

WISCONSIN COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 13, 2010
Madison, Wisconsin

Present: Billy Mauldin, (Chairperson), Daniel Houlihan, Mary Jane Griffin, Tami Klink, Stefanie Saltern, Alex Slappey, and Eloise Schwarz.

ODHH Staff: Linda Huffer and Alice Sykora

Not Excused: Terri Matenaer

Interpreters: Debra Gorra-Barash and Sue Gudenkauf

Captioner: Margo Lucas

Proceedings:

- *Meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Chair, Billy Mauldin*

Business Meeting

March 4th, 2010 Minutes:

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

Website Updates:

- The Council's website is due for updates to reflect current membership and goals accomplished within the last year
- Schwarz provided current listing for each member and provided input on what was requested to update the webpage
- Each member to update their profile and current email address; give to Huffer by end of the meeting
- Past Council letters and representative Council statements on Legislation passed will be included on the webpage

Governor's Signature – SB- 389

- Huffer announced to Council that the signing of the Interpreter's Licensure's Bill would be today –State Capitol
- Governor requested number of Council members who would be attending the signing session
- A representation of the Council and ODHH would be present with meeting completion at 2PM today

Future Council Meeting Dates:

- Discussion on new term/year dates for 2010-2011 noted that gaining access to the looped conference rooms would be difficult, if alternative dates would be requested, as noted by Sykora
- Dates reserved for next term include: ***September 9 and December 9 in 2010. May 12, 2011***
- March presents difficult with scheduling meeting since the Annual Educator's Conference also meets during same time
- Two dates were set for March 10 and March 17 as alternative. When definitive Conference dates are set – a specific date for the Council meeting will be determined. Room locations will be provided prior to the next meeting.

Celebration Planned:

- Houlihan noted that the WAD is planning a celebration for the passage and signing of the Interpreter's Licensure Bill
- The celebration has been scheduled at the Lake Long Lodge in Delevan with Guest: Bobbie Skoggins, NAD President

Brief Updates:

ODHH Updates

- Huffer noted office contracted for a Benefit Specialist in Waukesha office – Jennifer Koehn
- Koehn has completed her training, has a few assigned cases and is doing well
- One of the state coordinators – Marge Liberski has taken a medical leave; unknown date of return

- The ODHH is currently with only two State Coordinators for the entire state – which can not be done successfully.
- A letter of justification and request to the Department Director will be made in requesting reinstatement of two frozen positions of the office.
- Huffer also noted – Additional MIG funds may be coming to continue the present Employment Training/Workshops for deaf/HOH that the ODHH have been working on for the past four (4) years. Difficulty will come if there is not enough staff in the office to run the program.
- Houlihan questioned if ODHH is working with the DVR on employment issues; Huffer noted both department have their own funding source and work plans in serving the unemployed in gaining employment status.
- Huffer identified the Mentor/Mentee program for Interpreters has successfully concluded the first pilot year. This year is set to go with 10 committed Mentors. Request for mentees – graduate students who are preparing for taking the national testing are needed to assure program can continue.

Interpreter Licensure Bill

- Bill will be signed today by Governor Doyle. Huffer noted once signed, it will be a while before it becomes law. The bill will be going to the Department of Regulations and Licensing for assembly of administrative rules and statewide implementation requirements.
- Mauldin inquired on actual date of implementation; Huffer noted most bills take from six (6) months to a year for the practice to be started – after the Date of Public, not from the date of signature.
- Discussion on current interpreters in the state who are not currently certified and have a particular skill set (WITA=benchmark of proficiency) will have the opportunity to become nationally certified within a six (6) year period. Provisional licenses with restrictive rules on how interpreting are identified in the new bill.

Newborn Hearing Bill

- Saltern introduced summary of bill and its importance for all newborns state-wide. Signed into law on May 4, this law now requires all newborns in all settings outside of hospitals and birthing centers to be screened for hearing.
- This would include home births, use of midwives and private birthing centers that have not been included in previous bills for hearing testing. Early intervention from birth on will help to impact the child's receipt of treatment and services for hearing care.

Open Discussion:

Preparedness

- Schwarz noted previous opportunities Council has participated in for the State of WI - Special Needs Population and disaster preparedness. Schwarz maintains communications with various first responders located throughout the state including: Keith Land and Michael Steinhauer.
- A dialogue of previous interactive/community emergency preparedness activities given by experts in the past was noted.
- Klink provided an alternative view that Council members could consider when deciding next step of involvement in disaster preparedness.
- Vulnerable populations have not been included in any of the recent national disaster preparedness documents as noted by Klink <http://www.livinglakecountry.com/blogs/communityblogs/90881524.html> With populations that need help – most of the public have no clue what life is like for this group as noted by Klink.
- If all communication is lost in our present life as we know it, what means do we access to communicate with others? All of our area Fire, Police and Sheriff departments are asking for information on how best to help and provide. Initially, there has been excitement and funding but with time, training stopped, funds dried up and no actions were followed to assure everyone was on the same page.
- Klink provided an option for Council members to approach their Fire/Police/Sheriff Depts in each of their respective counties where they live. The proposal would include sending out a letter/template asking three basic questions. With responses received, Council members could work with ODHH / resources, family and neighbors. FEMA and Homeland Security are looking out for the global affects.

- Visually thinking: we should be thinking 1) what do I need, 2) what do I have, and 3) what is in my plan; along with 4) how do I educate myself and 5) how do I educate others? [*See attached Preparedness Letter*]
- Klink would also notify all state preparedness organizations and ask for related information.
- Huffer noted the Registry for people with disabilities was a successful activity but Klink noted since HIPAA law was passed, restrictions on access to medical conditions/disabilities no longer allow this activity.
- Open conversations on possible scenarios and distinct possibilities pointed to back-to-basic communications. American culture and adaptability have found ways to work around severe limitations as noted by Slaphey. ODHH does offer training for emergency services as noted by Sykora including: emergency management, public health and state preparedness. Shelter Services is challenging and continues to learn about how best to serve all people in the community. Or soliciting funding to create a position for training may be an option.
- Houlihan voiced concern with limited staffing in ODHH and the affect on services provided for the D/HOH and Deaf/Blind communities across Wisconsin. If current services are not being addressed, then the question was posed: what would happen in a disaster?

Motion by Mauldin: Move the discussion of ODHH staffing and preparedness position to New Business on agenda; all Council members agreed.

Motion by Mauldin: Only one member of the Council has not attended the last four meetings – Terri Matenaer. He will email her for her decision to stay or resign from the Council; all Council members agreed.

Sectional Discussions

- Mauldin summarized morning discussions including:
- Test Letter for Community Status on Emergency Preparedness will be written by Klink and sent out to Council for approval
- Once approved, Council Letterhead will be added and sent out to members for distribution in their communities
- Slaphey will request model plan for Delevan's Emergency Preparedness

Evaluation

- Schwarz noted – once letters have been received from all counties represented by the Council members, an evaluation can be made regarding goals for the Council's next term beginning in September 2010
- Mauldin questioned Council further on direction to pursue including: inviting guests to speak i.e. DVR with limited actions to follow; working on preparedness for disasters (letter of request for community plans from Policy, Fire and Sheriffs); and increasing services state-wide through re-instating or unfreezing state coordinators positions in ODHH.
- Goals should focus on identifying topics/subjects that can make a difference as well as be accomplished in a year's term, if possible.
- Huffer noted: two state ODHH positions remain frozen and are located in the Stevens Point/Wausau area and the Milwaukee/Racine/Kenosha regions.
- Klink proposed that use of facts and statistics in any written document sent out by the Council should include percentage of people who are not being served in the related communities. Additionally, making it personal – having little to no access to services for 1:3 people in WI, based on WI Blue Book data.
- Since legislators are not in session until 2011, letter writing would be directed to the Secretary of the Department – Health Services. A letter of justification from the ODHH would help outline the pressing need to reopen at least one of the two frozen positions.
- Houlihan questions amount of difficulty with hiring for these positions and keeping staff in them. Huffer stated positions can not be reclassified and that applicants have in-experienced for the positions. Job expectations and requirements remain the same and the qualifications and state rules must be followed.
- Past two letters of justifications have been denied. Two lines of approval must be received including through the Secretary and the Department of Administration (DOA). The state is still hiring but for Corrections and Family Care programs only.

Motion: Houlihan recommended Council write letter to the Secretary of Department in support of unfreezing the two closed positions; Mauldin seconded with discussion on returning department back to full staff; Council members agreed.

Motion: Mauldin will write letter to the Secretary discussing Council's concerns with decreased services from a lean ODHH; Houlihan seconded; all agreed.

New Business:

- Houlihan stated with the passage of the Interpreters Licensure Bill, the Wisconsin Association Deaf (WAD) is working on developing a Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in WI. Subcommittees are forming and working to address issues of the deaf. Joel Mankowski is chairing one of the subcommittees investigating this possibility.
- Houlihan sits on the Subcommittee for developing a Bill of Rights. Slappey voiced concern about the concept of setting up a Commission under the State Government. Discussion noted that this Commission would be a redesigned Council for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Deaf-Blind.
- Sykora provided insights and information on other states that use Commission for serving their Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations. Further information will be available at the next Council meeting.
- Schwarz questioned Huffer on current State of WI collaborations with other state Councils for D/HOH. Huffer noted first meeting is set for July 6th in Philadelphia – WI ODHH will not be in attendance but have been providing feedback for the other states. More information will be available at the next Council meeting.

Announcements:

- Walk 4Hearing event is Sunday May 16, 2010 at the Milwaukee Lakefront – invitations offered
- HLAA National Convention in Milwaukee coming June 17-20th at Midwest Center; new this year – Free access to the Exhibit Halls during the convention – see www.hearingloss.org
- HLAA WI will be holding a Loop Conference in Appleton, WI on April 11, 2011
- WAD – Deaf Awareness Day is September 25th at MATC South Campus with guest speakers from the Documentary Movie: “Do You See What I am Saying?”
- Miss Deaf USA winner – Michelle Koplitz is found on Eau Claire, Wisconsin
- NAD Convention will be held July 6-10 in Philadelphia, PA

Public Comments: None

- Meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.
- Minutes submitted by Secretary, Schwarz

Next Meeting: September 13, 2010 @ 10:00

Room: TBT

Addendum Note:

SB-389 Sign Language/Interpreter's Licensure Bill was signed in the Governor's Office at 4:40 pm with attendance of representative organizations including: Gov Council Deaf and Hard of Hearing; WAD; and State Interpreters organization.