



Idaho Council *for the* Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 17, 2023, at 10am

Zoom Video Conference

Transcripts available upon request

ATTENDEES

Council Members	Joelynn Ball, Valerie Player, Jacob Robison, Gretchen Fors, Steven Birkby <i>Absent: Matthew McGraw, Emilie Banasiak, Sonny Cabbage, (Audiologist Vacant) (quorum = 5)</i>
Ex-officio Members	Steven Snow (CDHH), Kelli Toohill (Idaho TRS), Terry Gammel (DOL), Brian Darcy (IESDB) <i>Absent: Erin Olsen (ICG); Vacant (AG), Jan Arrasmith (DOPL), Brian Shakespeare (ISB), Chynna Hirasaki (SDE), Jane Donnellan (DVR)</i>
Other Attendees	Jahaira Faber, Leah McElwee, Jess Raschke, Dawn Wells, LaVona Andrew Carson (interpreter), Morgan Sessions, Ray Lockery, Caitlin Quiroz

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Chair, Joelynn Ball called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM and welcomed everyone. Quorum was confirmed. Introductions and representations were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 15, 2023

Corrected verbiage under Approval of Minutes to read clearly, then minutes were approved.

MOTION Jacob Robison moved to approve the September 15, 2023, minutes; Valerie Player seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition.

PERFECTING THE AGENDA

Agenda was accepted.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Steve Snow

At the National Level

- Not much is happening with congress as they work on the budget.
- The House passed a concurrent resolution for agencies that operate using federal dollars to continue running, avoiding a government shutdown. This is good until January at which time they could pass the full budget or continue with concurrent resolution.
- Monitoring several bills in congress but no action since our last board meeting (SB-5121, SB-33)
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
 - As of January 2024, any facility under the Department of Corrections must provide VRS, captioned phones, and video phone services to those inmates.
 - i. That means prisons, jails, mental institutions, juvenile detention centers, as well as immigration detention centers.

- ii. Free of charge. Often inmates are billed per minute on the phone, however SEC announced it would be illegal to charge individuals with disabilities, including deaf and hard of hearing.
 - iii. A facility failing to comply will be fined by FCC
 - o DeafBlind equipment distribution program is federally funded program with a budget of \$10 Million that just doubled to \$20 Million and accessible to state programs.
 - i. In Idaho the program is through IATP, called ICanConnect
 - ii. Purchase and distribute equipment around the state.
 - iii. Previous income threshold was removed opening to all individuals regardless of financial status.
- 988 Hotline is LIVE. Human Commission Services announced the 988-hotline number for Suicide and Crisis Lifeline now available. Previously deaf and hard of hearing individuals going through critical emotional times could not access these services. Now direct access is available.
 - o Website 988LifeLine.org offers online chat.
 - o Video Phone call 988 will connect to a signing mental health worker (not through VRS) coming any day.
 - o Text 988 directly.
- Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) under the US Department of Special Education, published a new guideline called, *Promoting Meaningful and Sustained Engagement of Individuals with Disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program*.
 - o This publication recognizes the history of frustration nationwide and the limited resources within VR, creating waiting lists, prioritizing clients, and excuses of lack of financial resources.
 - o Information must be available 24/7, meaning online through social media, website, etc. so an individual doesn't have to wait until consultation hours for basic information.
 - o VR has so many programs yet the deaf and hard of hearing communities might not be aware of what is available to them. VR is the best kept secret.

At the State Level

- The new state computer operating system called LUMA, launched in July.
 - o It centralizes and standardizes all 86 state agencies into one software program and all state agencies are required to use it.
 - o Idaho is still learning how to use it, but the goal is transparency for the public.
 - o Mark Moyle, speaker of the House of Representatives, stated if LUMA does not improve, he wants to dismantle the entire system and improve the old legacy program. Moyle has quite a bit of power, so people took notice, but Idaho has paid \$120 Million into LUMA, so I don't foresee dismantling it. Hope we can smooth the bumps in the road.
- JFAC updated their committee meetings, reducing public meeting times. This impacts the time all directors of state agencies have to testify to explain their budget requests but they are still working out the details.
 - o Previous Schedule
 - 8am-11am (3 hours) Open Meetings
 - 11am, back to their House and Senate chambers
 - o Updated Schedule
 - 8am-9:30am (1.5 hours) Open Meetings
 - 9:30am-11am (1.5 hours) Closed Sessions for internal discussions.
 - 11am, back to their House and Senate chambers
- Tax Revenue Projections are about \$34 Million less than expected, which is not a huge number, but LUMA was missing the Miscellaneous Revenue, skewing numbers. Currently working on correcting the numbers.

At the Community Level

- ICDVVA and CDHH have been working on a program to provide services for deaf victims of domestic violence. With funding from ICDVVA, 10 deaf advocates were able to attend a weeklong training. The next phase is developing logistics of who will take what role as services are provided.
 - Ten (10) Deaf Advocates throughout the state will determine what regions will have services.
 - Advocates could contract with ICDVVA as a freelance advocate and bill them directly for services.
 - There are various organizations that provide services which could be contracted with those deaf advocates and be covered through ICDVVA.
 - First preference would be utilizing deaf advocates. If for some reason that is not possible, then interpreters would be used with hearing advocates, which would be covered by ICDVVA
 - Interpreters for ICDVVA would be on a roster in LUMA so all agencies have access to that.
 - Jess is working on a flowchart on how those steps will take place.
 - DOJ recently gave 4 million (programs for deaf by deaf)
 - 65% of states do not currently provide direct services, including Idaho.
 - Expecting those services will be provided by 2025.
 - ICDVVA hosted roundtable sessions with impressive content with mention of RID, Deaf Interpreters, etc..
- Jess Raschke has been working with the Idaho Human Rights Commission administrator on streamlining services so the CDHH referral is more of a warm handoff and not just a referral that we hope will have ASL services, especially with intake and mediation.
- Jess Raschke has also been in contact with Idaho Fair Housing. They were working on templates for their staff about communication access. CDHH has shared our templates with them and some resources.
- Idaho has 86 state agencies, and many don't work with deaf individuals, but some do, partnerships improve those relationships.
- FEMA Region 10 and the Idaho Office of Emergency Management IOEM recently hosted an event on what will occur when the Cascadia subduction zone earthquake happens.
 - Not an if, but WHEN.
 - Fault line from Alaska through California covering 800 miles.
 - Predicting over .09 magnitude with 80 ft. tsunami impact on the pacific northwest.
 - Idaho would not be directly impacted however, all the evacuees from Oregon and Washington will be flooding across our borders.
 - Representatives of different sectors look at a huge map and how Idaho will be impacted, how to support emergency management, news announcements, and look at the system & priorities in that moment.
 - CDHH needs to determine how we will communicate that to the community.
- Texas Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) is managed by the state and is 1 of 2 nationally recognized tests for sign language interpreters.
 - Texas has license to their design, but it is growing.
 - The BEI is currently only administered in Texas so people must fly to Texas to take the test, there is no option for proctored test.
 - The other most recognized test is the National Interpreter's Certification (NIC) by Center for Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters (CASLI) which is administered through proctor sites throughout the US.
 - CDHH is a proctor site to take that test.
 - Idaho state licensure recognizes the BEI.
 - The previous director did not want to open up their test, but he retired so CDHH is now in talks with the new director to use our site as beta testing for that program.
 - Details still need addressed including the security of their intellectual property.

- The Interpreter Focus Group is a new effort to address the lack of interpreters around the state, which is a huge barrier. Because of COVID many interpreters started working from home, then as life returned to a normal pace, those interpreters did not return to the community work force, creating a lack of interpreters in community settings. The focus group consists of representatives from all interpreting aspects to find root causes, barriers, and possible solutions. This could lead to legislative action or potential budget requests for programs.
- This year's Christmas Families project is sponsoring 5 families with financial need, that have a deaf or hard of hearing child. Wish lists will be posted within the week. The program is dear to my heart.
- The CDHH Town Hall and Chili Cook-Off will take place tonight at the Linen Building. Doors open at 5pm.
- Governor Little made the official appointment yesterday for our audiologist board member, Dr. Abe Vore. The previous audiologist, Kate Savage moved to Montana. We hope to meet him at our annual Meet and Greet at the state capitol. Abe is from Eagle and attended Gallaudet University. He has a deaf brother.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

Brian Darcy, Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB)

Outreach is very busy this year.

- We had fall celebrations throughout every region, we saw pumpkin carving and fall festival art projects.
- Treasure Valley had the Zoo event with 589 attendees.
- Idaho Department of Education and several stakeholders are working with us to develop our communication plan. When a student comes in with specific communication needs, we use assessments to identify those needs and solidify it better on the IEP.
 - Not only for DHH but also for blind and nonverbal students.
 - Not a new program, other states are doing it.
 - Along with that we are developing a guidelines document that helps Special Educators to know when and how to use the plan.
- Signing Santa events set up in every region. December 16, 2023 10a-2p Idaho State Museum

Campus kids went home yesterday so we are on Thanksgiving Break.

- Mr. Ken Anderson, the welding instructor, was recognized by Idaho Department of CTE for Lifetime Achievement. Well deserved!
- Hired 2 teachers,
 - The new ASL teacher is Mr. Austin Davis who also does morning broadcast of news and events. One student reads in braille, verbally, and another student in ASL.
 - The new Science teacher is Mr. John Lund, from Utah. He has a dual background of an ASL interpreter and science teacher.
- Basketball started with 10 boys and 7 girls. Western States Basketball Classic (WSBC) is in Tucson this year which is a big event for all deaf schools to gather and compete. Coach Jamal comes to us having recently played professional basketball in China. He has built a great rapport with our kids.
- Weightlifting club has expanded. The program started 2 years ago with 6 kids. All 6 received a medal and 5 won their weight classification. A week later we had 23 kids join the weightlifting program. It got so big we had to split it into 5am and 5pm classes. We look forward to the spring competition.
- We are invited to the Academic Bowl regional competition, I think in February in Texas.
- We are joining the E-Sports league through Gallaudet University. It is a video gaming competition which we started last year and has taken off.
- We are rebuilding the playground. Equipment is here but weather delayed the pouring of the rubberized surface. Regardless of ability, kids will be able to participate in everything we have including a ramp all the way up to the slides. Our kids in wheelchairs will be able to wheel onto the playground.
- Not official yet, but we are told we will get the following:
 - 2 new cottages designed to make students more independent. Right now, there is a waitlist of kids that can't come to the school but need to.
 - 1 cottage for blind high school students
 - 1 cottage for deaf high school students

- A new bus barn, which means our buses will be out of the elements and we won't have cold buses picking up kids in the winter.

Kelli Toohill, Idaho Public Utilities Commission/Idaho Relay

Idaho relay received recertification for the next 5 years from FCC for TRS services in the state of Idaho.

Emilie has been busy with outreach events like the Idaho Speech and Hearing Association conference.

Affordable Connectivity Program will be a digital transition for some people who will lose their analog lines in certain places, so we are trying to get the word out there and make people aware things are happening.

The Idaho Relay annual scholarship will open again, for high school seniors with a hearing loss or speech disability, attending college or trade school after graduation. <https://hamiltonrelay.com/high-school-scholarships.html>

CDHH was on a committee with PUC, Idaho Relay, and some other representatives, that went through the request for proposal process for TRS. The last meeting was June of 2022, when the contract was awarded to Hamilton Relay. Kelli and Steven agreed to meet just to revisit how things are going.

Terry Gammel, Idaho Department of Labor

Look forward to connecting with Director Snow about apprenticeship opportunities as discussed during the last meeting.

ADJOURNED

11:24 AM, minutes recorded by Dawn Wells

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, January 18, 2023

Idaho Capitol 1st Floor Rotunda Meet and Greet 9am-12p

Board Meeting, LBJ Building, SDE, Barbara Morgan Conference Room 12p-4p