

Council on the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

MINUTES DECEMBER 9, 2013 10:00AM – 4:00PM 1 WEST WILSON, MADISON

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| MEETING CALLED BY | Justin Vollmar |
| PRESENT | Gary Ebben, Nicole Everson, Tracy Haas, Deborah Herczog, Denise Johnson, Steve Smart, Justin Vollmar |
| ODHH STAFF PRESENT | Melani Kaplan, Amber Mullett |
| ABSENT | Brienne Hale, Billy Mauldin, Alex Slappey |
| INTERPRETERS | Mary Lynn Rose and Mary Fruits |
| CAPTIONIST | Rose Coulthart |

Meeting called to order at 10:11 a.m. by Justin Vollmar, Chair.

Agenda topics

COUNCIL MEMBERS INTRODUCTION & APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

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| DISCUSSION | | |
| Introductions: The Council members and meeting attendees introduced themselves. | | |
| Unanimous approval of Meeting Minutes (with one correction of word "cop" changed to "copies" on page 7). | | |
| ACTION ITEMS | PERSON RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |
| None | | |

VISOR CARD TASKFORCE DISCUSSION

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| DISCUSSION | |
| <p>Presentation by Special Guest, Jason Haas: Jason Haas is a graphic designer, marketing director and experienced with the process of printing projects. He is the designer for the Visor Card as conceived by the Council members. Options for dissemination of the card were discussed: printing, self-printing from a website, social media, etc. Some complications may arise from individuals printing their own copies on their home printers due to margin differences.</p> <p>Council Discussion: Options for marketing and possible partners for dissemination were discussed: community associations, police, DMVs, ILCs, audiologists, colleges, etc. Training should be made available for both the people who will use the card in their cars and law enforcement.</p> <p>The Council will create a mockup of the webpage for the Council website</p> | |

explaining the Visor Card and how to use it, with an ASL V-log that is also captioned and a printable version of the card. The deadline is January, 31st. The Visor Card Task Force members include Justin Vollmar, Tracy Haas, Steve Smart, Denise Johnson, and Deborah Herczog.

Deborah Herczog made a motion that the visor card be changed to Communication Card. Seconded by Denise Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Nicole Everson made a motion that the Communication Card Task Force will work on the Council’s plan of action. Motion seconded by Tracy Haas and passed unanimously.

| ACTION ITEMS | PERSON RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |
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| Communication Card: webpage mockup, ASL V-log, printable version of the card. | Communication Card Taskforce | 1/31/14 |

INTERIM DIRECTOR’S REPORT

DISCUSSION | Amber Mullett

Interim Director – Amber Mullett has been serving as the Interim Director for ODHH following Linda Huffer’s retirement on October 18th.

New Hire for Director of ODHH – The new Director of ODHH will be Dan Millikin who will start on January 13, 2014. His prior work history includes serving as the Director for the Student Accessibility Center at NTID in New York, a teacher of Math at the New Mexico School for the Deaf, and working at a federal level. Dan has a law degree from UW so he is familiar with Wisconsin. A short video of Dan introducing himself to the Council members was shown. Council members expressed concern over not receiving the initial announcement of Dan Millikin’s hiring. Amber will share this concern with BADR Director, Carrie Molke.

Staff Changes – Tom Benziger, who served as the Southeastern Regional Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist as a contract position through the Center for Communication Hearing and Deafness, is no longer with ODHH. Carolyn Small, who served as the Northwestern Regional Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist, will be retiring as of December 16th. The remaining staff members are stepping in to ensure that services needed in those regions continue to be met. Any new hires of ODHH staff (to replace the two newly vacant positions) will be part of the Director, Dan Millikin’s, duties once he settles in at his new position.

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Inmates and the Department of Corrections – Bette Mentz-Powell has been working closely with the Deputy Secretary of the DOC. Bette has provided training at 25 Adult Correctional facilities in Wisconsin, and worked with various facility ADA Coordinators to better understand the needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind inmates. She has also been instrumental in

having video phones installed in various institutions starting with Dodge, Racine, Red Granite, Oakhill, Columbia. With Bette's help, the DOC has created a policy that any time a Deaf inmate arrives at a Wisconsin facility that does not have a video phone, one would be installed immediately.

Hospital Toolkit – Shawnee Thomas, the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Specialist in the Northern region, is working on a toolkit for patients who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind in hospitals or nursing homes. Shawnee recently shared a sample of the toolkit with a few hospital and nursing homes for feedback.

ODHHNet – With Carolyn Small's impending retirement (Carolyn has been responsible for the ODHHNet creation and dissemination); Shawnee will now be taking it over. A card with information about the ODHHNet has been created and was shared with the Council.

Northcentral Technical College – In collaboration, Shawnee will be working with the Interpreting Training Program at Northcentral Technical College to provide pre-internship exposure to sign language. From January through March, Shawnee will work with the students once a week.

Employability and Employment of Individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind Pilot Project – Nancy Harbison, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Specialist in the Northeastern region, reported on her plan during the Council's September meeting. She is still working on this project.

Disaster Preparedness – With Tom Benziger's departure from ODHH, the Disaster Preparedness partnership with the Wisconsin Association for the Deaf, has transferred to Melani Kaplan. The manual development and filming for the video are in progress. The grant period is expected to close on April 30th so the project should be done by then.

Mental Health & Substance Abuse Steering Committee – The committee applied for and received a grant from the Kubly Foundation to support their works on the printing and marketing for the Procedures Manual, aimed at educating hearing service providers on the needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind consumers; the creation of more Personal Story videos, and community information sessions to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind communities about mental wellness and issues.

ODHH Website – This has been put on hold until the arrival of Dan Millikin and due to demands on Melani Kaplan's time with other projects.

Deafblind Services – The ODHH and the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired will be collaborating as part of the Bureau of Disability Resources initiative to improve services for individuals who are Deafblind. The Office on Aging is interested in supporting this initiative. This will be part of the new Director's duties when he comes on board.

| ACTION ITEMS | PERSON RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |
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| None | | |

SPECIAL GUEST PRESENTATION

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| DISCUSSION | Vincent Holmes |
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Presentation – Vincent Holmes was a DVR counselor for nine years before moving into an administrative position. He served as a District Director for ten years. During his time working for the Wisconsin DVR, he became aware of how counselors who do not understand the needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind clients negatively impact services provided. Communication access needs of these DVR clients are met inappropriately due to the lack of knowledge on the part of the counselors. Approximately 85% of people who are Deaf in Wisconsin are on SSDI. But people want to work. The barriers to gaining employment lead to this problem.

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council that oversees VR is chaired by Linda Vegoe who is not familiar with the needs of persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind. She has stated that no other states have counselors who specialize in the needs of this group. Based on research, Vincent finds this to not be true. For example, Illinois and Alabama VR provide such specialized services.

One reason put forth for the failure of getting specialists to Wisconsin to work in this capacity is that the current salaries are too low. Based on research, Vincent found that Wisconsin is in the top 5% of salaries for DVR counselors in the United States.

Wisconsin DVR has not had a single in-service training for its counselors specifically related to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind issues in the last fifteen years.

An example of how DVR currently cannot meet the needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind clients is that those who are currently working may contact DVR for services to help them succeed in the workplace. DVR currently states that it is up to the clients to educate and work with the counselors on their needs if the counselor is not familiar with needs unique to communication access and related issues. If the counselor doesn't know and understand the issues, how is that person to help train the client's employer? Where are the vendors? Where are the private contractors that are supposed to come in and help the employers understand deafness?

One way to help change the resistance on behalf of DVR is for a person to be appointed to the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council who is Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind. Vincent shared a plan created by Florida's DVR stating the plan and policies related to providing services for their consumers who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind. Another tool for change would be to encourage a

certification or training criteria for counselors to specialize in serving this population.

Council Discussion – Partnerships with the Wisconsin Association for the Deaf and Wisconsin chapters of the Hearing Loss Association of America to work on a plan of action is important.

COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT

DISCUSSION Justin Vollmar

Council Business Conducted Between Meetings –

- April, 2013: Council passed a motion to compose a letter to HUD in support of Apache Trails Senior Housing for the Deaf in Arizona.
- May, 2013: Council passed a motion to compose a letter to the Wisconsin Joint Finance Commission in support of funding for mental health issues for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind community.
- June, 2013: Council passed a motion to compose a letter to the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services encouraging that VRI interpreters be held to the standards of the Interpreter Licensure Law.
- June, 2013: Council passed a motion to compose a letter to the Wisconsin House of Representatives asking their support for the Alice Cogswell Act.
- September, 2013: Council passed a motion to compose a letter to the Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services asking them to reconsider the removal of funding for the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Steering Committee.
- October, 2013: Council passed a motion to compose a position statement advocating that audiologists and hearing aid dispensers inform all clients about the benefits of T coils and assistive listening devices.

The Council is aware that ODHH is going through a transition with the new Director position and some projects may be on hold until the transition is complete.

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION

Legal Liaison Position – No activity has taken place on this issue since the last meeting.

Council Website – V-logs and the Comments Section are put on hold until the new Director arrives.

DSPS Website & Interpreter Licensure – This item was continued from last meeting. [The DSPS website that oversees the Interpreter Licensure is currently difficult to navigate and not deaf-friendly, per complaints from the community. The Council will compose a letter to DSPS asking that they make the interpreter licensure section of their website easier to access and more deaf friendly; and that the letter is shared with SLIC, WisRID, WAD and posted on the Council website for

them to follow suit.] Billy Mauldin is not present so this is tabled for the next meeting.

VRI Interpreters Letter to the Deaf Community – This was a letter and V-log informing members of the Deaf Community that VRI interpreters must be licensed, the same as in person interpreters as required by the Interpreter Licensure law. This item is extended to the next meeting for completion by Justin Vollmar and Denise Johnson.

Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) – Tracy Haas made a motion to put the letter to DVR on hold. Seconded by Nicole Everson. Motion passed unanimously.

Telecoil and Loop Education Letter – The letter has been composed by Deborah Herczog and is waiting letterhead.

Council Communication Efficiency – In an emergency or urgent situation (when something must be completed in a timely manner, before the next Council meeting) Council members may want to make motions via email between meetings. Council member will review policy regarding this activity to add to the Council Bylaws. Melani Kaplan will forward a copy of another Council’s policy regarding this activity. Denise Johnson can reach out to Dan Johnson, who works with the Governor’s Council for People With Disabilities for a copy of their policies. Justin Vollmar and Denise Johnson will explore options for voting (such as easypolls.net) and discussing online or via email.

Hiring Process for New ODHH Director – Motion for this withdrawn by Justin Vollmar.

| ACTION ITEMS | PERSON RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |
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| <p>DSPS Website & Interpreter Licensure: Billy Mauldin will draft a letter to DSPS asking that the Interpreter Licensure page be easier for navigability and ASL friendly.</p> | Billy Mauldin | 3/14/14 |
| <p>VRI Interpreters Letter to the Deaf Community: Justin Vollmar and Denise Johnson will compose a letter in written English and as an ASL V-log explaining that the Wisconsin Interpreter Licensure Law applies to all VRI interpreters providing services into the state.</p> | Justin Vollmar & Denise Johnson | 3/14/14 |
| <p>Council Communication Efficiency: Melani Kaplan will forward a copy of another Council’s policy regarding this activity. Denise Johnson can reach out to Dan Johnson, who works with the Governor’s Council for People With Disabilities for a copy of their policies. Justin Vollmar and Denise Johnson will explore options for voting (such as easypolls.net) and discussing online or via email.</p> | Justin Vollmar & Denise Johnson & Melani Kaplan | 3/14/14 |

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION

Deafblind Representation – Nicole inquired about the possibility of a having a member of the Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired join Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing meetings in order to better collaborate on issues and projects related to the needs of persons who are Deafblind.

2014 Meeting Schedule – Due to scheduling needs amongst the Council members, meetings will alternate between Thursdays and Fridays in March, May, September and December.

Next Meetings – 2014

March 14

May 8

September 12

December 11

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISCUSSION

Denise Johnson announced that she is presenting six workshops on Interpreting 101 for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community to clarify rights on getting an interpreter, how to file a complaint against an interpreter, etc. These will take place in Appleton, Madison, Milwaukee, La Crosse, Delavan and Wausau.

Meeting adjourned at 3:18pm by Justin Vollmar, Chair.