said the school had everybody back on campus on January 3, 2021. Brian Darcy said IESDB currently has 110 students on campus. Brian Darcy said there has been an increase in inquiries from students who are having a difficult time in districts throughout the state with on-line learning and want to access instruction that is tailored to their needs. Brian Darcy said Outreach is serving 1869 students statewide, including 178 babies. Brian Darcy said referrals are high because in home visits are still curtailed with outreach teachers only visiting families on a limited basis until the pandemic is over.

Brian Darcy said IESDB received some CARES monies which was used to upgrade technology at the campus including servers, computers, and monitors. Brian Darcy said IESDB purchased video cameras for sports activities that can now be viewed by parents and will be used to broadcast graduation ceremonies. Brian Darcy said in addition, picnic tables and heaters were purchased to provide outside seating for socializing and lunching which will provide needed socialization and language learning for students. Brian Darcy said CARES monies were also used to purchase specialized cleaning supplies to sanitize the cottages and other areas.

Brian Darcy said the principal of the school Jana Hasco has collaborated with students and started the ROAR store on campus to sell swag including facemasks, hoodies, and other items. Brian Darcy said the items are also being sold in stores in Gooding.

Brian Darcy said IESDB Foundation received a grant from Chobani Yogurt for \$50,000 to support the Independent Living Students. The funds are being used to convert an old school bus to a food truck. Brian Darcy said the students have designed the truck, will create the menu and staff the truck when it is finished. Brian Darcy said the truck will be parked at various places throughout the state including Chobani Yogurt, the Capitol, and other places that make a request.

Brian Darcy said the Deaf Mentor program will be using the SKY HI curriculum which is well established, and the mentors will be experts in communication abilities. Brian Darcy said IESDB received a grant from Idaho Sound Beginnings and will be partnering with them and the Council to establish the program throughout the state and Paula Mason will be directing the program.

Brian Darcy said the teachers received their first round of vaccines.

Idaho Commission on Aging: Erin Olsen said the Idaho Commission on Aging provides several services for individuals over 60 and for people including assistance with food and nutrition, Medicare issues, transportation, and homemaker services. Erin Olsen said she has been teaming with Sierra McIver at the Council and the Idaho Caregiver Alliance to ensure that caregivers can effectively communicate with clients. Erin Olsen said the Idaho Commission on Aging will be making materials more accessible through Braille or closed captioning or ASL.

Division of Occupational Licenses: A report from Julie Eavenson said there are currently 182 licensed Sign Language Interpreters which is an increase from 178.

Public Utilities Commission: Kelli Toohill said Sierra McIver and Emilie Banasiak completed training for 911 operators in Ada County. Kelli Toohill said relay usage is about 40% higher than normal and TRS services have increased by 18%.

Kelli Toohill said there is a \$500 scholarship available through Hamilton Relay for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have difficulty speaking. Kelli Toohill said the deadline is January 30, 2021 and to let students know the scholarship is available.

Idaho Department of Labor: Lorraine Dennis said the Department of Labor is open by appointment only.

OTHERS:

Krista Kramer said the Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP) has low interest loans that can be used for hearing aids. Krista Kramer said the IATP received \$35,000 in CARES monies and an additional \$15,000 from Molina Healthcare to provide communication access in nursing homes including Pocket Talkers, personnel amplifiers, headphones for iPads, and other communication equipment for seniors to help with preventing problems caused by isolation.

ADJOURN: Valerie Player motioned to adjourn the meeting; Emilie Banasiak seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: APRIL 23, 2021