

CODHHE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 18, 2009
6:30 PM – Delaware School for the Deaf
Newark, Delaware

MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Pelletier, Chair; Loretta Sarro, DODHH; Peg Stewart, Advocate; Terry Whitham, DSP; Julia Sullivan, HLADE; Pam D’Occhio, Advocate; Kyle Hodges, Staff

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joe Drexler, WCD; Christy Hennessey, IRI

Guests: Karen Miller, Deaf Ministry of the Methodist church
Carol Stevens, Deaf Ministry of the Methodist church

INTERPRETERS

Lois Steele
Eileen Casey

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:44 pm.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kyle noted that under “Members Present”—Julia Sullivan should be listed under “Members Absent”. Under “Guest” change “Pam’s husband” to “Joe D’Occhio”. Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the January 21, 2009 minutes as amended.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Peg reported that as of January 30, 2009, the closing balance was \$9,726.03 (with interest of .082 cents). As of close of business on February 27, 2009, there was a closing balance of \$9,726.78 (with interest of 0.75 cents). Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the Treasurer’s report as submitted.

BUSINESS

Ideas on Spending CODHHE Money

Terry proposed sponsoring a scholarship for a specified amount to a student at DSD. Kyle noted that if you do this, do you want to continue this on a yearly basis? Terry noted that this decision would be made yearly based on CODHHE’s financial status. Peg noted that criteria would have to be established; therefore, this would not be able to happen until 2010. Peg suggested helping Karen Miller’s Deaf Ministry. Peg also noted

that the CODHHE money was received in memory of Sue Raymond and was intended to be used for the deaf community. Much discussion was had on the usage of interpreters for patients in DE hospitals. Peg stated that all the medical providers are familiar with their responsibilities to patients who are deaf; however, because of the staff turnover, they are not always familiar with these policies. It was added that education of deaf consumers is a great idea as well as having deaf consumers being aware of their "patients' rights". It was suggested to possibly have a "deaf persons' rights" laminated card. Kyle will ask Christy if she currently has anything similar to this card. Kyle suggested possibly having a conference on "Deaf Persons' Rights". Kyle added that as part of the conference, legislators could be asked to come and be speakers on how to advocate for issues. Kyle suggested adding the "deaf rights" card on another agenda and inviting a legal person to attend. The Committee agreed. Kyle added that if you have additional ideas for the use of the CODHHE's money, please contact him.

March 27th Deaf and Hard of Hearing Conference

Loretta announced that registration forms are still being sent out for this conference. Loretta will send the conference information to Carol Stevens. Loretta will be sending out a conference reminder one more time via fax or e-mail. Loretta stated that about 48 or 49 persons are registered. Kyle will get the CODHHE brochures to Loretta to be included in the conference hand-outs. Kyle stated that the Visor Card application should be included in the hand-outs.

Interpreter Requirements at Mainstream Schools/Programs

A copy of Title 14 Education: 764 Credentials for an Interpreter Tutor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was provided. Rich stated that the DSD feels that they must get interpreter standards raised for deaf students who are mainstreamed other than the DSD. Kyle added that this is a regulation that may be intended to provide qualified interpreters throughout the state. However, it was questioned if DSD is the only school in DE that follows this regulation. Peg replied that if they are not district employees, they may not be following the same regs. Also, para-professionals are being hired as full-time interpreters without the appropriate qualifications.

Under the Requirements for a Permit it states that a person needs: 3.1 A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in any field from a regionally accredited college or university; and maintains national certification as an Interpreter for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing by RID, or: 3.2 maintains a current and valid license and is certified as a Teacher of the Hearing Impaired. Peg was questioning the validity of 3.2—a "Teacher of the Hearing Impaired" does not qualify you as an Interpreter Tutor for the Deaf.

In conclusion, Kyle will contact Martha Toomey informing her that the concern is regarding 3.2 and revolves around the idea that a certified, licensed teacher of the deaf is not a guarantee that the individual has sign language skills sufficient to interpret. It was reported that this concern has been raised by interpreters who are certified teachers of the deaf. Their experience indicates that very little time and effort is focused on acquisition of signing skills. The Council assumes that the regulation is not just DSD specific, but statewide. Another concern is that school districts are not hiring individuals with the title "Interpreter/Tutor" but as paraprofessionals or teachers aides with sign language skills and the person is trying to do the job of an interpreter without the experience, skill or pay of an interpreter. Therefore, students outside of DSD may be receiving substandard services. Kyle will also ask the Governor's Advisory Council for

Exceptional Citizens, whose role is to advise DOE on Special Education issues, to see if they know anything about these regulations. Terry and Kyle noted that there is no definition in the regulations for an Interpreter Tutor.

Internship with Police Department

Kyle stated in today's materials s you have a copy of an e-mail from Rich. Consistent with what was going in Maryland, we are trying to find out information for an internship program in DE. A Maryland School for the Deaf student completed an internship with the Frederick Police Department facilitated by the Frederick County Department of Emergency Preparedness supported by the Fredrick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services. This project was to develop a communication tool designed to improve communication between first responders and the deaf community. The tool will then be distributed to fire and rescue police in Frederick County. The intern also participated in training scenarios in police and fire to allow personnel the opportunity for interaction with this intern and an interpreter. Rich did find a student at DSD who is interested in this program so the Council needs to determine how to move forward on this issue. Terry noted that when Kyle and he see Jamie Turner, the Director of DEMA, tomorrow they will let Jamie know that Rich has a DSD student who is possibly interested in the internship program. Terry noted that DEMA is required by law to have some exercises for the special needs community so maybe Rich could bring some students in for these exercises to effectively work with the emergency response team. Peg suggested having the exercises at DSD and the Delaware Autistic Program is next door. Also, Christiana High School has a wide population of special education students. We could also incorporate with regular education students.

DMV Driver License Testing Procedures

Kyle stated that he had written a thank you letter (hand-out provided) to DMV for incorporating some of the Council's comments. Kyle asked for clarification on the provision in the Code on "non-English Speaking applicant". The reason the Council asked is that some deaf individuals are non-English speaking and cannot read English well or at all. Kyle stated that he called DMV for clarification: "DMV clarified that if a deaf person cannot read English, the interpreter would be allowed to sign the questions and multiple choice answers for the applicant". The applicant needs to let the DMV person know that they do not understand written English.

Karen Miller stated that she had gone with a client to the New Castle County DMV. Karen asked if she could sign for her client, and she was told "no". Karen will ask her client if she may let Kyle know the person's name to follow-up with DMV. Peg noted that the only way that these issues could be resolved is if the person files a formal complaint. Kyle will contact DMV to see if this policy has been distributed and to also let DMV know about this client being denied the interpreter's help.

DMV & Sign Language Training

Kyle provided a hand-out of communication with DMV who is looking for some front-line staff to get some training on interpreter services. Kyle invited them to tonight's meeting; however, they were not able to attend. Kyle added that he is encouraged since DMV is reaching out to get comments on policies, etc.

Relay/TTY Scams

Kyle provided a hand-out that was in the Dover Post. Kyle stated that businesses seem to be getting scammed on large orders of merchandise when someone makes a TTY call. Only after the order had left the warehouse would the business discover the transaction had been made on a stolen credit card. Also, when a company receives a TTY call, they are treating the call differently because they are being sympathetic to the needs of someone who is deaf or hard of hearing. It was added that more and more people are using relay or text messaging since the TTY is becoming outdated.

REPORTS FROM ORGANIZATIONS ON CODHHE

Delaware Telecommunications Relay Services Advisory Committee Report—Julia reported that there was a meeting last Monday. After the meeting was finished, there was a discussion of there being a possibility to have technology to use IP access. Terry stated that the dilemma from the 911 arena is that they are in the process of enhancing their 911 Centers to IP. The problem is with the current technology you still have to convert the analogue phone to CAMA technology so the equipment can understand it. Terry cannot figure out why they would support this technology with everything going IP based now. Kyle added that anything that is going to cost money at this point, and with small numbers of people that could use analog CapTel, it is very unlikely that it will get funded.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Carol Stevens announced that there is going to be a new camp (church sponsored) for the deaf and hard of hearing at the eastern shore of Maryland and Delaware in Centerville, MD from July 17 to the 24. The charge will be \$199 for kids in the seventh grade through high school. There are some funds available and transportation could be worked out. Carol will post flyers in the DSD office.

Karen announced that there is a scrapbooking event this Friday and everyone is welcome. CPR training classes for ages 13-up will be on April 18 from 10 am to 2 pm at a cost of \$25. The instructor can sign and talk.

Pam announced that the JoJo foundation has a function that is deaf and hearing friendly this Saturday night at the Perkins Student Center at the U of DE from 7 to 10 pm with a charge of \$5. This is a variety show called “The Evening of Entertainment” sponsored by the JoJo foundation. A lot of the students in the show are from the University of DE who were friends of Pam’s son, Jo Jo. The purpose of the JoJo foundation is to support girls and boys who have lost a sibling—the money goes to a comfort zone camp scholarship which is a camp to help kids go through a grieving process in a healthy way. There is a college scholarship being given at the end of the summer. If you need a flyer, e-mail Pam at wemissjojo@yahoo.com. The website is jojodocchiofoundation.org. Also, there will be a 5k walk/run family friendly on April 25 at the Bear/Glasgow Park on 896. Information is on the website. All the events are deaf and hearing friendly. Volunteers are welcome.

Rich announced that there is a new DSD director from Arizona who officially starts on July 1.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07.

Respectively submitted,

Kyle Hodges
CODHHE Administrator

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