

Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
December 10, 2018

Present:

Council Members: Chair Larry Gray, Vice Chair Marny Helfrich, Lisalee Egbert, Erin Buck Skees, Stephanie Summers, Spencer Dove, Janet Moye Cornick, Jason Corning, Eddy Laird, Dakota Burgess, Mary Lynn Lally, Gordon Outlaw
Office Staff: Kelby Brick, Jacob Salem, LaToya Plummer

Call to Order: 2:04pm

Previous meeting minutes approved as corrected.

MACDHH Chair Gray's Report:

- Chair Gray gave a review of the LAD event in October, including a brief summary of the day with Suzy Rosen Singleton, the afternoon panel of underrepresented communities, and the awards and recognition portion.
- Chair Gray spoke about the recent Community Town Halls in Baltimore and Prince George's Counties. The Baltimore Town Hall was a learning experience regarding communication to the community. The Baltimore Community tends to communicate more via text, not social media. Communication attempts may need to be more creative, such as a texting app. This Town Hall also had discussions surrounding home ownership and employment, and possible free tuition to community colleges. At the Town Hall, Greg James mentioned that DLLR has apprenticeship programs. Chair Gray would like the Council to consider how we can find and access this type of information and better spread the word. The PG County Town Hall had a small turnout due to the inclement weather. There were some ASL I students in attendance. Discussions during this Town Hall included interpreter mistakes and misunderstandings that occur in court settings. The reviewing accuracy is via a sound recording, not a video (which would be preferred). Director Brick encourages the community to talk to legislatures as this is under the judiciary branch and the Office is under the executive branch.
- Chair Gray reviewed some thoughts regarding promoting events such as Town Hall. Some people may not understand the intent behind "town hall." Perhaps this could be advertised differently in a way that a notification or invitation could auto-populate in people's calendars if they are interested in attending.

MACDHH Vice Chair Helfrich Report: None at this time

ODHH Director Brick's report:

- Director Brick covered information about staffing. He mentioned that Katie has left the office. The Office is in the process of replacing her. A lot has been going on with the recent election. If you know of anyone that may be interested, encourage them to reach out. This person will be responsible for communication, social media, work behind the scenes, and some possible policy work. Director Brick noted that diversity within the office helps to better serve the community. There is no formal job description to share. In the meantime, Alyssa will hopefully be helping part time.
- Director Brick spoke about potential restructuring of the Council. The current structure of the Council is 18 members - 9 government agencies, and 9 community members. A suggestion included - splitting the Council into two valuable groups. These groups would meet three times a year separately and come together as a full group once a year. Discussion also surrounded the fact that there is no representative from the Maryland Department of Disabilities as this was not a department when this Council formed. If this seat is added, another community member would be added as well. This is the only Council this large - but, is also the only Office under the Governor. Changes would have to be a legislative proposal IF the Council would like to move forward.
- Director Brick spoke about an internal task force examining SSPs - working toward identifying a source to cover cost. Information can/will be brought to the governor. The key here is to have feedback from the DeafBlind community.
- Director Brick spoke about Medicaid rules on hearing aids/cochlear implants. Coverage has been expanded to include adults. This has not been formally announced at this time, but the ruling is in place.
- Information was shared about the statewide training for police academy curriculum. Information initially for new officers, followed by in services for current officers. Also, the Department of Corrections is looking to recruit signing corrections officers. There is a shortage - they are in need of 1,000 officers. If you know of anyone that may be interested, connect them with the Office. The department is seeking diversity in the corrections officers.
- Director Brick spoke about housing for Deaf and Hard of Hearing senior citizens with signing staff. Cardinal Capital Management in Wisconsin has experienced setting up specialized housing and has experience and funding. Meetings have taken place with Gordon Outlaw and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The state is now in the research phase, examining zoning opportunities, etc. A serious conversation has taken place with an experienced developer - the right people are at the table.
- An inquiry was made about public housing. Director Brick mentioned that if it is 100% public, it would be federal funding. It is too early to make a decision at this time.

Suggested a combination of both - transitional/independent living to more assisted. If anyone has feedback - near transportation, Medicaid facilities, etc. An inquiry was made about Deaf space. Director Brick shared that Apache Trails has had experience with the community in Arizona.

- Director Brick shared information about the Resilience Retreat. This is a two day retreat - cabinet secretaries; emergency preparedness and recovery, and mitigation and prevention. This retreat and information about accessibility may be used as a template for other states so emergency announcements are accessible.
- Director Brick touched on the topic of interpreters. PCRID had their annual conference last week. At this time, Director Brick spoke with the new president and examined how we can recharge the process.

Old Business:

- There were issues brought up at the last meeting after Director Brick had to leave. Revisiting those here. Discussion surrounding moving the Council meetings to Monday. Director Brick will support whatever the group decides. The requirements are - meeting 4 times a year with complete access for everyone. Looking at scheduling interpreters - It can be hard to get interpreters midweek, and the goal is to make sure there is minimal impact on community usage and availability of interpreters. The meeting schedule for this year is already set. If need be, this will be discussed further via group email.
- Chair Gray mentioned that the MDAD president would like there to be community influence and input as to who is on the Council. Director Brick agreed that this is a good idea. Applicants are screened and backgrounds are examined. He encouraged the Council to have people send in their information if they are interested in being on the Council. We are in a 2 year transition to be more diverse. This is a Council strength.

New Business:

- Chair Gray encouraged the Council to pick 4 or 5 priorities for 2019. The role of the Council is to advise the Office. What do we want the Office to focus on? With the knowledge that priorities moving forward do have to match the governor's agenda as well. Some feedback included - accessibility and support for senior citizens (rehabilitation, housing, interpreting services for everything in nursing homes - including activities - at all times), examining the possible impacts of the closing of the Deaf Ed program at McDaniel (this may cause a state issue of training for teachers), transparency and information sharing within the community, possibly setting up ad hoc committees to examine various issues, mental health support (possibly video/remote assistance), more employment opportunities within the state government for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, interpreter licensure/certification, and language deprivation.

- This conversation led to inquiries about the status of the interpreter licensure work previously done toward drafting something. The governor needs the community support and commitment to move forward with this. Moving forward would include review of the drafts and revisions. The legislative process can always include amendments. Lisalee made a proposal/motion - for the governor to recognize that this Council supports moving forward with the process for interpreter certification/licensure. This was seconded by Jason. There were seven votes for the motion, 1 opposed, and 4 abstained.
- This conversation also led to inquiries about the status of the language deprivation conversations and work being done. Director Brick shared that the Office does not have a position on this at this time as there has not been a push/request from the community to move forward. Several Council members shared that MDAD has a list of priorities they are focusing on, and language deprivation is one of them. Chair Gray reminded the Council that this is why it is important for members to send in agenda items so discussions can be included on record.

New Business:

- Discussion surrounding ad hoc Committees and whether or not anyone likes this idea. Establishing and continuing these would require commitment from the committee. This discussion was tabled for the next meeting.
- Is the Council interested in a retreat? There has been discussion surrounding members not understanding their roles within the Council. This retreat could also include logistics - such as how to make a motion, appropriate language, etc. This would be a “working retreat” and would cover topics discussed within ad hoc committees as well. Morale building activities could be built in. Council members will have to consider how this could be meaningful and respectful of people’s time. Eight Council members were interested in this retreat. Scheduling to be discussed at a later time.
- A discussion took place regarding gas station tv captioning - that these screens with music and information should have captioning as well. Spencer advised that people can file a complaint with MCCR.
- The possible Council restructuring will be tabled for either the next meeting or added to the retreat agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.