

COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

January 20, 2022

Via ZOOM Video Conference

Draft minutes to be approved on April 22, 2022, Council meeting

PARTICIPANTS: Council Members: Joelynn Ball (Chairing) (Representing Interpreters), Kate Savage (Representing Audiologists), Valerie Player (Representing parent of a deaf child), Gretchen Fors (Representing parent of a hard of hearing child), Sonny Cabbage (Representing a deaf individual)

Excused: Jacob Robison (Representing physicians), Emilie Banasiak (Representing an organization of hard of hearing persons), Steven Birkby (Representing an organization of deaf individuals),

Vacant Position: Member who is hard of hearing over the age of 60

Ex Officio Members: Steven Snow, Charlie Silva, Kelli Toohill, Erin Olsen, and Katie Stuart

Others: Cindy Schreiner, Sierra McIver, LaVona Andrew, Emma Wood, Jill Radford, Bella Brock, Clare Estrada, Raymond Lockary and Melissa Bair

INTRODUCTIONS:

The meeting was called to order by Joelynn Ball and introductions were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 5, 2021 MEETING

Approval of the Minutes of November 5, 2021 tabled until next board meeting.

PERFECTION OF AGENDA:

Agenda accepted as presented.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT:

Federal Legislation: Steven Snow said the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) request for public comment concerning the availability of Over-the-Counter (OTC) hearing aids recently concluded. Steven Snow said the target date for consumers to be able to buy OTC hearing aids is September 2022. Steven Snow said the OTC hearing aids are for adults only and have only mild to moderate hearing loss. Steven Snow said the rule specifically says that individual states cannot individually write the rules to regulate the rules for their state, federal rules must be followed. Steven Snow said there will be pros and cons concerning this program and as it rolls out, the Council will be monitoring the information.

State Legislation: Steven Snow said since the Legislature has just convened, there are not any bills that directly concerning the deaf and hard of hearing population. Steven Snow said currently, the Legislature is reviewing the Governors recommendations.

Steven Snow said the process of signing up to testify about a particular bill has been changed, the process is now completed online via a smart phone or a computer that is provided by the committees.

Steven Snow said the Governor's office has requested that any official from a state agency including board members receive permission to testify regarding legislation brought before committees. Steven Snow said if the Board members were to testify representing the Council, then they need to inform Steven and he will inform the Governor's office. Steven Snow said if the Board members were testifying as a private citizen on a matter, then the Governor's office does not need to be informed.

Steven Snow said the Governor has approved CDHH's request for a full time Deaf or Hard of Hearing Program Specialist and has included the request in the FY 2023 budget which will begin July 1, 2022. Steven Snow said the budget must be approved by the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC), and he is confident that the full-time position (FTE) will be approved.

Steven Snow said CDHH's budget request submitted by the Governor is \$503,000, which includes the new FTE and employee compensation increases and increases in health insurance premiums.

Steven Snow said CDHH's budget will be presented by Jane Donnellan, Administrator of Vocational Rehabilitation on February 24, 2022. Steven Snow said he will be attending the presentation to provide further information concerning the Council.

Other CDHH Activities:

- **Christmas Families:** Steven Snow said the Council provided gifts to 3 families this year who have deaf child/ren that are having financial difficulties. Steven Snow said this year the Council was able to provide gifts for 16 people totaling around \$2,000 which was donated by the community. Steven Snow said the families this year lived in Athol (northern Idaho), Rupert (eastern Idaho) and Kuna (Treasure Valley). Steven Snow said this program is very enjoyable to participate in and the Council will continue to do so.
- **Covid:** Steven Snow said the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) will no longer be providing a hotline for the public to receive information. Steven Snow said DHW will transfer funds set aside for the hotline to a Health Equity Grant. Steven Snow said DHW has invited organizations to apply for monies from the grant to assist underserved or at-risk persons pertaining to Covid. Steven Snow said the Council is partnering with the Communications Services for the Deaf (CSD) to request \$150,000 to establish 4 months' worth of services for a variety of needs to support the deaf and hard of hearing community. Steven Snow said he would keep the Council apprised of the results.
- **Interpreter exams:** Steven Snow said two credentialing exams that are available in Idaho are the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment and the National Certification

Exam being administered by the Center for Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters. Steven Snow said there is another exam available through Texas known as the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters, referred to as the BEI. Steven Snow said the exam is only provided in Texas. Steven Snow said he has conversed with Lori Breslow, the Director of the BI program and suggested a pilot program for access to the exam in other states. Steven Snow said the request was taken under advisement as the BEI program is concerned over intellectual property of the exams. Steven Snow said discussion will continue and the Council will continue to evaluate how the exam might be available remotely.

- Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration grant: Steven Snow said the Council is partnering with Idaho State University (ISU) to provide training to interpreters for medical interpreting. Steven Snow said the Council, Idaho State University and Gallaudet University applied for and received a grant regarding interpreter training in healthcare situations. Steven Snow said the grant is approximately 2 million dollars. Steven Snow said there will be 3 parts of the grant funding: 1) Gallaudet will create the curriculum, 2) Idaho State University will provide the instruction, and 3) the Council will communicate and collaborate with 6 other states involved in the grant. (Virginia, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Michigan, Kansas, and Arizona). Steven Snow said the grant is for 5 years and currently it is year 1. Steven Snow said there are 3 steps involved in the grant 1) identify responsibilities of each state, collecting data including surveys, identifying policies, and providing other information, 2) analyze the data, and 3) developing the curriculum that is researched based. Steven Snow said a Project Manager has been hired and the next step will be to have a strategic planning meeting.
- Closed captioning: Steven Snow said the Council created a letter and a flyer containing information about closed captioning in public places pursuant to last year's Legislature passing Concurrent Resolution 103. The Council sent the letter and flyer to 150 different associations such as the Hospital association, Restaurant association, etc., and the associations sent the information out to their members. Steven Snow said he has noticed that many places now have captions available on televisions.
- Employee news: Steven Snow said Sierra McIver's (Outreach and Communications Coordinator) last day with the Council will be Friday, January 21, 2022 as she will be focusing on a new career. Steven Snow said Lauren Seale's (Executive Interpreter) last day with the Council will be February 4, 2022 as she has decided to stay home with her new baby. Steven Snow thanked both for their service wished them the best of luck. Steven Snow said the Council will be conducting searches to replace them.

ISU DEAF EDUCATION PROGRAM

Dr. Emma Wood and Jill Radford gave a Power Point presentation about the Deaf Education program offered by Idaho State University. Dr. Wood said the program has been revamped after being paused in 2016 due to budget issues. Dr. Wood said the program will provide undergraduate studies and graduate studies in Deaf Education. Dr. Wood said the first undergraduate will graduate in 2022. Jill Radford said there are 5 graduate students currently enrolled. Dr. Wood and Jill Radford said they are enthusiastic about the program and will be working to ensure that Idaho will keep the program and ensure that students will enroll in both the undergraduate and

graduate programs. Dr. Wood said there are 4 ways to receive the Deaf Education endorsement including:

- Some students are already certified teachers and are just doing additional coursework to add the deaf education component.
- Some students are not yet certified teachers.
- Some students are hired and working as teachers and need to get the endorsement.
- Some students are teachers who are enrolled to receive their master’s degree.

Dr. Wood and Jill Radford said they are actively recruiting for the program and actively promoting the program in various ways to get the information to the public about the program.

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:

Idaho State Department of Education: Dr. Charlie Silva said the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sherry Ibarra presented at the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC) last week. Dr. Silva said the following were the highlights of the presented budget:

- Full Day Kindergarten for at risk children
- 6% salary increase for classified workers
- 3% increase for administrators
- Legislation about dyslexia
- A total of 8% increase in education funding

Dr. Silva said in the national Congress, a bill “Funding Early Childhood is the Right IDEA Act” has been introduced which would increase funding for students with special needs, and she will be monitoring that legislation and will keep the Council informed and requested that the Council contact their national Legislators in regarding the legislation.

Dr. Silva said School Districts throughout the state have been impacted by the pandemic and students with special needs have been affected in all districts.

Idaho Commission on Aging: Erin Olsen said her agency will be hosting an Aging and Disability Resource Center event in February which will provide resources and information to persons who are looking for information located in one area instead of having to go to many agencies for assistance. Erin Olsen said the event will be both virtual and in person depending on which venue participants want to utilize.

Idaho Division of Occupational Licenses: Katie Stuart will be the new Ex-Officio member for the IDOL. Katie Stuart said she will be reviewing rules and regulations to streamline rules for different licenses that are let by the IDOL.

Katie Stuart said currently licenses are:

- Speech Language Pathology Assistants 20
- Inactive Speech Language Pathology Assistants 0
- Audiologists 300
- Inactive Audiologists 3
- Hearing Aid Dealer & Fitter 470
- Inactive Hearing Aid Dealer & Fitter 6

- Sign Language Interpreter 376
- Speech Language Pathologist 2,169
- Speech Language Pathologist Aide 139
- Inactive Speech Language Pathologist Aide 0
- Inactive Speech Language Pathologist 16
- Speech Language Pathologist and Audiologist 1

Katie Stuart said that if notary services are needed for license applications, then on a case-by-case basis, on-line notary services would be acceptable.

Public Utilities Commission (Idaho Relay): Kelli Toohill said the Telecommunications Relay Services and for Caption Telephones and Outreach Services will be expiring in December and will be reviewed for renewal. Kelli Toohill said Request for Proposals will be sent out for review and then submitted. Kelli Toohill will keep the Council informed on the progress.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: Friday, April 22, 2022