

IOWA BOARD OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLITERATORS
Lucas State Office Building, 5th Floor Boardroom #526
321 East 12th St.
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

MINUTES
February 20, 2012 ----- 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order

The meeting of the Iowa Board of Sign Language Interpreters and Transliterators was called to order by Chairperson Brent Welsch at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call/Introductions

Members present: Judy Gouldsmith, L.I.; Diana Kautzky, L.I.; Stephanie Lyons, Consumer of Services; and Brent Welsch, Consumer of Services

Members absent: Cindy Crawford, L.I.; Freeman Harper, Consumer of Services; and David Theobald, L.I.

Interpreters: Peggy Chicoine and Jeff Reese

Staff present: Pierce Wilson, Board Executive; Barb Huey, Bureau Chief; Julie Bussanmas, AAG; Karla Hoover, Licensing Specialist; and Barb Christiansen, Administrative Assistant

Guests Present: Dr. Marianne Miller-Meeks, Director, Department of Public Health

Public present: Kathy Rapp, Sorenson VRS

Review Agenda

Agenda was accepted as written.

Approval of Minutes

November 21, 2011

Motion was made to approve the November 21, 2011 minutes as corrected. (MSC: Kautzky/Lyons) Motion passed unanimously. Stephanie requested the draft meeting minutes be sent to board members for review before the next meeting.

Discussion with Dr. Miller-Meeks, IDPH Director

Board members and staff introduced themselves to the Director. Dr. Miller-Meeks asked how the board was addressing the interpreter shortage. Pierce asked board members to respond. Diana stated that historically there has always been a shortage of Sign

Language Interpreters. Iowa recognizes that quality is very important. Diana reported that the intent of establishing licensure was to ensure that individuals providing interpreting services were qualified. Some individuals practicing in the field were not qualified and could not meet minimum standards. People do not need a degree to enter the profession however, higher standards are needed to ensure consumers receive the best services available.

Dr. Miller-Meeks asked if there was technology available to assist with the interpreter shortage. Diana mentioned that while technology opens a new channel to provide services, it does not replace the interpreter. Interpreters can be accessed using computers and specific software if consumers cannot secure services locally. Dr. Miller-Meeks asked if a person could type what they wanted to say to a deaf person and the deaf person could type their response. Diana stated that American Sign Language and English are very different grammatically and linguistically which is why Sign Language Interpreters are needed. Ms. Kautzky explained that many graduates from Interpreter Training Programs are not able to pass one of the Board approved examinations right out of school. It can take from two to five years before they are able to pass one of the examinations. Pierce mentioned that the scores the Board requires for licensure are middle of the road compared to other states. There are states with stricter standards.

Diana mentioned that our profession is young therefore licensure is driving education in our field. Two year training programs do not give people enough time to acquire a level of fluency in American Sign Language. Brent said that community colleges are limited in the number of hours they can provide so it's not a simple solution. He also stated that beginning this summer in order to take the national certification test, a person must have a bachelor's degree. There are no colleges offering a bachelor's degree in interpreting in Iowa. Once people leave the state, they don't return. Judy added that the bachelor's degree does not have to be in Sign Language Interpreting but can be in any program area.

Pierce noted that this issue has been brought to the media's attention by one family who lost the two interpreters who were serving their children because they could not pass one of the examinations. One of the interpreters took the exam five times and still could not pass it. The interpreters admitted they were not willing to travel even as far as one county away to receive the continuing education they needed to improve their skills so they could pass the exam. Contrary to what these two interpreters say, the numbers show people are able to pass the examinations. Karla Hoover stated she received a call recently from an out of state company that wanted to license 25 individuals. Ms. Hoover has also received many applications from individuals who have let their licenses lapse.

Dr. Miller-Meeks thanked the Board for allowing her to attend the meeting. She stated that it helps her advocate with those outside of the department. Board members thanked Dr. Miller-Meeks for coming.

Reports

Chairperson, Brent Welsch

Brent stated he would hold his comments because they related to House File 695.

Board Executive, Pierce Wilson

Pierce also said that his comments related to legislation so he would wait until that topic came up on the agenda.

Bureau Chief, Barb Huey

Barb reported the Department of Administrative Services increased the lodging rate to \$83.00 plus tax effective January 1, 2012. She also mentioned that the legislature has several proposed changes to administrative rules that will affect all of the boards but it is a very long process to get them through the system.

AAG, Julie Bussanmas

Julie reminded board members that when contacting a legislator, they needed to be sure to mention they were contacting them as a citizen and not as a board member. Julie then discussed deferred judgments. She reported that there was proposed legislation to limit the Board's ability to look at misdemeanors. The proposed legislation states that boards cannot consider misdemeanors when processing licensure applications or taking disciplinary action. Diana asked if Julie had the bill number and she responded that she would e-mail the board with that information. Pierce mentioned this has been ongoing. Julie stated that only felonies could be considered under the proposed legislation. There is a list of crimes that could be under the radar. Pierce asked if Julie had that list and she responded that she will send the list to the Board. Judy mentioned that the proposed legislation weakens licensure and Barb responded that it inhibits the Board's ability to protect the public. Barb attends the subcommittee meetings and will keep the Board updated as needed. Discussion followed regarding the omnibus bill.

Brent suggested writing a letter to Dr. Miller-Meeks thanking her for attending the meeting today and inviting her to future meetings. The Board agreed so Pierce said he would draft something and send it to Brent for approval.

Public Comment

No public comments were received.

The Board took a five minute break at 11:05 a.m.

New Business

Discussion of new or existing examinations that may be considered for Board approval and listing in administrative rules

Judy led the discussion about changes the committee recommends to Chapter 361.2(154E) Requirements for licensure. She provided the Board with a list of proposed

revisions that the committee developed. The proposed revisions were to both Chapter 361.2(154E) and to the requirements for temporary licensure as found in Chapter 361.2(4). The Board requested that Judy call the RID national office to get the date that the new NIC exam was approved. The Board also recommended that the acronyms NIC, NAD, etc., be spelled out. Pierce recommended bringing the new information back to the next meeting for approval. The Board had questions about the IC/TC exam. Judy stated the problem with this exam is that it is only a partial certification. The Comprehensive Skills Certificate (CSC) is very old and the board wondered if it is even still a valid exam. Diana would like to know how many individuals have their CSC or IC/TC and no other certification. Pierce said he will get the numbers on all certifications for the Board. Diana said she would look on the RID website and see how many interpreters in the state have either the CSC or the IC/TC. Some of them may not be licensed though. Pierce emphasized that if the Board decided to eliminate the IC/TC and/or the CSC certifications from the list of approved examinations, current licensees who hold those certifications would not lose their licenses. The change would only apply to new applications for licensure.

Judy reviewed suggested changes to the requirements for temporary licensure discussed by the committee and mentioned that the proposed changes would require changes in the code. Suggested changes include:

- Requiring a degree in Sign Language Interpreting from an accredited college.
- Interpreters who do not have a degree in Sign Language Interpreting would need to apply for RID's Alternative Pathway to Eligibility.
- Work with Boys Town National Research Hospital to explore the feasibility of requiring the pre-hire EIPA.
- Require the applicant to get a specific number of CEUs by an RID approved sponsor prior to applying for temporary licensure.
- Applicants must pass the written exam for either the EIPA or the NIC.
- Applicants must submit two letters of reference from Deaf people attesting to their skill, knowledge, and general attitude toward Deaf people.

David served on the committee with Cindy and Judy and asked that the Board be informed of which options he supports. David supports the following: 1) an Interpreter Training Program (ITP) degree or an Alternative Pathway to Eligibility as accepted by RID, 2) EIPA pre-hire scores as determined by the ITP where the person attended (even though the EIPA is a specialty test and not a generalist test), or 3) passing the written exam for either the EIPA or the NAD-RID NIC.

Judy emphasized that these were just ideas to start thinking about now and that changes to temporary licensure would require a long term discussion. Diana stressed the importance of asking for a degree in interpreting to be eligible for a temporary license. The rules now allow any individual to apply for licensure. Individuals need to be on the path to becoming an interpreter to receive a temporary license.

Pierce stated the Board needs to look at the ultimate goal that has been discussed in the past and that is to eventually phase out temporary licensure. The intent is to have competent Sign Language Interpreters serving the public. With temporary licensure, there are always less than competent individuals serving the public. No other board has temporary licensure as this. Pierce recommended going back to a two year maximum or less for temporary licensure and then eventually phasing it out. Diana would like to see something ready for the Board by the August meeting so a decision can be made and legislation can be ready for the 2013 session. Temporary licensure needs to be made stronger and then eventually eliminated.

Judy asked how changes to temporary licensure would affect legislators who might look at this as putting people out of work. Julie said it would raise the standards by requiring a two year degree for now and incrementally increasing the requirements. Pierce mentioned the Board should propose something significant enough so the legislators do not have to deal with it year after year. It has to be something the Board can live with for at least two years. Judy suggested that any committee formed to work on this issue needs to have face-to-face meetings rather than having discussions through e-mail. Brent offered to serve on the new committee and said he would contact absent board members to see if any of those individuals would be willing to serve.

Legislation Discussion

House File 695 — Brent attended a legislative coffee in Council Bluffs and was notified by another participant that HF695 is dead. Stephanie also stated that the Department of Human Rights Assistant Director received word from a Senator that there will not be any meetings regarding this proposed legislation this session. Barb stated that this is on the Bureau's watch list so if it comes up in legislative discussion, their liaison will let her know.

Applications Discussion

Discussion of any licensure applications that need board decision.

Chris Prudhom checked "yes" to questions in two areas. He admits to writing bad checks and being convicted of a crime. The Board asked that Mr. Prudhom provide information regarding what RID required to get his certification back and what other states have required of Mr. Prudhom. Julie suggested the Board could license him by consent agreement which means he agrees to follow all the laws and rules of licensure. It also puts the public on notice. Pierce suggested the Board first ask for more information. He will send a letter to Mr. Prudhom asking for more information and a personal narrative.

Closed Session

The Board will go into closed session to discuss complaints according to Iowa Code 21.5-1(d).

In accordance with Iowa Code 21.5(1) “a” & “d,” the Board went into closed session at 12:22 p.m. by unanimous roll call vote to discuss closed session agenda items. (MSC: Gouldsmith/Lyons)

Open Session

Finalize closed session actions

The Board returned to open session at 12:28 p.m. (MSC: Lyons/Kautzky) A motion was made to accept the settlement agreement and final order for Case # SLI-11-001. (MSC: Gouldsmith/Lyons) A roll call vote was taken:

Judy Gouldsmith – aye
Diana Kautzky – aye
Stephanie Lyons – aye
Brent Welsch – aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Brent reminded everyone that the next Board meeting is May 14, 2012.

Future Meetings

May 14, 2012
August 20, 2012
November 19, 2012

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 p.m. (MSC: Lyons/Gouldsmith)
Motion passed unanimously.