

§ 9-2404. Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH)--March 8, 2019

*Third Quarterly Meeting  
March 8, 2019*

**MACDHH Council Members:**

**Present:** Chair Larry Gray, Vice Chair Marny Helfrich, Secretary Vikki Porter, Janet Moye Cornick, Lisalee Egbert, Tanya Green, Greg James, Stephanie Summers, and Victoria Wilkins.

**Absent:** Dakota Burgess, Jason Corning, Spencer Dove, Eddy Laird, Mary Lynn Lally, Gordon Outlaw, Karunya Samuel, and Erin Buck Skees.

**Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) Staff:** Kelby Brick, TraciAnn Hoglind, and Jacob Salem.

**Call to Order:** 2:17 PM

**Meeting Minutes:** Minutes from December 2018 were accepted, with Council Member Green suggesting that acronyms be spelled out throughout in subsequent minutes.

**Chair Gray's Report:** Chair Gray extended a warm welcome to TraciAnn Hoglind, ODHH's new policy and communications manager. Then he brought up the issue of respecting council members during robust discussions. While council meetings are public, any disagreements or concerns should be addressed with the particular council member(s) during the meeting, not afterwards. Chair Gray asserted that council members should leave a session with mutual respect, as we all are here to benefit constituents of the State of Maryland. Chair Gray continued the discussion from the last council meeting about possibly hosting a retreat, the purpose of which is to clarify the vision and mission of MACDHH. On February 28th, Chair Gray and Secretary Porter met with Director Brick and ODHH staff to discuss the retreat idea further. One immediate outcome from that meeting was staff member Hoglind developing a welcome package for newly minted/incoming council members, designed to be simple and easy to navigate. Chair Gray opened the floor for discussion about the retreat. Vice Chair Helfrich stated that the welcome package had helpful information, and suggested adding information on how meetings should be run in terms of motions and voting, i.e. which aspects of Robert's Rules of Order apply. She noted that may make the meetings more efficient. Chair Gray concurred, adding that a timeline of the motion and what the process involved would be good information. He asked if the welcome package may be a good substitute for the retreat. Council member James pointed out that a lot of logistics would be involved in planning a retreat which would be a one-time event. Whereas the welcome package can constantly be updated and still be valid regardless of who comes and goes on the council. Plus, Council member James mentioned that since council meetings are public, consider the fact that the retreat may also need to be open to the public as well if members of the council are present. Council member Wilkins asked about the budget for the retreat and whose authority it would fall under. Council member Summers suggested goals and purpose of the retreat be more solidified before further discussion and planning. Director Brick put forward for consideration that someone could make a motion to establish a group to think about the retreat and set a deadline. Chair Gray concurred.

**Vice Chair Helfrich's Report:** None.

**Secretary Porter's Report:** None.

**ODHH Director Brick's report:** Director Brick started off with reporting on efforts to analyze and disseminate online information. Staff member Hoglind has been focusing on that project as well as working with the state of Maryland's web design team to have consistent web addresses and links. A major issue with the website is when PDFs were updated, the website does not allow the updated PDFs to have the same link as the obsolete PDFs, resulting in broken links. Hopefully the issue will be resolved, but right now there is less emphasis is placed on uploading PDFs. In the meantime, if anyone has feedback on the website, let ODHH know. Director Brick also discussed the four legislative bills impacting the Deaf and hard of hearing Maryland citizens. First one was a bill ensuring that state buildings have audio loops for auditory aids such as hearing aids hard installed and ready to go. Second bill would expand the hearing aid loan bank program, which extends the time period children are loaned hearing aids. The bill would also provide access to language and resources for Deaf and hard of hearing children, and waive college tuition for parents of these children so they can develop sign language skills to communicate with their kids. The interpreting licensing bill is the most controversial. While everyone agrees licensing is necessary to reduce the number of unqualified/fraudulent interpreters, there is confusion on how to implement the licensing process. An example of confusion is that DLLR would administer the program, but ODHH would be the one managing it. Also, the requirement of supervisory interpreters being inserted has caught the community off guard, and there is some ongoing vigorous discussion about that particular requirement. Lastly, the all bill—the one tracking language development milestones—has been withdrawn. Director Brick reminded that ODHH has not taken a position on any of the four bills yet and did not have any involvement in developing and writing those bills. Once the bills have been vetted, passed in legislative sessions, and scheduled for the Governor's desk, ODHH will at that time take a position. Vice Chair Helfrich clarified that the last bill hasn't yet been officially withdrawn, and that an amended version could possibly come up for discussion. Director Brick talked about social media efforts for outreaching and awareness purposes. Presently, ODHH is doing a series of themes, with black history month and women's history up next. ODHH wanted to recognize individuals who have made a difference, with much emphasis on the Deaf

Ecosystem—people who have supported and promoted Deaf entrepreneurship and businesses. Director Brick reiterated the Governor’s commitment to ensuring Deaf and hard of hearing Maryland citizens have opportunities for employment and access to various state services. If anyone has ideas of who to profile, contact ODHH. He also spoke about various concerns and complaints from citizens, and one common thread is that agencies and departments are not captioning their videos online. Director Brick reminded the state representatives on the council that it is a legal requirement, and to contact the communications staff in their agencies to comply. Director Brick also noted that six council members’ terms are expiring and the Governor hasn’t taken action on the appointments for these members. There will be several reappointments and new appointments, with this summer being a huge transition time for the council. He encouraged anyone who is interested or knows someone who would be a good fit to contact the state appointments office directly. Council member Summers asked if there’s a standard operating procedure in informing the community about the opportunities to serve on the council. Director Brick stated not at this time, and Council member Summers suggested some type of standard communication be distributed from ODHH, in which current council members and others can disseminate to the community. Last item Director Brick talked about was complaints about communication access in healthcare settings—lack of qualified interpreters, fraudulent interpreters, and so on. ODHH has been working with the Office of Healthcare Quality (OHCQ) under the Department of Health. The department provides licensing for nursing homes, hospitals and rehabilitation centers. Because of this ongoing concern, OHCQ is looking into this issue. Director Brick emphasized that a more robust system is needed to provide this important oversight.

**Old Business:** Chair Gray addressed the topic of restructuring the council that was discussed at the last meeting. The idea was to split the council into two separate groups. Plus, he asked the council their thoughts about adding the Maryland Department of Disabilities, which would require a legislative process. Council member Summers stated that adding two more members to the council will make it huge. She suggested possibly replacing a current department, but is unsure if that would be a good solution. Council member James felt that the value of participation is the exchange with community representatives on the council. This exchange affords the state representatives to provide information directly about what the departments do and the positions on various issues. He favored that the council remains together in the meetings. Council member James also supports adding Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to the council roster. Secretary Porter clarified that the suggested breakouts would be a mixture of Deaf and hearing council members into two groups—not one group made up of all Deaf and the other made up of all hearing. The first hour, the two smaller groups have their sessions, and in the second hour, the council meets as one to discuss. Council member Summers recommended that the priority is focusing on the expansion of the council—one position occupied by a representative from MDOD, and the other by a community member—increasing the number of council members to 20. Council member Moye Cornick asked if adding the two positions would necessitate changes to the bylaws. Chair Gray and Director Brick answered in the affirmative. Director Brick added that the council would need to propose the changes in council makeup to the Governor and he could add them to his legislative agenda. Vice Chair Helfrich clarified what the council could do without legislative action—changing the way meetings are run, and having breakout sessions without changing the bylaws. After much discussion, it was decided to table the council expansion issue, and to invite a representative from MDOD to come to the quarterly meetings and give an informal presentation about the visions and goals of the department.

**New business:** Chair Gray stated that in order to vote on the bylaws, two-thirds of the council needed to be present for the vote. With today’s council meeting having only nine councilmembers—three short of the 12 needed—voting on the bylaws will take place in the next council meeting. Director Brick explained that formal action regarding bylaws can take place at any future meetings. Chair Gray opened the floor to general discussion about the proposed bylaw amendments. At the end, two of the proposed bylaws amendments were withdrawn, and Council member Moye Cornick suggested members familiarize themselves with the bylaws in preparation for the upcoming vote in June.

**Announcements:** None.

**Meeting adjourned:** 3:57 pm