

**Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Review Board Meeting**  
**current version as of 11.27.2023**

November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

*Omaha Association for the Deaf*

*4050 Hillsdale Ave*

*Omaha, NE*

**A. Welcome**

The meeting of the Nebraska Interpreter Review Board was called to order at 3:07 PM by Chairperson Ms. Meghann Cassidy.

**B. Notice of Open Meetings Act**

Chairperson Meghann Cassidy announced the notice of the meeting was duly given, posted, published, and tendered in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, and all board members received notice simultaneously by email. The agenda has been kept current and available at the Commission's office and on their website. The materials generally used by the board for this meeting are on the table in a public folder that is available to the general public for this meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, {Neb. Rev. Stat. 84-1412 (8)}. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is available with the public folder for the duration of the meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

**C. Roll Call**

For the record, board members Meghann Cassidy, Margie Propp, Vice Chairperson Tami Richardson-Nelson, and Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell were present at the time that the meeting was called to order. Sharon Sinkler, NCDHH Interpreter Program Coordinator was also present. Executive Director of NCDHH Arlene Gunderson and board member Vonda Apking arrived late, at 3:12 PM and 3:48 PM respectively.

Interpreters: Amber Tucker and Pamela Duncan

Minutes: Gina Petersen, NCDHH Administrative Technician

**D. Review of Agenda**

Chairperson Meghann Cassidy reviewed the agenda with the Board Members.

**E. Acceptance of Agenda**

Ms. Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell moved to accept the agenda as written, seconded by Ms. Margie Propp. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all voting ayes.

## **F. Acceptance of Minutes**

There were no changes suggested. Vice Chairperson Tami Richardson-Nelson made the motion to approve, and Ms. Margie Propp seconded. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all voting ayes.

## **G. Chairperson Updates**

- a. Chairperson Meghann Cassidy stated that the update will be regarding the community forum taking place this evening, beginning at 5:30 PM. Ms. Cassidy explained that members of community have been invited to attend and share feedback on how the IRB can improve the interpreter shortage as well as quality of interpreters in Nebraska. There was no RSVP requirement, so the IRB is unsure how many people will attend. Ms. Cassidy stated that the plan is to give welcome and thanks, then deferred to Vice Chairperson Tami Richardson-Nelson to explain the specifics of the activity.

Mrs. Richardson-Nelson explained that the plan is to ask attendees to break into small groups and ask 4 questions. Each group will have an opportunity to discuss those questions and make note on paper or clipboard if needed. The audience will be numbered off using one through four in order to decide who is in what group. IRB members are encouraged to facilitate and support, but not participate in the dialogue. Perhaps have the small groups select a recorder to take notes for their group. Best option is to give the groups all 4 questions at once to discuss instead of one at a time. Ideally it will be 10 minutes per question, then 20 minutes for each group to share out what they discussed.

Ms. Arlene Gunderson (after her arrival at 3:48) mentioned something she noticed regarding the community forum, which is that some interpreters she met recently didn't know about the event, which raises the question, "How can we improve the outreach that we are doing?"

### *Discussion on current outreach methods*

Ms. Gunderson stated that Scottsbluff seemed upset that the forum was not being offered remotely through Zoom, and suggested options on how to make that work for the future. Ms. Cassidy suggested in the future perhaps making a trip out to the western parts of Nebraska. Ms. Gunderson agreed with that idea, but questioned whether they would have people participate since folks are spread out in rural areas. Zoom provides more access than ever to rural areas for events like these.

Ms. Sharon Sinkler, NCDHH interpreter Coordinator, stated that Facebook Live at least will be provided for the night's event using her cell phone, and pointed out that Zoom is more difficult to coordinate.

*Discussion on how to make Zoom work for virtual participants.*

Mrs. Tami Richardson-Nelson revisited Ms. Gunderson's earlier concerns about advertising this event and asked if everybody on the IRB got a notification that it was happening, to which she got mixed responses of yes and no. Ms. Sinkler clarified that the flyer did get sent via both email and social media, to which Ms. Cassidy added that the flyer can be provided, but it is out of the IRB's hands whether or not people choose to pay attention to it. Ms. Gunderson stated that she understood, but her concern still is that 3 interpreters in the last week did not know that the forum was happening, so how can that be changed and what are some solutions?

*Discussion on advertising methods*

Ms. Arlene Gunderson suggested that maybe the answer lies with something other than just posting on the internet, like texting individuals or using zoom to advertise. Ms. Gunderson admitted her frustration with the lack of communication between the IRB and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and suggested improving that connection as a goal for 2024.

Ms. Sinkler posed a question on behalf of Kelsey Cruz, Public Information Officer, who sent a message asking whether or not to post the Facebook Live reminder on Facebook. Ms. Gunderson stated that yes, the reminder should be posted and a Zoom link should be added as well.

*Discussion on Zoom logistics*

**H. NCDHH – Arlene Gunderson**

**a. Agency Updates**

- Ms. Gunderson reported that there have been some issues between the board and the staff, as well as some tensions within the agency and with external organizations. Ms. Gunderson stated that she is still new, and recognizes that her leadership style is different than the previous executive director as well as the fact that she is a Deaf, Hispanic woman.
- Ms. Gunderson explained the agency's 4 programs: the interpreting program's future is a little worrisome in light of Ms. Sinkler's retirement since it is such a big responsibility. The Behavioral Health Coordinator position had 3 candidates, one of which was offered the job but declined, likely due to insufficient compensation/benefits. The Communication and Marketing program is run by Kelsey Cruz who also monitors the admin team, most of whom do not sign. Last is the advocacy specialist team, run by Kim Davis. The advocacy specialist team recently hired a new staff member, Katia Castro, who is fluent in English, ASL and Spanish.

- Next full board meeting
  - December 8th in Lincoln at 8:30 AM; members of the public are encouraged to come, since NCDHH will be releasing their new logo along with some other announcements.
  - Additionally, the board will meet on November 27th in Lincoln from 10:30 AM to 12:30 AM and the meeting will be kept open at Ms. Gunderson's request and according to the open meetings act. Members of the public are also encouraged to come to this meeting just to learn about what is going on within the agency.

**I. Public Comments**

None

**J. Old Business**

**K. New Business**

- a. **Next meeting date:** Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1:30 to 3:30 PM in the Lincoln NCDHH office building (room 4A).
- b. Ms. Gunderson brought up the potential to livestream board meetings in the future.

**L. Announcements**

- a. Ethics training webinars with Regan Thibodeau will be provided on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> from 5-8 PM. These workshops are free and counts for Ethics and RID PPO (power, privilege, and oppression) credits.

**M. Adjourn**

- a. Ms. Margie Propp made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:10 PM, seconded by Ms. Arlene Gunderson. With no further discussion, the motion carried with all voting ayes.