



**Louisiana Commission for the Deaf
SFY 21 Regular Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes of December 1, 2020**

- I. Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Ernest Garrett.
- A. Invocation/Silent Prayer- Ernest Garrett
 - B. Pledge of Allegiance – Jimmy Gore
 - C. Roll Call – Commissioner Chairperson, Ernest Garrett

Commissioners Present: A quorum of Commissioners was present: Ernest Garrett, III, Jimmy Gore, Dr. Ashley Argrave, Senator Sharon Hewitt, Dr. Lee Mendoza, Iva Tullier, Melissa Bayham, Dawn Melendez, Bradley Wellons, Dr. Heather Laine, Lisa Potter, Candice Leblanc.

Commissioners Not Present: Rebecca Beard, Jay Isch, Kevin Monk

LCD Staff: Jana Broussard, Vanessa Magnon

Interpreters: Sylvie Sullivan, Donovan Williams, Lissa Gill, Laura Sicignano

Captionist: Provided by CC Group

II. Introduction of New Board Members

- A. Brad Wellons (HH Rep)
- B. Dr. Ashley Argrave (Deaf Prof Rep)
- C. Dr. Heather Laine (LSD)

III. Approval of August 21, 2020 Meeting Agenda – (Dr. Mendoza/transcript did not indicate name)

- A. **Motion:** Commissioner Melendez (president LRID) would like to add an item to include interpreter certification board. Chairperson Garrett- As time allows.

IV. Approval of February 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes – (Lisa Potter/Jimmy Gore)

V. Public Comment

- A. Dan Arabie – DeafBlind Advocate
 - 1. Statement of difference of interpreter and SSP roles. Would like to know the results of previous discussions on this topic. Ernest Garrett acknowledges the comment and will add it to the agenda as an item for the next meet to discuss.

VI. Old Business-

- A. Election of Secretary - **Motion:** Mr. Wellons nominated Dr. Argrave for Secretary. Ms. Melendez seconds. All in favor/no objections. Dr. Argrave is officially named the secretary for LCD.
- B. Commission Priorities
 - 1. Revision of Legislation
 - a. Strategic Initiatives- Ernest Garrett introduces Shane Feldman, Director of Innivee Strategies. Mr. Feldman gives a presentation on how he plans to support LCD by



developing a clear vision and intentional goals and objectives to further clarify the role of LCD. Questions to Commission:

- i. Mr. Feldman, LCD Director, staff and commissioners will be working together to establish and implement the strategic plan
 - i. Ms. Melendez mentions that she thinks the community needs to be involved; Mr. Arabie (public) would like the materials that Mr. Feldman will provide to be in a format that can be in Braille such as a word document format. Mr. Feldman complies and will make sure materials are accessible; Dr. Argrave adds that she agrees with Ms. Melendez as there are some populations not represented among the commissioners such as interpreters and DB representatives and agrees that the community should be involved; Mr. Gore brings up specific needs for different areas and the need to develop a plan to bring those people in for involvement.
 - b. DeafBlind Commissioner seat- Mr. Arabie (public) comments that the DB person if to serve as a commissioner should have an interpreter and SSP present to provide appropriate access.
 - i. LCD Director, Ms. Broussard clarifies 2 things: There is a DB position commissioner position that is being proposed to legislation; There is an ethical situation with the DB commissioner seat as the commissioner themselves would not be allowed to receive services provided by LCD, such as SSP services, outside of the scope of public meetings. LCD Director requests if the board would like to request for an advisory opinion from the Board of Ethics on this issue. Mr. Wellons replies that we should request an advisory opinion from the Board of Ethics; Dr. Argrave adds that she also thinks we should request an advisory opinion. She adds that in the future it may be possible to have a DB person on the Commission but the person could not be included in votes specific to services they receive; Ms. Melendez agrees to request an advisory opinion as well as there was a similar problem to this in the past that was resolved due to feedback from the Board of Ethics. **Motion:** LCD Director to request a formal advisory opinion from the Board of Ethics. (D. Melendez/seconded name not recorded on transcript) All in favor/No objections.
2. Lead K follow-up. Commissioner Isch not in attendance- deferred to next meeting. No objections.
3. Accessibility to legislative hearings for deaf, deaf/blind, and hard of hearing individuals- LCD Director Ms. Broussard:
- a. The Governor's Office of Disability affairs has asked some commissioners on the LCD board to weigh in on the Working Group Policy Profile Form. Commissioners Mr. Wellons, Dr. Mendoza, and Ms. Melendez are willing to participate.



VII. New Business

- A. Vacant Commissioner Seats- Parent of DHH child interested in joining commission and House of Representatives Seat are vacant.
1. Commissioner Dr. Mendoza mentioned that the House of Rep. Seat is typically one that has been appointed in the past. Chair Mr. Garrett suggest that we need to advocate for this position; Commissioner Ms. Tullier is willing to reach out to Speaker Clay Snyder to see his interest in joining; Suggestion to reach out to Former Rep. Pat Smith for seat suggestions.
- B. Bulletin 1508: discussion related to DB individuals. Deferred to next meeting by chair.
- C. Medicaid Language lead by Commissioner Wellons- Health Equity: the Office of Community Partnership and how it defines health equity, very little discussion or consideration for Deaf, Hard of hearing, Deafblind population,
1. Commissioner Dr. Mendoza supports Mr. Wellons and believes LCD should be involved in these discussions- also suggest to add the Department of Disability Affairs to this discussion; LCD Director Ms. Broussard mentions that she has spoken to the Bureau of Family Health regarding this matter and that internally agency to agency there is attention on this matter; Commissioner Melendez suggests sending a statement to the task force on the behalf of LCD to recognize that DHHDB individuals be included in this discussion.
- D. 2021 Meeting Dates led by Jana Broussard (Interim Director)- suggests moving up quarterly meeting dates making the new dates January 15, April 16, July 16, and October 15.
1. Chair Mr. Garrett adds we may have a few additional meetings to meet the timeline given by Shane Feldman and the strategic initiative of LCD; Commissioner Ms. Melendez brings up a possible conflict with the July 15 meeting as there is an LRID conference that day. **Motion:** To approve the proposed 2021 dates (B. Wellons/I. Tullier) No objections.
- E. Commissioner Ms. Melendez- add a discussion on the LRID interpreter levels.
1. Chair Garrett suggested postponing the item until the next meeting so that we can have a more in depth discussion on this topic.

VIII. Reports

- A. LCD Interim Director (J. Broussard)- The Community, Office of Disability Affairs education committee, and other agencies have met and are having continued discussions regarding the qualifications and oversight for educational interpreters working with Deaf students in the state. Research is being conducted to investigate who at LDOE is overseeing educational interpreters. We will provide more information as it becomes available; LCD was contacted by LRID in regards to the Dept. of corrections interpreting program. Historically, there have been conversations regarding this matter. LCD did respond formally, however did not pose a position; SSP RFP: The goal is to have the document publicly posted in January with a proposal conference to be held after the publication to participate and learn more; LCD recently was invited by the Louisiana Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf to participate in a town hall discussion regarding interpreter licensure, certification, state recognition of the Board of Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) and a host of other topics. More discussion to be had in the future; LCD will continue working with Shane Feldman in the strategic initiative for LCD. This will guide LCD



legislation proposal for the spring.

B. Commissioner Reports

1. Commissioner Melendez, on behalf of LRID thanks LCD for their participation in the conversation regarding interpreting certification.
2. Commissioner Dr. Mendoza gives COVID update: 5,326 new case as of this date.

VI. Date, Time, and Place of Next Commission Meeting –

January 15, 2021 9:00am-12:00pm

VII. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm (No motion to end meeting was seen in captioning transcript)

Draft of minutes prepared 11/25/2020.

Minutes corrected on _____.

Recorder

Date

Secretary

Date