

WISCONSIN COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 10, 2009
Madison, Wisconsin

Present: Billy Mauldin, (Chairperson), Tom Meitner, Daniel Houlihan, Stefanie Saltern, and Eloise Schwarz.
ODHH Staff: Linda Huffer and Alice Sykora

Excused: Mary Jane Griffin, Terri Matenaer and Alex Slappey

Interpreters: Amber Mullett and Nicole Mueller

Captioner: Rose Coulthart

Guests: Chris Quesnell, Wisconsin DOT and Peter Rafferty, WI TOPS Lab

Proceedings:

- Meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chair, Billy Mauldin
- Snow day delayed arrival of Captioner and board member

Business Meeting

September 30th, 2009 Minutes:

- Meeting Minutes were electronically sent to all Council members and approved online.

Morning Presentation: Statewide Travel 511 System - Update

Guests: Peter Rafferty, Wisconsin Traffic Operators & Safety Laboratory (TOPS) and
Chris Quesnell, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Request for Feedback; Update of System

- Initial rollout of the statewide 511 system was completed in December 2008 with some difficulties that have since been improved. This real-time travel information provides Interstate highways and major state highways updates only. This can be accessed through the telephone system, through the 711 relay system and on the website. <http://www.511wi.gov/Web/>
- Council feedback noted when accessing the 511 system, some have encountered difficulties when interstate highways become metro and are not available for access once in the city limits.
- Further information on how and what travel information is posted to the website including the IVR state-wide Emergency Alerts, interactive maps and other user-friendly features. WI 511 does not cover local roads. The traffic center's staff feed the message board and alerts.

Personalization of the website is possible with text-based messages sent to the mobile/smart phones with completed registration.

- Around forty (40) states have variations of the 511 system. Illinois and Michigan do not yet have 511. <http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/nov09/nov5/1105wisdotwinter.pdf>

Council Updates:

Interpreter Licensure Bill

- The bill will not be up for a hearing until sometime in January 2010. Current legislators in committee may not support the bill or allow it to be heard. Both Houses are controlled by the Democrats. The Republicans are in the minority, support the bill, but have not been successful in having the bill move out of committee.
- Contacting the Committee Chairperson as well as the committee members is needed in order to show that this is important to the Deaf Community. Joel Mankowski continues to advocate and meet with the Committee.
- Discussions on approaches that the Council could take in offering support for the bill noted that the WI Association of the Deaf (WAD) have sponsored letter writing parties as well as blogging to the legislators of the Committee.
- Goal: write letter of support to Chairperson and CC: to remaining members of the Committee requesting licensure bill be allowed to move to a hearing. Additionally, schedule meetings with Committee Chair for one-on-one conversations in support of the passage of the bill. Mauldin will write first draft of DHH Council's support letter and request feedback from Council members before sending in January to the Committee.
- Huffer will email names of Senate Committee members to Council for individual letters of support, to be sent out in January 2010.

Council 2009-2010 Schedule

- Council meetings have been finalized and include March 4, 2010 and May 13, 2010 in Room 751.
- With the possibility of inclement weather during the winter months, suggestion of choosing alternative dates in December and March were discussed and approved. Houlihan will send out link for Council members to pick the alternative dates <http://doodle.com/rb2ip97yfcx44sms> Sykora will notify Council members which date in March 2010 will serve as an alternative date.

Council Membership

- Three open positions remain for the Council as noted by Huffer. No candidates have been received to date by the ODHH. If applications have been submitted to the Governor, Huffer and Sykora have not been notified.
- Meitner, representing the Deaf-Blind has decided that he will not be reapplying for this position.
- Two Member-at-Large positions are still open as are one Hard of Hearing position. Huffer appealed to the Council to provide possible candidates for the open positions. Candidates can contact Huffer at Linda.Huffer@dhs.wisconsin.gov

New Business

Initiatives for 2010:

Identification & Discussion

- Mauldin provided a re-cap of last meeting round-table discussions of possible initiatives for 2010 including various approaches to address communication barriers for the deaf and hard of hearing. Attempts by Council members to receive feedback i.e. Broadcasters Associations brought no responses.
- Brain-storming on possible alternatives that focused on issues closer to our homes and communities included expansion of service funding or TEPP program for family events and activities – Huffer noted funds are being cut from most programs.

- Employment opportunities for out-of-work disabled individuals in Wisconsin challenged Council in finding ways to increase the likelihood of employing deaf and hard of hearing people in the current economic downturn. Sykora encouraged members to contact their legislators and provide a glimpse into their difficulties in their day-to-day needs.
- With the recent success in passing the Hearing Aid Insurance bill for children, Huffer noted Council could continue to work closely with state legislators on issues specific to the deaf and hard of hearing.

Initiatives for Council

- With a limited timeline when legislators are in session, contacting the Senate Committee members re: the **Interpreter Licensure Bill SB 389** with a letter of support sent out in January 2010 may help to move the bill out of committee. A list of the committee members will be sent out to all Council members.
- The frozen positions of the **Deaf Benefit Specialist position and a Regional Coordinator in WI** may also be an opportunity to write a letter of consideration to the State Secretary of the Department in support of refilling them to again return services to the deaf and hard of hearing in WI. Mauldin will also draft letter to Secretary with invitation to come as guest speaker to the next Council meeting.
- Future opportunities for Council members to advocate and tell others about ODHH's Job Preparation Workshops coming up in 2010 are strongly encouraged. Dates and locations will be announced in the new year, Huffer noted. Mauldin will send **a letter of Invitation to the Secretary of the DVR** as guest speaker to address vocation rehabilitation and what the department provides specific to the deaf and hard of hearing people.

ODHH Update:

Current Projects

- The MIG grant finished out the year with two workshops in Milwaukee and Delevan for the deaf and helping them find a job. A booklet "*How to get a job,*" is available on the ODHH website. Two additional Employment Fairs will be scheduled in 2010 – no dates and places have been set.
- Two staff positions are still frozen in Wausau/Stevens Point and Milwaukee/Waukesha. The Deaf Benefit Specialist position will be blended into the regular coordinator's position. Office staff continue to cover for services around the state. Furloughs will continue due to budgetary cuts as noted by Huffer.
- The Mentoring program for interpreters continues to evolve and will continue in 2010 despite a minimal amount of funding available in the budget.
- Deaf Unity program is progressing with plans in 2010 supported by a small grant, to provide deaf interpreters for first responders. The curriculum for training in 2010-2011 is being finalized. Collaborating with outside sources will help to make this program successful.

Announcements: None

Public Comments: None

- Meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.
- Minutes submitted by Secretary, Schwarz