



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network

DHHCAN Meeting

March 3, 2021

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held online using the Zoom video-conferencing platform.*

**ROLL CALL**

Voting Members	Organizational Partners	Others
Zainab Alkebsi, NAD	Neal Tucker, RID	Jan Nishimura, Interpreter
Eric Kaika, TDI	Eric Raff, NASADHH	Jayne Tubergen, Interpreter
Marcia Zisman, GUAA	Eileen McCartin, NVRC	Natalie Ennis, CART Captioner
Lise Hamlin, HLA A	Caroline Pezzarossi, ADARA	Lynn Dey, Interpreter
Mark Hill, CPADO	Davin Searls, CSD	Barbara Hemstreet, Interpreter
Al Sonnenstrahl, DSA	Barbara Raimondo, CEASD	Angela Rogers, TDI Intern
Art Roehrig, AADB		Robin Stoller, NAD Volunteer
Ken Arcia, ALDA		Elaine Navratil, DSA
		Kelby Brick, NASADHH

Communication protocols were shared. Attendees introduced themselves.

Meeting called to order: 12:04p EST.

Quorum: Met

## **Chair's Report**

- Last month was a rough one for Deaf people living in Texas due to no power, no access to information and no water. Most people now have their water and electricity back. On top of that, the governor of Texas announced yesterday that there are no longer any masking requirements in place and that everything is reopened. We hope people in Texas will stay safe and be sure to double mask.
- FCC's Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) recently began its fourth term in February. Some representatives are new while others were carried over. Mark is now representing CPADO on the DAC. Opportunities were given to each representative to share experiences and observations related to access issues and the pandemic. Unfortunately, each organization only had one minute to cover a year's worth of access issues. . Unlike in the past, no committees had been formed yet nor assignments made so it remains to be seen if any progress will be made.
- NAD recently announced that applications will be open for the Nancy J. Bloch Leadership and Advocacy Scholarship. Check <https://www.nad.org/njb-scholarship/> or contact Zainab for details.
- There are a few organizations interested in joining DHHCAN. NTID will be submitting its application. National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) who at one time was a member and attended meetings is interested in returning. Neal will share information on a third organization - Deaf Refugee Advocacy (DRA) - that has expressed interest in joining DHHCAN.

## **Vice-Chair's Report**

No report.

## **Secretary's Report**

- Two late wording changes to the February 3rd meeting minutes will be made (Health and Civil Rights Protection and Enforcement Policy reports). Art (sec) moved to accept the minutes of the February 3rd meeting as corrected. PASSED
- The President of GUAA has asked that I stay on as GUAA's representative to DHHCAN. If the Home Region representative is interested, she will attend DHHCAN as an observer.

## **Treasurer's Report**

- The balance as of March 3rd was \$27,127.26.
- Deaf Refugee Advocacy (DRA), based in Rochester, NY is a new organization that is interested in joining DHHCAN. We've shared information with DRA including our bylaws and application process. Now awaiting their response. In addition to DRA, NBDA as well as NTID/ RIT have shown interest in joining DHHCAN.

## **POLICY REPORTS**

### **CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT**

- There have been a few meetings on the Hill concerning legislation for picture in picture ASL interpreter standards for television news broadcasts. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) is a supporter and members of his staff shared some tips and connected us with other congressional offices. A timeline and strategy have been developed. Instead of a standalone bill, we will try to place it within a larger legislative vehicle such as the new financial package coming up in September of this year. We also may try to go through the U.S. Access Board although it took them 10 years to complete the 508 standards.

### **EDUCATION**

As relayed by Zainab since Barbara Raimondo expected to show up at our meeting late.

- Last week Gallaudet, the Clerc Center, the NAD, and CEASD held its annual Education and Advocacy Summit. It was very successful. Capitol Hill Advocacy Day had more than 50 attendees at 20 virtual meetings with Capitol Hill staff. Thanks to DHHCAN for providing the interpreting service support.
- The Cogswell-Macy Act will be introduced in the current Congress. We are waiting on confirmation of the introduction date from the House.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

- Gallaudet is hosting a Deaf Employment Summit on March 11th at 1 pm EST, co-sponsored by NAD, NTID, and CSD. The webinar will discuss the do's and don'ts of accommodating deaf and hard of hearing employees from an access service provider's perspective.
- Following up on a suggestion made by Mark to have a webinar for Deaf with other disabilities - he has communicated with CSD Works staff to figure out how to make this happen. Kristy Ramos will possibly be the one responsible for the webinar.
- Neal shared that Gallaudet University's Center for Continuing and Online Education is hosting a webinar series on audism. One of the presentations will be on audism in the workplace on April 7th. Check <https://www.gallaudet.edu/ccoe/audism/> for more details.

### **HEALTH CARE**

- Lise had no report. She has been focusing on over-the-counter hearing aids and while there have been no updates on that, she has been learning that more states are looking at state legislation on insurance coverage for hearing aids.

## HOUSING

- President Biden's plan on housing needs during the pandemic was discussed at the Coalition of Organizations Serving People with Disabilities (CCD) Housing task force virtual meeting last month. The plan focuses on two major concerns - people who are homeless and at-risk families. We also discussed housing for disabled people and decided to proceed drafting a letter to the Biden administration. The draft emphasizes integration of Deaf people with disabilities due to feeling marginalized and left out of the community at large. Both Zainab and Eric reviewed the draft and provided feedback. More needs to be added about special considerations for the communication needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. Lise wants to provide input on people with hearing losses other than senior citizens. Anyone who is interested in reading the draft can contact Eric Kaika for a copy.
- Mark shared the story about Chestnut Lane Assisted Living for the Deaf in Gresham, Oregon where he lived for 7 years. Mark was asked to defend the developmentally disabled deaf (DD) residents' desire to remain there and not be moved to a separate facility. At the end of his statement at the county DHS headquarters, Mark asked the DD residents whether they wanted to remain at Chestnut Lane or move to a new place. The unanimous answer was to remain at Chestnut Lane. The new ownership was quickly educated about Deaf Culture. The facility is now known as Avamere at Chestnut Lane (<https://www.avamere.com/avamere-at-chestnut-lane/>)
- March is National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION SERVICES, AND VIDEO PROGRAMMING

- There have been 2 filings with an additional one happening today. The first was an ex parte meeting with Helping Educate to Advance the Rights of the Deaf (HEARD) in February. Zainab and Eric met with the FCC to reintroduce several issues that were in the original filing in December -- ensuring satisfaction with communication service including fee structure and letting them know that one application had a very interesting website that folks need to be aware of.
- The second filing was another ex parte issue. There was a meeting with FCC's leadership to discuss suggestions about transitioning priorities that should exist within the FCC. Suggested was the Disability Rights Office (DRO) should be a part of the FCC's civil rights division. Also encouraged more access to teleplatforms. Additionally, there is a need for interoperability between relay services and video conferencing platforms. Real Time Text needs to get out there. The last point related to Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS). FCC is finally open to feedback on establishing metrics for captioned telephones which includes error rate, latency, and so forth. Detailed comments were provided on those metrics. This effort was led by Lise and HLAA but also is so important to the Deaf, DeafBlind and hard of hearing communities especially in emergency situations.  
<https://tlpc.colorado.edu/tlpc-and-georgetown-communications-and-technology-law-clinic-draft-accessibility-agenda-for-fcc-transition-team/>

- Information on the third filing will be shared after it has been filed.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- The Air Carrier Access Amendment Act (ACAAA) will be reintroduced to Congress. This is an update of the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 which is outdated and obsolete. The first proposed set of amendments a year or two ago died. The new title is the Air Carrier Access Amendment Act of 2021. Senator Baldwin (D-WI) is the sponsor of the bill along with several co-sponsors. There is no bill number yet.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Zainab will follow up with her contacts at Facebook on the DHHCAN page.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ken shared that Zoom now offers automatic Live Transcription (closed captioning) through Otter.ai. It is available to all to all Zoom account holders. Automatic speech recognition (ASR) will be used and must be turned on by the meeting host. ALDA, TDI, NAD and HLAA reached out to Zoom requesting this feature. ASR is good for informal small group or one-on-one meetings but with more formal and educational settings, professional live captioners are more appropriate.

The NAD, TDI, HLAA, and Gallaudet University (Dr. C. Vogler) have discussed captioning metrics. There are captions for network television and internet and then captioning for IP CTS as Eric previously mentioned. Dr. Vogler is researching caption quality and the potential development of metrics and standards. It's probably best to have two separate sets of standards. FCC continues to say that consumers must file complaints which is not working due to the onerous process and consumers not wanting to file complaints every time captions are not accurate. They'll be meeting again with the FCC and ask them to revise their policies and rules as well as complaint process.

NAD's lawsuit against the White House to provide ASL interpreters is still active although the new administration has been accommodating our requests and is providing ASL interpreters for briefings.

NVRC will be hosting different virtual events during the month of March that are available to anyone. One of the events is a presentation by ABLEnow on financial matters. Check [www.NVRC.org](http://www.NVRC.org) for more information.

TDI's 2021 conference will be held virtually from July 26-30. Also, TDI is hoping to host its annual holiday party in person this year.

Recently there was a panel discussion hosted by NASADHH featuring four Black directors of state agencies sharing their life journeys. Two executive director positions are currently available -- Missouri and West Virginia so anyone who is interested is encouraged to apply.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 7th at 12:00 noon EST.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:56 p.m. EST.