

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
Quarterly Meeting in Tallahassee, FL.**

Thursday, February 9, 2023

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mary Hodges (FDOEA), Cindy Simon (Audiologists), Glenna Ashton (FAD), Chris Littlewood (ALDA), Cory Parker (DOE/VR), John Jackson (DCF)

Members Present Online: Debbe Hagner (HLAA) and Karen Goldberg (HLAA)

Department of Health Staff: Sean Isaac, Angie Green

Service Providers: Donna Flanders, Natasha Moreno, April Perry, and Kelly Gagain (Interpreters), Lisa Johnson (CART), LaShay Lewis (A/V)

Service Providers Online: Janelle Barnes and Carrie Moore (Interpreters on Zoom)

Minutes from November 3 and 4, 2022 Meeting and Agenda for February 2023 Meeting:

Cory Parker made a motion to accept the minutes and it was seconded by Cindy Simon with changes made. The minutes were voted on and accepted with a couple minor changes. Cindy Simon made a motion to accept today's agenda, and Cory Parker made a motion to second. The agenda was voted on and accepted.

Staff Updates: Angie Green provided the following:

1. A categorized summary of all phone calls coming into the FDOH.
2. Updates were provided on the virtual FCCDHH meeting May 11 and 12, 2023.
3. Form 1 Financial Disclosure forms were discussed to be finished and turned in by June 30, 2023.
4. Update given on the status of the Biennial Report. It is routing for approval.
5. An update was given on the appointees current situation. They remain under review.

Committee Updates:

1. Audiology – Cindy Simon provided no update
2. Bylaws – Glenna Ashton said we worked on them last meeting and hoped to have time to work on them in the meeting.
3. Budget – Cory Parker states:
 - a. The total budget in expenses to start the fiscal year was \$17,978. We have spent \$8,009 in travel and supplies; leaving \$9,968 left
4. Executive Committee: Glenna Ashton stated not much in the way of bills. The Council may have some interest in HB-61 Medicaid expansion through a Medicaid buy-in program. Could help some with their hearing loss. HB-223, as well as SB-290, public school students progress for students with disabilities. SB-394, along with HB-435, relates to newborn hearing screenings; they want to look more into congenital cytomegalovirus, a neurological disorder that can lead to hearing loss. Glenna and Cindy had 10 appointments and 20 drop ins. Several legislators asked if the council had enough funding or needed more funding. Most all agreed the council

deserved more funding. It was agreed that around \$250,000 would be a good number for the council. Biennial Report was not available to hand out due to it not being approved and printed yet. Glenna and Cindy handed out last years report. Told the legislators they would receive the new one once it was printed. The Council would love to have a budget for 17 members, an Outreach Educator and funding to purchase travel materials.

5. Biennial Report Committee – The Council reviewed the new 2023 Biennial Report being routed for approval, and made edits.
6. Web Committee- -- No updates

Organization Updates:

1. Audiology – Cindy Simon stated the audiology committee did not meet but that the Florida Academy of Audiology were going to be making visits in Tallahassee next month.
2. Florida Association of the Deaf (FAD) – Glenna Ashton stated the FAD board is still going through transition. There have been no board meetings. Glenna helped a new secretary with how to handle the minutes. The committee is planning to have a conference in St. Augustine, FL sometime next fall.
3. Adult Late Deafened Association (ALDA) – Chris Littlewood stated that ALDA is planning a training presentation on a quarterly basis on Zoom and more social meetings, maybe as often as a month. The National Convention for ALDA will be held in San Antonio, TX in October of 2023. This is the only chapter in Florida as the other in South Florida stopped. Because of ALDA doing social events online, more members from all over the country can participate.
4. Florida Department of Education/VR – Cory Parker provided no updates.
5. Department of Elder Affairs (FDEA) – Mary Hodges noted this would be her last meeting as a representative of the FDEA with the hopes of a new representative by the next meeting in May.
6. Department of Children and Families (FDOCF) – John Jackson had nothing to report.
7. Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) – Debbe Hagner stated the convention will be in New Orleans this year. The HLAA is trying to re-establish itself since they lost Ed Ogiba. If there are no more volunteers, they may have to temporarily shut it down.

Presentation: Steven Zuilkowski – Deputy Executive Director & General Council for the State of Florida Commission on Ethics Commission

There are many volunteer positions that are required to file financial disclosure forms. There are 4,000 candidates for constitutional offices required to file Form 6 and 6,000 public officers and employees who file Form 1. The form is due by July 1st of every year, however, there is a grace period until September 1st. After September 1st, there are fines that accrue of \$25 per day up to a maximum of \$1,500. There is an appeals process as well.

Mailings are sent about Financial Disclosures . After July 1st, for those who haven't filed the Commission, they receive notice and holds what is called a Phone Fun Day where the commission calls people statewide to let them know they have not filed their disclosure forms. About 1,000 people receive these phone calls. Post cards are also sent as a reminder.

The statute, not the commission, indicates who is required to file financial disclosure.

The legislature decided certain positions have much power and the public requires certain disclosure about the person holding so the public knows decisions aren't biased.

Section 112.3145 subsection 1c2 defines state officers. There are three classifications who have to file: State Officers, specified State Employees, Certain State employees and Local Officers. An appointed member of a council having statewide jurisdiction, excluding a member of an advisory board.

Cindy Simon stated the council is an advisory board by statute. Steven will look into the matter whether the council is an advisory board or not. He will review at who put the council on the list in the first place. He will look into Debbe Hagner's appeal as well.

The system allows individuals to only have to file once even if they hold more than one position that requires filing.

Form 1 can be filed as soon as January but no later than June 30th.

If a Council Member resigns, they have to fill out a final financial disclosure form as well, within 60 days of leaving. Fill out an F1 for the previous year. When leaving your position, you need to file another F1 form from January 1st to the day you leave and submit that as well.

There are 36,000 people across the state filing F1 forms.

Kim Holmes is a great resource at the Commission. There is an attorney of the day program where the attorney answers any and all questions you may have. They do about 80 calls a day.

The Commission has an education and training mission side to it as well as the enforcement side.

The Commission exists for enforcement and education. Form 6 has way more information than Form 1. The Commission has no way to audit the forms. They just look them over.

One can email or mail the form in.

One cannot accept a bribe. Quid pro quo. Gift giving with the understanding that this will happen without being said is called unauthorized compensation. Gift law indicates if you're giving something of value and you didn't pay them back within 90 days, it is a gift.

Cecil Bradly Presentation: Director of Florida Telecommunication Relay (FTRI), former Council Member

The Florida Telecommunication Relay, Telecommunications Access and Systems Act, is the Florida State 417.701-708, the Florida Statute. It was created and passed in 1991. Due to being created and passed in 1991, there is no mention of internet or wireless services. Cecil became a director in the Fall of 2021 to make it his mission to change the law. Things like Teletypewriters (TTY) and Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TTDs) are 40 year old terms and devices no longer being used. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is becoming more commonplace of how to communicate through internet lines, instead of analogue to digital. Landlines have gone by the wayside more than about five years ago or more. There is some people on the Senate committee who focus specifically on the Public Service Commission, PSC, who think the law needs to change. February, March, and April are the months where legislative sessions are the most active so now is a good time to focus on specific issues within bills that are on the table now. There is a legislation session in 2024, meeting in January and February, so a bill needs to be introduced by November or December. With the landline disappearing, FTRI would like to try different investment opportunities to extend the program. The PSC does not have statutory authority to oversee the wireless providers. They focus on the

phone companies. Currently, 10 cents a month is being billed on phone bills for this service. Cecil is very optimistic that a new proposal will be written for next year. In May of 2023, FTRI will try to be aggressive in meeting with legislators. There is a pilot program in about 23 other states where they provide that opportunity for wireless. So a wireless pilot will be proposed in Florida.

Special Recognition:

Anna Simmons and Shay Chapman were in attendance for special recognition to Mary Hodges, Debbe Hagner, and Michelle Peart.

Anna Simmons recognized Mary Hodges for her retirement from the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and her role in the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Ashley Apthorp, division director of the Department of Elder Affairs, and Jennifer Moore, division director, were recognized as showing support for Mary receiving her award.

Anna next recognized Michelle Peart for her being a jack of all trades for the council. Michelle helps facilitate the process of receiving email from the public to the Council as well as drafting some answers to these emails.

Anna then recognized Debbe Hagner for her many years on the council. Glenna Ashton spoke a few words on behalf of Debbe. Debbe was a former Chair and Vice Chair for the council. Debbe has received awards for her leadership roles.

Bylaws discussion:

It was discussed whether the term is Deaf-Blind or deafblind is more appropriate. It is considered correct when it is deafblind.

There was a discussion on why the Department of Children and Families is on the council. John Jackson states that the Department touches people's lives in many different ways: adult abuse, child abuse, benefits like Medicaid and foods, a mental health section, substance abuse section, and a domestic violence section. Chris Littlewood states you cannot change anything in the bylaws since it is part of the legal authority under 413.271. It is stated that page numbers on the bylaws would be helpful.

It is stated that the council would love to have the liaison contact the governor's appointee monthly for updates and the appointments.

Bylaws discussion has been set aside for now.

New Business:

- 1) Expo Planning – The council is looking toward putting a deposit on a hotel for the 2024 Expo. Cindy Simon mentioned the Embassy Suites for the Expo. Glenna Ashton mentioned a convention hall with tables and chairs, with one to three main plenary sessions, some common topic, advocacy, collaboration, and maybe a performance. She mentioned no workshops due to AV, CART and interpreters.

- 2) Glenna collected 40 public comments while at Deafopia. There was 1,000 people in attendance. It was held at Sawgrass Mills in Fort Lauderdale.
- 3) DSA – Deaf Seniors of America – is having an event June 25-29th. There is expected to be 1,000 people and 200 are from Florida. This is a National Based Organization.
- 4) Angie Green should follow up with governor appointee.

John Jackson made a motion to adjourn, and Cindy Simon seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.