



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO**  
**COMMISSION FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**  
**Thursday, March 3, 2016**  
NMCDHH Conference Room  
505 Marquette Ave. NW, Suite 1550  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
3:00 p.m.

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**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Austin Welborn called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

Present: Austin Welborn, Chair  
John Fullinwider  
Concha Dunwell  
Rosemary Gallegos  
Johnny Robertson  
Don Johnson

Absent: Luis Quiñonez

Fourteen staff members from NMCDHH were present: Executive Director Nathan Gomme, Jason Siergey, Corina Gutiérrez, Lisa Dignan, Deborah Romero, Cheryl Padilla, Lori Neubauer, Luke Adams, Roger Robb, Rich Bailey, Joyce Croker, Susana Santillan, Sandra Williams and Staff Interpreter Andrea Ginn. Six other interpreters were present, Rachelle Clifford and Adam Romero (tactile), Mary Collard, Brandi Burrell, Audrey Blanco and Monica Sower. Eleven members of the community were in the audience.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**16.8**

Commissioner Johnny Robertson made a motion to approve the agenda.  
Commissioner Rosemary Gallegos seconded.  
Motion Passed unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF December 3, 2015 MINUTES**

Chair Welborn asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the December meeting.

**16.9**

Commissioner Rosemary Gallegos made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.  
Commissioner Johnny Robertson seconded.  
Motion passed unanimously.

#### IV. REPORTS

##### **a. Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Nathan Gomme began by welcoming the new members of the NMCDHH Board, Commissioners Concha Dunwell and Don Johnson. He also announced that Sam Martinez took a position with another agency, which meant some changes with the staff and their responsibilities.

Executive Director Gomme shared that before Mr. Martinez left, he had done a lot of work in establishing collaborative efforts within the state of New Mexico as well as on a national level. Mr. Martinez attended the National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA) conference as well as the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) conference. There Mr. Martinez presented about the Commission's iPad program. Mr. Gomme mentioned that the CDHH iPad program was the first in the nation, and has started to spread across the country as other states adopt this program. Mr. Martinez was able to talk about the positives about the program as well as some of the hardships that CDHH faced while establishing the program.

Executive Director Gomme also talked about the Southwest Conference on Disability which took place in October. Haben Girma, a Deaf-Blind lawyer and Harvard graduate, gave a presentation there. She presented on some of the struggles of the Deaf-Blind and Mr. Gomme came away from her presentation realizing CDHH could do more for the Deaf-Blind community. Recently there was a Deaf-Blind awareness event for the State of New Mexico. Executive Director Gomme was invited to that event and heard from the group that employment was a major issue; Deaf-Blind individuals want to work. The Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing needs to see how Deaf-Blind services can be improved.

Dr. Juliette Sterkens came to the state to work with the three Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) chapters here as well as CDHH, to provide presentations on the Loop, t-coil and assistive technology in general. NMSD also supported her presentation in Santa Fe, and at the Commission conference room here in Albuquerque she gave a presentation to approximately 14 audiologists and hearing aid providers. In Las Cruces, Sandra Williams and Susana Santillan worked hard to help Dr. Sterkens' presentation happen there.

At the same time it was clear there was a need for legislative action. Executive Director Gomme said that the Commission with all three chapters of HLAA developed a communications access committee. That committee discussed the need for t-coil education, and House Bill 70, which would require audiologists and hearing aid dispensers to educate those provided with hearing aids about how their hearing aids work with assistive listening devices. So far the bill has proceeded through the process. A lot of work was done with different legislators, developing relationships and a positive rapport.

Aside from HB70, the Commission was able to discuss with the legislators the future needs of CDHH. The state had to make some tough budgetary decisions, and the final outcome is not yet shown in writing, but a possible change that could affect CDHH in a positive way is having surcharge assessed on Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and pre-paid cell phones. Executive Director Gomme stated that he was happy to say he found people within the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) and the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) that were willing to listen to his concerns. To apply the surcharge to VoIP and pre-paid cell phones will require legislative action.

Commissioner Rosemary Gallegos asked if Executive Director Gomme could expand more on what is happening with the budget and asked if it was still not finalized. Mr. Gomme responded that he was aware that Governor Martinez had signed the budget, House Bill 2, but he had not received it from the DFA. He explained that there were two separate proposals, one from the LFC and one from the DFA. The executive budget proposal allowed CDHH a bit more room for the new initiatives Mr. Gomme previously discussed with the Board: the mental health and the veterans' initiatives. That proposal also eliminated the DVR transfer in full. The LFC budget did not stop the transfer completely, but reduced it, and did not include additional funding for the initiatives. Mr. Gomme added that Paul Aguilar, Interim Executive Director of DVR, was also in favor of eliminating the transfer of funds from CDHH to DVR. HB2 recommended cuts statewide, so Mr. Gomme knew there were reductions, but has yet to see the exact numbers. Mr. Gomme also mentioned that the State was facing a funding crisis due to the drop in gas and oil prices, and that no one at the legislative level wants to cut our agency. They want to ensure that services are going to continue and are concerned about sustainability for every agency.

Commissioner Johnny Robertson asked if Executive Director Gomme could talk about what the future holds for CDHH in the next five years. Executive Director Gomme responded that he was approached by members of the deaf community who want to establish a task force on deaf issues, and he had been working with the Hard of Hearing community, too. Eventually they needed to be brought together and CDHH can proceed from there. CDHH cannot move forward until some of the issues facing the deaf community and the divisiveness is resolved. An example would be the capital outlay funds for the DCC multi-purpose center. Mr. Gomme said he was approached to participate in their focus group. He did and also worked with NMAD and discussed transferring the capital outlay funds to the city of Albuquerque, which amounted to \$20,000. He said this was the first time in several years he had seen this kind of collaboration and it has a lot to do with the current DCC and NMAD boards.

Commissioner Concha Dunwell asked how the funding was divided between the deaf and the hard of hearing. She stated that in Las Cruces most of the deaf know about the Commission, but when she talks to hard of hearing people they have no idea about CDHH. Executive Director Gomme agreed she had a valid point and that was why he had been involved with HLAA with Steve Frazier, and the presidents of the Las Cruces and Santa Fe chapters. Sandra Williams and Susana Santillan from the Las Cruces office are also working hard networking in that area. As far as the question about allocation of funds, Mr. Gomme clarified that there is no designation to hard of hearing versus deaf. CDHH advocates work with everyone, whether deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind.

**b. Department Reports**

**i. Community Advocacy**

Corina Gutiérrez introduced herself to the new board members as Director of Community Advocacy. She is also responsible for community education, the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution (TED) Program, and individual and systemic advocacy all over the state of New Mexico. Ms. Gutiérrez explained that many individuals struggle with communication access, and her department is there to solve those issues. For systemic advocacy, her department works with different organizations such as law enforcement.

With Sam Martinez leaving CDHH, Ms. Gutiérrez said that Jason Siergey has taken on the responsibility of the TED Program and she wanted to recognize his hard work. Mr. Siergey has brought some great ideas to the table. One thing he has done is work closely with Luke Adams to develop a card to send to clients after they've had equipment for three years, reminding them to contact CDHH about reapplying for new equipment.

Roger Robb worked with law enforcement and came up with a placard that deaf individuals can show to an officer if they are pulled over. The officer would be able to point on the card to show what has happened and they will be able to communicate quickly and effectively. Ms. Gutiérrez explained that this particular card was developed for the needs of the deaf community, and a separate placard will be developed for the hard of hearing community because deaf individuals and hard of hearing individuals have different needs.

Ms. Gutiérrez announced that Roger Robb will be working with Amy Lucero from COPD to help seniors at NMSD understand the differences between CDHH and COPD. When the students graduate, they will be aware of what resources are available to them.

In the Las Cruces office, Sandra Williams has been working with the Director of Dispatch, Hugo Gomez, to have a system for deaf individuals to contact the 911 dispatchers. For example, if a deaf person is on the road and an emergency comes up, they can now contact 911 by text. Currently this is only happening in Doña Ana County. Hopefully it will spread to other counties as well. Ms. Gutiérrez explained that for this to work individuals need to sign up to be able to use the system.

Ms. Gutiérrez mentioned that there were a many clients in southern New Mexico that spoke Spanish, and she was thrilled that Susana Santillan is able to speak Spanish with those clients. Furthermore, in the short amount of time that Ms. Santillan has worked there, she has already had 40 clients.

Commissioner Robertson asked if CDHH and COPD will talk to the mainstreamed students about the roles of each agency. Ms. Gutiérrez agreed that might be a good idea. Commissioner Robertson also asked if the placard for the deaf drivers was supposed to be displayed somewhere. Ms. Gutiérrez responded it was not meant to be displayed, but it could be kept in a glove box or purse. She also clarified that this was still in development.

Executive Director Gomme also added to the discussion about the placards saying that CDHH was in the process of providing training for law enforcement, and showing them the best way to interact with deaf or hard of hearing individuals when they are pulled over for routine traffic stops. The police are motivated to learn this information. Other states, such as Arizona and Kentucky, are using placards and have found it very useful. It is also reducing anxiety in the deaf individuals who are pulled over and have to interact with the police. The police can just point at the icon that indicates what the violation was. It reduces barriers and helps establish a relationship with law enforcement. Mr. Gomme added that Mr. Robb was doing great work with APD, and this training is ongoing.

## **ii. Community Engagement**

Director of Community Engagement, Lisa Dignan, explained for the new board members that the department had a staff of three, herself, Andrea Ginn, who was one of the team of interpreters at the meeting, and Richard Bailey, our Communication Engagement Specialist.

Ms. Dignan and Mr. Bailey work together on the website and social media, and Mr. Bailey handles all the Request for Proposals (RFP). He is currently working on the RFP for Deaf-Blind Deaf-Plus Services. CDHH currently has a contract with the COPD, but it has reached the maximum number of times it can be renewed. CDHH is required by the state to go out for RFP again.

Mr. Bailey attended the pepnet 2 summit in Atlanta which was entirely paid for by pepnet 2 and he was able to be involved in other state teams on the subject of serving deaf and hard of hearing students. He was also an important part of the Career Expo that took place at NMSD, coordinating presenters. CDHH had two presenters with a total of ten presentations and CDHH

also participated in the stakeholders meeting and a panel presentation in the evening in which Ms. Gutiérrez participated.

Ms. Ginn coordinates all the internal requests for interpreting services and is CDHH's Staff Interpreter. She runs our apprentice program and there are three apprentice interpreters who are currently working with the Commission. The apprentices are pre-certified interpreters who are working towards certification. They come into the office and do professional development activities with other interpreters as well as deaf and hearing staff members. With Sam Martinez no longer with our agency, Jason Siergey and Luke Adams are doing booths at outreach events. Since both are deaf, the apprentice interpreters will go with them and this gives them experience in a fairly mellow environment. One of the apprentices will complete the program by the end of March and CDHH plans to keep her on as a contract interpreter.

Ms. Ginn will be presenting to the Signed Language Interpreting Program at UNM. CDHH has a great relationship with the program and Ms. Ginn will talk to them about professional development opportunities, involvement with NMRID and about the apprentice program.

Ms. Dignan mentioned other professional development opportunities including New Mexico Mentoring which is for signed language interpreters throughout New Mexico and her department also collaborates with other entities for professional development activities for interpreters. This year two of the curricula used in New Mexico Mentoring will be revised: the medical interpreting curriculum as well as fingerspelling and numbering curriculum. All of the curricula age out at some point and need to be revised regularly. Ms. Dignan stated that the goal of all professional development was to increase the pool of well qualified, certified, community licensed interpreters for New Mexico.

Ms. Dignan said that at the last meeting she mentioned that the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) no longer had a centralized coordinator for ASL services, but now the AOC has completed the RFP and has entered a contract with Rhiannon Sykes Chavez to be the statewide coordinator. To have centralized coordination again is good news for advocates as well as for the deaf and hard of hearing community when they need services.

The new website is getting positive feedback. Ms. Dignan asked that if anyone noticed anything on the website that needed adjustment, to let her know. Unlike before, certain staff members that work on the website have the ability to make changes and do not need to pay our web designer to make those changes. It seems to be an effective tool to reach out to the community. One of the features is the "Ask the Expert" and we have seen an increase in the questions asked to us through that feature.

At the last board meeting, Ms. Dignan talked about the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) placing a moratorium on certifications. The Licensure Board met in January and made a decision to suspend the expiration on provisional licenses for six months. Although there is no guarantee that RID will be certifying again at that time, the hold is in place until July and then it will be revisited. The Licensure Board is actively working on ways to avoid a negative impact on the deaf and hard of hearing community as well as on interpreters working towards certification. The Licensure Board has said that if there are interpreters who have concerns about their specific situation, and would like to bring their questions directly to the board, it is important to submit those questions to the board administrator before the April meeting. The Board is expecting to receive several concerns.

In addition to all her responsibilities as Director of Community Engagement, Ms. Dignan informed the board that she also handles Human Resources for the agency. At the last board meeting, Ms. Dignan announced that CDHH would soon be fully staffed, which lasted six weeks until Sam Martinez moved to another agency. Ms. Louise Chavez-Rasgado joined CDHH on January 2<sup>nd</sup>

as Financial Services Specialist and has been a great fit for the agency. The Director of Administrative Services, Deborah Romero, is happy to have her since Ms. Joyce Croker will be retiring within the month.

Ms. Dignan explained that State workers have an Employee Assistance Program that offers excellent training in the form of webinars, which were not accessible to deaf staff. After contacting the people in Risk Management and the EAP program, they agreed to start captioning all their webinars. Luke Adams and Rich Bailey participated in the first captioned webinar and the captioning was successful.

### **iii. Administrative Services**

Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services, said she currently had four people in her department, but as Ms. Dignan had said, Joyce Croker will be retiring near the end of March. Ms. Croker has worked for the State of New Mexico for 28 years. She is also a veteran and was in the U. S. Air Force. She will be missed. The new employee, Louise Chavez-Rasgado, has a great deal of experience with the State and many of Ms. Croker's duties are being transferred to her. The department is working hard, meeting deadlines and attending trainings.

Ms. Romero was happy that there was a reduction in the transfer to DVR and the new amount is \$183,000 for FY17. Since she didn't have the final numbers for the FY17 budget, Ms. Romero talked about the FY16 budget. Currently about 41% of the budget has been spent. The TRS revenues are decreasing as Executive Director Gomme discussed, and Ms. Romero projected that we will bring in \$2.2 million for FY16. The budget that was approved for FY16 was \$3.7 million. It will be necessary for the agency to save \$562,000 of the unspent budget since there will not be the revenue to cover it.

Commissioner Robertson asked why TRS surcharges were declining. Executive Director Gomme explained that it was the rise in VoIP phones and pre-paid cell phones. The FCC said that VoIP is not telecommunication, therefore they are not paying the surcharge. With pre-paid cell phones, customers buy a card to pay for the phone service and the surcharge is not applied. The language needs to be changed to fit the definition of telecommunications, which has happened in Maine and California, and New Mexico is trying to follow their lead. This would require legislative action.

Deborah Romero concluded by saying that CDHH has no control over the amount received from the TRS surcharge through the Taxation and Revenue Department. Other than the TRS surcharge, CDHH has money from the general fund and the fund balance.

### **iv. Summary**

Executive Director Gomme wanted to add that he has taken over the Relay Administration responsibilities now that Sam Martinez has left. He also wanted to applaud Jason Siergey for his motivation in the TED program, he has already found things to fix to make it easier for applicants and the process more efficient, and has taken on a great deal of additional responsibility. He also said that all members of the staff have taken on every task that's been handed to them.

A new person representing Teltex, Shannon Qualls, will be working directly with clientele here in New Mexico. She will be able to directly answer people that have the Teltex equipment from our TED program. Ms. Qualls just started a month and a half ago and has already done ten booths.

Executive Director Gomme said that CDHH will work closer with NMSD, the DCC, HLAA and increase collaboration. He reiterated that deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind will all receive services from CDHH.

## **V. ACTION ITEMS**

**a. Election of Officers**

Chair Welborn announced that it was time to elect officers, which would be Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Secretary.

**16.10**

Commissioner Robertson moved that Commissioner Austin Welborn maintain his position as Chair.  
Commissioner Welborn accepted.  
Commissioner Gallegos seconded.  
Motion passed unanimously.

**16.11a**

Commissioner Robertson moved that Commissioner Concha Dunwell be Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Dunwell inquired what the position entailed. Executive Director Gomme explained that the board would be working with CDHH's attorney Rick Word to present a brief summary of the commissioners' roles and responsibilities and CDHH's vision. NMSD had a great training and Mr. Gomme said he thought CDHH could borrow from that for CDHH Commissioners.

**16.11b**

Commissioner Dunwell accepted the nomination.  
Commissioner Don Johnson seconded.  
Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Welborn nominated Commissioner Gallegos as Secretary; Commissioner Gallegos asked for clarification on her responsibilities. Executive Director Gomme explained that in the past Dr. Ronald Stern was secretary and worked with Lori Neubauer in taking care of the minutes and documentation. Ms. Neubauer stated that she took care of the minutes unless a special meeting was held and then Dr. Stern would take the minutes, making sure that she received them to post on the website and keep in the records. Commissioner Gallegos felt that it being her first year as NMSD Superintendent, should decline at this time.

**16.12**

Commissioner Dunwell nominated Commissioner Don Johnson as Secretary.  
Commissioner Johnson accepted.  
Commissioner Robertson seconded.  
Motion passed unanimously.

**b. OMA Resolution**

Executive Director Gomme stated that Lisa Dignan would explain the OMA Resolution. Ms. Dignan stated that the OMA, the Open Meetings Act, is a state statute that all Boards, Commissions and Public Bodies are required to follow. All board members were emailed a copy the day before. It has been approved by the Commission's attorney, Rick Word. All public bodies are required to adopt an OMA Resolution annually. Ms. Neubauer and Executive Director Gomme also deal with this as well to make sure all public notices for the meetings are sent out to the appropriate places within the appropriate amount of time and final agendas and meeting minutes are also posted within the required time.

**16.13**

Commissioner Robertson made a motion that the Board adopt the OMA Resolution as written.  
Commissioner Dunwell seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

***c. Future Board Meeting Dates***

Executive Director Gomme explained that dates of board meeting should be set well in advance to help reduce the complexity of the OMA regulations and we can post information in a timely manner so the community is able to attend. Mr. Gomme stated that the next potential date would be in June. There must be four meetings annually.

**16.14**

Commissioner Robertson made a motion that the Board set the dates for future meetings. Commissioner Dunwell seconded.

After discussion the following dates and times were selected for future board meetings:

Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

All were in support of the proposed dates; motion passed unanimously.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to discuss.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

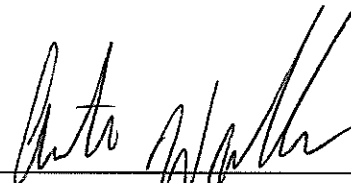
Chair Welborn adjourned the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lori G. Neubauer

Administrative Operations Specialist



Austin Welborn, Board Chair