

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
Virtual Quarterly Meeting
Thursday, May 13, 2021
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Debbe Hagner, Glenna Ashton, Chris Littlewood, Mary Hodges, Sean Isaac, Gina Halliburton, Cindy Simon

Minutes from February 11, 2021 accepted. Today's agenda approved.

Sean Isaac: Tiffany Baylor has changed position, so the position was advertised on People First and there are several applications being reviewed by Ann Simmons. There were 18 applications. Shay Chapman is changing positions also, so I was asked to facilitate this meeting. Cecil Bradley has retired thus will no longer be in the Council nor do budget reports. 500 copies of the biennial reports were made and have not yet been distributed to the Legislature plus some will be sent to each Council member and posted to our web site. Governor has ordered face-to-face meetings to resume. Will follow up on the status of Council appointments. Dottie March prepared the minutes for February. Statistics on public request via emails or phone calls need to be collected. Will check on replacement for Cecil Bradley from VR/DOE.

Website Committee: Need to add new person information and PDF of biennial report. Need to do clean-up, updates, and adjustments to our web site.

Education, Medical, Outreach, and Technology Committee: no report, template letter format was discussed and will be further developed.

Legislative Committee: Two bills failed again in the Appropriations Committee – coverage of hearing aids for children and allowing sale of hearing aids through mail.

Budget committee: no report, however budget Excel was attached and will keep recurring funds for new fiscal year to cover meeting expenses

Presenters: Michael Yelapi of Tampa, Monique Rousell of Jacksonville, and Colleen Metcalf of Ocala are Coordinators of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs at their respective Centers for Independent Living (CIL). They explained their activities of advocacy, various trainings, devices, referrals, and COVID-19 issues. There are 15 centers in Florida serving thousands of clients. Would like to collaborate with all the different organizations represented here on the Council plus others. Will share statistics on Deaf and hard-of-hearing clients. Also, Chris Littlewood is working with Family Center on Deafness for statistics and a survey on children. Will apply for a position on the Council under Deaf Service Centers. CIL have lobbyists that we could work with. Will share emails of DHH Coordinators to get the public notices of FCCDHH meetings. Both CIL

and FCCDHH will be at October 2nd event, It's a Deaf Thing in Lakeland. Top issue for Deaf is qualified interpreters and top issue for hard of hearing is financial assistance for hearing aids.

Presenter: Tracie Snow of Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine. She explained the challenges of education during COVID-19 school closings with extensive planning, virtual technology and devices, communications, mental health services and outreach, and family outreach. 2021 reopening involved more planning with innovative learning environment (ILE) and brick and mortar (BAM) approaches with DOE and CDC guidance. The enrollment tends to be 1/3 blind and 2/3 deaf and has stayed flat with about 535 total plus the statewide infant program (almost 500). Students are served from birth to age 22. Parents have several options at local level in addition to FSDB. 2021-2022 school year will be another set of challenges as it's hard to predict the situations but there may be raised expectations since all have learned to use technology and effective communications.

Public Comments:

Michael Yelapi of Tampa CIL explained about their program to train people to pass the citizenship test with US Office of Immigration and Naturalization. Interpreters are provided however they are unqualified, or they should be a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI). Apparently, there is a state contract with Trusted Translations who do not do best practices. The office interviewers also do questionable actions such requiring use of voice, not providing names of employees. Try to follow up with a letter, and research for names in the office.

Eloise Schwartz of Sun City Center (south of Tampa), a former RN case manager, explained about the success of the Wisconsin Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She was involved in advocating for the OTC hearing aid bill which recently died in committee. She noticed that many legislations need to be updated since they were based on 1973 Rehab Act and not the 1990 ADA Act. There is a need for more current statistics. Suggest inviting the Governor or someone to our meetings. There are communications cards available that are all pictures for quick reference for a range of people to use.

August meeting: It will be in Kissimmee. The new rental car contract is now with Avis. Issues need to be resolved for public transportation, reimbursement, personal car use, meeting room set up, early planning, and public notices. Possible topics include the legislative bill writing process, organizations collaboration outside of FCCDHH, and CERT training. November meeting will be on th4th due to 11th being a holiday.

Elections: Glenna Ashton will be Chair and Debbe Hagner will be Vice-Chair.

Announcements: HLAA national conference in Tampa 2022, this year it's virtual. Debbe is a graduate of the Peer Mentorship two-year certificate program at Gallaudet which she explained. The annual Senior Summit will be held on May 20th.

Respectfully Submitted by Glenna Ashton