

§ 9-2404. Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH)—June 22, 2020

**Fourth Quarterly Meeting**  
**September 25, 2020 via Zoom.com**

**MACDHH Council Members presented and seen via Zoom:**

**Present:** Chair Lisalee Egbert, Vice Chair Marny Helfrich, Secretary Vikki Porter, Dakota Burgess, Janet Moye Cornick, Jason Corning, Spencer Dove, Lisalee Egbert, Gregory James, Mary Lynn Lally, Norma Moran, Gordon Outlaw, Dawn Padon, Erin Buck Skees, Michele Westfall, and Victoria Wilkins.

**Absent:** Veronica Davila-Steele and Alena Troxel

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

**Call to Order:** 1:06 PM

**Meeting Minutes:** Minutes from June 2020 were accepted without corrections.

**Chair Egbert's Report:** Chair Egbert received the chair email from the previous Chair Stephanie Summers, and she was in discussion with Director Brick about setting up an email that the entire council can receive emails in addition to the Chair. Chair Egbert reported that Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) requested partnering with the Council in creating a vlog about the upcoming elections. Staff member Hoglind will be contacting various organizations to join in this partnership. Chair Egbert also reported that MDAD contacted her regarding the letter sent out by GODHH about the interpreting licensure bill, and Director Brick clarified that this letter was intended to offer suggestions, and is not meant to be construed as official stance on the bill. Before and after Chair Egbert assumed her current position, people have expressed concerns about the systemic racism and other pertinent issues at Maryland School for the Deaf, including the role of the Kappa Gamma fraternity controversy. The controversy also impacted GODHH as Director Brick is involved with the fraternity. There were also concerns from the community about GODHH staff work hours. All of these concerns Chair Egbert passed on to Patrick Lally, Senior Executive Director of the Governor's Coordinating Offices. Since these are considered potential personnel issues, MACDHH can not be involved further. Testing sites for the EIPA may be established at CCBC and Johns Hopkins. Chair Egbert congratulated Council member Moran on her article featured in the *Odyssey* publication.

**Vice Chair Helfrich's Report:** No report at this time.

**Secretary Porter's Report:** No report at this time.

**ODHH Director Brick's report:** Director Brick provided a summary of 20 things about the year 2020:

- 1) Deaf Ecosystem: ClearMask and Sisters in Style among others. DC: Mozzarella. The Deaf community is booming in the region with the opening and growth of those businesses. I just came back from the wonderful grand opening of the Sisters in Style this morning in Frederick!
- 2) International Day of Sign Language and Deaf Awareness Week. That is this week! Thank you, council members, for your help in production of the video that also featured our own Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford signing his support for Sign Language!
- 3) DCDL. Also, in honor of this week, DCDL had their grand opening of their new website, a long work in process!
- 4) Census ends September 30. Final stretch! Don't forget to spread the word and have folks fill out the census form asap!
- 5) Gov. Hogan proclaimed Sep 15-Oct 15 Hispanic Heritage Month. He also announced the distribution of state announcements in text via Spanish.
- 6) Text to 911 now available across the state. It took a long while including our chasing down the last counties to come onboard but the text to 911 is now operational statewide!
- 7) JCR Request Response Sent. We filed a response to the legislature's request that we come up with various policy options on how to address fraudulent and unqualified interpreters.
- 8) Breonna Taylor and Baker Douglass Museum and 1 year anniversary of naming after Hairston. I met with the Director of the Museum (which is also under the coordinating offices of the Governor and compared notes with their Breonna Taylor mural and our naming our facility after Dr. Ernest Hairston. We learned that they are planning to produce more visual arts and we will meet again to find way to work together to bring visibility for Black Deaf artists and other artists of color.

- 9) Education Interpreting Bill Update. Delegate Qi informed us that at this moment, he will not be pursuing an education interpreting bill until the advocates pull together to address outstanding issues.
- 10) MSD. We have been getting tons of contacts about the Maryland School for the Deaf, the early retirement of its Superintendent, racism issues, and the search for a replacement Superintendent. We have been providing various individuals information and resources on how the political process work so that people can address various issues more effectively.
- 11) LAD. Due to the pandemic, we will not be having the legislative awareness day in the usual format. We will be building on our previous efforts to have the community take a greater role in managing that event and hope to have more details soon.
- 12) Vote. We have been releasing videos weekly on the process to register and vote and will continue to do so. We also participated the recent panel discussion held by the Center for Democracy in Deaf America to further amplify our message.
- 13) Darrin Smith: DSS video access. We have been providing support to Darrin Smith, a Deaf employee within DSS in efforts to possibly set up a statewide ASL service line.
- 14) 30 years ADA Anniversary. Governor Hogan issued a proclamation recognizing the 30 years anniversary of the ADA! Thirty years ago!
- 15) Budget impact. As you know, we lost a staff position due to the pandemic crisis and the state has been looking for further cuts. Governor Hogan continues to urge Congress to pass additional stimulus packages to support the states.
- 16) MD Relay Move. We have been providing support to Maryland Relay in its move from DoIT to MDOD.
- 17) Financial Education. We have released videos providing information on financial education and empowerment for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.
- 18) Press conferences and now the White House. When I came in, more than five years ago, interpreted press conferences (and the use of CDI) was a rarity in America. We standardized it, partially leading to all states now having interpreters for governor press conferences and now a court has ordered the White House to do the same. A win for access!
- 19) MCCR. Jeff Rosen, a distinguished Deaf attorney and former counsel of the National Council on Disability, has been appointed by Governor Hogan to serve on the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.
- 20) Over 200 videos produced since COVID-19 to keep the community informed. I am so grateful for my staff's leadership here and especially grateful for Dr. NancyLynn Ward for coordinating a team of volunteers in producing important videos in ASL informing the community on a wide range of issues.

Discussion ensued regarding expanding GODHH's staff number in light of the District of Columbia's counterpart planning to hire at least six staff members, about text 911 being accessible to DeafBlind Marylanders, and resources available to help the Maryland Deaf community successfully advocate for themselves.

**Old Business:** Chair Egbert discussed systematic injustice, initially brought up by Council Member Lally. Chair Egbert requested various state agencies' reports on how they address social injustices and the coronavirus pandemic. Council Member Gray wondered what the council plans to do with this information and the ultimate goal. Council Member Buck Skees and Vice Chair Helfrich noted that the questions for the agencies were too broad and ambiguous. Vice Chair Helfrich pointed out that the same questions may mean different things and require different answers. Council Member Lally expressed frustrations that some of the agencies did not respond to the questionnaire. Council Member Westfall suggested setting up meetings with the agencies to further discuss their outreach efforts towards the Deaf community. Several council members continued discussing the merits of such questionnaires. Director Brick stated that this was a longstanding and worthwhile issue to focus on, and explained discussions like this is the reason for the formation of the council: to share and increase accountability across the board. As for best practices on collecting and disseminating the information, he suggested the questions may need to be tailored for each agency for maximum response.

Next item for discussion was the systematic and structural racism at Maryland School for the Deaf. Council Member Gray suggested that someone from the Department of Education investigate these concerns. This issue has been ongoing for many years, and the community wants this addressed heads on. Also, restructuring the Council itself, which would require legislative action.

With the time running out, the Council discussed whether to call a special meeting to continue the discussion. It was agreed that a special meeting would be held before the regular meeting scheduled in December.

**Meeting adjourned:** 3:00 pm