

CODHHE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

6:30 PM – Delaware School for the Deaf
Newark, Delaware

PRESENT: Richard Pelletier, Chair, DSD; Loretta Sarro, Co-Chair, DODHH; Peg Stewart, Treasurer, DSD; Julia Sullivan, HLADE; Pam D’Occhio, Advocate; Carol Stevens, Interpreter/Deaf Ministry; Loretta Sarro, DODHH; Karen Miller, Deaf Ministry; Josh Weinstein; D.A.D.; Terry Whitham, DSP; Maureen McCaffrey; Educational Interpreter/Cape Henlopen School District; Andi Thomas, Teacher, Capital School District and Kyle Hodges, Staff.

INTERPRETERS

Lois Steele
Theresa Muschiatti

GUESTS

Maureen McCaffrey; Educational Interpreter/Cape Henlopen School District
Andi Thomas, Teacher, Capital School District

CALL TO ORDER

Rich Pelletier called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM. .

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Cochlear Implant Center issue
Elections of Officers – Kyle will check on this for the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the September 16, 2009 minutes as amended as follows:

- Interpreter should be Theresa Muschiatti (instead of Eileen Casey).
- Treasurer’s Report – Change to: Peg provided copies of the Treasurer’s Report. The balance as of August 30, 2009, was \$9,731.66. Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the Treasurer’s Reports for June, July and August as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Peg provided copies of the Treasurer's Reports for September, October, November and December 2009. The balance as of December 31, 2009 was \$9,734.66. Kyle asked if anyone had ideas on how this money could be used saying it had been discussed previously, but no decision had been reached. Peg noted that until they have the correct tax ID number, the IRS required backup withholding in December of \$.23 from the \$.83 interest earned. Peg will contact IRS. Terry offered to speak to his representative at Wilmington Trust (who handles the Volunteer Fire Dept.) about what options are available and get back to Peg. A decision was made to discuss this at the next meeting.

BUSINESS

Interpreter Regulations Forum

Rich stated that a forum had been held regarding possible amendments to the interpreter regulations on December 17, 2009 and asked attendees to give feedback on these proposed regulations. The subcommittee (consisting of Wendy Strauss, Debbie Trapani, Della Thomas, Tina Fredrickson, Rich, Julia, Peg and Kyle) will be reviewing the feedback and making modifications to the regulations based on the feedback. The regulations will be sent out again for comment. Kyle stated that feedback (handout on forum in materials) seemed to show concern about how people would be grandfathered into the new proposed regulations. Kyle commented that some thought four years to get a Bachelor's Degree was not enough time, while some thought the regulations should be more stringent in parts and less stringent in parts. Even though there are not enough interpreters; school districts do not always abide by the current regulations all the time, so how is it going to help making the credentialing of interpreters even harder. Kyle stated that the subcommittee would meet, incorporate modifications, present to this Council and then take to DOE to see what they think (DOE knows this is being worked on by CODHHE). Kyle added that this proposal will be a process; it would need to eventually go through a formal regulatory process, which will give another opportunity for comment, so this is far from finalized. Kyle also said that there was a lot of discussion on the requirements of the EIPA. Peg commented that another issue that came out of the forum was the limited educational opportunities for those interested in becoming interpreters in the State of Delaware. If people are interested in this, they have to go out-of-state to get what they need. Peg also stated that it will be very difficult to recruit those with extensive credentials in a state as small as Delaware because employment is not guaranteed for an entire school year. Peg added that there has to be a system of evaluation and assessment of skills. The main issue is that students are not getting interpreter services that they need and are entitled to receive. Kyle stated that the final outcome may be different than enhancing the regulations. There also needs to be something offered for continuing education. Josh brought up that money would be another big issue.

There was discussion about the current situation with interpreters in the school districts and how issues are handled (e.g. no substitute when regular interpreter is out, speech therapists serve as interpreters, not all teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing sign or sign proficiently). Someone stated that the EIPA would be a great place to start when

assessing the skill level of interpreters. Terry Whitham mentioned that if the school districts get State funds, they would be required to follow State Regulations. Peg commented that it depends what title the school district is hiring under - either professional or paraprofessional. It was stated clearly that assessment needs to take place since this affects the student outside of school and they struggle through life not knowing the proper way to sign. Someone suggested that D.A.D. could work with parents in regards to qualifications of interpreters. Comment was made that it has been difficult to get solid numbers from the State on how many students are requiring interpreter services.

Deaf Bill of Rights

Kyle mentioned that in the handouts, there is a draft Deaf Bill of Rights provided by Julie Johnson, a memo from Brian Hartman with his observations, and a letter from State Council for Persons with Disabilities Chair Daniese McMullin-Powell. Kyle added that originally this was introduced as a resolution last spring/summer, but may end up as a bill. Julie has taken all these comments and another meeting is scheduled to review this further. Kyle would like Rich and Joshua to participate. Kyle said that Joshua has already forwarded comments, but if others would like to do so, they could forward to him. A suggestion was made that not only the terminology needs to be looked at, but the impact of the intent. Another suggestion was made to include the term hearing loss and that incorporates all types.

DETRS Legislation

Kyle stated that this bill (handout in packet) was drafted during the last session of the Legislature, but not introduced. Loretta is on this Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Committee, along with Julie. Kyle said that he was asked to review, make comments, and suggest various groups that needed to be involved. This Council also reviewed it and the bill will now be introduced. Kyle said that the bill is revamping legislation that already exists to be consistent with current practices for this Advisory Group. Terry commented that this clarifies who is a voting member. Kyle added that they may be contacting the Delaware School for the Deaf to serve. Kyle stated that he could serve for this Council, but will have to ask them to change their meeting dates since they always conflict with an already scheduled meeting. Loretta added that there is a new representative from Verizon on this Committee.

Pilot Program in Great Britain

Kyle explained that he received an email from Linda Heller (DSAPPD) about a pilot program in Great Britain where deaf people can be registered for a new service—a text number where they can reach the police in case of incidents or issues they may have. Terry commented that text is considered data and it would not work with 911 calls as is presently designed. Terry added that the current equipment tells you where the person is calling from; with texting, you have no way of knowing where the text is coming from or if it is valid. Terry said that this is currently being looked at how to accept this technology, but all the issues have to be worked out.

REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deaf Ministry Group is offering to complete tax returns for deaf people for free and asked for volunteers. This will include volunteers to interpret and people to do taxes. No date has been set, but they hope to do this in Wilmington and possibly in Middletown.

Julie announced that HLADE had an election and Nick Fina is the new Vice President and Joanne Holbart is the new President. The term is for two years.

Loretta announced that DVR is going to have a Town Hall meeting (yesterday in Dover and today in Wilmington) from 4:00-6:00 pm.

Loretta stated that the BHDC has been working on DPC policy and procedures for deaf and hard of hearing people so patients can have access to the interpreting services they are entitled to receive. They will be meeting with Kevin Huckshorn (DSAMH Division Director). Kyle added that Steve Dettwyler will be presenting this revised policy to Kevin for the BHDC. Kyle added that once a solid draft is done, it will be presented to this Council.

Kyle asked Loretta how many visor cards have been distributed. Loretta stated that 51 have been distributed. Kyle will check with Kim Chandler (the Public Information Officer at DSHS) to do follow-up outreach. Suggestion was made to give out at DMV. Kyle will also check with DMV to see if the form is still on DMV's website. The application can be sent electronically, but the visor card must come from Loretta's Office. Loretta did a flyer that that was sent to agencies where deaf and hard of hearing go to for services and had it placed on their walls.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM. The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 17, 2010 at 6:30 PM at DSD.

Respectively submitted,

Kyle Hodges
CODHHE Administrator
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