

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
QUARTERLY MEETING: March 25, 2022
Virtual

Members Present: Michelle Paonessa (Chair), Russ Goddard (Vice Chair), Kay Tyberg, Lori Leiman, Janette Fulton, Trisha Mader, Amy Letteri, Becky Lorah, Lee Sheffield, Deb Shostak, Mark Beall

ODHH Staff: Melissa Hawkins (Director), DeeDee Keiser, Ben Moonan, Denise Brown

Interpreters: Cindi Brown, Jessica-Bentley-Sassaman

Moderator: Nichole Wade

Review and Approval of Minutes:

The December 3, 2021 meeting minutes were reviewed. Russ Goddard asked for a correction to the date (from 12/1/21 to 12/3/21). There were no other corrections. Russ made a motion to pass with that one correction. Amy Letteri seconded. Minutes were approved.

Guest Speaker:

Jessica Adams (Deafstone) gave an overview of the Deafstone Support Service Provider (SSP) Program. Deafstone is a nonprofit that provides supported employment, senior services, SSP, advocacy and childcare. Deafstone was awarded contracts with ODHH for both the East and West. Jessica went over the steps on how SPP works. Do's and Don'ts of the SPP program were given. The council asked a few questions after the presentation.

ODHH Presentation:

ODHH staff introduced themselves and their roles within the office.

ODHH will be having townhall meetings with the purpose of reviewing existing services and to discuss the future together. The townhall meetings will be done virtually via Zoom with captioning and interpreters on May 5th. ODHH will set up three different sessions during the day to meet different time needs - morning, afternoon, and evening.

Department Reports:

Aging – Becky reported that the PACE program recently assisted a Deaf individual needing assistance with placement into a nursing home.

Education – Janette reported that the annual PDE Conference was held March 2-4, 2022. Over 1200 individuals attended the hybrid conference with over 30 nationally recognized speakers presenting on a variety of topics. Janette gave information on a hybrid family learning conference coming up on June 24-25 that is intended for families with a child that is deaf and blind. PaTTAN was given as a source for anyone who would like resources for improving educational results for students with and without disabilities. Janette also discussed the APR Initiative, which is a priority of the Bureau of Special Education with the goal of attracting, preparing and retaining skilled, compassionate and diverse individuals to the field of special education.

Health – Matt reported information from the Office of Developmental Programs. ODP has created many trainings/resources and have trained many people on various topics such as Deaf Sensitivity. The Office has completed over 450 Communication Assessments for individuals that have an intellectual disability or autistic individuals who are Deaf and over 100 individuals received a second assessment. Matt reported that ODP publishes a monthly communication corner. ODP requires all providers to take a training course on Deaf Culture before supporting Deaf individuals. Over 30,000 people have taken this course.

Labor and Industry – Russ Goddard reported on the 2022 DHH Summer Academy that will be occurring July 17-29 at the Hiram G. Andrews Center in Johnstown. The Summer Academy is a two-week program for high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing and preparing for entry into post-secondary education leading to competitive integrated employment. During the program, staff from the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, PaTTAN and ODHH provide professional instruction and classes in the following areas: Assistive Technology, Communication and Audiology, Vocational Counseling and Career Exploration, Social Work and Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination.

Nomination of New Council Member:

The council interviewed Heather Schoenwald for a position on the council. The council asked Heather a series of questions such as why she wanted to be on the council, what issues she feels is facing the community, advocacy achievements, etc.

The council went into an executive session to discuss the candidate. The council came back and voted against Heather joining the council.

Public Comment:

No public comments

Council Officer Elections:

Russ Goddard proposed that the officer elections take place this month rather than June as dictated in the bylaws. Janette Fulton seconded.

Amy nominated Michelle to continue as Chairperson. Michelle accepted the nomination. Michelle received the majority votes to serve for two years.

Janette nominated Russ to continue as Vice-Chairperson. Russ accepted the nomination. Russ received the majority votes to serve for two years.

Kay nominated herself to serve as Secretary. Russ nominated Janette. Janette received the majority votes to serve as Secretary for two years.

Other:

Russ made a motion to close the meeting. Becky seconded.

Meeting was adjourned.

Next Council Meeting is on June 10, 2022 in a hybrid manner (in-person and virtual).