

Highlights

The 181st Quarterly Meeting of the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) was held on Friday, April 26, 2024, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in Frankfort, Kentucky. Hearing accessibility was provided during the meeting by CART and ASL interpreters.

Dr. Tommy Evans presided over the meeting and welcomed commissioners and Ms. Row Holloway, guest. Mr. John Perry was formally introduced to the Board as this was his first meeting since being appointed to the Board.

Quorum was established as a result of roll call. Mrs. Donna Lawlor served as proxy for Nancy Perry who represents Kentucky Association of the Deaf. Dr. Evans requested that commissioners review the minutes of the last Quarterly Meeting held January 26, 2024, via Zoom. Following the acceptance of the Quarterly Meeting minutes, the minutes from the Executive Board Meeting held on March 8, 2024, via Zoom were reviewed and accepted as well.

Dr. Evans recognized Ms. Anita Dowd as KCDHH's new Executive Director as this was her first Quarterly Board meeting since being officially appointed. A reception was held in her honor.

Next, Ms. Jeannie Taylor asked to address the Board. She read a letter of nomination sent to Governor Andy Beshear requesting Mrs. Amy Hatzel be appointed to the Commission of Kentucky Colonels. Governor Beshear granted the request and sent an official certificate of recognition to be given to Mrs. Hatzel. Secretary Jamie Link and Deputy Secretary Beth Brinley presented the certificate to Mrs. Hatzel.

Ms. Anita Dowd, Executive Director, reported on KCDHH's quarterly activities from January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024. Ms. Dowd summarized portions of the Agency Report which included the following items

Legislation

At this time, KCDHH will not seek to propose legislation for the Deaf Child's Bill of Rights. The Education and Labor Cabinet administration and the Governor's office has asked for a report including statistical data, identified current gaps, best practices and the return for investment experience by states where this bill already exists.

Access Center Regulations Meeting

Ms. Dowd reported that meetings are taking place to discuss potential changes to the Access Center department. While KRS 163.510(4) requires KCDHH to oversee the provision of interpreter services to the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH), it does not mandate direct provision of these services. The Access Center at KCDHH was established in 1999 and helped to streamline the process of requesting interpreter/captioner providers for the state agencies requesting its services. At this time, KCDHH is exploring how the access center can be better utilized to meet the needs of the DHH communities.

DeaFestival-Kentucky

Ms. Dowd reported that staff members unanimously voted in favor of canceling DeaFestival 2024. The decision was made with the intention of allowing the incoming executive director, current and new staff members to focus on a successful onboarding experience for everyone. It also allows the organization to focus on the new strategic plan goals as well as get a head start on planning DeaFestival 2026.

National Weather Service (NWS) Meeting

During a recent meeting with a meteorologist from the National Weather Services (NWS) Louisville office, a discussion was held regarding the development of NWS communication cards. The communication cards will help facilitate communication with DHH individuals allowing NWS to ask questions about damage and if they need assistance in any way. There is a possibility that NWS will create short videos to be used in conjunction with the communication cards for individuals that use ASL. KCDHH has agreed to partner with NWS to create the videos.

Personnel

Ms. Dowd reported there are five vacant positions at KCDHH: Executive Administrative Secretary; Administrative Assistant; Executive Staff Advisor; Information Office Supervisor; and Interpreter.

Finance

KSDHH's financial situation overall is unchanged and stable at this time.

Emergency Management

KCDHH continues to have ongoing meetings with Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM). The National Weather Service (NWS) has been working with KCDHH to learn about weather safety needs of the hearing loss community in Kentucky. Weather radios are the fastest way to get weather warnings and information; however, some radios do not have hearing loss-friendly capabilities. Ms. Dowd informed the Commissioners that weather radios have been purchased for the DHH community and currently plans are being made for distribution. Several organizations will meet to determine the criteria that must be met in order to receive a cost-free weather radio. These radios will be distributed to individuals who are hard of hearing as well.

Strategic Plan

A motion was made to accept the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan that Ms. Dowd proposed; however, Board members agreed that although overarching goals had been identified, it lacked specific priorities, activities, and objectives. Therefore, Ms. Dowd will work by adding more depth and any missing components. Targeted areas identified were education, employment, accessible healthcare, safe communities, and hearing loss awareness.

Upcoming Vacancies

The Executive Board presented two candidates to the full Board for the upcoming member-at-large vacancy. It was determined by vote that Ms. Mona McCubbin will replace Ms. Edie Ryan. Ms. Ryan's work with the Board was acknowledged, and she will be presented a certificate of service during the July Quarterly Board meeting.

Currently there are two other vacancies yet to be filled: Kentucky Association of the Deaf and A.G. Bell.

KCDHH Study Group Report

➤ Emergency Management Systems Study Group

Chair: Barbie Harris

The Emergency Management Systems Study Group has officially ended. KCDHH has an ongoing relationship with KYEM and will report updates and additional information as needed.

Additional Quarterly Activities Supporting KCDHH Goals

- Statewide Health Improvement Subcommittee – *Meeting*
- Kentucky Hospital Association – *Meeting*
- ELC Diversity and Inclusion Council – *Meeting*
- KyLEAD Conference – *Meeting*
- Williamstown Senior Center – *Outreach Event*
- DCBS LACES Stakeholder Meeting – *Meeting*
- Assistive Technology Industry Association– *Meeting*
- Dinner Table Project – *Meeting*
- Kynect Resources – *Meeting*
- Digital Equity Summit – *Meeting*
- Community Impact Council Meeting – *Meeting*
- Kentucky Access and Functional Needs Collaborative – *Meeting*
- Kentucky Public Health Association – *Presentation*
- Rotary Club – *Meeting*
- Kentucky Early Hearing Detection and Intervention – *Meeting*
- Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation Board Meeting - *Meeting*

Other Announcements and Additional Actions of the Commission Board

- The next Executive Board Meeting will be held on June 14, 2024 from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (EST) via Zoom.
- The 182nd Quarterly Commission Meeting will be held on July 26, 2024 from 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (EST) location to be determined. Hearing accessibility will be provided by CART and ASL Interpreters.

In Closing

The 181st Quarterly Board Meeting was adjourned.

Jeannie Taylor, Commissioner
HLAA Representative
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April 28, 2024