

§ 9-2404. Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (December 8, 2017)

Second Quarterly Meeting
December 8, 2017

Present:

Council Members: Chair Stephanie Summers, Interim Secretary Vikki Porter, Janet Moye Cornick, Jason Corning, Spencer Dove, Lisalee Egbert, Larry Gray, Tanya Green, Marny Helfrich, Greg James, Eddy Laird, Mary Lynn Lally, Tayler Mayer, Gordon Outlaw, Karunya Samuel, & Victoria Wilkins

ODHH Staff: Kelby Brick, Allysa Dittmar, & Deborah Nathanson

Absent: Vice Chair Erin Buck Skees, Dakota Burgess

Call to Order: 2:08 PM

Meeting Minutes:

Minutes from September 2017 read and accepted as corrected:

Lisalee Egbert arrived late, but was present at the meeting.

MACDHH Chair Summers's Report:

Emceed at the recent Legislative Awareness Day (hosted by ODHH); Event attended by 50 people and had a panel and awards for distinguished leaders in the community.

Attended stakeholder meeting on captioning in public space; Meeting attended by representatives from community and restaurant owners and associations; Discussed how can improve captioning in restaurants and public spaces; Suggestions for improvement include signages.

Thanked ODHH for posting information on their website on how to file complaints with MCCR

Encouraged council to keep eye on upcoming legislative session and address any bills that may be critical to all MACDHH stakeholders; Requested by Council Member Corning to send any bills concerning DB to him so that he may mobilize support from his community.

ODHH Director's report: See attached.

General Discussion:

Chair Summers asked for a follow-up on Council Member Gray's inquiry from recent meeting on whether transportation can be provided for those attending AA and/or NA meetings; Suggested that the Council (or the Office) consider doing a survey to determine if there's a need for providing transportation to those kinds of meetings.

Council had an open discussion on providing outreach to underserved populations; Council Member Gray asked about meeting the needs of those in the Latino community especially trilingual interpreters including providing workshops on cultural competency for the interpreters; Some discussion on having outreach materials printed in Spanish and other languages; Council Member Dove explained that his office has installed a plug-in in the office website that is capable of translating into other languages and the office website also has different attachments in other languages as well through the Department of Information Technology's Translation Services; Council Member James explained that his office does provide outreach to target populations on an as-needed basis; Some are concerned that resources are available but are they being made known to key stakeholders (Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing) especially in visual language (ASL); Council Member Samuel provided some examples from his office (IRS) on providing communication access to Deaf individuals on how to use tax forms via ASL; Council Member Porter suggested that state department websites include separate pages with ASL videos to make it more accessible for Deaf consumers; Council Members Dove & James provided some info on how department websites are set up and how websites are managed by communication people and IT staff; Consider designing special URL for deaf populations; Council Member Mayer, with more than 20 years of experience designing websites, suggested that departments do user testing to identify what works and what does not work as far as accessing key information is concerned; Council Member Helfrich suggested that data be collected on how many consumers need information in ASL to help departments justify adding videos to department websites (EX: If there is a large population of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing needing information on public transportation then the Department of Transportation will better rationalize the need for posting ASL videos on public transportation); Council Member Corning cautioned that departments need to make sure that their websites are 508-compliant for low vision consumers.

Council Member Lally shared some concern about Deaf Seniors living in nursing homes with limited access to interpreting services and suggested that State consider providing funding to nursing homes with Deaf Seniors so that they can provide interpreting services for everyday interactions; Director Brick added that the office has received reports from Deaf individuals complaining that they are not receiving interpreting services from nursing homes and/or rehabilitation centers when law is clear on the fact that they must provide interpreting services. The Office has communicated this concern with both the Department of Aging and the Department of Health and encouraged those to file complaints through MCCR anytime interpreting services are not provided.

Council Member Porter asked about having general fund for providing interpreters for funeral services and currently, the State of Maryland government doesn't have such fund because there's no state-run interpreting agency. However, it is possible to consider setting up some kind of grant to provide funding for interpreters for those attending funeral services.

Council Member Samuel, in response to Office Staff Nathanson's comments about sharing what departments are doing and providing, shared that Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing are often unaware of different services available to them and how this information can be disseminated.

ODHH Director provided additional reports on a variety of issues being addressed by the Office: NONE

Council Inquiry:

Council Member Helfrich, in response to Director Brick's Report, inquired if there were any legislators or legislative aides attending the Legislative Awareness Day and whether it is harder to get legislators or aides to attend the event in October due to MGA not being in session in the fall.

Chair Summers inquired Director Brick on whether the Office has completed a summary of the captioning stakeholder meeting.

Council Member Helfrich asked if interpreter licensure bill will be proposed at the upcoming legislative session to which Chair Summers said she did not have any information on this.

Council Reports:

Council Member Wilkins shared about her office, Occupational and Professional Licensing (under the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulations); Regulates 25 different occupations and professions in the State such as barbers, CPAs, undertakers, boxers, real estate agents, and between (Health-related professionals are regulated and licensed under the Department of Health); Was inquired by Council Member Egbert if Wilkins has participated in discussions about interpreter licensure and Wilkins replied that she has had conversations with Director Brick about this.

Council Member Dove shared that there is a vacancy in his department for someone who will work with Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing in filing complaints through MCCR process; Council Member Dove also mentioned that his office is finishing up Annual Report and the report shows that there haven't been many complaints made by the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing in spite of receiving verbal concerns in this area.

Council Member Corning shared that DORS does provide communication services to help DeafBlind find employment in the State of Maryland including but not limited to writing resumes, completing job applications, so on. Office Staff Nathanson shared a little about American Job Centers and how they can help individuals find jobs however the Deaf community is not taking advantage of AJC and is asking for feedback on how to help improve this.

Council Member Wilkins talked a little about how the State of Maryland is trying to streamline a website for prospective small business owners wanting to set up entrepreneurship.

Old Business: NONE

New Business: NONE

Announcements:

Council Member Dove shared an announcement that there is a gala on April 28th to celebrate 50th anniversary of Federal Fair Housing Act.

Director Brick shared that the Office will have a town hall in Hagerstown on February 1st.

Chair Summers shared on behalf of Vice Chair Buck Skees that the Maryland School for the Deaf is having a holiday school play on December 14th through 17th.

Council Member Mayer brought some attention to net neutrality and its impact on use of internet.

Council Member Lally shared about a recent Maryland Deaf Senior Citizens holiday party attended by 190 Deaf

seniors.

Council Member Egbert shared about an upcoming workshop hosted by the American Society for Deaf Children in late January.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm