

WISCONSIN COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 9, 2010

Best Western – East Towne, Madison, Wisconsin

Present: Billy Mauldin, (Chairperson), Daniel Houlihan, Tami Klink, and Eloise Schwarz.

ODHH Staff: Linda Huffer and Alice Sykora

Excused: Terri Matenaer; Mary Jane Griffin; Stefani Saltern; Alex Slappey

Interpreters: Jamie Garrison, Sue Gudenkauf

Captioner: Rose Coulthart

Guest: Susan Burleigh, All Hazard Planner – State of WI Department of Military Affairs

Proceedings:

• *Meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m. by Chair, Billy Mauldin*

Business Meeting

May 13th, 2010 Minutes:

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

Council Updates:

Election – Council

- Saltern and Matenaer informed the Council just prior to the meeting of their resignations but have not submitted their letters of their intention to resign; no quorum possible; elections will be delayed until Council positions filled,
- Mauldin remains President; Schwarz as Secretary and Houlihan as Vice President

Open Council Positions

- *WI Council is made up of nine (9) member (per bylaws) appointed by the Governor of Wisconsin to serve staggered 4 year terms. The Council must be comprised of three deaf, three hard of hearing, one deaf blind and two member at large [Article III Section 3]*
- Current membership, after the resignations of Saltern and Matenaer, consists of two deaf members and three hard of hearing members.
- Applicants have been received in the past but have either declined and taken other positions, or were not chosen. Discussion on finding new replacements before the end of the year noted that Governor Doyle may fill the open positions while he is still in office.
- Further discussion noted application process requires a two-step process – one on the Governor’s website and one through the Department of Health Services vis a vis Sykora.
- Recruiting qualified candidates and assuring they have completed their applications is the first step. Notifying the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) that an applicant has completed

this process also helps with the recommendation. Mauldin and Houlihan will campaign for the deaf positions, and Klink & Schwarz will search for candidates for the remaining open positions. All Council members in agreement that active recruitment will be for candidates who will be committed to the council, will give of their time, and will show up for the meetings.

- Sykora offered to send out an application letter as a frame of reference for ease of application.

Website Updated

- Schwarz stated that the WI Council website has been recently updated but will need to reflect the recent resignations.
- Huffer also noted that the website can post items that Council members would like to have listed related to issues of the deaf and/or hard of hearing, with due time noted.
- Huffer referenced the application process, i.e. electronic link to the Governor's application site will be posted on ODHH website with a receipt deadline of Friday, October 15, 2010. A message will be put out on ODHH Net.
- Klink will put write a column on her blog with the link to the Council website to aid any potential candidates.

ODHH Updates:

Deaf Unity

- Sykora informed the Council that Deaf Unity recently attained its 501 (c) 3 from the IRS.
- A federal grant to support a director position was submitted but was not accepted. Funding from other sources will be sought since operations cannot be run without a director.
- The second annual fundraiser is October 2nd at The Madison Club near the Hilton Hotel, downtown Madison. A nationally known speaker Tony Porter, co-founder of Call to Men, will be the main speaker. A press release has been issued.
- Sykora also noted that Deaf Unity will soon be launching their own website where more information will be made available.

Deaf Awareness

- The Department's Affirmative Action Advisory Committee will be hosting a Deaf Awareness event for their own employees. Two movies will be shown: *Audism Unveiled* and *Through Deaf Eyes*.
- The Audism movie has no sound, only captioning. For those who hear, this will be a new experience. Open discussions will follow re: discrimination, judgment and oppression of the deaf population as noted by Sykora and Houlihan. Klink identify hard of hearing population have similar experiences also.

Open positions- ODHH

- Huffer confirmed that ODHH is contracted with the Center of Communication Hearing & Deafness (CCHD) and is working with Deaf Benefit Specialist - Jennifer Koehn. She currently has 50 cases. She is expanding her role as a part-time regional coordinator – Deaf Benefit Specialist – State of WI. She will be filling the void in the area of southeast WI.
- Recently one in-house interpreter left and moved to Hawaii. A new interpreter has been hired – Mistie Paswaters.
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Secretary Timberlake's Response

- The ODHH office will be able to hire one of the open positions in the northern part of the state – either in the Wausau – Stevens Point office or the Green Bay Office. The internal application process is in the works.
- The letter sent to Secretary Timberlake was helpful in identifying the representative numbers of deaf and hard of hearing communities not being served.
- The response letter from Sec. Timberlake indicated she supported our Council but the budget and economic times were difficult in asking for additional staff.
- Huffer requested Council to forward possible candidates that would qualify for this position.

Other Department Updates

- MIG Grant – Finishing up the year 2010 with one more workshop-training oriented on employment needs for deaf and hard of hearing people. Focus is on: staying employed; asking for a raise; promotions, etc.
- Event is a one-day training in the WI Dells around October 23 – a Saturday. Captioning offered, free event with food. Final place is still being confirmed.
- Fliers will be sent out soon for posting on HLAA and WADnet websites.
- Preparation for the 2011 MIG grant is in the works with the current staff. In the communities, ODHH staff has been educating hiring staff on issues concerning finding jobs for deaf and hard of hearing, and other relevant topics.
- 2011 will be the last year for any MIG grant money.

Mental Health Services

- Sykora and Huffer are participating on an inter-agency committee led by the Department of Public Instruction – Mental Health Services for deaf and hard of hearing children in K-12 settings.
- Little funding is available for mental health services for deaf and hard of hearing children.
- Huffer was able to obtain seed money for a work plan in collaboration with the DPI. A summit meeting with other State providers and WI communities (deaf / hard of hearing) will come together to collaborate on a goal and plan. Steering committees will further the steps on process and actions. Anticipated fast track timeline: Summit meeting #1 April-May 2011 and Summit Meeting – early 2012.
- Houlihan and Mauldin will provide Huffer with contact information on previous Mental Health Directors who have worked and facilitated projects related to this topic in the past to assess if this fits with new objectives.

S. 3304 Bill

- Schwarz provided short explanation regarding actions taken regarding request received via electronic mail May 2010 from Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT) on then legislation pending in Washington D.C.
- S. 3304 – Equal Access to 21st Century Communications Act basically works by enhancing the Americans Disabilities Act - increasing the access to advanced communications to products and services; access to closed captions on TV programs everywhere; having key elements on TV programs; and having access to visual displays on TVs.

- This is a federal regulation applicable to services across all state boundaries. The exceptions to the bill is if a company or organization can prove that it has a significant expenses or has difficulty providing such services for the consumer.
- Various real-time instances were provided as illustrations and possible opportunities for future application for the Council to intervene on behalf of the deaf and hard of hearing people in the communities. Limited knowledge on how to apply captioning on television may interfere in providing this service. Few experts are available in the field. For more information: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s111-3304>

Interpreter Licensure Bill – SB 389

- Huffer updated Council members that the Department has been fielding calls from citizens and interpreters regarding this bill since passage this spring. This is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Regulation and Licensing, who is charged for setting up an advisory council and writing the administrative rules. ODHH has been re-directing calls and emails to the Department of Regulation and Licensing.

Lunchtime Dialogue:

Guest: Susan Burleigh – Wisconsin Emergency Management Division of the
Department of Military Affairs

Emergency Preparedness

Introduction completed

- Preparedness Letter from Klink was received; collaborated with Klink/ODHH; presented with opportunity to present state’s plan on issues, challenges, ideas, solutions, and questions regarding emergency preparedness for people with “***functional needs***” – “an orphan child to be dealt with aggressively as a national initiative in 2010” Burleigh.
- Burleigh provided handouts and business cards for all regarding website and resources that reflect Wisconsin’s plan for preparedness. Note: phone numbers are not correct – recently moved into new position.
- Burleigh referenced letter sent out to Council and state/communities and Council Minutes from May 2010 to address concerns voiced. Previous model work and outcomes with key contacts in the state and where they are today, were provided. Agreement was voiced that past national disaster preparedness had limited resources for vulnerable populations. But this is changing.
- CEPIN training, funding, and efforts stopped for preparedness -stopped federally, Burleigh noted but at the local level, it should still be found. Burleigh contends that contacting your local fire, sheriff, police departments, as outlined in Klink’s letter is the way to go. Educating yourself first and then educating others around you. That is the primary focus. This new program is called ***Ready Wisconsin***. <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/>
- Additionally, there is a Special Needs Registry. If used correctly, the Attorney General’s opinion in WI is that HIPPA laws do not get in the way of creating registries, if people voluntarily apply to the registry. These are maintained as confidential databases.
- Obstacles to using these registries exists including reluctance to self reveal, and what happens to this information when it is given to whomever takes it. A network of “trusted partners” would be an alternative system within the community who then would maintain the registry instead of the governmental agency. A model of this partnership can be found in Dane County.
- Questions were posed by Huffer, regarding being unaware of such a program and how was ODHH not included in the development while Klink, experienced with emergency services in

the state, was not aware of the *Ready WI* program, were answered by Burleigh. Emergency Management had grant money for launching a short surge of public service announcements in Dane County only. The *Ready WI* program materials would provide what the people across the state would and will use. **The way emergency management works is - everything is happening at the local level.**

- Special Needs Registries would not be linked from *Ready Wisconsin* website.
- Wisconsin Emergency Management Website links to all of the County Emergency Management Directors – each director will decide if they will have their own registry and if they will include the functional need population registry.
- Question posed: Is this safe? The public is either unaware, not interested, or is reluctant to give personal health information (PHI) to an unknown person.
- It is not mandatory. Giving information is still a personal choice Burleigh stated. Sykora noted – the deaf community’s response in the Dane County is very low.
- Trust is the key. If there is Deaf/Hard of hearing/Blind Representatives trained in Emergency Management, then it is more likely to make an impact on this functional needs population than those who do not share in the same type of needs. Council recommends having this opportunity in the near future. Even having community-based Functional Needs Representatives will make an impact if working from the Ready WI website.
- Some communities have working registries that the police/fire departments have in place as noted by Schwarz and Mauldin, while other communities are not aware but should be starting.
- In the community, there is no single point of contact. Every person is their own liaison. Each community is made up of Task Forces that comprise the different representatives making up their community-at-large populations. Remember: **The State Emergency Management does not work at this level.**
- Klink offered to post information for readers and follow through with Burleigh on this process. Watch for further information.

How does the plan work?

- Emergency Managers (coordinators in each county) respond and coordinate state preparedness if an event has occurred. These people are part-time county employees – not paid to do this.
- Coordination includes: 1) communication; 2) locate and coordinate resources; 3) bring in outside help if needed; 4) create emergency management program/plan consistent to State Plan Ch. 323
- Federal funds are tied to the emergency management plan at the local level and event location. All emergencies remain at local level forever even if federal government is involved because the practice of “emergency management is handled at the lowest possible jurisdiction.” Burleigh.
- Local level’s responsibilities in being prepared for any event, as well as using outside resources, helps to make the event successful, but only if they have done their homework. Are their shelters ADA compliant, or do they have a database of resources for trigger points for who to call or contact? Different segments do different work – fire/police/health/Red Cross/ - **Emergency Management has no authority over any of these segments.**
- The Emergency Plan has different segments called Essential Support Function of the Annex System. These segments include: Communications and Warnings, Evacuation and Transportation, Mass Care and Shelter, Needs of People with Functional Difficulties (as a thread through all of these segments).
- Challenge is to know how to integrate the functional needs person through and in all of the segments with all of the “stuff that they need in their plan.” Burleigh.

- FEMA released Version CPG10S to the Emergency Management Team outlining new comprehensive plan guidance on how to create the plan following the ADA premises recently. [Identifying least restrictive environment and specific functions that are in effect at time of emergency].
- The Creation of **Ready WI** was to begin to generate a culture of awareness and to move WI forward. <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/>
- Past disasters in the U.S. research show that individuals and families were not prepared to live in their homes for over 72 hours without power. At the federal level, a program for preparedness was created and is rolling out across the country to address this issue. In WI, a full-time state project targets just individual and family preparedness addressing 5 points, as noted in Klink's letter sent out after last month's Council meeting. Having a Kit, a Plan, I am Informed, I can handle myself in 72 hours in an emergency, because it may take that long before a responder will get to me is the basis of this project.
- The website has easy to use turnkey materials that can be used in outreach to the communities and in Trusted partnership groups (trust and single point of contact). Take the information and use it for yourself and family; pass it onto your neighborhood communities; your church congregations; your watch blocks and special needs groups. Answering the questions of how do I communicate my needs if I am deaf/hard of hearing and don't know there is an emergency? Do my neighbors know that? My church friends? My alderman? The Policeman down the street?
- Building a Trusting Partner Relationship/ Network may be the answer to helping bridge our communities and state emergency management programs. New federal guidance and definitions are guiding the thinking process. Repositories of best practices are being collected to assure the right processes are being put into place.
- Assistance is requested to make sure that what is written fits what is needed. Social networks like Face book™ have the **Ready WI** information on it. An American Sign Language (ASL) video is also included on this page. A weather radio shaker for your bed, in case of a tornado, or other like devices are starters. Offering a clearing house of information or a one-stop shop that sends a person to a defined resource is the goal. TWITTER, Y-Tube, and other social networks are also being added to allow for distribution to the public.
- Schwarz noted the older generation is also quite concerned about being prepared but do not have the luxury of social networking or computer use. They rely on others to care for them in their own communities of living.
- Burleigh noted the Emergency Management Team has a new Preparedness Coordinator who does presentations in the communities.

What's Next?

- Cities/towns often do not have their own websites. Having an emergency plan with a website also is not a commonly found item in WI. But for those who do, Burleigh has sent out to the WI Council of Counties, Towns, Municipalities, and Boards **Ready WI** information. If they have it and have posted it on their websites, she does not know. Council members advised to check their own city/town's websites for this information.
- If a town/city does have a plan in place but the information does not include functional needs that are appropriate or all inclusive as noted by Mauldin, suggestions were requested of Burleigh on best approach to take to assure the city board is receptive to information given. Communication is lost when a power grid is gone. Creative and practical ways to communicate i.e. Twitter, or knocking on doors or any way to contact or spread the message were discussed.

- For the deaf and hard of hearing community– if communication is non-existent then, Klink posed the question of how will we communicate in this type of situation? Burleigh indicated they would also not be able to communicate and would be relying on developing a way to get the word out as well.
- Huffer and Sykora posed additional questions to Burleigh on what Council members can offer to help the local communities address the deaf-hard of hearing- blind people needs, including a proposed communication plan.
- Burleigh indicated addressing these issues – Best Practices, Standard, the right language, technology, and all that is needed to be done or be available for deaf/hard of hearing/blind in communities for the work plan and requirements of the receiving community
- [SWOT = Strength-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats] – allows for the community to analyze what strengths, weaknesses, etc they have and where they can go to address these limitations and still serve all their community members.
- Klink inquired if representatives living the functional life within these communities could also collaborate with the Task Forces or the decision-makers as well – no cost factor involved. Burleigh noted that the communication plans would be dispersed among the regional coordinators and it would be up to them to communicate this information. Each Council member should also continue to follow through at their respective community level leaders for involvement, and encourage them to follow the Emergency Management’s Guidelines. **We need to create a sense of urgency that is not there right now.**

Council 2010 Initiatives

Letter Writing Outcomes

Action Plan -

- Klink noted requests were sent to 52 states with one response in Spanish (Guam); there were nine (9) that had classified/declassified/completed or nearly completed plans in place. A level of trust is required when working with these documents. Each plan can be few too many pages long. They are indexed for easy referencing, have glossaries and additional information specific to the state or province. All Council members will receive the documents by electronic mail.
- States received include: District of Columbia, FEMA, Ohio, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Texas, and Oklahoma. Wisconsin **does not** have a final general state plan for emergency preparedness yet. The rough draft does not include or address any special needs services.
- Schwarz and Houlihan received letters indicating their cities are working on a plan.
- Mauldin has contacted and is working with his township’s City Council on their current emergency plan to update to a more appropriate functional need in Dane County.
- Huffer noted – opportunity now is to read, review these plans; write, and address the needs of the deaf- hard of hearing – blind, so that these Standards and requests will be included in the Requirements to the jurisdictions for 2012.
- **NOTE:** All Council members – bring back your additions, questions, scenarios, resources, contacts, forms and other local-level items for discussion and possible inclusion for the document that will be sent to the state. Pull out your Guidelines, Standards, Best Practices, Agencies, organizations that are available in the communities where you live – bring in this information to be included in our discussions.

Delevan’s Emergency Plan

- Mauldin noted Slappey not in attendance – Delavan’s emergency plan not available for discussion. Klink noted Chief Neal in Delavan stated the city itself does not have a plan but the WI School for the Deaf does have a Plan.
- Mauldin will contact Slappey for a copy of the School’s plan for discussion in December.

New Business: No Business noted

Announcements:

- Schwarz noted the Hearing Loss Association of America- WI will be holding their 2010 Annual Meeting on October 9th at the Portage County Library in Steven’s Point from 10 am to 3 pm. New officers will be announced – members are welcome. More info: eloise6376@wi.rr.com

Public Comments: No comments

- Meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.
- Minutes submitted by Secretary, Schwarz

Next Meeting: December 9, 2010 @ 10:00 am