

**ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
QUARTERLY MEETING; DECEMBER 7, 2018  
PATTAN, HARRISBURG, PA**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Karen Leslie-Henry, Chair, Dale Long, Russ Goddard, Jerald Cohen, Kay Tyberg, Shatarupa Podder, Lori Leiman, Devon Grant, Marsha Drenth, and Sam Trychin via telephone.

**ODHH STAFF:** Melissa Hawkins, Director, DeeDee Keiser

**GUESTS:** Christine Heyser, Department of Emergency Planning, John Hogue, Andy Unger, Sharon Behun, CIL, Ryan Hyde, Acting OVR Executive Director, Jerry Oleksiak, Secretary of Department of Labor and Industry of the Commonwealth

**INTERPRETERS:** Cindi brown, Jessica Bentley - Sossamon

**CART:** Terry O'Connor

Melissa led a moment of silence regarding the passing of George W. Bush who signed the American's With Disabilities Act

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2018 MINUTES**

Kelly Holland added that her department was working on an educational document and resources for guidance on educational interpreters.

Russ added a correction regarding the duties of Vice Chair. He also noted that Marsha Drenth's name was misspelled.

Kay made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections.

Shatarupa seconded the motion.

Minutes were approved.

**REPORT: Secretary Oleksiak**

Secretary Oleksiak came to greet the Council and to put faces with names. He has been with labor and industry for one year. He previously was a special education teacher working with students with emotional, behavioral, and legal issues. He also worked as an officer with PSEA. He discussed individuals receiving worker's compensation, unemployment compensation, and services from OVR. Employment First is a priority of his agency. He appreciates what members of the council do to advocate for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. He wishes his agency could do more.

There are 5 main deputies

1. OVR
2. Workman's Compensation
3. Unemployment Compensation
4. Safety and Labor Management
5. Workforce Development

When asked Secretary Oleksiak stated that students going into special education should be passionate, committed, and fearless. They also need to show respect for the students and work with families.

When asked what we should do to encourage deaf and hard of hearing in the workforce he stated we should understand what they can and cannot do and to work with people where they are.

He also spoke of Career Links needing to be accessible to persons with disabilities. There should be braille, interpreters, etc. Most career links have an OVR presence. Some mobile career links are not accessible.

**REPORT: Ryan Hyde, Acting OVR Executive Director**

There are programs throughout the State that are not deaf specific but deaf and hard of hearing can participate in them. One example is My Works in Pittsburgh. This program puts 200 Kids in work-based learning experiences.

OVR is also working to be sure all mobile Career Links are accessible.

Annual report from 2017 was made available. A calendar for the upcoming year was provided to all members. If you have a QR reader on your phone you can access videos.

Federal law changed a few years ago. Now about 20 million dollars comes off the top for preemployment transitions.

He encouraged everyone to attend board meetings. There are 4 annually, 2 in Harrisburg, and 2 in other areas.

There is not enough funding for the third ODHH position. ODHH is funded through general government funds. They are advocating for more funding. However, that position has been empty for 3-4 years.

The council think about this and advise ODHH what it wants ODHH to be doing. OVR is being pressured is also being asked to do more and is not receiving budget increases. Act 26 added more duties to OVR without a funding increase.

Secretary Osborne will be coming to an upcoming council meeting to speak about how ODHH and the council can get more resources.

Ryan stated that the council needs to find our vision. We need to come up with a letter or position paper with a few recommendations and solutions. What services does the community need and what funding levels are necessary?

Karen and Kay met last night and talked about identifying issues to dedicate our advocacy towards including the open position. The council advocates, informs, and refers.

**REPORT: Christine Heyser, PA Department of Human Services, Division of Emergency Planning and Safety Operations**

She discussed being deployed to North Carolina after hurricane Florence (September 15-22). She deployed with other staff as part of FAST (functional assessment service team) to help people with disabilities. The FAST Team performs functional assessments with people with disabilities to determine their needs such as durable medical equipment, cultural needs, interpreters, mental health. Her FAST team assessed over 300 people. In North Carolina the Division for Deaf and Hard of Hearing has 7 regional centers. These 7 centers connect with local emergency management to let them know what services are being provided. They also work with Dept of Aging.

She is working with Pennsylvania about how our state can use FAST. They will be recruiting and training FAST members in the coming year. They want to train Red Cross and community volunteers first. North Carolina ODHH has 7 regional offices with 75 staff. FAST kits contain things such as ASL interpreter contracts, noise cancelling headphones, Cap tel phones, TTY, amplified phones, and pocket talker. Currently Pennsylvania has a disability integration task force. Melissa is on this task force. It was established in 2017. In August of 2017 there was a drill. Two shelters were set up, one in Shippensburg and the other in Penn State Harrisburg. Different people with different disabilities participated including Kay, Marsha, and Nancy.

After the drill there is an after-action review to identify failure points and a plan for fixing them. They are working with Temple Institute for Disabilities to develop an intro level access and functional needs awareness course. The Commonwealth response coordination center is at PEMA on Elmerton Ave. There is also an incident command system to set up shelter leadership.

### **COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS**

Karen proposed a cycle for council member appointments. Many of us have had long waits. Some people just dropped out. Karen spoke with Secretary Oleksiak and Ryan Hyde about a nomination cycle. Karen proposes to submit 2 names at a time. Then give those two names time to work through the process. Several members are in USQ. Maybe if we have a process to show the Governor it will help speed up the process.

Reverend Hogue is here today and there were 3 other candidates who were interested.

DeeDee stated that ODHH is waiting for a letter representing John Hogue.

A vote for the second person is needed to fill the vacancies without affecting those in USQ. Dale, Sam, and Karen are in USQ.

Shatarupa made a motion to adopt the proposal to send 2 nominees to the Governor and Jerry seconded. Vote passed the proposal.

We have interviewed three people, Elizabeth Hill, Nancy Kingsley, and Michelle Poanessa. And we just got another application, but that person has not been interviewed. We will pass around ballots and vote for one person. This is done in public. Whoever gets the most votes is the second person to send to the Governor. Nancy and Elizabeth tied.

A motion was made to send all three names by Marsha and seconded by Shatarupa. Michelle's name will remain in the nomination pool. Elizabeth Hill, Nancy Kingsley, and John Hogue's names will be sent to the Governor.

### **NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF SECRETARY**

A public member is needed to be secretary. Dale, Sam, Lori, or Jerry. Russ nominated Lori and Shatarupa seconded. Lori stated that she is not good at things like this, but accepted. The vote passed.

### **WEB SITE REVIEW**

Karen gave homework for everyone to review the website.

[www.dli.pa.gov/odhh](http://www.dli.pa.gov/odhh)

The website can also be reached by googling ODHH

The website needs to be updated. It still lists members who are no longer on the council.

Karen wants to create a small power point that council members can take into the community to encourage people to access the resources on the website.

All correspondence for the council is sent to DeeDee who then sends it via email to the council. There is no specific council email. DeeDee reads all emails sent to ODHH. DeeDee will send out a council email list to all council members.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **DEVON GRANT – Governor’s Office**

The 2019 meeting dates for the Advisory Committee for people with disabilities are on the handout. The group developed a strategic plan over the last few meetings and developed a list of general disability issues that the community had input on. The committee came up with 4 work groups; budget/funding, education, employment, transportation.

Information is provided in the handout from Samantha Koch from the Governor’s office. She oversees implementing Employment First Act. The act makes permanent the Governor’s cabinet for people with disabilities. There is also an employment first oversight commission. Devon pulls press releases that are disability related from [pa.gov/news](http://pa.gov/news)

### **KELLY HOLLAND – PA Department of Health**

EDHI advisory group continues to meet as do the learning communities. A third and fourth learning community will be added to Lehigh Valley and Pittsburgh.

Hands and Voices is planning a family weekend in February at the Eden in Lancaster. It is free for member families.

### **SHATARUPA PODDER**

Three things were picked that are relevant to the council.

1. Special Ed certification requirements will be changing on January 1, 2022. They are reverting to K-12 certification due to a teacher shortage.
2. Keystone exams. There will be more components related to students with IEP’s
3. Grand families. Many family members are guardians and have no legal authority for the children. Act 88 gives temporary guardianship in 90 day increments up to one year, so the family members can make legal and educational decisions. Act 89 provides resources for the family member who suddenly becomes the legal guardian.

### **RUSS GODDARD – Department of Labor**

1. Summer academy is July 14-August 2, 2019. We are looking for up to 30 deaf and hard of hearing high school students that plan to go to college, university, or trade school.
2. Career Links. They are under Department of Labor and Industry. We are in the process of developing a plan to improve accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing.
3. National Deaf Center on Post-Secondary Outcomes. They recently got additional funding from rehab services administration, in early 2019 will find out what the resources look like.

### **MELISSA HAWKINS - ODHH**

There are currently 450 state registered interpreters and 70 provisional. Act 57 held their last meeting on 10-25-18. Amendments were sent.

ODHH has been working with ODP to improve assessments for deaf and hard of hearing. ODHH is working with OVR and BVS to improve accessibility such as by captioning videos or with ASL video capability.

Theresa Osborne from Dept of Aging may be able to come to the next council meeting.

next week ODHH is meeting with General Anthony Corelli to talk about how we can work more with veteran’s programs and support more veterans.

Hearing Loss Expo is November 13 and 14, 2019 at the Radisson in Camp Hill.

Now that the position will not be filled at ODHH they will strategize as a team to best fill the gaps and prioritize tasks. Melissa was asked to provide ODHH priorities at the next meeting

**DEE DEE - ODHH**

Last Friday she sent out travel guidelines for requesting accommodations

**PUBLIC TIME**

**NANCY KINGSLEY**

We need advocacy on this council with the legislature. We need someone on the council again.

Is there a way, like the council did with the police, to see a draft of the Temple course?

Also mentioned that final arrangements should be made for the recommended training for OVR counselors working with non-signing hard of hearing people.

Nancy asked the PUC to approve the addition of wireless items to the TDDP program. TDDP is aware but has taken no action.

**MR. ANDREW UNGER**

ODP (office of developmental programs) had an advisory council meeting two weeks ago. Russ and Melissa were at the meeting. They talked about services for ID and autism clients who are deaf and hard of hearing or deaf blind. Want to partner with ODHH specifically related to interpreters.

**SHARON BEHUN**

TRS advisory board wants to set up a task force to discuss wire services including equipment under TDDP. They are trying to get cell phone companies to use a surcharge. Talk to Kay if more information is needed. ODHH is not part of telecommunications so ODHH cannot get funds from them.

Governor Wolf wants a balanced budget and he is not increasing the budget so without council advocacy ODHH will not grow. Need to get everyone involved including HLAA and PSAD to send letters. Sharon is willing to be involved.

**HARRY BARNUM**

1. ODHH and PEMA should work together.
2. Senior citizens want to live independently and not in nursing homes. Maybe ODHH can work with Department of Aging on trainings. Deaf senior citizens don't always understand things such as insurance deadlines.
3. More focus needs to be put on deaf and not on people with physical disabilities.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Lack of accessibility of the hotels used when here for this meeting.

Russ made a motion to adjourn

Marsha seconded