



## **DHHSC BOARD MEETING MINUTES** **(March 10, 2015)**

- I. Meeting called to Order at 6:03pm
- II. Board Members Present: Jonathan Silva, Vice President (JS), Chad Catron, Treasurer (CC), Jill Nolen, Fundraising Committee (JN), Melissa Sortwell, Secretary (MS)
  - \*Board Members Absent: Sue Stone (SS)- excused, Justin Gaines (JG)- unexcused
  - \*Board Members Tardy: Tess Contreras (TC)- excused

DHHSC Staff Members Present: Michelle Bronson, Executive Director (MB)

Visitors: Alexander Sanborn, Skippy Sumner, Janel Birrenkott, Marilyn McCallon, and Shelley Stout.

Interpreters: Pam Warkentin and Nicole Wolfe

### III. **Public Comments**

- Skippy Sumner: Because we've moved to every 2 months for the Board meetings, I feel that the 3 minute limit is not enough -please bear with me. In the last minutes, it said that the website will post who the members of the AC are. I still do not see it. Also, in relation to the Vice President's Report, I would like to see the formatting of that made better please. For clarification on behalf of Justin Gaines, his organization's name should be "Hand on Hand" **not** "Hands on Hands." I wanted to mention as well that the Board meeting was not listed in the email, so I wasn't sure if it was happening tonight or not. Lastly, I want to speak about the decisions made pertaining to LOA. This tends to be for large organizations so I contacted a few other agencies in the state and found out some information about their typical standards. There could definitely be pressure on the individual who is leaving for personal reasons. For example, that person could have cancer and may need extra time, but with such a small Board there will be possible apprehension. It was voted to be 6 months in which we currently have a member on LOA, and it was proposed that we should request them to either come back or stay, but I would like to see some more elaboration on that from the Board.
- JS: I would like to respond now since the thoughts are fresh in my mind. In terms of LOA, you related it to personal leave which is aimed at paid positions, but LOA does not have that negative connotation so there shouldn't be that stigma. In terms of AC, I will let Michelle Bronson answer.
- MB: I'm glad you asked about the email, that was my responsibility and I take the blame for that, I apologize. My intention was to have that included, as well as the AC, and it will be clearly stated from here on out.
- JS: Also, thank you for the clarification of HOH. I too, thought it was plural. In regards to the 3 minute limit, we touched on that at the last meeting that this was merely a guideline, so we have some reasonable limitations for community members to share. However, it is not set in stone and perhaps we can raise that time a little.

IV. **Approval of Agenda Items** – approved

V. **Approval of January Board Minutes** – some corrections have been noted and will be taken care of and posted on website.

VI. **President's Report** – N/A

VII. **Vice-President's Report**

- JS: I will consolidate both the President and Vice-President's Report.
  1. Yes, we are meeting every 2 months now and we meet with staff during the alternating months. We had a great dialog for discussion last time. One of the things we discussed was the struggles we have

faced in terms of staff and the ability to devote themselves to things that are happening within the agency. Staff has to abide by DHHSC guidelines and we are trying to decide what to do about VDF and the tremendous labor-intensive energy and finances required for events like that. So we are looking at putting that time and energy into other beneficial programs like ROCK. Our goal is to generate the funds that the staff need in order to support their efforts.

2. We also had a Board member, Brianna Berg join staff and therefore she cannot be on the Board due to conflict of interest. Congrats to her, but it is our loss unfortunately.
3. It seems like we are slowly but surely focusing on what we should do such in terms of fundraising to provide staff the support they need, and not just problem solving. We need to focus on the community at large by sharing something uplifting at our meetings to start out on a positive note. This has a good effect on the staff and members and creates a positive image, which will be a good approach. It is good to recognize our positive accomplishments and will be great for our attitude. On that topic, we will soon be hosting a Rummage Sale and the Board is responsible for spearheading that. We will be looking for volunteers to help us with cleanup afterwards, so please come to me if you have information. We are excited about this.
4. Lastly, it would be important to note that we have already conducted 3 interviews for the Board. As you might be aware of, we must have 49% Hearing and 51% Deaf (Brianna was hard of hearing so she fell under this percent). So our new hire will need to be Deaf. Sue will officially be back as of March 15th, her leave date was September 15th. Therefore, she will attend our next Staff and Board meeting and then regularly after that. When she is back we will have 4 Deaf Board members and 3 Hearing Board members, so if we add another hearing it will be 50:50. Obviously that is not acceptable we and are currently looking for a new Deaf hire. Keep that in mind.

**VIII.** Secretary's Report – MS: none

**IX.** Treasurer's Report – CC:

January-February Financial Report distributed and reviewed.

Checking/savings balance	\$ 387,641.51
Accounts receivable total	\$ 171,927.29
AR grants	\$ 96,634.48
AR interpreting	\$ 75,292.81
Accounts payable	-\$ 6,576.19
Board private fund balance	\$ 1,698.23
Profit/loss	\$ 49,149.47 (for 8 months)
Grant awarded for 14-15	\$ 650,564.00
Grant spent up to 02/28/15	\$ 437,777.21
Grant unspent 4 months remaining (ending 06/30/15)	\$ 212,786.79

**X.** Executive Director's Report

- MB:

Funding Updates:

Unfortunately, we have been turned down for both the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund and Ray Charles Foundation grants. We are now contacting them to request feedback. The San Joaquin Valley Health Fund grant was to provide health-related workshops for our Merced, Visalia, and Fresno offices. Also for these offices, the Ray Charles Foundation grant was to fund our literacy services. We are disappointed, but we will continue applying for these and other grants. These two were new to us, so we will learn what these funders seek in selected grants.

We applied for a meditation grant, but because it requires a certified Christian meditation instructor, we were not able to proceed with the grant application. However, the funder expressed interest in DHHSC and our Deaf Community, and strongly encouraged us to apply once we find a certified Christian meditation instructor. We do have contact with Tai Chi and yoga instructors, but the grant specifies a focus on

meditation. We are now seeking a Christian meditation instructor, so if you know of one, please give us that contact information, thank you.

#### Training Updates:

On Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, Omar Ruiz, Harvey Bradley, and I attended a San Joaquin Valley Town Hall meeting called “Power and Influence” by Amy Cuddy, who has given many powerful Ted Talks. The lecture was about how to boost one’s sense of self-power and confidence. Amy Cuddy discussed how leaders carry themselves and demonstrated power poses.

On Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, I did a presentation to Etienne Harvey’s class at Fresno City College on expectations of a skilled, qualified, and certified interpreter. As E.D. of DHHSC, ET wanted me to share what I expect in my designated interpreters and how interpreters can reflect, both positively and negatively, on Deaf professionals. Interpreting is not a profession to be taken lightly, especially because of how misinterpretation can lead to disastrous consequences for a D/HH person, even if not intentional.

On Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>, I attended a Café Connection, a network of different professionals in the Fresno/Clovis area, and I was able to meet some great individuals, including a director from First Five Fresno and Marjaree Mason Center (MMC) who is responsible for DV training. I was thrilled to make these contacts because we’ve applied for First Five Fresno grants before, but I’ve learned that it’s beneficial to know people there. In addition, one of my staff has expressed interest in becoming a certified DV instructor who can provide court-approved DV classes for victims. The director from MMC is very interested in making this happen, and we will soon meet to discuss how my staff can get this needed training.

Cheryl Parreira and I did a presentation on the “Importance of Communicating With Your Kids” for Merced’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Parent Institute Conference on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>. We had a great workshop and also had a DHHSC booth there. I would like to thank two of our Merced Advisory Council members for running the booth while Cheryl and I were involved with the conference. The purpose of the conference was to provide parents with resources and information, and we wanted to represent DHHSC there.

For February and March Staff Development Days, we had presentations from Exceptional Parents Unlimited on Behavioral Interventions, Central Valley Regional Services on their services, and University of San Francisco Alzheimer’s and Memory Issues Center on Alzheimer’s and Dementia. All the presenters provided our staff with great information as we want to ensure we provide our clients with current and appropriate resources. Knowledge is power, and the more resources we can provide to our clients, the more access they have to public services and the greater their support system. We believe in the importance of building a support system for our clients, and with these vital connections to other community resources, we can provide our clients with more services that promote their well-being.

#### Staffing Updates:

We are pleased to announce that we have hired Brianna Berg as our part-time Merced Client Services Specialist. Welcome, Brianna!

#### Recent Events:

On Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, Shelley Stout and Harvey Bradley hosted our Beyond the Embers ASL movie at Fresno City College, which drew 120 people. I would like to thank Harvey and Shelley for their hard work with promoting the event. I was unable to attend as I had an all-weekend California Hands & Voices board meeting in the LA area, and I was grateful that Harvey and Shelley were able to handle the event. Thank you to everyone who participated.

Yesterday was Celebration of Diversity at Fresno State University, and I would like to thank Omar Ruiz and Shelley Stout for representing DHHSC and for facilitating our booth. Shelley also did a phenomenal job with the ASL ABC and 123 stories. She was very clear and entertaining, and I was very proud of her. I’ve received quite a few compliments on her performance, and this is one of many examples of why I love having my DHHSC staff at different school and community events. It was also a great opportunity for both staff to

see the students they also work with at local schools as the event was for Deaf and Hard of Hearing kids in the Central Valley.

#### Current Projects:

As you may know, Jill Nolen and I are currently working on the motorcycle run, and we just finalized the revised logo. Jill did a marvelous job creating a new one, and I'm excited to use it as our event's logo. We will be sending out the new flyers this week, and I will be meeting with Fresno State's ASL Club tomorrow evening to recruit volunteers. We will have a committee meeting every Tuesday from 1-2 p.m. until the event, so if you are interested in participating, please let me know. We will have five stops in the Fresno/Clovis area and possibly one in Bass Lake before arriving at our final destination in Mariposa, Salvador's Mexican Restaurant. This is an exciting, new fundraiser for us.

Shelley Stout and I are currently working with an Early Intervention Specialist at Fresno Unified School District to host a parents' meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to provide parents of D/HH children with information and resources so their children can grow up to be happy, successful adults. Some parents do not know their children's potential, so we will be meeting with them to provide exposure to Deaf adults and to candidly answer any questions they might have.

I recently met with National Alliance on the Mentally Ill (NAMI) and Blue Sky Wellness to discuss mental health services for the D/HH. We are exploring ways we can collaborate on services, and I learned that Blue Sky Wellness has a staff person who is a CODA and signs. She currently runs some support groups, so if you know of anyone who is looking for mental health services and has a diagnosis, please refer to Blue Sky Wellness. We will also do cross-trainings, meaning Blue Sky Wellness staff will provide us with mental health training and we will provide them with Deaf-sensitivity training. The Fresno Executive Director, Chris Roup, will also talk with the national NAMI organization to add the D/HH to their list of diversity as they did not include the D/HH with the current listing of cultures and languages.

#### Public Relations:

Shelley Stout recently did a television interview with Azteca Fresno, a Spanish-speaking station, to explain our DHHSC and ROCK services. She did a professional job, and I have received positive feedback from those who have viewed it. It was a great opportunity to outreach to the Spanish-speaking populations who have D/HH family members, particularly children. Susan Coulter also recently did a video interview with Fresno State as a breast cancer survivor and her involvement with the Art of Life exhibits. She did a fantastic job of sharing her experiences and we are proud of her work.

### **XI. Committee Reports**

#### ● Bylaws Committee

JS: We did make a revision to our bylaws, but we have not determined the exact language for that. Yes, it is important and those details will be attended to. Sue is working with us to get the wording correct before making it official.

#### ● Fundraising Committee

JN:

#### **-notes pending-**

JS: So how will we encourage the individuals to attend Panda Express and Jamba Juice after Soak me Pah?

JN: Panda Express gives a 20% discount and Jamba Juice gives a 10-15% discount.

JS: Also, you mentioned getting to more fundraising after graduation - you mean yours or in general?

JN: In general "graduation time" of year.

JS: That whole week before the Rummage Sale we will be accepting donations, and will send an email with scheduled pick up times etc. So we will discuss those details and the Board's availability to pick up items and be present for money-handling, as well as the Salvation Army pickup. We will ask Nat to get in contact with volunteers.

MB: It is becoming harder and harder to recruit Fresno State student volunteers to help out because of their other project obligations, and we want to make you aware of that.

JS: I will talk to Nat more about that and I also know some people I can recruit.

- Grant Monitoring Committee – N/A
- Public relations

JS: The Board and staff talked about this specifically in trying to figure out what this looks like. It involves networking, as well as going to events and getting DDHSC's name out there, which we already do. However, we wanted to include this topic for that reason, so we can more effectively accomplish this. Brianna left, but we will remove this as a topic from now on since we are all involved in this effort. It will be added to the Vice President Report and there will no longer be a special committee for that.

## **XII. General Board Comments**

- JS: I want to make comment - none of us are really new anymore and it is our responsibility to network and attend events to get people to understand who the Board is and what we do. Most people don't come to Board meetings, they go to events. We need to start making appearances, be more visible, and support each other.

## **XIII. Unfinished Business – N/A**

## **XIII. New Business – N/A**

## **XIV. Public Comments**

- Skippy Sumner: Hello again. In regards to items on the agenda, I would suggest you can delete the 3 minute limit listed on agenda unless we have more people, in which case time can be restricted. Of course I am flexible. Also, I have been to a variety of different groups meetings and events all over California, some even gather at 5:30 in the morning in mass numbers and are out by 6am. This is just a suggestion for you. Also, NAD is focusing on things like language barriers and what needs to be there for the Deaf and HOH. Having a Board or Staff member go to develop connections with them would be extremely beneficial.

## **XV. Announcements**

- MB: Because Susan is not here, I will do the publicity for her. One event next week is the Green Best Fest breast cancer program. March 31<sup>st</sup> is a holiday so we moved it to March 30<sup>th</sup> and will provide an Irish-themed lunch. Also, the annual Martha's Vineyard event on Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup> will be held 10am-2pm here at DHHSC. Watch for Community emails, as far as the Board Meeting goes, I will follow up on that from now on and make sure it is posted every other month.
- JS: I will ask the interpreters now to step out of their role for a moment. There was a workshop recently, how was it?
- Pam Warkentin: This past workshop hosted by CCRD was called Forensic Listening. It seems like an odd title, but it means really listening to the meaning behind the words. It means to know the speaker's intent. Sometimes we interpret thru our own lens and we have to make sure everyone is truly understanding what is conveyed. Attendance was moderate; it used to be better in the past so now we really need to analyze what will motivate people to come out. Also, while I am up here I want to announce that we will have the Deaf Missions on March 20<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm-8:30pm at \$30 per person and \$50 for couples. Unfortunately, the deadline is tomorrow and you may write me a check if you want or pay online. It will be held at the Deaf Church and the food will be delicious, since it will be catered by Mother Mary's Italian restaurant. This event will support local communities and families, and we plan to take 20% of the profit and donate this to the Deaf Missions. They work very hard in translating the bible to ASL and they are about 2/3 of the way through it. This includes translating Greek and Hebrew to ASL, so that's really amazing.
- JS: Unfortunately, I was not able to attend and only received an email about it 2 weeks in advance. There seemed to be a theme that other interpreters were unaware also, but it seems to be an amazing workshop and I'm sad I missed it. So maybe the lack of turnout had to do with some of us not knowing about it?
- Shelley Stout: Maybe it would be possible to get it out to sister agencies in Northern and Southern California? That would help turnout too.
- Skippy Sumner: I met with interpreters from other areas recently and it seems like they are not aware of activities in this area. If I can be aware, I will dialog or share with others that I meet from now on.
- JS: I've gone to workshops in other areas in the past, but our interpreters who run these workshops are the best hands down. In my experience, we depend on the interpreters a lot here and it would be nice to give them a break and let them attend these, they're so important. We need the exposure and need to support CCRAD.
- Pam Warkentin: Yes, we have some of the top people in the field coming here. We have a speaker coming soon, his name is Noah and he will be hosting a workshop. Following that night will be storytelling and folklore. Jan 30<sup>th</sup> - mark your calendar.
- Skippy Sumner: Can anyone attend CCRAD workshops?
- Pam Warkentin: Yes but it is not free to pay for travel expenses, food, and hotel for the speaker. Each one is \$55 for the whole day.

- Shelley Stout: Is there some kind of fundraising that can be done for this?
- Pam Warkentin: Oh yes, we had the dessert auction last year but there were other conflicts.
- JS: To emphasize, it is great to bring in these speakers and we want to see our interpreters here at the workshops.
- Pam Warkentin: I would like to see the local interpreters providing workshops so there is no cost for flight and hotels etc. We have attempted this in the past, a few local people have hosted some on Friday nights and all day Saturday.
- JS: Then we obviously have many good interpreters that can do workshops, and I did not know we could present our ideas to you -maybe at large this is not known? Maybe we can do a poll of local interpreters, or find some other way to get feedback, as I'm sure you are already doing that. This is such an important topic.

**XVI. Adjournment** – 7:40pm

**Date of Next Local Board Meeting: (May 12, 2015 at 6:00pm) DHHSC – Fresno**

\*Draft submitted by Melissa Sortwell, intermediate DHHSC Secretary