



**DHHSC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 7, 2013**

I. Call to Order – 2:02 Amanda Sortwell (AS), president. JS: outline of today’s schedule.
Board Members Present: Jonathan Silva, Vice-president (JS), Sue Stone, Secretary (SS), Jill Nolen (JN), Chad Catron (CC), Melissa Sortwell (MS), Tess Contreras (TC)
DHHSC Staff Members Present: Michelle Bronson (MB), Executive Director; Jessie Lewis (JL); Susan Coulter (SC)

Visitors: 27 visitors signed in. The sign-in sheet is filed with the minutes.

Interpreters: PamWarkentin, Nikki Wolfe.

- II. Approval of Agenda Items – Community comments moved to bottom of agenda.
approved by consent
- III. Approval of **July** Board Minutes –by consent
- IV. President’s Report – AS: Board is growing, great time to see how we can grow together.
Goal to make DHHSC better.
- V. Vice-President’s Report – JS: need more D/HH board members due to 51% rule
- VI. Secretary’s Report – SS no report
- VII. Treasurer’s Report –finances appear healthy. If anyone wants more information can see me.

July and August Financial Report distributed but not reviewed.

| | <u>July</u> | <u>August</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Checking/savings balance | \$222,951 | \$361,667 |
| Accounts receivable total | \$236,611 | \$280,134 |
| AR interpreting | \$91,548 | \$95,197 |
| AR grants | \$145,062 | \$184,937 |
| | | |
| Accounts payable | \$-520 | \$-7,616 |
| Board private fund balance | \$60 | \$4,761 |
| Profit/loss | \$2,161 | \$2,095 |
| | | |
| Grant awarded | \$650,564 | \$650,564 |
| Grant spent | \$63,912 | \$117,926 |
| Grant unspent | \$586,651 | \$532,637 |

VIII. Executive Director’s Report – MB

Staffing News:

A. We have added quite a few new staff members the past two months, so this is an exciting time for us. We would like to welcome the following new team members:

Kimberly Glenn as our Interpreter Coordinator Assistant. She joined us in July after Becky Edens departed on June 30th. Hannah DeVous as our part-time Staff Interpreter. Everett Glenn as our Visalia Client Services Specialist. His first day will be Oct. 1st. Rochelle Greenwell as our Salinas Client Services Specialist. Her first day was yesterday, Sept. 6th. Nicole Sanchez as our Merced Client Services Specialist. Her first day was also yesterday. Ryan Scottt is now our full-time staff interpreter—she filled that position after April left on July 19th. James McGuire will be leaving the Merced office.

B. A big thank-you to Shelley Stout for shuttling back and forth between the Fresno and Visalia offices until Everett starts on Oct. 1st. She is a tremendous help, and we are grateful to her for assisting with our many cases in both offices. She will stay in Fresno after Everett starts in Visalia.

Funding News:

C. We were sad to receive a declination letter from Kaiser on our request to fund and develop a new “Deaf Seniors Still Thriving” program. Their feedback was very positive but due to limited funding, they could only fund a few proposals. Darn! We will continue searching for new opportunities.

D. We were also disappointed that Bank of the Sierras did not elect to fund our Visalia ROCK (Reaching Out and Communicating with Kids) program for the second year. However, we do have two fundraising projects to support that program, which I will explain shortly. For our Salinas’ GOALS program, we are waiting to hear back from Monterey Foundation. They recently emailed Jesse and informed him that our proposal has passed screening and is now up for discussion for approval. We are hopeful it will be approved for the second year.

E. I would like to thank both Sorenson and Purple Communications for being one of our sponsors of our upcoming 25th Valley Deaf Festival on November 2. Please be sure to stop by their booths at the fun event! We very much appreciate their support and seeing their continued involvement with our local community.

F. On Tuesday, September 10th is the annual Combined Federal Campaign kick-off. This event is when community benefit organizations pitch their mission and services to government employees with the goal of being selected as a preferred charity. I normally do the popcorn presentation, but because this falls on the same day I have to chair Disability Advisory Commission meeting, Omar Ruiz will do the presentation and Stacy Constantino will do the booth. I would like to thank them both for their teamwork as this is an important event I do not want DHHSC to miss. This is how our agency receives supplemental funding without any strings attached, and the funds are used for special events or materials for the agency.

G. I am excited to share that Dr. Paul Ogden, FSU Deaf professor at FSU, penned a new book called “Secrets from My Silent Eden,” and Dan and Barbara Koontz donated 200 of his books to DHHSC for a fundraising project. I am grateful for their generosity, and we will use monies raised from this particular fundraiser to expand the ROCK program to all four offices. It is a successful program in Visalia, and we’d like to provide the same services through our HQ, Merced, and Salinas offices as well. Each hardcover will be sold for \$100 each, and an autographed copy can be picked up here at DHHSC on Oct. 30th during the book-signing party. We will also have a short program whereby Dr. Ogden explains how he was inspired to write the book. He focuses on three important concepts in this book, which include faith, relationships, and communication. Please reserve a copy for yourself or for your friends and family.

Donations:

H. We would like to thank Rotary Club of Fresno and Phil and Marty Pigott for their very generous matching donations in replacing the lighting in our community room! I know this has been a long-time dream of the community, and we are excited to share that this dream is now becoming reality. I was invited to a Rotary Club luncheon last Monday to receive the check, and

I was able to thank them for their support. I also met a board member of the Fresno Regional Foundation, which I'm hoping will be a good lead in eventually getting a grant! The new LED lights, which are also energy-efficient, will hopefully be installed within the next week or so.

Summer Activities:

I. Diana Lee and Lisa Huffman recently hosted the 4th annual ASL Summer Program, and we received a lot of positive feedback. We would like to thank ParentLinks for their sponsorship. We had approximately 45 parents and children involved. They had fun going to Forrestiere Underground Garden, Round Table Pizza, and Color Me Mine. We hope to receive another grant next year, and we encourage parents of D/HH children and CODAs to participate!

J. A big thank you to Rosemary Diaz for volunteering her time to host Deaf Reel Pride, whereby she showed movies and led discussions about Deaf Culture, heritage, and what it means to be a Deaf person. Susan Coulter also assisted, and I would like to thank them for their time in facilitating these important cultural workshops.

Current Activities:

K. Jesse Lewis was able to coordinate with Gateway Church in Visalia to offer ASL classes for a fee, and the funds raised will also be used for the ROCK program. Shelley Stout is teaching the classes until Everett starts his new position. At that time she will begin teaching ASL classes at Norseman Elementary School here in Fresno to parents of D/HH students.

IX. General Board Comments –

- 1) MS: Requesting an interpreter in the hospital setting follow up: there is a website for submitting a complaint or one can submit a paper complaint and leave at DHHSC for Melissa, and she will follow up with the hospital. Main purpose is to focus on VRI (video relay interpreting) as it is difficult to communicate through VRI. VRI is not compliant with ADA law.
- 2) JL: July fundraiser with Panda Express had a good turnout. Next Sunday is 5K run 'Soak me Pah' @ Woodward Park Mountain View area from 8-12. 51 people signed up.
- 3) TC: completed the leadership training course and is certified.

X. New Business –

A. Annual review of agency evaluation forms: Some highlights: 61% of the responders were deaf. 94% of the responders felt positive about the agency. People were asked about event requests, service requests, and workshop requests and there were about 8-10 requests in each category. People like that DHHSC is ASL-friendly and comment that the staff is friendly and helpful. Improvement: more events outside of offices, more ASL classes, more staff, better Wi-Fi access. Board suggestions: more visible at community events, talking without signing is not supportive of an ASL-friendly environment.

XI. Community Comments (see below)

XII. Announcements –

- A. JJ: ASL movie next Saturday—get tickets
- B. Dr. Patty Ladd on Understanding Deaf Culture Friday September 27 2-5 @ FCC. No voice interpretation.
- C. The Deafhood Monologues. Tickets only available on-line or at Tower Theater. There will be voice interpreters. Two shows: 3 & 7:30.
- D. DINGO Friday September 13th @ DHHSC.
- E. Fresno Deaf church women's retreat Friday September 27.
- F. The calendar is on the DHHSC website. Events include: Tuesday PEP workshops. Every Tuesday BodyWorks at Fashion Fair offers a facial or makeup at 11:30. Let SC know today if you are interested.

G. Deaf Awareness Week: Monday ice cream social @ 6:30. Wednesday dinner/silent auction \$8 with guest speaker. Friday CCRID signing night live. Saturday picnic at Woodward Park 10-2.

H. October 11 DINGO, proceeds toward Susan G. Kommen fundraiser.

I. ASL movie 11/2

J. VDF November 3

XIII. Adjournment – **4:04**

Date of Next Local Board Meeting: October 9, 7-9 pm @ DHHSC – Fresno

Community comments:

1. Jason Jackson: facilitates Fresno Deaf Events. Wishes to commend the board for their support of our events; would like to see more staff and Deaf community members at our events. For example, at one event out of 75 people 25 were deaf & 50 were hearing.
2. Becky Sortwell: Why VRI and not an interpreter? Thinks it is a financial issue. Called Blue Shield and they would pay for interpreter, so got one. Maybe OK in office for checkups, but some situations require a live interpreter. {JS noted that at the meeting held regarding hospital interpreting, some were satisfied with VRI} {MS thinks it is not compliant with ADA and encourages people to complete a complaint form if VRI is not meeting your needs}
3. Beth Lipston: (sp?) 2 questions: 1. For JL Do staff have to sign all the time? {JL: that is the expectation but sometimes people forget.} 2. Senior citizen age group? Marilyn McCollum: Unofficial rule 55 and up, but seniors are passing away and our numbers are low so we are thinking of changing it to 50 and up.
4. JS: sometimes we do speak because busy with kids running round, so it would be nice to be reminded.
5. MB: We are deaf-friendly and do remind others to sign. Sometimes people sign and voice at the same time out of necessity. Please inform Harvey if you have concerns so we can address it.
6. SS: This is a D/HH center and many HH don't know how to sign. It is important to support ASL at all times, but not all HH sign.
7. Linda McGloughlin: many times no one at the front desk. If know ASL should be signing all the time. Need someone at the front desk who signs.
8. Angelica: agrees with Linda that anyone who can sign should be.
9. Susan Turner: (Merced) would like to see D-WELL expand beyond the medical focus, but was told no. eg Independent living, new laws. {JS: can request topics if there is interest.}
10. Teresea Comaskey: In her experience VRI is not always reliable due to internet issues.
11. Xaverie: September 3 I was at a hotel and there was a curb and I tripped over it and fell on my shoulder. At the hospital in Lodi a nurse brought in VRI equipment. My daughter is deaf and did not like that at all. My request for an interpreter was denied. I had a lot of trouble communicating because of my injury-- the interpreter could not see my hands clearly. At ST Agnes I went to the ER and had an interpreter for several hours and when I asked who called them it seemed someone in the front office made a request. Equipment issues make it difficult to communicate.
12. Robin Kifer: A social worker did not recommend VRI, particularly for mental health patients or patients on a lot of prescription medication. She recommends that we as a Deaf community help her to deal with this problem. She said that when we sign in at the

hospital we put language as ASL, not English. It needs to be in the medical record that you are Deaf and what you need, specifically an in-person interpreter. You do have the right to refuse VRI service. Be sure you carry ID with you that explains your health background including that you are deaf so if you are in a car accident they will be able to meet your needs.

13. AS: would community be interested in doing a follow up on the complaint form and needed changes in the system.
14. SS: I wear a wristband when I am cycling that contains my contact information, limited health information and that I am deaf.
15. Marilyn McCollum: Last year made a request for public relations liaison from DHHSC to communicate with other organizations on how to work with the D/HH community. We need to educate businesses and medical organizations about current communication techniques. Also there are issues among seniors on how to get legal advice. We are interested in legal aid or a pre-paid legal service. {MB: This was one of the purposes of the Deaf Seniors Still Thriving Grant that we applied to Kaiser for. System advocacy is also one of the missions of DHHSC. Let DHHSC know if you have needs. Contact Diana Lee or Shelly Stout. **Use our services!!!!!!**}
16. Larry: The hospital I went to used staff who knew little sign language. There were no interpreters.
17. Jake Garcia: I had a very bad experience at CRMC. I handed them a card requesting an interpreter but was refused. When the doctor talked to me I could not understand anything. Frustrated. Finally got interpreter but she was from another state and I could not understand some of her signs. CRMC was horrible so I complained.
18. Julie: Woman got a call from her Deaf mother that was not accurately interpreted so that worries her about VRI.
19. Cowboy: An orange wristband in hospital identifies someone who needs an interpreter, could be any language, including ASL.
20. Beth: Also had a frustrating experience with VRS.
21. Angelica: Wonders how to help with various communication devices for families that cannot afford them.

Draft submitted by Sue Stone, DHHSC Secretary