

Below is a transcript of our recent Community Comments town hall meeting, in which our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community was encouraged to share concerns and/or comments. The meeting was hosted on Zoom this year and livestreamed on YouTube. Our Board of Directors started with an hourlong board meeting and then used the second hour to host Community Comments. The format was pared down as a result, a decision on the Board's part, because of their concern for people becoming "Zoom-fatigued" after two hours. At the very least, they wanted to host yet another overdue board meeting and maintain our annual tradition of Community Comments.

## Community Comments - August 2020

Meeting began on Zoom with Trisha Houston, Board President, explaining the process of how the meeting would be facilitated on Zoom.

Community members were given a swift opportunity to make comments or express concerns on any issues:

- Jane Lessard: Despite Covid-19 pandemic, DHHSC figured out creative and different ways to provide support. Thank you for being with us during this difficult time.
- Darci Lessard: Requested for board members to have a DHHSC email address.
  - Response: We are in the process of developing one. At this time, general inquiries are sent to [resources@dhhsc.org](mailto:resources@dhhsc.org). Michelle: In the past, there was an email address specifically for the board but it was rarely checked and the board then decided to use their own email addresses. We can always reestablish a board email address, depending on current board members' preferences.
- Nicole Bruno would like information about board members to be included on DHHSC's website. She also asked that we list which services are provided by which staff on the website, to make the information more clear, because she recently needed to contact staff and it was a bit confusing trying to figure out who does what.
- Regarding VDF, Nicole Bruno said that she would like to see a way for vendors and small businesses still be able to promote their products/services, perhaps via a virtual event, because they are not able to sell in-person at the event due to COVID-19.
- New board member, Jessica Logano-Delgado, took the opportunity to introduce herself (and one of her Deaf children).
- Darci Lessard suggested using creative and innovative virtual events to keep the Deaf Community connected, such as watching a movie together via Zoom.
- Beth Lipston: Fresno Deaf Seniors continue their weekly Thursday socials by using two videophones (VPs) with a limit of 10 individuals each to play games. Susan, DHHSC's Educational Services Director, shadows what each person says so everyone can connect and converse in spite of two separate VP screens. The participating senior citizens are grateful for

Susan's assistance.

- Nicole Bruno: Asked for clarification on how the Fresno Deaf Seniors meet. She suggested that we set up an online tutorial on how to use Zoom for senior citizens. She also asked that DHHSC reinstate something for DeafBlind clients in order to combat isolation.
  - Response: Michelle: Yes, we do provide tutorial videos on our website for how to set up a Zoom account and use Zoom. The DeafBlind Support Group (DBSG) is now discussing how to host a Zoom meeting in September but they are trying to figure out the logistics and how to get SSPs because of remote services. This is a very challenging time for the DeafBlind.
- Michelle: Jane, at the beginning of Community Comments, you complimented DHHSC on our vlogs and remote services, and I want you to know I appreciate your kind words and support. This has been a very challenging time for all of us and we are doing our best to keep our community connected and safe. We want to continue providing quality services and we are all learning as we go. Thank you for your support!
- Trisha reminded everyone that we rely on the community to inform us on pressing issues. Please reach out to your board members with questions, comments, or concerns.
- Steve Longo commended the board on their work and specifically DHHSC's accountant for doing an excellent job on zeroing out CDSS contract balance for the FY 2019-2020.