

March 11, 2021

REMOTE MEETING OF THE ILLINOIS DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMISSION

A quarterly meeting of the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC) was held remotely on Thursday, March 11, 2021.

Call to Order

Chairperson Dennis O'Brien called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM.

Commissioners Present

Amy Blough	Yes	Joseph Culpepper	Yes	Susan Dramin-Weiss	Yes
David Frazier	Yes	Lori Krakora	Yes	Jarom Matheson	Yes
Dennis O'Brien	Yes				

Public

Remote Live Broadcast

Special Presentation

Dr. Michael McKee and Sarah Hein of the Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Losses (AMPHL) presented **COVID-19 Vaccination: What is it and what's it like to get a COVID-19 Vaccine?** Dr. Michael McKee, as a physician with a hearing loss, presented the science behind COVID-19 vaccination procedure, herd immunity, and how Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine protects against the infectious diseases. Sarah Hein, as a nurse practitioner with a hearing loss, presents the vaccine shot procedure, side effects, and how to take care of your body after the vaccine shot.

Approval Meeting Minutes

Lori Krakora moved to approve the minutes as read for the February 24, 2020, Special Meeting; seconded by Amy Blough. Motion passed.

Amy Blough	Yes	Joseph Culpepper	Yes	Susan Dramin-Weiss	Abstain
David Frazier	Yes	Lori Krakora	Yes	Jarom Matheson	Yes
Dennis O'Brien	Yes				

Dennis noted the minutes for the March 13, 2020, Special Meeting is tabled to the next meeting due to an employee on FMLA.

Chairperson's Report

- Chairperson O'Brien acknowledges the Commission had no meeting for a year since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic impacts many different walks of life. The Commissioners were able to conduct interviews for the Director vacancy and hired Benro Ogunyipe as the new Director. There are transition and training procedures in place for a new Director. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic there have been restrictions and rules in place regarding the Commission office, staff interactions and operations impacting

the new Director's full responsibilities including: training, meeting with other state agencies, be it in the office, be it in virtual format, and so on.

- As a Commission chair, I ask the Commissioners to take consideration giving a new Director more time than provided to acquire responsibilities due to the restrictions imposed by the state government during the pandemic. As Commissioners, we are responsible for evaluating the Director's job performance annually. With the pandemic ongoing for, we must determine how do we evaluate his job performance during the pandemic versus when it was not occurred during pandemic. I have personally informed Benro that we as Commissioners are supporting him any way we can during the pandemic. The Director has been doing the best he can.
- As a Commission Chair, I have been meeting with the Director on a weekly, sometimes bi-weekly, basis.
- Commissioners and the public should expect the FY18-19 Two-Year Audit report to be completed and released by the Illinois Audit General soon. The Director is made aware of the previous audit and has been eager and proactive to take any corrective action by meeting with Central Management Services, Governor's Office of Management Budget, and others.
- The Director will participate in the legislative committee hearings to testify on appropriations, one of the many of firsts the new Director will experience, and the Commissioners are standing behind supporting his effort.
- All Commissioners including myself are running on expiring terms. The Director had the opportunity to contact the Governor's Office and inquired regarding the Commissioners serving on expiring terms. Director received a response affirming the Commissioners have the discretion to continue serving on expiring terms and looks forward to working with them on filling in vacancies and replacements.

Director's Report

- Director Benro Ogunyipe provided an agency report for the period from November 2020 to March 2021.
- The Commission's new Director assumed his role and responsibilities on November 2, 2020 going through the limited transition during the ongoing pandemic and the health and safety guidelines and restrictions.
- No formality set up for the new Director during the pandemic including meeting with the full staff simultaneously. No state issued video technologies available for meeting all staff.
- The state continues to transition all governmental materials to remote format making it a bit challenging to ensuring materials are accessible, for example, audio only training during the remote training without captioning. Continues, through a slow transition process, to acquire full roles and responsibilities as a Director due to a lack of streamlined governmental transition process set up for a new Director during to the ongoing pandemic.
- Commission Office operates on a limited basis with 50% staff remote work and 50% limited capacity at the office in adherence to the Illinois Department of Public Health Guidelines & Governor's Executive Orders Disaster Declaration. From the middle of November to current (March 2021), 100% staff remote work in adherence to the Central Management Services Internal Guidance for State Employees.
- The Commission office remains closed to the public as of May 2021 pursuant to Executive Orders 2020-04 and 2021-01. Currently, one staff at a time goes to the office on a limited basis to check on the mails and maintenance of the office.
- Worked to identify solutions to restart the Commission Meeting remotely through utilizing state issued Cisco Webex Meeting for the March 11, 2021.

- Dry Run was conducted to ensure accessibility and compliance with the updated Open Meeting Act for conducting public body meeting in a virtual format.
- In the event COVID-19 restrictions continue into FY22, the Commission will continue to conduct the Quarterly Commission Meeting remotely utilizing video technology platform with implementation of full communication accessibility including live video ASL interpreters and captioning to accommodate a broader audience including hearing loss individuals, sign language interpreters, and all members of the public.
- Attended State Government Meetings and Collaborated/Partnered with the following agencies: Lt. Governor’s Office, presented Communication Access Training; Secretary of State. Access on CDL exam and information; Illinois Department of Public Health, Communication Access on IDPH’s COVID-19 Content; and Equip for Equality, on Communication Access for Incarcerated Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Met with the Office of Governor Staff’s Human Services Appointment Team (HSAT) regarding the process for appointing individuals to boards and commissions during the pandemic. HSAT reassured the Governor’s Office permits people to serve on an expired term until they are replaced. HSAT confirmed the Governor’s Office is active at reviewing and approving appointments to boards and commissions appointments to filling vacancies, replacements, and new appointee during the pandemic.
- The Commission would like to encourage the public, who are interested in serving on the Commission to apply at this website, www.appointments.illinois.gov. Director will work with the Commission staff to publicize applications to the public interested in serving on the Commission.
- Commission Budget:

Previous FY20 Commission Fund July 1, 2019 – June 20, 2020	Appropriations	Actual Expenditures	Remaining Balance
General Revenue	\$ 673,000.00	\$ 497,846.44	\$ 175,153.56
Interpreter for the Deaf	\$ 211,800.00	\$ 139,399.32	\$ 72,400.68
Agency Total	\$ 884,800.00	\$ 637,245.76	\$ 247,554.24

Current FY21 Commission Fund July 1, 2020 – June 20, 2021	Appropriations	Estimate Expenditures	Remaining Balance
General Revenue	\$ 639,400.00	\$ 609,400.00	\$ 30,000.00
Interpreter for the Deaf	\$ 202,800.00	\$ 192,800.00	\$ 10,000.00
Agency Total	\$ 842,200.00	\$ 802,200.00	\$ 40,000.00

Budget FY22 Commission Fund July 1, 2021 – June 20, 2022	Appropriations	Actual Expenditures	Remaining Balance
General Revenue	\$ 639,400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Interpreter for the Deaf	\$ 243,100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Agency Total	\$ 882,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

- Additional reports provided to the Commissioners: State Government Meetings, Outreach/Presentations, Staff Professional Development/Training, Meetings with Stakeholders, Commission Reports, FY22 Appropriations, Legislative Bills and Resolutions, Interpreter Licensure Board, and Interpreter Licensing & BEI Certification, and FY22 Key Objectives

New Business

- FY 21 Meeting Schedule
- FY 22 Meeting Schedule
- Election of Officers

Joseph Culpepper moved to open new business; seconded by Susan Dramin-Weiss. Motion passed.

Amy Blough	Not Present	Joseph Culpepper	Yes	Susan Dramin-Weiss	Yes
David Frazier	Yes	Lori Krakora	Yes	Jarom Matheson	Yes
Dennis O'Brien	Yes				

Lori Krakora moved to accept May 21, 2021 as the next quarterly Commission meeting in FY21; seconded by Joseph Culpepper. Motion passed.

Amy Blough	Not Present	Joseph Culpepper	Yes	Susan Dramin-Weiss	Yes
David Frazier	Yes	Lori Krakora	Yes	Jarom Matheson	Yes
Dennis O'Brien	Yes				

Susan Dramin-Weiss moved to accept the following quarterly meeting dates in FY22: August 13, 2021; November 12, 2021, March 11, 2022, and May 13, 2022; seconded by Lori Krakora. Motion passed.

Amy Blough	Not Present	Joseph Culpepper	Yes	Susan Dramin-Weiss	Yes
David Frazier	Yes	Lori Krakora	Yes	Jarom Matheson	Yes
Dennis O'Brien	Yes				

Susan Dramin-Weiss moved to elect Dennis O'Brien and Lori Krakora to remain serving as Chairperson and Vice President, respectively, until November 2021 elections; seconded by Jarom Matheson. Motion passed.

Amy Blough	Not Present	Joseph Culpepper	Yes	Susan Dramin-Weiss	Yes
David Frazier	Yes	Lori Krakora	Yes	Jarom Matheson	Yes
Dennis O'Brien	Yes				

Public Comment

Chairperson reads the written public comment received for the record:

Darci Zook: Good evening IDHHC Staff, What are your plans for the future distribution of masks? Will you be looking into BendShape or Clear Masks for DHH+ residents in IL? Will there be statewide training in the near future for law enforcement, EMT, emergency agencies, and etc.? The interpreter dictionary needs to be updated at local hospitals, will there be a task force developed by IDHHC to make sure that all hospitals in Illinois have the most updated list for interpreters to be on-call? Thank you for your time. Respectfully, Darci Zook.

Open Discussion

- Chairperson O’Brien addresses the need for promotion and recruitment of new Commissioners. Promotion includes application process through the appointments website. Commissioners are encouraged to promote any individuals interested to apply for the Commissioner position of the IDHHC.
- Chairperson O’Brien addresses the state agencies forming Facebook pages. O’Brien added that previously there was no policy set up for state government utilizing Facebook page. Lately, more state government agencies have utilize social media platform and inquired whether there is an existing policy for social media by state government agencies in place. Director Ogunyipe responded there’s no policy, per se but there’s a guideline by the Secretary of State. The guideline addresses concerns regarding FOIA compliance that satisfies requirements for state agencies to create and maintain a Facebook page or any social media platform.
- Commissioner Krakora brought up an overdue 5-year strategic plan and was informed that the plan will be initiated once a new Director is hired. Chairperson O’Brien responded that the 5 year strategic plan can be on hold until the Director is able to fulfil priorities in his role as he acquire and participate in the trainings the first year as a Director and new Commissioners and when restrictions are rested before the Director can undertake proposed brainstorm and strategic plan based on his communication with the Commissioners, staff, and the communities. Commissioners can document notes for the future meetings for use to discuss strategic plan. Commissioner Krakora stresses the importance for Commissioners to start documenting and brainstorming items prepared for the strategic plan retreat in the near future.

Adjournment

Jarom Matheson moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 PM; seconded by Susan Dramin-Weiss. Motion passed.

Amy Blough	Not Present	Joseph Culpepper	Yes	Susan Dramin-Weiss	Yes
David Frazier	Yes	Lori Krakora	Yes	Jarom Matheson	Yes
Dennis O’Brien	Yes				

(Signature in file)

Chairperson _____ Date _____

(Signature in file)

IDHHC Open Meetings Act Designee _____ Date _____