



**DHHSC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
(November 10, 2015)**

- I. Call to Order – JS 6:02 PM
- II. Board Members Present: Jonathan Silva, VP (JS); Sue Stone, Secretary (SS); Chad Catron, treasurer (CC); Melissa Sortwell (MS); Jill Nolen (JN); Justin Gaines (JG); Justin Blanco (JB)
Board Members Absent: none!
DHHSC Staff Members Present: Michelle Bronson (MB), Executive Director,
Visitors: Shannon Mulhall, City of Fresno ADA coordinator; Skippy Sumner, Peter Crume, Whitney Kidd, JesiAnne Couvillion, Daryl Werkentin, Shelly Cooper, Gloria Wolff, Sophie Powell, Kimberly Tamez, Janice Smith-Warshaw Ed.D, Tim Spires
Interpreters: Pam Warkentin, Nikki Wolfe
- III. Visitor Comments (3 minutes per visitor) Shannon Mulhall ADA coordinator for City of Fresno recognized and thanked MB for 6 years of service on the Disability Advisory Committee. MB responded that it was a honor to serve.
- IV. Approval of Agenda Items – approved by consent
- V. Approval of November Board Minutes – approved
- VI. President’s Report – N/A
- VII. Vice-President’s Report – JS gave information with regards to out attempt to recruit board members. Interested individuals can also attend the Board/management meeting which occurs months alternating to the regular Board meeting. The first hour is public and the second hour is restricted to Board members and management team. The required number of meetings has been reduced to 2 meetings. Prospective Board members will then be invited to interview and membership considered at their 3rd meeting, at which time they will or will not be invited to sit on the Board.
- VIII. Secretary’s Report – SS no report
- IX. Treasurer’s Report – CC
September and October Financial Reports distributed and reviewed.

	September	October
Checking/savings balance	\$350,172	\$303,465
Accounts receivable	\$278,759	\$332,630
AR grants	\$150,977	\$196,591

AR interpreting	\$127,782	\$136,038
Accounts payable	-\$36	\$-1638
Board private fund balance	\$403	\$497
Profit/loss	(\$49,830)	(\$5173)
Grant awarded	\$650,564	\$650,564
Spent	\$156,003	\$208,238
Unspent	\$494,560	\$442,325

X. Executive Director's Report – Michelle Bronson

Financial Updates:

Our CDSS' RFP is due on Dec. 15th, so Jesse and I will be primarily focusing on that task for the rest of this month, until it is completed. We aim to finish it early as we also have holiday parties/luncheon during the month of December. Once it is completed, I will need the Board President to sign the final copy.

We applied for Deaf Blind services through the Kirchgessner Foundation but were declined due to their preferred service area of LA and change of focus this year, which was eyecare and eye research. We will check again next year.

We submitted our final reports for Fansler Foundation and Monterey Peninsula Foundation. Fansler Foundation funded our ROCK and YES! services for our Fresno, Merced, and Visalia offices while Monterey Peninsula Foundation funded our REAL (literacy) program in our Salinas office. We will reapply for Fansler next February. Monterey Peninsula Foundation is currently considering our new grant application, which is for READY, a family intervention services program, which also includes ROCK, ASL instruction, PRAISE parenting classes, and YES!

We just received feedback on our spring grant application from Fresno Regional Foundation, which recently changed its name to Central Valley Community Foundation, and the information was specific and helpful for the next application. For example, while they told us that they were very impressed with our application and our work, they want a specific breakdown of what it costs to provide services to a D/HH student vs. a hearing student. They were initially surprised by how expensive it is to serve D/HH students, but after Jesse explained the time, energy, and resources it takes to serve this specific population, they told us to emphasize that because the focus of that particular grant was on transformation, that we are working to transform students and their families.

Staffing Updates:

In October, Stefani Santos and Sharon Renee McPherson became full-time staff interpreters. Jane Datsko is our full-time Information & Referral Specialist/Volunteer Coordinator and freelances during the evenings and weekends. We have hired Joshua Watson as a full-time Client

Services Specialist for the Merced Office. We are pleased that all positions are now filled and we have a great team of staff.

Agency's Activities:

We are now planning for next year's Signing Full Throttle event, which is scheduled for April 30, 2016. This event will be a bit different and will include a community chili cook-off. Diana Davis, our Coordinator of Client Services, is our lead person for this event, and as a biker herself, she has some great ideas and connections.

We have Kathy Yoshida-Doerkson's surprise retirement party this Thursday from 7-9 p.m. and it's \$10 per person. The cost includes desserts and beverages, and after expenses are paid, the rest will go towards Kathy's passion, Deaf Blind services. We will also have a silent auction during the event, with proceeds going to Deaf Blind services. People who come Thursday evening will have an opportunity to have their personal messages videotaped by staff who will then edit all videos into one DVD for Kathy to keep. We hope this will be a special and memorable evening for such a well-deserving person who has spent 28 years of committed service to our D/HH Community.

We are also planning for our annual Holiday Luncheon on Dec. 23rd from 12-3 p.m. This will be a free luncheon for our community as a way of showing appreciation for their support and involvement. At the event, we will have a Deaf Santa and gifts for the children.

Last Thursday on Nov. 5th, we had staff and community volunteers facilitate signing stations at Valley Children's Hospital, which was spearheaded by two FSU students with a passion for providing accessible medical services to the D/HH. It was the first time for an activity of this kind, and while there were some challenges, it was a positive experience. For example, some doctors and nurses were harried and did not take time to stop at a signing station to learn some basic medical signs, so we were disappointed. We hope to have this activity again in the near future.

Also on Nov. 5th, in the late afternoon/early evening, there was a Mental Health Community Forum, and three of our staff attended to share about the challenges the D/HH face when seeking mental health services. It was a positive experience and we made some good connections. We will follow up on establishing partnerships and training opportunities so we can improve access to mental health services for our clients.

I was hoping to participate in both the VCH and mental health forum on Nov. 5th, but that was also the same day as our CDSS' RFP bidders' conference and Judicial Council review meeting in Sacramento. At the RFP conference, only those who attended were DHHSC, NorCal, DCS, and GLAD, no other attendees, but with the meeting not being mandatory, it is still possible we may face competition. Hopefully, not, but will keep you informed if I learn anything. As for the Judicial Council review meeting, the four sister agencies met with the Judicial Council to discuss the terminology used in the Evidence Code Section 754, such as using the word "qualified" vs.

“court-certified” interpreters. While we want legally-trained interpreters, we also have to discuss a back-up plan if one is not available. There are only 35 court-certified interpreters in the state of California, so if one is not available, what do we desire to see happen? Use a top-level community interpreter who has some legal experience and one approved by the Deaf client, or insist that everything halts until a court-certified interpreter is available? A tough situation but we’re still in discussions.

Agency’s Trainings/Presentations:

On Sept. 21st, I did a presentation with Dr. Nancy Delich to Dr. Roberts’ class on “Advances in Technology Over the Years for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.” It was a large class as it consisted of 90 students, and the professor informed me that now some students are interested in switching to Deaf Education and Interpreting because of our presentation. It’s nice to know we can make an impact.

On Oct. 9th, I did a 25-minute presentation on DHHSC’s services to a group of 25 judges. I explained the needs of the D/HH and the importance of using ASL interpreters and DI/CDIs in court proceedings.

On Oct. 28th, Kim Glenn, our Assistant Interpreter Coordinator, and I did a brief presentation on how to request interpreting services to Clinica Sierra Vista. There were approximately 50 people present and we explained the law pertaining to effective communication and the proper procedures for requesting interpreters.

Last Friday was our Staff Development Day, and we had Amanda Somdal, a Deaf LCSW, and Bonnie Gibson-Brydon, a certified interpreter who owns her interpreting agency, do training on “Vicarious Trauma.” This workshop focused on different levels of trauma, how to provide care to self and others, and coping techniques. It was a great training, and with the difficult cases we often see here at DHHSC, it was crucial that our staff know how to take care of themselves and not “absorb” their clients’ trauma. Absorbing clients’ trauma will lessen our service providers’ ability to provide objective and quality services.

Events:

Our 12th Annual Deaf Women’s Conference, Visalia Town Hall meeting, and Merced Community Picnic were all successful. We had approximately 50 people in attendance at each event. Way to go, DHHSC Team! A big thank you to the staff and volunteers who hosted these events.

I would like to share that California Hands & Voices will be hosting a Mom’s Night Inn on the weekend of Oct. 4-5th. We will have workshops and activities all day Saturday and Sunday morning, and all mothers of D/HH children are welcome to attend. There is a fee, but that

includes meals, snacks, beauty sessions, a Zumba lesson, supplies, information packets, etc. It will be a fun weekend! If you are interested or would like to refer a mom, please see me.

- XI. Committee Reports –
- a. Bylaws Committee – SS no report
 - b. Fundraising Committee – JN

Saturday hosted an event that was small but fun with 15 kids in attendance.
 Restaurant fundraiser in the future when there is a date available
 JS hosting an event and charging \$5 where people can compete with games at different stations, egames similar to sporting competitions, video games, etc... This is a popular concept and will hopefully raise funds. Over 200 have expressed interest.
 JS is hosting.
 - c. Grant Monitoring Committee – JN no report
- XII. General Board Comments – MB clarification of clinic paying for interpreters; MB explaining how system works for drug/alcohol services and mental health services. JS if we develop a relationship with the county we could provide services.
 JG/JB: Halloween event last year raised \$600 hosted by hands-on-hands. This year 230 people came, twice the number from last year (only the second year) and generated almost \$2000.
 JS what about an event on the in between years from VDF? MB will probably return to annual event. We are looking for sponsorship and donations. We have been focused on Kathy's party—really big event.
- XIII. Unfinished Business –none
- XIV. New Business –
- A. San Joaquin Valley Health Grant: 1) health workshop focusing on D/HH, goal is to provide one/month and at different times of the day to accommodate those who work and 2) assistance advocate to educate and train about interpreters and using live interpreters and no VRI; will be a challenge working with the hospitals
- XIV. Public Comments (specific to agenda – 3 minutes per visitor) Skippy Sumner: VDF regards to staff stress levels. Suggested working with other community organizations, discussed networking options.
- XV. Announcements – 1) 11/21 Holiday boutique 10-2 here at DHHSC. If you would like to host a booth let SC know—no fee.
- XVII. Adjournment –7:13

Date of Next Local Board Meeting: Tuesday January 12, 6-8 PM DHHSC – Fresno