

Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of hearing Board Meeting
June 3, 2019
Crownsville, Maryland

Larry Gray, Chairman:

- Welcomed all of us including visitors.
- Asked for a volunteer to be the secretary as Vicki Porter was not able to attend. Mary Lynn Lally volunteered.
- Meeting minutes for March 2019 was approved as read.
- Having a retreat was brought up at the last two meetings. Since Traci Ann Hoglind developed a welcome packet which details what MACDHH is, is there a need for a retreat? (Traci Ann added that we have a website link, so there is an online option) It was agreed that there may be no need for a retreat at the present time.
- Reviewed the concept of Townhall Meetings
 - Feels that some people do not understand the concept of Townhall meetings—wants to give everyone an opportunity to voice their concerns and what not.
 - We do have good turnouts at different places such as Montgomery County Prince George County and so on as well as Maryland Association of the Deaf.
 - Should we advertise that a townhall meeting will take place more frequently. Karunya Sam suggested that we use social media as well as video announcements on a frequent basis.
 - Eddie Laird suggested that it be renamed. Mary Lynn Lally suggested Community Meeting.
 - Victoria Wilkins oversees a number of boards that have meetings like that and there is a community input section on the agenda, so it is not a separate entity. It is fixed part of the board meeting.
 - It was felt that MACDHH needs more input from the community and that outreach meetings be continued.

Marny Helfrich, Vice Chair

- Senate Bill 677 has become a law-the operation of hearing aid loan bank which will be handled at the Department of Education. This bill will also provide videos and downloaded materials that will allow family members to learn sign language or other language and communication methods with their children who are deaf and hard of hearing. And it also provides families to take a course in sign language or any other method of communication at any public college or university in the state of Maryland at no cost. (This is thanks to the efforts of Lisa Lee Egbert).
- The office would appreciate getting feedback on materials and ideas on ways to help the office with distributing materials.
- Questioned on how many classes the family can take—only one.

No report from Vikki Porter

Kelby Brick, Director

- Three bills pertaining to the deaf community have become a law:

- Any new facility that is a public gathering place must install a loop system. They will have an advisory council working with the department to make sure that any physical construction done will include the right equipment and the right technology installed-that includes any new construction or remodeling or redevelopment and redesign of the space.
- Patient's Bill of Rights (duplication of ADA requirements for Deaf and Hard of Hearing). This new law requires that the Bill of rights are shared with all patients and posted. ODHH is currently working with the Department of Health to really address nursing homes and hospitals to ensure that everyone has access. If you know of anyone or facilities that are not providing accessibility, do let the office know.
- Senate Bill 677 that Vice Chair Marny Helfrich just explained.
- The Office is currently advertising for job posting for correctional officers. They have been in touch with the Department of Public Safety and they are looking for those deaf and hard of hearing prisoners currently within the system to have access to those correction officers who are deaf or know sign language themselves.
- The posting of the position for the Director of Maryland Relay was just closed. This has been an ongoing search for a director. The office received many letters from individuals and communities that a deaf person or hard of hearing person be seriously considered; and that someone who is deaf or hard of hearing should be on the screening and interview panel. HR is now screening the applicants. The Interview Panel has not been established.
- Exciting news at the moment is that McDaniel College Board of Regents has reinstated the Deaf Education Program. (The program was to be closed.) The Office will have a discussion with the college on how to provide support such as public awareness or encouragement. McDaniel College has historically been considered one of the premier institutions in the country for deaf educators. Eddy Laird announced that he is retiring.
- The Office has been meeting and continue to meet with people here and there to look at housing issues.
 - Looking at a range of housing from senior housing, independent living facilities, housing for students who just graduated from high school (they need that transitional housing or temporary housing)
 - They have been meeting with individuals from the Maryland School for the Deaf; The Frederick housing (HUD).
 - Frederick is committed to making this possible and that State of Maryland supports making this happen for all.
- The staff also attends various meetings, conferences-always looking for knowledge and getting resources.
 - ADARA National Conference (American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association) is currently meeting in Baltimore.
 - The office plans to host a TDI Conference in Baltimore this summer.
 - The office will also host the National Association of State Administrators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Baltimore. This is an organization where individuals like Kelby Brick network and meet.

- The office is keeping an eye on the interpreting licensure bill and hopefully it will become a law in the near future. The office continues to get complaints about fraudulent and incompetent interpreters.
- The office now posts announcements and what not on Instagram along with Twitter and Facebook. This way they are able to reach all groups of constituents who have different preferences.
- Answered a question by Sam with clarification that Maryland Relay is under the DoIT (Department of Information Technology) and that they will be screening the applicants. The HR people are also involved in the screening process. It will not be a one man show. The director of DoIT, Julia Fisher is aware of the needs of the deaf community.
- Sam reported that there were some deaf people in Montgomery County that were having difficulty getting housing as they could not understand the application form and that interpreters were not available. Feels that there is a need for a video in ASL to describe the process and what not. Brick advised that this should be addressed to the Montgomery County Advisory Council on disability issues. Brick reported that Jacob Salem and Traci Ann Hoglind have been working on this issue. It is a priority for this office. The office will be happy to help with this situation.
- Jason Corning wants to be sure that DoIT is sensitive to the needs of the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind when considering applicants for the position of the Director of the Maryland Relay. Brick announced that several individuals who work at the Maryland Relay are now in the back room.

Reports from State Representatives (None)

- Sam asked if he could speak on behalf of IRS?
 - He reported that IRS is going to have a pilot program at Prince George Community College with support from FCC. If the pilot program is successful, then it will go nationwide. This will provide training on how with work with different constituents with different types of communication needs and that accessibility will be met immediately rather than wait weeks.
 - Jason asked that tactile interpreting for the deafblind be provided.

Old Business

- Larry Gray proposed that By Laws-Article VII that meting minutes must be disseminated to council members two weeks after the meeting rather than two weeks before the meeting takes place. Seconded and passed. (Effective immediately)
- Stephanie Summers proposed that By Laws -Article IX that the wording for Calendar year be changed to Fiscal year. Seconded and passed. (Effective September 2020)
- Marny Helfrich asked for review of the Board Make up-the idea of adding the Department of Disabilities on the Board. Did we invite Secretary Beatty or a Deputy to the board meeting? Gray said that a representative from this department will attend our Fall Meeting. Brick stated that the law that established this office also mandated an advisory board of 18 individuals who are representatives from the state agencies and departments and the community. If we want to invite MDOD to join the board, it will require legislative change.

New Business (none)

Discussion/Questions

- Sam is concerned that the different organizations serving the deaf are not as numerous so information is not being disseminated to the deaf community effectively such as sending information to all the counties. He feels that we need to build a relationship with the various organizations serving the deaf and that there happens to be no chain of communication. Brick responded that he agrees that there are gaps in the exchange of information within the community. The office has been working with the Deaf Culture Digital Library. (Years ago, the library was often considered the community place...you would go to the library to gather information about this and that. They have various posters advertising different community events and now this is becoming more and more digital. So, the Deaf Culture Digital Library was established.) TraciAnn is on the advisory board. She is really pushing them to get this up and running. The goal is to set up some kind of community forum, a place where we can post community events and share information. The website is under design and as soon as it is completed, then more information will be widespread with hopes that there will be less gap in the communication among the various deaf constituents.
- Jason asked if the Digital Library will be accessible for all people? For the deafblind? Where would it be located. Brick responded that DCDL will be accessible to all. The web site is being developed by a deaf owned business.
- Laird suggested that there be a yearly consortium to keep communication open, among different organizations and state agencies.
- Sam asked about underemployment among the deaf. He asks if there is some kind of task force to work on providing interpreters for those looking for jobs—walk in agencies? Instead of having to wait for two weeks to get an interpreter. Brick asked Victoria Wilkins to explain what DLLR and various internship programs. Wilkins explained that internships are geared to the younger population such as high school and college ages. There are job training resources such as American Job Centers that are located throughout various counties. And they all do provide interpreters, but maybe not for walk in situations. Sam is concerned for those walk ins-as hearing people can get their needs met right then and there while the deaf need to wait until an interpreter is available and that there should be one on call. Wilkins was not sure about the two week's notice but that interpreters are free; however, it helps to have advance notice. Jacob Salem mentioned that there are job fairs and asked if there are interpreters available without a request being made. If he remembers correctly there were deaf employees at those job fairs.
- Sam asked about unemployment offices-Department of Labor usually has long lines for people applying for unemployment benefits. Are there interpreters there ready on hand to provide the needed service. Jacob mentioned that each office has a VRI. Kelby stated that this is a good idea to have VRI located at each job training site as well as other state agencies so that communication is accessible if a live interpreter is not available. Wilkins will check into this (she is not familiar with how the VRI works). This would provide immediate communication for those walk ins.

- Sam asked how the FCC recently upgraded 5G technology will affect the cost to the deaf community. Gregory James stated that the 5G technology is basically a replacement for the landline data access and to his understanding that it is being deployed on a small scale so should not have a wide scale monetary effect.

Announcements

- Gray announced that there will be a retirement party for the retiring Md Relay Director Brenda Kelly-Frey in Ellicott City on June 13th. Flyers should be going out soon.
- Dr. Eddy Laird will be retiring from McDaniel College after 20 years. He has worked for 45 years in the field of Deafness.
- Dates for the next four meetings have been set: Friday, September 13, Monday December 9, Friday, March 20 and Monday June 8. (Erin Buck-Skees reported that the State Wide Steering meeting will take place on March 20)
- Legislative Awareness Day will take place on October 14, 2019. Brick asked for ideas for sponsorship for this event as well as speakers, recognition and to share these ideas with TraciAnn
- Mary Lynn Lally reported that at the MDAD Conference, a motion was made to explore the possibility of setting up some kind of Deaf Center. (Lynn Jacobowitz made this motion).
 - The Frederick Community under the leadership of Linda Stoltz has had several meetings with the idea of developing a Deaf Community Center to meet the educational, social, recreational needs of the deaf community of all ages.
 - Described what was done at various deaf community centers in Italy where it become self-supporting by collecting rent from businesses within the building.
 - Can use the model at the Robert Sanderson Community Deaf Center at Utah.
 - Could meet the needs of late deafened adults
 - Parents of deaf children
 - Deaf Parents of hearing children
 - Educate mainstreamed deaf adults
 - ASL classes (Could support Bill 877)
 - Recreation events, etc.
 - Brick responded that he loves it when people get active and get involved, like Robert Sanderson. He visited the center and it is a beautiful, large meeting place. They have various community advisory meetings there. They have a kitchen. It has so much to offer so it is really a one stop facility. He would love to see us support something like this and somehow plug into this to make it a law. We could have an audio loop in this building.
 - Mary Lynn Lally described deaf clubs of the past where deaf used to congregate for various reasons but this is a dying phenomenon due to captioned TVs, relay interpreters, interpreters in most walks of our life. But today, the deaf community needs a place of their own to meet their various needs.
 - Eddy Laird stated that deaf culture awareness sorely needed as many deaf students come from mainstreamed programs lacking knowledge in Deaf Culture and deaf resources.

- Bill 877 does not address late deafened adults who need ASL to communicate with others as well as those from mainstreamed programs.
- Spencer Dove reported that his department used to have satellite offices in Hagerstown, Leonardtown and Salisbury, but due to budget restraints all these offices are closed. All operations are done at the Baltimore Office. They still want to have a presence in these other areas, so are developing a pilot program to set up a Western Maryland Advisory Council that will cover Frederick, Washington and Allegheny Counties. Applicants for this advisory board need to be a resident of these respective counties, must be 18 years of years of age and the maximum number for this board is 15 folks. Asks us to spread the word and all information is on Google. We need input on civil and humans' rights in Western Maryland. If this program is successful, then they will replicate it in other areas in Maryland.
- Mary Lynn Lally thanked Spencer Dove for being one of the speakers at the MDAD Conference on the rights of deaf citizens. Others were scheduled to speak but due to conflicting scheduling they were not able to speak. (Keith Murkey, and a representative from the Department of Aging came but had to leave).
- Eddy Laird and Jason Corning would like to have refreshments served at the Meetings. Brick responded that the state will not respond favorably to use taxpayer's money for snacks. Eddy Laird suggested that we find a sponsor to provide snacks. MDAD?? Sam suggested that MDAD can provide snacks as a fund raising project? Or other organizations.

Meting was adjourned at 3:33.

Town Hall Meeting

- Brick expressed appreciation to those who came to this meeting by taking time off from their jobs and home life to witness this meeting and to provide feedback on how we can improve services throughout the state of Maryland.
- At the end of every advisory committee meeting, we open the floor for input from the community on any issues.
- Our state representatives who are here may be able to answer questions or concerns you may have.
- **Richard Jeffries, MDAD President**
 - MDAD supports the need to improve the support and collaboration so that applicants who are in need of housing as well as emergency housing. He also supports programs to address underemployment of deaf constituents.
 - Asked about SB 235 pertaining to Maryland School for the Deaf. Brick responded that there were 2 bills and to his understanding it was to codify practice from time immemorial and to make it into a law—very small bills.
 - Would like to see more collaboration between MDAD and ODHH as there are many activities throughout the state and many times there are conflicting dates. The DCDL could really help with announcement of events, conferences, workshops so that more deaf people might be aware and may be able to attend these events. This could be a partnership with MDAD.

- Would like an event to take place where different state agencies can describe how their agencies can provide resources to the deaf community. (Virginia State Association recently hosted an event of this kind.) This event can be a partnership between MDAD and ODHH.
- The Interpreter Licensure Bill is also being revisited with PCRID (Potomac Chapter of Registered Interpreters for the Deaf) as well as other stakeholders. They will be in touch with ODHH to move forward with redrafting of this bill. MDAD is committed to this and to get this made into a law.
- Asked if there were any seats on this board vacant. Brick responded that it is all filled up with 18 representatives.
- **Barry, Hearing Loss Association of America**
 - He is one of the people who worked on the legislation requiring all new public buildings being built to have the loop wiring system installed.
 - He thanked Kelby Brick for his effort to make this Bill into a law.
 - He states that hearing loops are not well understood by the public even within their community and would appreciate the office to advocate on the importance of using the hearing loop to all state agencies as well as county agencies. The Association would be thrilled to work with ODHH to provide information that can be distributed,
 - At today's meeting, the loop within this meeting room did not work and they do not know why. This presents a problem that happens very often, A great start would be to install a loop in this meeting room.
 - Brick stated that it was due to diligent efforts by Barry and Lise Hamlin who made possible for this Bill to become a law. He congratulated them for their untiring work to make this possible. He is also disappointed that the loop system for today's meeting did not work and that he agrees that this whole building needs to be looped entirely.
 - Brick likes the idea of providing more resources and support at the county and state level agencies.
 - Public buildings also include public schools.
 - Jason reported that the DoIT has already installed a loop system within their conference rooms, where GABTR Meetings are held.
- **Kelby Brick**
 - Thanked the community for their input.
 - Reminded the community that the ODHH is here to serve them and that they can go through various state agencies as well.
 - Thanked everyone for making Maryland better for all.
- **Larry Gray**
 - Congratulated Kelby Brick for being awarded the Daily Record Award.
 - Brick says that this is a testament to the work of the whole community.
- **Townhall ended at 3:57 pm.**