

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL  
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
Quarterly Meeting  
Tallahassee, Florida**

Friday, February 10, 2022  
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>> SEAN ISAAC: We have one minute.

[Pause].

>> SEAN ISAAC: All right. It's 9:01. Do we need a couple minutes?

[Pause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay.

>> VOICE: Recording in progress.

>> CORY PARKER: Do you know if John is joining?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Good morning. I think today is "Deaf Day," there's three of us here!

This is the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing meeting today, Friday February 10.

I want to take a moment to recognize the service providers who have been doing, as usual, a wonderful job of providing us support yesterday and today.

Carrie Moore on Zoom; April Perry, Natasha Moreno, Donna Flanders, Kelly Gagain, the interpreters from AQI.

La'Shay and Lisa, La'Shay Lewis and Lisa Johnston. So thank you for your support and services, a wonderful job as always.

[Applause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Yesterday was a very productive day, we got a lot done yesterday. So before we go on and do a roll call.

>> SEAN ISAAC: Good morning. My name is Sean Isaac, I represent the Florida Department of Health.

>> ANGIE GREEN: My name is Angie Green and I represent the Florida Department of Health.

>> CORY PARKER: Good morning, this is Cory Parker, and I'm representing Department of Education, as well as vocational rehab.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Glenna Ashton representing the Florida Association of the Deaf from Boca Raton.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: Good morning, this is Chris Littlewood representing Association of Late-Deafened Adults, I live in Seminole, Florida and work for St. Petersburg College.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: And hopefully Mary and John will show up. Cindy had to fly home.

Okay. We have a few minutes before the speaker.  
Oh, Karen, Debbe? Visitors?

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: Good morning, this is Karen Goldberg representing Hearing Loss Association of America.

>> DEBBE HAGNER: This is Debbe Hagner, good morning, everyone, this will be my last meeting. I will miss all of you.

Feel free to call me any time. You all have my phone number. And good luck to everybody!

And you know where to find me. Thank you for everything you have done.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Debbe? Shay Chapman and Anna Simmons showed up yesterday wanting to give you a Certificate of Appreciation and unfortunately, you had to leave. But we recognized your service on the Council.

As a member, vice chair, and chair, and I also mentioned your work with HLAA and your recognition there too.

So, again, we thank you for your service on the Council!

>> CORY PARKER: Hi, Debbe, this is Cory. Can you hear me? I've known you so long, I mean, I haven't known you that long, but I have to say I have admired you and all of your work that you've had with the Council. And I want to thank you.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: Good morning, Debbe, this is Chris. I just wanted to say that I wanted to thank you so much for all you've done with the Council. And you continue to be a strong advocate wherever you are.

I know all the work you've done with HLAA, but you know ALDA is my first priority and it has always been a pleasure to work with you.

You have served on the ALDA Board as well, even currently. And when I was president of ALDA, you were a lot of help to me for support for the Board, and I can't thank you enough for that.

Don't stop all the wonderful things you do; just enjoy the break from the Council and

keep doing other things.

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Love you.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Thank you, Debbe. Sean?

>> SEAN ISAAC: Debbe, can you -- oh, yeah. I too appreciate your help, Debbe. When I first started working with the Council, everybody was so helpful, but you were especially warming and welcoming and helpful in giving me information about how this works [chuckles], and so I really appreciate your help.

And special recognition to you.

It's amazing to get an opportunity like this to create such unique opportunities for communities that you represent.

I love the opportunity to work with the Florida Department of Health in doing that, but you've been doing this for so long. So kudos and congratulations to you.

And I look forward to working with you in other ways.

[John Jackson enters room].

>> DEBBE HAGNER: You're welcome. Thank you.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: And John is here.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Sorry. John Jackson, Department of Children and Families, a bit late.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: We both want to mention something. I got an e-mail from Hands & Voices, you remember we had a speaker, a new parent that came to speak, and we told her we wanted to work with Hands & Voices and hope that she would put in an application. I don't know.

But anyway, they sent an e-mail saying they want to seriously collaborate with us, to work together.

It was a really long e-mail....

It wasn't really specific on how to work together, but they're very interested in developing a strong professional relationship with the Council.

[Mary Hodges enters room].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: So we need to find ways to include Hands & Voices and, of course, naturally I'm going to tell them please have someone to fill out an application for an appointment, and that's the first thing that we want to see happen. And how we can do collaboration. It's something for us to explore more, because we all represent different organizations.

But maybe we need to think about how to really have more of a collaboration with each organization so they can be more involved instead of just sending a representative.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: This is Chris. I got a similar e-mail from Anthony Verdeja, he is the executive director for the Family Center on Deafness in Pinellas County, and I'm lucky living in the Tampa Bay Area that there are several Deaf and hard-of-hearing service centers in different ways.

Also, in Pasco County and other areas very close by.

He mentioned that he's been trying to work on collaboration with other Deaf and hard-of-hearing service organizations and he said that he wanted to speak to the Council.

And I mentioned to Glenna that I wanted to recommend ways for him to do that.

Maybe in May, for him to give a short presentation for the virtual meeting, which wouldn't require any travel on his part.

And we could find out what he would like to do to work with us.

His question or comment to me was that he has noticed an uptick in the need for services in Deaf and hard-of-hearing organizations around Tampa Bay, and he was wondering what the Commission, us, was doing.

And I clarified with him that we are not a commission, we are an advisory council, but we would be in touch soon to communicate and collaborate and I think that would be a very good thing.

Anthony is a very staunch advocate for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing in the Tampa Bay Area throughout the state. He is also a sign language interpreter. He has been with the Council before as working as an interpreter.

And he so I really look forward to doing everything that we can.

His first name is Anthony, last name is Verdaja.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Before we move on, we want to recognize that Mary is here.

>> MARY HODGES: Thank you, Glenna. This is Mary Hodges, Department of Elder Affairs.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I would suggest the e-mail you got and the e-mail I got we forward to Angie and help us to follow-up on that, okay? And have more in-depth discussion. And you said there was a need for more services. I already noticed and many of us have already noticed that there was an increase need for mental health services, you know, since all this disaster has happened the past few years.

And, again, where are the people who are qualified to provide direct service or qualified to interpret in mental health, I've noticed that too.

Cory?

>> CORY PARKER: No, I just wanted to say hello to Mary. That's all. Just waving and saying good morning.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Sorry.

>> CORY PARKER: No problem.

[Laughter].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Anything on chat?

Okay. Do we have anything else we want to quickly discuss before the speaker -- the speaker is here already?

>> ANGIE GREEN: [Nods head].

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: This is Chris. Real fast, just because I do have to leave a little bit early and I don't want to forget.

One question that's been on my mind is when someone calls the program office, how is the phone answered by you, Angie? Because as I recall, it's just answered "Department of Health," and I'm worried that that's confusing to a lot of people that we're encouraging to contact The Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Council and I was wondering if you could elaborate a little bit more on how that works.

>> ANGIE GREEN: Yeah, so it just comes in and it is just a general service and then they transfer it to me and they get ahold of me to talk to. And then I give them my direct line so they can contact me if they need anymore answers or questions.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: So when people call the number that's associated with this Council, they're really calling the general services, "This is the Department of Health, how can I help you?" And they want to know where to direct the call?

>> ANGIE GREEN: Yes, yes.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: So how does that person end up directing the call for blind people to you, okay?

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: This is Chris. So we have no direct line for the Council anymore, where the phone is answered as FCCDHH?

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. So those -- Angie does have a direct line. Did you all have a certain way that you wanted her to respond when folks called in?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: That, always. I mean, because when we're encouraging -- if anybody e-mails me, like what Anthony did, you know, I said I happen to be at a council meeting and I will bring up what you're asking me.

But if anybody does that, like, say two or three weeks from now I give Angie's phone number and contact information and then they call and, you know, somebody is answering the phone "Department of Health," that's a little bit confusing.

I want people to get a direct contact and know that they're speaking to somebody associated with the Council for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. So I think that can be arranged; she can say that she's the liaison to the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; that's not an issue at all.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: What is the direct number again? I think I have it at home, but I want to make sure.

>> ANGIE GREEN: It's 850-558-9645.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: This is Chris. Is that the same number that's on the website for contacting the Council?

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. That number has been updated, so currently we need to update that number to make it the same as on the website.

We had a previous number associated with that account and when the previous person moved on, that was updated and this is a new number for Angie and we'll make sure that's updated as well.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Angie, are you actually taking care of the website or do you have other people work with you to change things, do things on the website, on our website?

>> ANGIE GREEN: No, I continue -- I'm starting to do the website myself, so I can update that on Monday.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay. Okay.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: This is Chris. I just can't see a more important action item than making sure that that phone number on the website is linked directly to you and answering the phone; just so that people have a direct contact with the Council.

>> ANGIE GREEN: Absolutely. I will do that.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: Thank you so much.

>> ANGIE GREEN: You're welcome.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay. Does anybody have anything more they want to share?

Oh, I have one more thing. The Florida Deaf Artist Show that the --

[Pause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I want to make sure I have the right -- every year, they do a statewide exhibit of Deaf and hard of hearing artists from the whole range, not just Deaf signing -- but it happens to be them -- but the Deaf and hard-of-hearing artists 2D or 3D and performers.

They do a show of an exhibit and it becomes bigger and bigger and bigger every year, as more and more Deaf and hard-of-hearing artists find out about it and they encourage you to submit their work.

They typically do it in Miami. They've done it in Orlando before. And I believe it's the... it's during the summer.

[Pause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: What's cool about it is they do it in an area of Miami called... I want to say Wildwood or Westward or something like that, it's a very artist-type thing, they have murals everywhere and there's a lot of galleries and things like that.

So I just wanted to let you all know about that.

And that's the group I tried to contact because I wanted to get them involved in the expo. That's one of the ideas for the expo; they have a room for artists' exhibits from everybody, Deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, whatever, to have an art gallery at the expo, so to speak, and performers and that would help draw more people.

So I want to work with them as part of the expo.

Does anybody have anything else?

Okay. I think we can go ahead with the speaker, if you're ready?

This is Octavio Simoes-Ponce, assistant general counsel Office of the General Council Florida Department of Health, who will speak with the Sunshine Law and other updates for this Council.

And hopefully there will be a little bit of time where we can ask questions related to the expo, correct?

>> SEAN ISAAC: [Nods head].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay. Welcome!

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Good morning, everybody.

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Excuse me, this is Debbe. We don't see the speaker.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Is there a way to...

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: Just a minute.

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Thank you.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Is that better?

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Thank you.

>> SEAN ISAAC: Yes.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Okay. So, good morning, my name is Octavio Simoes-Ponce, I am the attorney for The Division of Medical Quality Assurance under which the Coordinating Council for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing are organized and I am also your attorney.

I am here today to give a brief presentation on the Sunshine Law as it relates to public meetings, which we are in if right now.

A brief history about myself: I have worked for the Department since 2014. When I joined the prosecution services unit as an attorney, prosecuting licensed discipline for various professions. Including for a brief time hearing aid specialists.

I eventually became a supervisor for the team prosecuting various cases before I went to the Legislature and then I had an opportunity to come up here and I returned in September of last year, so I'm very proud to be here today and I'm very proud to be here before you.

I do have a presentation, I do have some materials, but if we can't -- that's okay if we can't show it slide-by-slide.

>> SEAN ISAAC: We have it.

[Pause].

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: While he's working on that, very briefly, as you're aware, Florida has a very broad public meetings and public records law. It is generally

most favorable by everything we conduct under the Sunshine and making sure the public has access to everything that we do, including the opportunity to attend meetings, such as these, and to obtain public records.

Florida is probably one of the most open states in the Union. This has been since we enacted Section 286.011 and Article 1 Section 24 of the Florida Constitution.

These are collectively referred to as the Sunshine Law and access to the public to various public functions, such as these.

The law applies to both elected and appointed boards. And so any cabinet of two or more members to discuss any matter as foreseeably within your duties as outlined in statute establishing you guys.

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: Mmm-hmm, that's it. Let me turn it on; I'm so sorry.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: That's helpful.

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: [Chuckles]. Give it a second.

[Pause].

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I can just hit that.

All right. So what are the three basic requirements of the Sunshine Law? Meetings and public boards or commissions have to be open to the public so that you are allowed to do this by Zoom, I see we have a couple of Zoom members of the public joining in, and also your doors are open [microphone feedback] are open today for people who may want to step in.

There must be reasonable notice of the meetings. There's no point in having a public meeting if the public doesn't know about it. If you're going to meet at midnight somewhere in the dead of night, that will not satisfy the open meeting requirement.

There also has to be minutes taken. There should be some kind of minutes or something that is taken during the meeting, maybe a court reporter or however you guys opt to do it, so that people can after the meeting access it and see what you guys are doing while you are exercising your functions and duties.

So who does the Sunshine Law apply to? It was basically the legislative intent that the Sunshine Law applied to every board or commission of the state. Of any county or public -- or of any public subdivision, so you can see the list of things that the Sunshine Law applies to. It does in fact apply to the Florida Legislature, they have their own requirements related to the Sunshine Law. It applies to state agencies, county commissions, quasi judicial proceedings, are advisory boards, city commissions, and special district courts.

You may be wondering where you guys fall into under that list. Spoiler alert, it is an advisory board. You are considered an advisory board. That is why the Sunshine Law applies to you and that is why every time we set up one of those meetings, your staff has to work hard to make sure that the meeting is noticed, minuted, and are complying with all of these requirements.

So, what is an advisory board? You are considered an advisory board because you are empowered by the statute that creates you to make recommendations.

When you make a recommendation, necessarily that requires some kind of discretion. Why are you recommending A instead of B?

So even though the Department or the Legislature or whoever you're making the recommendations to don't have to adhere to your recommendations, the fact that you have



some kind of discretion in making those recommendations and deciding what you're going to put forward and not put forward is what makes you an advisory board, and therefore why the Sunshine Law applies to you.

So what does it mean that your meetings have to have meeting notice? This is actually not defined in the statute. The statute just says "reasonable notice." This is generally interpreted to mean at least seven days in advance of your meetings. More than that is great, but you have at least seven days in advance to notice your meeting.

How you do your meeting notice, your diligent staff will make sure your meetings are noticed in what's called the Florida Administrative Register, this is open to the public and this is how everybody knows your meetings are going to occur.

Department staff will submit these meetings on your behalf.

Recorded meetings. You have to keep minutes or you can make a summary of the meeting. You do not have to literally record it as in a video recording of every single minute. It's fine again to stick with minutes or to a summary.

But if you do decide to record it, that's great. But be aware that you're creating a public record that will be available to the public forever, for as long as you are required by law to maintain it.

There are some exceptions for times when you do not have to meet in public or have the meeting, for when you have to meet in public. One of these exceptions is if there is pending litigation that you are already an active party in or you are meeting with me or you are meeting with some other legal counsel that is representing you and you are talking about the pending litigation that you are a party in.

There are a lot of other requirements to that, but we're kind of going into the bushes a little bit too much, but those are some of the times your meeting does not have to be public.

Other times is when your -- another time that doesn't apply to you would be, for example, a chief executive officer is bargaining with a unit or some other related to a collective bargaining and there are a couple other examples, but if you guys are meeting and conducting official business, it is open to the public and it should be noticed and it should be recorded.

When, what is a meeting when you are meeting? It is considered a meeting and the Sunshine Law applies when two or more of you are discussing business of your Council. This is actually extremely broad. It doesn't mean when you are publicly noticed and discussing council business here. If two of you pick up a phone and you discuss council business, you are conducting a meeting as far as the law is concerned and it should be noticed and recorded under the Sunshine Law.

Telephone calls between two or more of you or e-mails between two or more of you, if you are communicating about council business, that is considered a meeting and it needs to meet the requirements of the Sunshine Law.

Now, you can discuss one-on-one issues with your staff or if it's something legal with me. That's fine.

But you can't use that as a way to get around this requirement. So you would not be able to go up to me and say hey, you know, I want to talk about this at the next meeting, can you convey that to another council member for me? I couldn't do that. That would be trying to get around the Sunshine Law.

There are some limited exceptions, like I just discussed, you are allowed to talk to your staff one-on-one. There are also times when you may be able to list certain reports in advance, but I would err on the side if you're doing council stuff and making decisions, it needs to be a publicly-noticed meeting.

The public always has a right to attend these meetings, they also have a right to make

their own recordings of these meetings which they can keep for themselves.

The only thing really with regards to the public is you are allowed to set reasonable accommodations or requirements that they maintain public decorum, you know, maintain public stability, stuff like that.

But in general, the public has a right to attend meetings and see what you guys are up to.

How is this all enforced? There are a system of penalties that may be -- that you may incur should it be established of any violation of the Sunshine Law happened.

Essentially that means to be avoidable, and any member may be removed from office and the worst-case scenario is criminal, when it is a knowing violation, and obviously attorney's fees may be awarded to the winning party.

Fortunately you have very diligent staff across the Department who want to make sure and do everything you can to make sure you are always complying with the public meeting requirements. If you ever have questions about that, you can forward them to staff and they can forward it to me and I will do my best to answer those questions.

We're all here to make sure that you guys are able to do the best job that you can do, while also staying within the applicable parameters.

If you would like to learn more, there are two resources online that I can recommend. The Florida Sunshine Law manual, the Sunshine manual is an annual compilation of case law, statutes, everything related to the Sunshine Law. If you ask me a question, that's going to be one of the first resources that I go to to make sure I'm giving you the best advice possible. The whole thing is available to the public.

The Florida Attorney General also gives opinions on the Sunshine Law. You can access that online and that's a helpful guide as well.

And I forgot to include your helpful staff and myself, we're also a resource here available to you guys whenever you want help or have any questions.

So speaking of which, I'm happy to take any questions. Yes, sir?

>> CORY PARKER: I'm Cory. Thank you so much for coming today to give us this explanation!

Am I still new to this job? I feel still like I'm new to this Council!

But the concept of the Sunshine Law is definitely new.

You mentioned that the Sunshine Law, when it triggers, the first bullet says, you cannot discuss board issues outside a public meeting.

So, can you help me understand a "board issue"? Can you define that for me?

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: [Sneeze].

>> CORY PARKER: And I ask that because it seems we really need to, when it comes to this meeting, this meeting sometimes does not allow us to talk about the many things happening all over this state.

So, there are things that we might need to discuss or offline, things that need to be discussed in detail.

What is a "board issue" that can and cannot be discussed offline?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: That is a great question. Thank you. So for other boards, like the Board of Medicine would be a little straightforward, the Board of Medicine is talking about rules or discipline, something like that, that is obviously an issue that is public notice.

For you, I would point you to your statute, Section 413.271 Florida Statutes, specifically

subsection 3, that subsection basically says, and I will read it out: That basically says that all of your duties, what it is that you are empowered to do and to talk about. So, for example, you provide information and assistance to the Legislature. You provide technical assistance to other state agencies. You provide information and referral services. Promote public and individual advocacy for Deaf, hard of hearing, and late-deafened citizens. And you conduct public meetings, like today.

So if you're doing any of those things, that is something -- that is when the Sunshine Law will trigger. Because these are your officially delineated duties. Excuse me.

Does that answer your question?

>> CORY PARKER: Not really.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Okay.

>> CORY PARKER: So we have Department of Health staff. Let's say one of them reaches out to me, because we need answers to public questions. And so they ask us, the council members, and let's say I don't know the question and I go to Glenna or Chris, hey, what can you guys think of this topic right here?

Is that outside -- is that under the scope of the Sunshine Law?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: It may be --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: That has to do with answering a public -- oh, sorry, go ahead.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: No, please, go ahead.

>> CORY PARKER: No, no, no, actually, Octavio, I'm asking you the question. What is... we have internal issues that we need to clean up when we're making contacts or doing things, and I sometimes feel uncomfortable when, you know, do we need to call a committee meeting? Because that -- or do we not need to be in the course of a meeting to take care of some of this, these items?

So, I'm wondering what is a violation of the Sunshine Law? What we cannot and can do.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I hate to give you the lawyer answer, but the answer is "maybe." It's going to depend on each individual topic. So --

>> CORY PARKER: Sure.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: -- I would advise if you're uncomfortable or unsure, ask staff and they will ask me and I can give you that advice. Especially -- I would especially, after this meeting, you may want to do that. But for now, I really hate to give you the lawyer answer, but the answer is "maybe."

>> CORY PARKER: I would prefer your lawyer answer. I don't want to be in violation at the end of the day and that's where it goes back to, you know, I don't understand, because I'm still new.

So if I ask a question to one of my co-council members and they say "don't ask that! We're not in a meeting!" So sometimes I feel like I'm getting no, don't do that because it's a violation, but I don't actually know what is a violation. So it's a game of trial and error.

So I feel like I'm half asking the question or half stating a sentence because someone cuts me off because I'm in violation.

So... it's different, I guess...

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna speaking. So let's say that Angie receives a question from the public and she doesn't know the answer, so she forwards it onto one of us to provide her that answer. Is that okay? Because the public is not us? Is that okay?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: If it's -- again, the answer is going to be "maybe." But if you are one-on-one with just you, one council member and staff, that's probably where you are most safe.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: But again, whenever you are unsure, it's always to be safe and sorry, I'm more than happy to take a question from you or your staff any time, I'm more than happy.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. I do have another question. So if we have finished our business meeting and we're done, but we don't have the final product, meaning we're still working on a project, we're still proofreading, we've agreed on the content and everything is good, but we're just tweaking something, proofreading, editing, can we do that through e-mail? Or should we not be doing that?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Well... again, the answer is going to be "maybe." I'm really sorry --

[Laughter].

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I'm really sorry, but I can't give you better answers on a public meeting since I don't know the specifics.  
I see multiple hands.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: This is Chris --

>> CORY PARKER: Hold up, hold up.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: Thanks, John.

This is Chris. I understand the subject of the Sunshine Law that meetings are supposed to be out in the public and we're sharing information.

It seems like there is an evolution of how it's being applied.

In the past, I've been with the Council for at least ten years and I work on other advisory boards. We always have a support staff, program office, in our case here through Angie and Sean.

We only meet four times a year in our public meetings. Outside those meetings, to get any work done, we really need to be able to communicate, but so long as I'm not communicating from Chris to Glenna or Chris to Cory or Chris to Mary, and I send it through the program office so that it's shared with everybody, it was my understanding that that would be considered in the Sunshine and not a violation of the law, so long as it's communicated to everybody.

Is that not correct?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: It depends.

[Laughter].

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I'm really... I swear, I can say more than just those two words.

It is an established fact that if there are times when you are going through staff, and staff is going through other members, that may be a violation of the Sunshine Law.

>> CORY PARKER: John? Hold on, Mary. John?

>> JOHN JACKSON: No, no.

>> SEAN ISAAC: [Laughs].

>> CORY PARKER: Okay.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. So you're saying "it depends." Suppose I just want to share some information, something has happened with an organization and I need to announce something. It is not a board issue or a board vote, can I send it to the staff to share with the greater council members?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: If it's a generic announcement, like a news article or something like that, if it's, as you said, quote-unquote, it's not council business, yes, you can do that.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay. All right.

>> CORY PARKER: Mary?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Mary?

>> MARY HODGES: [Shakes head].

>> CORY PARKER: Okay. So this is Cory again. I'm a little stuck with the reality when we're discussing our -- let's say our biennial report and we're making edits and we're discussing that. And then I text Chris, hey, are you coming to the committee meeting? And he says no. Did you see the report? And he says no, I don't have a copy of it. And I say oh, okay, sure, sure, I will send it to you. And he says no! That's a violation of the Sunshine Law. Do not send it!

Is that so? I can't directly send something to a co-council member, it has to go through the staff member? Because boy, is that frustrating!

It's really frustrating how we can't get things done, even though Angie and Sean are not in the office. Let's say they're on vacation or out sick or they're not online.

The three of us among us, we can't get work done or we can't have a discussion?

Because this Council has a lot of housekeeping to do, just as every council does, you know, every council has just little business to do.

How do we go about that little business without being out of compliance?

>> JOHN JACKSON: Lots of noticed meetings.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: That's the realistic answer, is you may need to have more noticed meetings.

>> CORY PARKER: But I missed what he said.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I'm sorry, the gentleman behind you said you may need more noticed meetings, and I agree, you may need to have more noticed meetings. That may be the only way around it.

>> INTERPRETER: You need a microphone. John, do you need a microphone?

>> CORY PARKER: Come forward, John.

>> INTERPRETER: Thanks.

>> JOHN JACKSON: All of those "maybe" answers are absolutely correct. The Sunshine Law, one thing positive to say about it, is an equal pain in the butt to every commission, committee, etc., across the board.

It is difficult sometimes. I mean, as far as time goes.

What we're -- what we run into with this Council is the same thing that others do, including other councils and commissions at DCF that I work with. Four quarterly meetings, you know. That's what the statute requires. Quite often that's what our budget works around, having four quarterly meetings.

But I get the same questions from sheriffs and people like that who are on our committees, wondering why is it so slow? We can't get any work done. Same comments, absolutely the same comments.

So, but the answers are the same: That's the way it is.

And it's kind of, you know, it's one thing for -- it's a little bit more difficult, quite frankly, telling a constitutionally-elected sheriff that no, you can't do that, sir, you'll break the law

[Laughter].

>> JOHN JACKSON: And I'm sure you've been in that position as well.

One of the ways to combat this pain, and it is a pain, is really with you guys. That's where we combat it. Part of it is, yeah, we can share information, we're just sharing and not discussing information. But the smart way to do it is to do it through staff.

As far as meetings go and when I made the comment about "lots of meetings," that's kind of what you have to do or you have to plan ahead, knowing that you've only got four meetings, we've all been in these meetings, we know they get slowed down, we know that things happen, and so we just have to plan for that.

And we include planning of that is what we did, was it December when we were working on the report? Those are extra meetings that we called. They're noticed, etc.

But that is how you deal with the problem with the public records -- I'm sorry, with the open meetings is, it really is, you just have to have more meetings.

Now, of course we have to work around our budget, you know, so if we see a year coming where, like, we know we're going to put out a report in 2025, we know we want to take the report a little further than we have previous reports, then we know that's going to

require extra work and require extra time. We need to plan that in advance, not only for scheduling meetings between our quarterlies, but for our budget perspective, because if we have those meetings between our meetings, it might take away for our ability to have a live face-to-face meeting, you know, later that year.

So, it really is -- it's a pain, but it is more than workable. It just requires a lot of planning ahead of time and it requires a lot of time, quite often, of committee members -- or council members, excuse me.

I'm sorry to take over your thing

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: No worries.

[Laughter].

>> JOHN JACKSON: But I've given this speech or I've given this presentation to my own Council before, just when we have -- and the thing is, I can promise you guys who are newer on this Council or people who have been on it a little bit longer, you got the same answers from me: "Maybe." It's a case-by-case thing in a lot of the questions that you're asking.

And one piece of advice I'm sure he was going to get to and we've heard it from every other presenter, when it doubt, take the safe route, okay.

One thing making this council not completely different from other councils like it, it's a volunteer council where people, when they leave this council meeting, they don't leave Deaf and hard-of-hearing issues behind them, they go with them, they go with them because they all, most of them, come from organizations that are specific to Deaf and hard-of-hearing issues.

And they also meet outside on their own issues, you know. Like, you know, we, you know, Cory might run into Glenna at a function, but they're both representing something other than the Coordinating Council. That is going to happen. And I've had plenty of people say "Can we talk about Deaf and hard-of-hearing issues?" And I say of course you can talk about Deaf and hard-of-hearing issues. You can't talk about council issues.

We know we work on, you know, we know pretty much what we're going to work on in advance. So you can't talk about that stuff.

There is crossover sometimes, and if you can't feel like that you can navigate that crossover, when in doubt, take the safe route and don't discuss.

>> CORY PARKER: Thank you, John, thank you.

>> JOHN JACKSON: And I'm sorry, but I just... I understand what they're saying. And it is kind of a unique thing. But I just want to make sure. I'm in total agreement with everything you said. It's an exact presentation I've given 50 times over the past 20 years.

>> CORY PARKER: Thank you, John.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Appreciate it.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna --

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. Thank you.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: John, thank you. This is Glenna. When John mentions

additional meetings, it is possible for us to have more committee meetings. We don't have the money for it, but we could set up more meetings to finish committee work in-between our board meetings.

And that work could count towards us moving ahead, but we have to plan that ahead of time.

So whatever the number of people show up at those committee meetings, we still need to go ahead and finish the work and we can do that.

But our problem is that we're not like other councils. We do require a lot more support services, like here in the room and virtually. It's not easy to set up these meetings, like other councils who can just do a conference call and whatever the case is, it costs us money to do these type of meetings.

So I wish there was a way to increase the budget for that. But that's one concern.

The second concern that John brought up too, and now that you're back behind me, but... we as Deaf professionals, we're so used to having to deal with the overlap of dealing with our own personal communities. Because we work with professionals. We're professional teachers or counselors, whatever it is that we do, so we know how to draw the line and where the line is.

And the Council is just another line that we have to toe.

>> CHRIS LITTLEWOOD: This is Chris. My concern, as you both said, have more noticed meetings. But as Glenna said, the requirement of additional support services for our meetings is restrictive to our budget.

We're being told that our fourth quarterly meeting, we can't have a live meeting because we don't have the budget to have a live meeting and travel for that meeting. So to have noticed meetings, committee meetings, outside of our four quarterly meetings, it seems like some of that might be cost prohibitive.

And my concern is that in our effort to do things in the Sunshine, where they're really tying our hands to do things at all.

The other thing is, as John said, use our support staff and communicate with that. I thought that's what we were doing. But then we've been told additionally that that can't always be shared with the entire Council.

If I have something that comes up that's informational that affects the whole Council or something that I might want to see put in a future meeting or I have a constituent contact me and I want to share that with Angie so she lets the other council members know, now I'm being told that we can't do that and not be in violation?

Like Cory said, I don't want to be in violation either. If somebody brings something to my attention that might be a violation, as John said, I'd do my best to take the safer route and not be in violation.

But how do we be most effective with the restrictions that we just mentioned?

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. And really, Chris, I think we could sit here all day and give a multitude of scenarios. What about this one? What about that one? What about this one?

But what it really looks like, when it doubt, just don't do it.

And to add to that, the Sunshine Law is -- really limits us. And it's there to protect us at the same time. So we are stuck.

So we can give a multitude of examples, whether it's green, yellow, purple, whatever the case is, between what we're hearing today, it just depends.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: And to be clear, I'm happy to answer your questions,



but these kind of more complex questions, these kind of scenarios, it's better to defer those to us after the meetings when I can do my best to answer them more fully.

[Pause].

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: All right. Any other questions for me?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. When we talk about the Executive Committee, which is myself as the Chair and the Vice Chair, Cory, and the staff, if the four of us communicate with each other to try to finish, you know, business between the quarterly meetings, you know, pre-meetings, whatever the case is, is that allowed for the four of us to communicate?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: It's going to depend on what you mean by "business." Is it, like --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Let's just say proofreading.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Proofreading is probably --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Like grammar, I's are dotted, T's are crossed. We just finished working on our 2023 report and the Council made suggested changes to wording. It wasn't content, it was just grammatical changes and corrections that we needed to retype. And we wanted to make sure we remembered everything from those suggestions into the proofreading final changes.

Is that acceptable? It's not content, it's just grammar.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Those sort of things where you're not exercising discretion, basically things like that is probably going to be okay.

[Pause].

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I would say --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: So the four of us, we could have those type of conversations to get work completed. It isn't content, it isn't meeting, but if we clean up those types of English errors, that's acceptable.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. We have to continue to do that. As long as we're following the straight and narrow and communicating with our staff, those are things that we have to do. We can't just wait until a meeting to get it done.

But at the same time, Glenna, we're not making decisions that are impacting the entirety of the Council. We don't say things like "We're going to change this or add this or drop that," we're doing logistics, we're doing housekeeping sort of issues. So I think those are things that we have to meet with the staff about.

But again, I think that between Sean and Angie, we all have a great relationship. We've got folks that would not say oh, no, that would call us out, don't forget about the Sunshine Law, and keep us on the straight and narrow. So I think we're safe.

I think!

In a nutshell, I think we're safe!

[Laughter].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. Are there anymore questions related to the Sunshine Law?

We do have questions in other areas, but not necessarily the Sunshine Law.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. Could you give us an example of what might happen to people who maybe have violated a specific scenario? Could you explain that?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: It's in our PowerPoint.

>> CORY PARKER: Yeah, but I would like to hear from the horse's mouth if we could.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Let's say there is a situation where you're working on your report and the report is currently recommending do option A, whatever option A is. You're not a fan of option A. So you pick up the phone and you call me and you say I want to communicate to Chris or to John, I'm not a fan of option A, option A needs to go. We want to go with option B instead, whatever option B is.

So I go from you call me and then I call another council member and I say we've got to get rid of option A, we have to go with option B. That would probably be a violation of the Sunshine Law.

You're talking about council business, part of what you do is you make recommendations, you're advocating for one recommendation over another outside of a public meeting.

I think that's fairly clear-cut. That's like the slum dunk, the most obvious one possible.

Or let's say you run into another council member while you are shopping. Sir, go ahead.

>> CORY PARKER: So this is Cory. The side conversation wink-wink, nudge-nudge, we get it. Thank you.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Okay.

>> INTERPRETER: [Off mic].

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Let's say you walk into another council member at a private function and if you're just talking about advocacy for the Deaf or hard of hearing in general, that's probably fine. But if you're going to go back to that Council, what the Council is specifically doing for the Deaf and hard of hearing, again, you should not be discussing that with another council member even though both of you as council members are entitled to be there.

Does that make sense?

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. It does make sense, thank you. So how do we recruit people if we're out and about? I know we've got some vacancies on the Council. How do we -- how do we recruit people? What do you suggest without being in violation? Is that considered a violation, to try and recruit? Do we need to ask your permission and the staff's permission first?

I mean, if we're looking for people, I know several people who -- that I would love to

have that I think would be great to serve on the Council. We're always looking, we're always doing that.

So do we need to go through staff and through you, Octavio? Or do we -- can we just go ahead and do that on our own?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I would probably recommend going through staff.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: So if we find somebody that we feel like we might want to encourage them to apply for one of our vacancies for an appointment, we can't talk to them directly about that? Can we explain a little bit more about what the Council is like? Not necessarily the business piece of it, but the point of the Council and that position?

You know, this is where you might find the information to fill out the application, we're not able to do that?

Because they're not on the council yet.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I don't know about that per se, if you're not allowed to do it, but this is getting into a more and more complicated scenario, that it's probably better that we discuss this afterwards.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Gotcha.

>> CORY PARKER: Gotcha.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: So now I need to ask you a question, Octavio. I've been wondering, and I'm not quite sure what the answer is, but in our -- again, this is not part of the Sunshine Law, this is part of our bylaws -- within our bylaws, it says that we can apply and accept funding, grants, and donated services from local or state governments, as well as federal governments, from any of their agencies or any other public/private sources, and maybe use funding for the purposes authorized by this section.

So that really means that we have no bank account, we have no place to -- if we get any type of monetary donation or form, what do we do? How do we set up an account?

We haven't been able to find an answer. How do we do that? Where do we find the answer? Where do we start to ask about where we want to place that money?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: So, that's not just in your bylaws, but also in your statute as well, so you're clearly authorized to do those things.

The actual mechanics of doing those things, how to go about it, where would the money go, unfortunately that is not something that's really within my area, that is something that your staff would have to help you with. And if they're not sure, the Department has other staff I'm sure that deals with these issues that would be able to help them out.

But that's not something that's personally -- the actual mechanics of doing that, that's not something that I have enough experience to advise, so I will defer you to staff.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. When it comes to the actual mechanics of getting a check, at that point the staff has the ability to provide it to our internal budget folks to make that type of deposit, okay.

But before that, any action before that, we don't have any procedure for.

I think that's the question that they're wanting to know, is how do they request those gifts? How do they apply for those different types of donations, per se?

Is there a procedure? Is there some rules that guide what they can and can't do when

it comes to soliciting that kind of funding?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I am aware that there are rules. And it makes me a little antsy, but the statute specifically says gifts and the way of accepting gifts, but I don't know that for this meeting, I wasn't prepared to go over that. But I'm happy to work with you and your staff if that's what you guys want me to do to figure out what is the way for you guys to go about pursuing these opportunities.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. A question that I thought of as we're talking, we're planning a conference. It's an expo of sorts in 2024. The Council has never done this before. So are you familiar with any sort of guides or guidelines that are out there that we might need to be aware of?

Because as we go ahead and start planning our conference, such as things that could put us in violation, we want to be aware of that beforehand of things that we can't do.

Do you have any guidance on that?

I don't know if the boards, your boards or commissions that you've worked with or represented in the past, if they hosted a conference of sorts. Are there certain things that our community, our Council, our -- is there something that we can -- is there something for us to follow?

Let's just say there's a video relay service out there, a company that they want to have a booth, for example, they want to sponsor something, maybe, you know, ten interpreters at our expo for what you call in-kind services, as opposed to donating money, giving us money, they're donating the interpreters or the services, if you will.

So in that regard, we need to be careful when we're hosting a conference.

Is there something that we need to think about in negotiating prior to? Should we do fundraising? Are there guidelines for us that we need to follow prior to?

Because myself, Cory, I've planned conferences in the past with organizations. But they're different than the roles and guidelines that we have to follow here within the Council.

So if we, as the Council, get involved in that expo, are there things that we need to know, just like with the Sunshine Law, we've been doing nothing as a Council and realize there are Sunshine Laws that we may or may not be in violation of, to do that business, is there something that we need to know while we're planning and pre-planning this conference or expo?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: There would be potential Sunshine Law implications, but there's also potential ethical implications whenever you're dealing with outside vendors, what you can accept from them and what you cannot accept to them.

I will refer you, there is ethical training out there that would go over this stuff. There's also, I'm sure, policies and manuals how to work with outside vendors as well, if that's what you're concerned with.

>> CORY PARKER: Thank you, yes. Yeah, we would like to know about all those --

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Okay.

>> CORY PARKER: -- things prior to as we go along. If there's a situation that pops up, we want to know where to look and who to reach out to, just to make sure that if we're being approached with all different types of opportunities out there, sometimes it's hard for us to know. I mean, we could sit here again all day and give you examples.

But we do want to host this conference/expo of sorts. So the purpose is to serve the community and so forth and we want to follow our statutes, providing prior information about the gatherings and anything that happens. But any sort of guidance would be helpful for us as a Council.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Yeah, I would be happy to see if there's any guidance I can get to your staff and your staff can provide to you.

>> CORY PARKER: Thank you.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I'm sure there's something out there. I'm more than happy to do that.

>> CORY PARKER: Okay. Thank you, thank you so much.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. And it sounds like our staff might need to reach out to the speaker we had yesterday as well on the ethical concerns, as well as Octavio today, and maybe John can help, but gather some information of things that we need to be aware of prior to starting the planning, the real planning, of the expo. And that way we need to make sure that we can do certain things as well as what we can't do.

I mean, we can dream about it all we want, but, you know, once we put boots to the ground, we need to make sure that we're in compliance.

We can do that. And that information is what we can share with the entire Council, is that correct, Octavio?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Yes.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay.

>> CORY PARKER: Thank you.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: You're welcome. That's what I'm here for.

>> CORY PARKER: Thank you for coming, truly.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Are there any other questions for Octavio?

[Pause].

>> JOHN JACKSON: Just... just one last question, I think I know the answer to it, but I just want to make sure on this particular point that everyone on the Council is on the same page, so let me give you a hypothetical, and I apologize ahead of time.

Chris reads some information in a periodical and he thinks it's something that council members should read, because, you know, it's interesting, possibly impact the work we're going to be doing in future meetings.

Chris sends that to Sean or Angie. And just -- they send it out to the rest of the Council as an FYI.

At that very point, we're still good, I believe, in the Sunshine Law, right?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Just FYI, just an article, you're fine.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Now, if after that point, Cory reads it and then goes back to Angie and says hey, Angie, this is blah, blah, blah, blah, could you send it out to the rest of the Council? At that point, we're having a discussion, are we not? If we're doing it through our support staff, which the law clearly says we can't do.

I mean, you know what I mean?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Yes, once you're getting to the discussion phase, you're inching closer to the Sunshine Law.

>> JOHN JACKSON: That's the deal. Don't hesitate if you have information that you think the council members is interested, do what you have to do, send it to Angie and Sean and it will get out.

What you don't want to do is initiate a discussion. Once you get it, save that for the council meeting that's coming up.

So I think that one, I think, I just want to make it clear, because this Council shoots information all the time, not only about their own particular groups, but just stuff that, you know, nationally, internationally that's read, published or whatnot, that is just -- even if it's not relevant to any issues we're working on, it's still broader, relevant to the Deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind community. And I want to make sure you guys do understand that.

If you read something really, really good, you can send it to them and they can distribute it out to everybody. Just don't start talking about it.

[Pause].

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Okay. Anything else for me?

>> CORY PARKER: No, just thank you, I was just saying thank you. I really appreciate you, Octavio! And you, John.

Yesterday's speaker, who gave us a lot of information and input. All of this gives us the ability for foresight. Thank you.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: And this has been extremely informative for me.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean, I do have another comment or question.

[Microphone feedback].

>> SEAN ISAAC: And often I do get information or we do get information from the Council and we're asked to share. And usually we do, whatever we can, we try to provide that information quickly.

There are instances, though, where we're given information and because of the scenario you mentioned, we're not able to move forward. And so that's sometimes why you all may say well, why wasn't this information shared?

It's sometimes complex, as you mentioned.

And so we try to navigate those waters as best we can.

Sometimes it's gonna be business that comes before the Council, and so it gets to be a little bit complex, again.

But we're not trying to hold the Council back in any way of moving forward; we're trying to do the exact opposite. It's just we're trying to do our best to stay within the Sunshine as

well and I did want to mention that.

I did want to ask you a question, because of this issue about council members communicating with one another, one of the practices that we have had internally with the Department is if there is some information that we want to share with all the council members, we will send it out and blind copy the other council members as a habit.

Is that necessary? Is that a best practice? What is your guidance on that? Have you heard about that or how we move forward on that in the future?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I [clearing throat] -- excuse me -- I have not heard of this practice in the past. I'm not sure it is 100% necessary. But this is the first time I'm hearing about it.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. So can you let me know if that's necessary in the future?

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: I will find out.

>> SEAN ISAAC: To me, I was trying to do my best to protect the council members so they wouldn't happen to hit reply and discuss something inadvertently. But if it's not necessary, please let me know.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: It's probably a best practice, but I'll look into it.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. Understood.

>> OCTAVIO SIMOES-PONCE: Well, I want to thank you all for giving me this opportunity. I've learned a lot about you guys as well. So it's very helpful for me going forward when I'm thinking about advice to give you and stuff like that and advise you as much as possible. So this has been really helpful for me as well.

I forgot earlier when we scheduled this, I had a scheduling conflict yesterday and thank you to your staff and you guys accommodating me as well.

Thank you very much. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me through staff. Thank you.

[Applause].

>> CORY PARKER: Thank you!

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Thank you very much! Thank you for coming! We appreciate it.

Okay. It's 10:17, let's take a 15-minute break.

[Break].

>> VOICE: Recording in progress.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay. We're back.

[Microphone feedback].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: We're back. And the public comments, we're going to use this time we had to read public comments yesterday from Cecil related to FTRI and TASA bill.

Today, the public comments comes from the time when I went to December 10 Deafopia at Sawgrass Mall and we collected 40 written comments and I have asked council members to help me reading these comments, there are 40 of them!

Just say the name and then read the comments. If you have a hard time reading it, just do the best you can. They're pretty similar.

And so I will start. And if the name is a common name, fine. But if the name's a little bit different, you might want to spell it out for the CART.

Okay. I'll begin. Michelle Alexander. I want an interpreter for my doctor's office. They changed interpreters to iPads. I don't like because WiFi is free, so apparently trying to use technology presents its own set of problems.

Charles M. Avena. Treasure Coast of Eastern Florida has limited resources for the Deaf, which is fast becoming a growing population.

And the Deaf limited awareness education and resources for the seniors with hearing loss, lack of certification for ASL CDI interpreters. Limited social activity for the Treasure Coast area.

Limited mental health and substance abuse services for the Deaf.

He, himself, is a Deaf professional who just moved here and went ekkk!

John Austin, ADA lawyer for consumers' protection. For example, if a Deaf person wants to buy a car, the dealership doesn't or won't provide an interpreter. Same with going to the bank, real estate, etc.

Stewart and Martha Fleitman. All interpreters must be certified or licensed. Want to have better ASL interpreters, like classic ASL. More qualified interpreters for the Deaf community who have a good heart, not very business only.

Jennifer Stansel. Interpreters not employed in medical situations in-person unless VRI, screen is hard to see. Interpreters are not provided at higher-level education community colleges. Deaf and hard-of-hearing hard time finding a job.

Erika Kamen. Struggling for doctors' office to provide an interpreter. When they finally got an interpreter, they were not qualified, meaning no access. Dangerous for Deaf to rely on limited or no access. Also, forcing Deaf to delay medical concerns due to no access.

Hadi Saqer. I have my master's degree in bio medical science, yet I am still struggling to find a job due to my disability. The majority of jobs that does not require any hearing communications always hire hearing people.

This was a guy -- I remember him now -- this is a guy who wants to do lab work, so....

Eric Beer. Yes, Beer as in beer. We need -- no, he's an IT guy, so he's doing jargon -- we need interoperability, interoperability between our video phones and cell phones. We use our cell phone numbers for text messaging and video phone number to use video phones on our cell phones. Why can't we have one number for both video phones and text message?

Hearing texters often think our text numbers can receive audio calls and call us directly using our text number. Which does not work for Deaf people.

Michael Goldberg. Stop discriminating from getting the above services, medical, hearing aids, interpreters, and employment.

I can speak, but not understand, so they won't get me an interpreter because of that. He is a Deaf speaker.

Valentyne Libman. Educated medical places about providing interpreters.

Margaret Weiss. Grant to support families of Deaf children to locate where Deaf institutions are. Set Deaf CODA institutions after school activities with interpreters in



South Florida.

In other words, provide interpreters for after school activities in integrated settings.

Give more resources to Deaf families/children, more resources to Deaf families where Deaf children and CODA children. Need technology for closed captioning, sound recognition, VRI, relay, everywhere, to provide technology everywhere that works.

Deaf finding homes to either own or rent, in other words open spaces and renting, and be aware that TTY is no longer used by most of them, Deaf and hard of hearing.

Increase ASL and Deaf awareness. ASL to be a second language in the USA. Okay.

A stronger ADA law.

Okay. Who's next?

>> MARY HODGES: This is Mary. I'm going to try to read these [chuckles].

The first one is from Neil and it looks like Tugg.

And area of concern is medical and interpreters. And the comment is please and interpreter should ID budget. [Shrugs shoulders].

Online identification centrosome.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: He means that we get interpreters online or in person, live, and they don't give their name and there's no ID number, so that if they want to complain about an interpreter, it's, like, who are they or whatever.

>> MARY HODGES: I understand.

The next one is from Cathy Oshrain and the area is service animals, and she wants one. And train it on her own. And she wants to get certified.

The next one is from Rowena Cole-Palmer, she has a hyphenated last name. Area of concern is "other." I want imported interpreters to bank, doctor, business, etc. That is problem not there, interpreter without communication.

>> CORY PARKER: [Sneezes].

>> MARY HODGES: Next is Falice Marker. Area of concern is some doctors don't provide interpreters and they need to be educated and know the ADA law. Someone needs to provide training, how to set up interpreters as equal access.

This one is from Elaine and the last name is Aiello. Area of concern is medical, interpreters, law enforcement, education, and hearing aids.

When buying hearing aids, not all audiologists can sign. It's important that they sign.

This one is from Kyle Gillum and area of concern is medical, interpreters, law enforcement, education, hearing aids and service animals and employment. Do not forget disability rights. Every Deaf individual is important. All services need to be improved and provided.

This one's from Leslie and the last name is Kiracofe and the area of concern is other, accessibility of work at meetings, when the speaker is online, speaking to staff and office, I can't hear or lip read. Need equipment to better participate in group meetings.

This one is from Nadelie and the last name is Dufresne, area of concern is medical, interpreters, and hearing aids. I don't want more improved -- I want more improved and motivated? Or motive services? For Deaf community. Need better access to work via interpreters and alert devices.

This one is from Ian and last name is Carallho, I think, singular. Area of concern is interpreters. Need help to help by interpreters be there for health insurance... um... and co-pay if relevant every year.

This one is from Monica last name is Caruvalh --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: The last one and this one is Carulvho, that was my former Deaf student.

>> MARY HODGES: Okay. Very good. Area of concern is interpreters, and Monica says need interpreter to be available easily.

>> CORY PARKER: Before you begin, John, I have a question. I have a question. I'm just curious, what are we going to do with these? As it relates to jobs, I feel like, you know, I should contact them. But how do we do that?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: They become public comments and they become part of the record. And then once they're done, we do our biennial report and we can visit and have --

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Excuse me, we're having trouble hearing. Excuse me. We're having trouble hearing.

>> INTERPRETER: Speak up a little bit if you could. Put the microphone up to the mouth. Thank you.

>> LISA (CART CAPTIONER): It was yours.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Yours wasn't on?

>> INTERPRETER: I did, but it seems it was light.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: All right, John.

>> JOHN JACKSON: All right this is John. The first one I have is from Lisa Johnson from Pompano Beach. She requested an interpreter for a meeting at the Office of Social Security, interpreter did not show up, and then she got a letter from the Social Security Office and I think that she's indicating to see proof that she is actually disabled. She said her intention is to go to the audiology for proof.

Next one is Richard DeConinck, from Delray Beach. Doctor office is not providing interpreters upon request. And they make no good excuses for not providing the sign language interpreter.

The next one is from Logan I think it's Schpreyer? Local... um...

[Pause].

>> JOHN JACKSON: Drive through service not accommodating Deaf people, was refused service.

I'm assuming it's a restaurant, but it could be a pharmacy or really anything else.

Rey Vega: Not enough qualified interpreters or certified in school system, needs to raise the pay rates. Otherwise pay more from contracted agencies.

Hearing aids are now over-the-counter, should the same for DHH eventually?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Deaf and hard of hearing.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Yeah, especially with severe to profound hearing loss. More open captioned movie opportunities in theaters.

The next one is Walter Cerasoli, the quality of interpreters varies a lot. Sharianne, last name Sch -- no, Shre -- I'll go with --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Shriar.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Okay, I couldn't tell if that was an E or not. Drive through fast food is not accessible to Deaf. Live news needs closed captioning.

I guess this is the first time in all my years on the Council that I've heard the complaints about fast food, which you think is obvious, but I don't think anybody has brought it up. This is twice. It's not like I've been at every meeting, but fast food, it makes sense, doesn't it

>> GLENNA ASHTON: There has been lawsuits about not serving their drive throughs.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Really.

>> CORY PARKER: Yes.

>> JOHN JACKSON: So the next one is from Carmin Forde, and it looks like it's also from Anna Forde. Service animals would be great for the younger Deaf children. It can provide them with... um... an awareness to sounds that they are not aware of and their environment of what's going on.

Next one is Omar Rivero, from Hialeah. Aw, need trilingual interpreters for some situations.

The next one is from Dakota Kalis from Lakeland. Need improved phone technology for functional equality.

And the last one I have is from Monica and Terry Thornton. Need financial assistance for hearing aids that are priced too high. Need to have qualified interpreters quickly available in serious situations, like medical and police.

And that's it

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Thank you.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory speaking. This is Jimmy Libman, and his comment is scheduling the interpreters, often they don't show up or they don't do the scheduling for the interpreters:

Kevin Noland, I'm very concerned about mainstream situations. Often they depend on poor quality interpreters or they don't have really good equal access.

This is from Donna Sprague.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Donna Sprague.

>> CORY PARKER: Hiring Deaf for jobs.

Samantha Foster. Her mother's in Hospice and they haven't provided an interpreter. This has been a long-term issue with many VRI services, forcing siblings to interpret while grieving.

This is from Betty Erast --

>> INTERPRETER: No, one moment. Cerasoli.

>> CORY PARKER: There was no interpreter provided during an accident. They provided a Spanish interpreter, not a sign language interpreter.

This is from Larry and Andrea Carlin: More Deaf senior citizen homes are needed and more interpreters to be available.

This is from Joel Goldfarb. We need more live interpreters, not VRI. We need them to be licensed or certified to work in Florida. Also, we need Deaf...

[Pause].

>> CORY PARKER: More Deaf residential assistance or assistance residential facilities. And more ALD, assistive listening devices for the Deaf.

From this Kathy Edler. Interpreters are needed in all areas. They need to be certified.

This is from Preston Ashley. We need more certified interpreters.

And the last one, is it H-E-Y...

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Heyrman.

>> CORY PARKER: First name is John, Heyrman. We need more certified interpreters.

[Pause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Thank you for helping to read them.

As you can see, they're from a certain group of people. They're all Deaf signers. They're all from South Florida. There was a few that had come from Central Florida as well to visit friends and took the opportunity to attend.

I realized while you were all reading the names, I was, like, oh, I know most of these names! And that's how I was able to support, you know, encourage them to come! Many of them were my former students as well.

As I mentioned yesterday, I met so many people while I was there!

But it's always the same....

As I told the legislators on Wednesday, the top two comments that I hear over and over and over again is: The interpreters and those that are hard of hearing having to pay for hearing aids.

So, it's -- you hear interpreter, interpreter, interpreter.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory speaking. And jobs. So when you're in a public area, maybe, I don't know how, but maybe, you know, those public comments could be... let's see, what do you call it...? Like the CART up here, I can take that and show it to my employer and say hey, we need more outreach here within VR. We could do that as well and collect those public comments from them and I can make a call and I can call people and say hey, tell me about your situation, and we can advise them from there.

So, when they go and talk about employment or jobs or not getting interpreters provided, I tell them to let me know -- I can tell them to let me know.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: And a lot of these people are senior citizens, so they don't talk

about jobs very much. And most of them are on SSDI, so....  
And this was on a Saturday, so...

>> ANGIE GREEN: Karen has her hand up.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Karen? Karen?

[Pause].

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: Okay. Sorry about that, I was having a hard time getting the thing off mute.

This is so critical that we're having this feedback. And so my question is: Well, where does it go from here? As a Council, what do we do about any of this?

We're an advisory [audio cutting in and out] council, we're not a legal board, but we want folks to know that they're heard.

What can we do?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Karen, this is Glenna. With the public comments, anything that's on paper, we pass it on to Angie to keep in the file, because we have names, addresses, and the comments. That's part of our proof when we do our biennial report and when we visit legislators or any people that write letters, we have the backup and prove to show that there is a very common concern about the same issues.

We, as a council, advisory council agree more on a safe level than an individual level, really, because we only refer, we don't give direct services.

>> CORY PARKER: Can we refer?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: We can do referral, yes.

>> CORY PARKER: And this is Cory, sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, but many of these issues, when it's talking about education, education, education, that as a service provider myself, I'm listening to these comments the same as when the staff receives questions, I respond to them in a similar way.

What would you do? You refer to the Center of Independent Living.

I link Angie to all of the Centers For Independent Living and she says which county, what area, and she can provide information to that consumer.

And while we're on this topic, there's one question, Angie had sent it to me about an officer, I can't remember exactly where, but the sheriff's office wanted to know where they could find volunteer interpreters.

And I thought oh boy... you cannot get a volunteer interpreter.

So, that's the kind of thing that, you know, many of these are referred to the Deaf Service Centers and those Deaf Centers For Independent Living and they take over that information and it's their responsibility to do educating.

So that's really a good question: Where do we go from this point?

Those of us who are Deaf professionals who have worked many years doing this type of work spend, you know, a lot of our time, a lot of my work experience, doing that type of work, wanting to respond, wanting to answer.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. We're working on writing letters to send to different organizations. We're still working on that at the moment. But I do remember

NAD, National Association of the Deaf, they have, on their website, advocacy letters ready to go for different situations.

And I was looking at the different organizations and I was laughing! Because when we're working so hard on these letters, just this one page, a simple page, their letters were two pages, so wordy, referring to all of these laws, look at all this stuff that you have to follow!

So that was very interesting. And I thought well, you know, we'll still work on ours, on our simple letter, and also attach NAD's letter with it, of course with their permission, with all of the technical terminology, the legal terminology, to say.

And the other way to say it is they're working again to develop materials and education training and awareness, like awareness kits. We need that outreach educator position to go out and do that type of training.

>> CORY PARKER: Mmm-hmm, I agree.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: And that -- it's too late now for the next fiscal year, we can't ask for an increase, because we're running out of money right now, or why we need to ask for an increase, because we're running out of money right now and the increase in expenses and the increase -- we need a full in-person meeting, we need to get more members.

We're just maintaining the same level --

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Excuse me --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: -- and we get stuck.

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Excuse me, I don't mean to interrupt, on Zoom, we got hacked, they're saying some foul language to me. Sean or AV, please remove Bony for unacceptable language.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Boogiemán, he was called Boogiemán or something like that.

>> INTERPRETER: La'Shay, if you can please remove him, please.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: The host can block him.

>> DEBBE HAGNER: I took a picture of it.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Can we respond back with something nasty before we cut him off? I can come up with something better than that.

[Laughter].

>> DEBBE HAGNER: I don't know what to say. I mean... it's not my position. I think Sean or Angie could say something.

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: I don't think there's much to say something, other than... [audio cutting in and out] coming from.

>> CORY PARKER: Well, why can't you just block him instead of just deleting the

messages, just block him.

>> DEBBE HAGNER: There's the three dots and then you can say force remove.

[Pause].

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: Let's see what happens here.

[Pause].

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Or you're going to have to shut down the Zoom.

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: Mmm-hmm.

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: This is Karen. Before we do that, can we address the... um... these -- God, what is it... these comments?

I would hate that we just keep them in a file and it's not really being addressed.

It sounds like laws are being broken. So what do [audio cutting in and out] we, as a Council, do?

>> DEBBE HAGNER: That's why you cannot have the Zoom address be public to make it available for the world.

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: We have to. I mean, that you have to.

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Yes.

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: We have to.

>> MARY HODGES: Did we delete him?

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: Well, the stuff they were putting on there, whew...

>> MARY HODGES: Can we delete him?

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: Yeah.

>> MARY HODGES: He can't listen now? He's out?

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: He's out as of right now. We'll see what comes up, if anything comes up.

>> JOHN JACKSON: He will sign in under someone different.

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: If I see on the list, on the invitation are you guys.

>> MARY HODGES: But there was a B-O-N.

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: I deleted him.

>> INTERPRETER: He's back in, La'Shay.

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: He's back in again?

>> INTERPRETER: Yes.

[Pause].

>> SEAN ISAAC: Um...

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay. Sean?

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. Thank you. We have our AV person working on that issue. But I wanted to kind of keep us moving forward. When it comes to those comments, just like any comments the Department of Health gets, we can respond to those with information, those referrals. We expect the Council here will respond and let us know what the correct response to go there and let us know, but that's the work of the Council.

If you guys give us information regarding those, that would be great.

I think the first thing is to share that information with Angie. Angie can go through those and see if she has referrals and services that would be appropriate and if she has any questions, she can refer you guys to them for further services.

Some services we may not be able to assist with, other than information.

When it comes to legal questions, the Department does not serve as a legal representative across, but we can refer them to --

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: Okay, I removed him and reported it and we'll see what happens.

>> SEAN ISAAC: And so we --

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: That was the Bronny, that person?

[Pause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. Most of the comments, especially related to the interpreters and VRI, mean that they need training. We need training to the hospitals and to the doctors and businesses. Nobody's been providing any training for any of them. So they're not aware.

They need to be aware of the ADA compliance. They need an ADA compliance person. Maybe that's a group that we can reach out to and try and provide them the information for the training and tell them to include the Deaf and hard of hearing while they're doing the ADA compliance trainings.

Most of the comments aren't really individual situations. It's a common problem that has been there for many, many years. It's nothing new. They're not really individual situations; it all comes back down to training.

FRID, that's who Gina represents, they need to step up their game and do these trainings. Of course, it could look like a training, a conflict of interest because of the training hey, you need to hire us or you need to use our interpreters.

However, the FAD is going through a transition, so....

I know that CIL, almost all CIL do provide training. CIL is a little bit more active



than -- some CILs are more active than the ones over in the south over here. But in Florida, they need to be a lot more active. Angie?

>> ANGIE GREEN: Karen had her hand up.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Karen?

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: Okay. Do you -- this is Karen. Do you see my hand up?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Yes.

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: Okay. So, Glenna, I wanted to respond to a comment you made that it's about training with the hospitals. Hospitals know what they need to do. They know the law, okay.

If they're not following the law, that's a whole different issue. And maybe a reminder needs to come from the Department of Health or the Medical Quality Assurance Board or what have you, that this is -- I think the training is not the issue, okay. [Audio cutting in and out].

You end up with sending a lot of resources to 100,000 hospitals in the state of Florida when they know the law and they need to uphold the law, okay.

So that's the most important thing. I think the time for training has passed.

If they're not providing interpreters, they need to justify why.

About three or four years ago, a friend of mine who had a medical emergency went to the ER and they texted me and asked if I could intervene, because they were not being provided with an interpreter. And I spoke to the Director of Nursing and she was well aware that they needed an interpreter and she ran [audio cutting in and out] down the reasons they didn't have a live interpreter and all the different places they had called.

So they do have procedures in place. And I reassured my friend that the reason they had to have the VRI at that moment is that they couldn't get a live interpreter. That's not the fault of the hospital. And they have to document when they can [audio cutting in and out] happening, that kind of thing, and why they're using VRI instead.

So, the hospitals know the law and they have procedures and policies in place. If they're not following it, that's the issue. [Audio cutting in and out].

I hope that was helpful

>> GLENNA ASHTON: And this is Glenna. Maybe someplaces, especially with doctors, they're aware of the laws, but their last missing step is knowing where to find the interpreter. Maybe it also means providing a list of agencies of where they can call to get an interpreter.

That was a problem on Wednesday. One of the last representatives that we had seen, said last minute we had seen, we were trying to get an interpreter, we didn't know what to do. So maybe that would help. And maybe we can add that to our website and maintain a list of all of the interpreter agencies and the individual interpreters so they know where to find an interpreter.

Because sometimes that can happen as well.

And Mary is nodding her head yes, yes

>> MARY HODGES: Yes, thank you. I think that's a good idea. Because in listening to the comments, a lot of them had to do with access and having access to an interpreter. And also the quality of the interpreter.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. The ADA does not say -- it says provide the access, it doesn't say anything about the choices. So many hospitals are directed over to VRI because with VRI, they are providing the access.

And many Deaf people don't understand that.

And that's why they're saying oh, I don't want VRI, I want a live interpreter. But they have to be realistic. It's 2:00 o'clock in the morning, most interpreters are not up and ready to go.

VRI would be used in place of this.

And another reason, and with Karen, what you said, and I'm in support, is that... hold on, I just lost my thought....

Karen was talking about we're past the point of training. Yes, I understand that. But also we have to understand that the turnover, the turnover rate within the staff, the training has to be consistent. It has to be constant. Annually. Every six months.

Who in the community has funding from the state as part of their agency requirements? Centers for Independent Living.

Many years ago, they were responsible for all of that, especially with the Deaf. It started in VR. Figuring out the interpreters, VRI, 40, 50 -- sorry, VR, 40, 50 years ago, every Deaf person was involved with VR in one way or another, and we said no, no, no, no, we can't do all of that, we need to divide this out and delegate, so that we can focus on the jobs.

We at VR, we have the same type of questions. We refer to the agencies who take care of that type of business.

So, with these comments, we can refer them to, and it would be helpful, if we could call the Centers for Independent Living, the director, those who work as Deaf Service specialists, I know of them because they've invited me to their meetings before for work.

How can we work together? How can we collaborate? How can I support your training?

Maybe we can provide more feedback on their training, on their training materials.

Because it's their responsibility to teach the community.

Within my previous job, I worked with the police and emergency management systems and all of those people who are Deaf, who do they contact in an emergency?

And that was a big need for them. And I would ask: Are you doing that? And we see the trickle effect.

If we're doing the frequent training, same with the hospital; if we can keep their minds refresh and refresh their minds on what's going on with the trainings and they're up-to-date, they will be able to keep that in the file and everybody would be able to follow along with what's required.

Sorry for extending that out so long!

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. As far as responding to the public comments, do you have anything else?

[Pause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I was making notes for a future project and now that we're finished with all of that report, I'm trying to set up a website and a list of interpreting agencies for individual interpreters. Also, I think to add to that list, the Center for Independent Living, that list of those in the Florida area, that would be good there.

There's three organizations, we just need to figure out how to partner with them.

Hands & Voices, the Family Literacy Center and the CILs.

>> CORY PARKER: The information that's on the website, I think we have that, I think it's already there.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Oh, really? Can we take it?

>> CORY PARKER: No, I think the CIL information is already there, right?

>> ANGIE GREEN: Yes.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Is it there, that information?

>> CORY PARKER: Yes, but we also need to refresh that list and keep it updated, because of the attrition rate and there's so much change that happens.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Well, first we keep up with what?

>> CORY PARKER: Yeah, we need to keep up with who is updated. The Center for Independent Living, the people that are there, who's not working anymore, who is not doing it. Just the attrition rate there, we need to make sure we're staying up with that.

That will also give us the opportunity, if we want to invite them to a meeting, if we're inviting folks to come to the meeting, we --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Yes, they came before.

>> CORY PARKER: Yes, that was a local one, but I don't think they're distributing that information. Maybe virtually we can pull in most of them and say hey, how do we work best with you? It just starts with the people of making the big decisions and the trickle effect that happens after that.

So how do we make the best impact when it's not just words? We want to be impactful and we want some results.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Any other comments?

I want to add one more thing. When I was listening to these comments, you know, FSDB, I get their newsletter annually and there's a map on here. And I don't know, have you seen this, Angie? I don't know, maybe you can scan this and get it to the rest of our members.

But it looks like this [indicates] and it's a map of the state of Florida. And their students who go to FSDB, it says that they serve 500, 67%, of their students live on campus Monday through Friday and they go home every weekend.

So, between both campuses and parents in the infant program, there's 1,422 students.

For me, South Florida, wow, it seems like there's a lot. Palm Beach, there's 69, and that's only the students that actually go to FSDB, that doesn't count the infant program.

So, Palm Beach is 69. Broward is 52. Miami-Dade is 63. Orange County is 55. Marion is 48.

[Cell phone ringing].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Alachua is 43. Hillsborough County is 20. Here, in Leon

County... where is that number...? Oh, 24.

[Pause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Oh, there's some other counties here, wow. And apparently there are a lot of families who have moved to that area to be close to St. Augustine and they want to be in the area, because 287 students go there. And St. Johns County, there's 202. So apparently there's over 400 students who attend FSDB, so that means there's a lot of parents who have actually moved to that county so that their students could be day students. Something like that anyway.

So that was a shock to me. Just interesting statistics for you.

Now, Sean, I asked a question about the budget. Is it possible to make that increase, that percentage, in those same categories, but a percentage increase for those categories that we talked about? Is that possible? Can we still do it? I mean... I know, can you ask them, hey, we need an increase in this budget. Is that something you can do?

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. We, at the program level, we can make those requests and pass that up to our Bureau Chief and Division to see, okay. So we can certainly make those requests.

I personally, and Angie, unfortunately we don't make those decisions; otherwise we would have did it yesterday [chuckles].

But we can certainly pass on the request.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I think we're going to have to be a little more aggressive and let them know what our needs are. You know, we can't be lackadaisical about it.

[Laughter].

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. I would agree. I will remind staff that the process this year included what happens every year with the Council; when you're putting out funding and quotes for bids for contracts, there's a process that you undergo where you receive those quotes and you have to make the best decision with what quotes you receive.

And so that budget may change based on the quotes that the Department gathers.

But for the most part, the program has a similar budget this year as it did last year, and now that the Council is making additional requests to spend, we can pass those requests up.

And to be specific, our budget matches the amount of funds that were spent last year, okay.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: That's not enough, obviously.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. I was just going to say, we increased the type of services that we have this year, and so, again, to make shows requests to increase the functionality of the budget for next year.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. The budget now and last year, they just don't... they don't reflect the inflation that we're dealing with.

[Pause].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: No, they don't. It's not showing what we need, you know, in-person for those meetings that we need, instead of Zoom, it's just not enough.

>> CORY PARKER: It just means that in May, the May meeting, we're going to really have to do it on Zoom, because we can't do it in person.

So, if we submit a request that we want to do an in-person in May, would it be something possible that they could approve, Sean?

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. Can they approve an in-person meeting in May? Is that the question?

>> CORY PARKER: Well, if we ask for a budget increase, we just need extra funding, we'll say that, so that -- we have a meeting in May and we want it in-person instead of virtually, is that possible?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I think we can have it. Because I remember some years ago, I believe, we didn't know, at that time we didn't know, but they told us later that we could ask for an increase in the budget so that we could meet the fiscal year, and they did it before.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean -- oh --

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. As you can see, on Zoom, we were hacked. [Laughs]. That was awful! So can you imagine if we were all in that meeting and this happened to us during that meeting? It would be such a disruption!

So, I'm just curious.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: It can't hurt to ask. All they can do is say no and we can say okay, we tried.

>> CORY PARKER: Yes, exactly.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: You know, if we ask strongly and come on with a strong front, we might get what we want and tell them we need it! Not "we wish," it's what we need.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean --

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: This is Karen, my hand is up whenever there is an available moment.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Yes, go ahead.

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: Okay. Is the reason we're meeting virtually in May due to a financial [audio cutting in and out] issue?

>> CORY PARKER: Yes. Continue talking, sorry.

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: That's very concerning, because we are mandated to have these meetings and we need to be out there meeting with people and inviting them to

come in.

If I did not have this knee injury, I would be there in Tallahassee right now.

There's something very much missing for me by doing it virtual. And I'm in favor of pushing for an in-person meeting in May.

It's our last meeting of the fiscal year [audio cutting in and out] -- did I say it -- is that how to say it? Fiscal? Yeah, fiscal. Right [chuckles].

Just my opinion.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Sean??

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. Thank you, Karen and Glenna and Cory, for those comments. We appreciate those comments. We like that feedback. We need that feedback.

I do remind you, number one, that the budgets are made at the beginning of the State fiscal year, clearly before the fiscal year.

Programs, agencies, and councils all have to adjust to what happens during those years.

And it is very difficult sometimes to adjust on the fly when your budget is approved by the Legislature and the Governor.

So, those interagency changes happen inside the agency and it's no matter if I say it nicely or strongly or sweetly, those type of efforts don't often change the reality of what the budgets are.

And agencies are meeting their budgets. So if there's room in their agency budget to account for these differences, these changes, then that's when we're able to use those fundings that we're requesting to use at the end of the year.

So, I've heard your concerns. We will definitely request those additional funding and let the Board know -- or let the Council know -- let the Council know what has been stated when it comes to increasing the budget for this particular project, okay.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. Now I remember, as I'm sitting here thinking about what we did, asking for the extra money for the end of the year. It was Shay Chapman, she actually was the one who did that and requested those funds. So maybe you can talk to Shay about that. She probably knows how to request those funds.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I don't know if you're allowed to, but we'll go with it.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. The good thing is that Shay continues to be an advocate for this Council. She is in my direct line of supervision, she is in Angie's direct line of supervision. She knows of your challenges and your concerns. When she was here yesterday, we spoke to some of these issues.

The fact that Shay has taken on a new position inside the Department, that gives her additional flexibility as a positive, I believe, for the Council.

And so I'm sure she's using all of her tools at her disposal to assist the Council.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. So... in anticipation, if we are approved for extra funding for May, where would we have the meeting?

[Laughter].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Ah...

>> CORY PARKER: Because we need to get started. I need to look faster and sooner for food!

[Laughter].

>> CORY PARKER: I'm just being honest!  
John, go ahead, what did you say?

>> JOHN JACKSON: Doesn't meeting location require a vote? And we don't have what we need to vote in terms of people, do we.

>> CORY PARKER: I have no idea.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: No, we have five. We have enough. Five out of five -- we have a quorum. Karen, Karen.

>> JOHN JACKSON: I didn't know --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I don't think we're counting Debbe, because she said it was her last council meeting? I don't know. Okay, all right.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Is five enough then? I don't know what the quota is.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Yeah, five out of nine. The majority.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Oh, because we have a bunch of vacancies. Okay. All right.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Right.

>> JOHN JACKSON: I'll throw out Tampa, let's get started, I've thrown out Tampa.

[Laughter].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. I just wanted to mention, too, that one of the ways that the Council has tried to address the issues this year is to work with other sister agencies. Cory and his agency has been very forthcoming with providing services. I believe they've provided the sign language interpreters for our last committee meeting. That might be something that this Council considers. Other agencies can step up to the plate and provide services that are needed for this Council to support the Council.

So if your other agencies are aware of things that you can provide, please keep that in mind and let us know.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I agree. That's something that we really do need to work on, our statutes for our bylaws, they could reflect -- we could contact other agencies that we've helped and see if they're willing to help us. We definitely could do that more.

I'm trying to think what's happened in the month of May or what's going to happen in the month of May that maybe we could kind of, I don't know -- if there's an event or something that we can tie this into. I don't know.

>> CORY PARKER: This is Cory. Maybe Chris -- Chris suggested the man from Family Center on Deafness, that maybe he needs -- maybe they have a space they could use there, the Family Center for Deafness or maybe a state agency in Tampa. I'm agreeing with you, I'm just running with John's suggestion of a city. But maybe there's a facility there in Tampa, a state facility that we could use and we could utilize their spaces, and that would be wise, I think.

I'm not sure if our staff interpreters would be available ALL day. I don't know. Because we're busy, I mean, out in the field, our interpreters are extremely busy assisting consumers.

But, you know, I'm sure we can partner with others and go on that.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna -- oh, Mary?

>> MARY HODGES: Hi, this is Mary Hodges. May is Older Americans Month and it may be that if you're looking at Tampa area, we could contact the director at the area Agency on Aging in that area and she may be able to help with a location and maybe that would reduce costs.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: This is Glenna. May is also Better Hearing and Speech Month.

>> CORY PARKER: I was thinking that too.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: I would suggest Tampa Bay or maybe St. Augustine. Where were we before? St. Augustine? Is that where we were at? I forgot, I forgot. Where were we? St. Augustine? And then where was the next meeting?

>> MARY HODGES: Orlando.

>> CORY PARKER: The last meeting was Kissimmee.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Oh, that's right, Fort Myers and then South Florida. I would suggest Tampa Bay. Like Chris had said before, there's a very active area, lots of organizations.

I'm thinking of Rosa, she -- I know her and I know the building and the facility that she has. She has a huge room. We could find hotels that we can use and go back and forth to.

>> CORY PARKER: Oh, yes, I agree, I completely agree.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: So I would suggest Tampa Bay. And I'll have to get the name of the Family Literacy Center or Rosa, oh my gosh, I forgot the name of her organization... but anyway....

Also, maybe we could visit the School, the Blossom School that's in the area, it's Blossom Academy. Blossom Academy serves children who are both Deaf and CODAs, so brothers and sisters attend there. It's a Montessori school. So that would be an



interesting visit, to be able to get an opportunity to do that.

So I would suggest that. Tampa Bay, there's a lot to do.

I know there's an ALDA, there's HID (sp) there, you know, we can host a party, maybe a party night and have them all come.

>> CORY PARKER: Like a social night before it. Yes, yes. Tampa's got a very active -- they do a lot of Deaf -- the Deaf Literacy Centers there, they do a lot of Deaf -- oh, goodness, what is it? -- Deaf literacy, thank you, that's what it is. And they host -- oh, what do you call it...? It's A Deaf Thing.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: That's in Lakeland.

>> CORY PARKER: But the Deaf Literacy Center is part of that, they're part of advocacy for that. Tampa has a lot of resources. Angie?

>> ANGIE GREEN: Karen has her hand up.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Karen?

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: Thank you. This is -- -- this is Karen. I'm in favor of Tampa Bay. I just want to ask a couple of nuts and bolts questions. If it's in Tampa or the Tampa Bay Area, those who live there would not need to be at the hotel, right? So that would be a savings. Is that correct?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Yes.

>> KAREN GOLDBERG: Okay. So there may be a few of us, I know for me, I'm in the Brandon area, which is Tampa, so that's, you know, it's just a suburb, so I wouldn't need to be there in the hotel.

But what is pretty exciting about Tampa Bay is there are a lot of resources in the Hillsborough/Pinellas/and Pasco County areas for services and it would be great to actually invite them to be a part of this, to come and, you know, come and inform people to come to the meeting, you know, and give public comments. I mean that would be fantastic [audio cutting in and out] and also to have some presenters.

I love the idea of touring Blossom School, I had seen it a few years back, I would love to go back -- I mean, I live closer so there's no excuse -- but I would love to go back as part of the Council.

And, you know, I would be happy to be part of that planning team for Tampa, since this is kind of our back yard.

I know this is Debbe's last meeting, but maybe we could, you know, invite her as a member of the public, and if she has some ideas.

But, you know -- and we could also send out to HLAA to have members come too. It would be really great to have a representation of [audio cutting in and out] Tampa Bay, so, yeah [audio cutting in and out]

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Sean?? You see, we're excited about the idea of Tampa Bay!

[Laughter].

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: And there's lots of resources there, lots of presenters that could come. And potential maybe even, like, you know, a mini mini expo for people to come.

>> CORY PARKER: Tallahassee meetings, we should save us a lot of money here, right? Because there's one, two, three, four, five of us who are local and we're not doing travel at all, we're not asking for mileage, we're not asking for meals or anything. So that should help, that should be a big savings.

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. Those considerations have been made at the beginning of the state fiscal year. They do save money for staff who are not traveling if you have a meeting in Tallahassee. But we've already considered that, right, in the creation of the budget.

And some of our costs, remember, are not just expenses in travel, some of our costs are in contracted services, so let's keep that in mind as well.

And I think Cory is the budget person... I don't want to be the person to say yea or nay on the budget [chuckles], but I realize that the Department has that information as far as what is available to it and how we can make those, so we will definitely be in contact with Cory and let him know what changes can be made. And I understand that we need to make sure that this next meeting is in person and we will do the best we can to make sure that that happens.

But if it does not happen, it does not mean that we were not strongly or strenuously making it happen.

>> CORY PARKER: We'll plan a meeting for this next month.

>> SEAN ISAAC: Perfect. Thank you.

>> JOHN JACKSON: This is John. As we're running out of time, I want to make sure I get a couple things in before we go. I don't think these things require a vote or not, but I guess discussion if we need it.

I'd ask that staff, number one, start are the process right away of figuring out what are the bureaucratic logistics, etc., of getting grants and other money given to us, so at the next meeting we could have some sort of presentation, it would be nice, you know, if we do win the lottery, we know what to do with the money. That's the first thing. So, you know, we continue this. It's a very good topic and I don't think we should let it drop, we should go into it at the next meeting, whether it's in Tampa or online.

The second thing you all need to do is go back to Octavio and ask him specifically -- I've done this research but I can't give you guys legal opinion, that's what he's for, and I did the research years ago and things may have changed -- but ask Octavio if a collegial body like ourselves chooses and besides our quarterly meetings, which we plan out ahead of time, we may not notice them ahead of time, but we have them out ahead of time, but if we were to go ahead and notice a bunch of meetings for online, you know, Zoom virtual meetings in-between our quarterly meetings; in other words, like, say in July, when we meet -- or August or even May, if we meet in Tampa, either way, if we not only plan out the meetings for the next year, but we also say we want an established, set noticed meeting three times in-between each, or two times in-between each face-to-face meeting or each quarterly meeting. And so we have them scheduled. Schedule them out all the way through the year.

As far as I know, if, as we approach each one of those in-between quarterly meetings, those virtual meetings, we would have had to take up stuff that pops up real quick during those meetings, if we cancel those meetings, I don't believe there's any violation of the Sunshine Law, but to have them already noticed and strung out for a year in front of us, either which we've had the meeting when the time comes, they've all been properly noticed and we'll know we have the budget or whatever, but also know there's no reason to have that October meeting, you know, we don't need that October virtual four-hour meeting and we cancel it a couple of weeks in advance.

Is that a possibility? Because I've advised, when I've been in an advisory capacity myself on the Sunshine Law, that one can do that, and that way it takes care of, you know, when we have a July meeting and we suddenly say wow, we would like to do this and we have to wait -- July or August -- and we have to wait until November beforehand, you know, at least we'll know we have those meetings noticed in-between and ready to go.

And if we don't avail ourselves of those meetings, we should be able to figure that out ahead of time for any of the -- because those virtual meetings I believe would require less contracts and less stuff set up in advance. I don't know how far in advance you have to have translators set up and stuff like that, but it seems to me if we did that, we avoid any Sunshine violation without having enough notice or sufficient notice.

I want to know from Octavio if we set that stuff out ahead of times, the meetings in-between our quarterlies, can we notice them all to the Florida Administrative whatever it is site, can we notice them all at the beginning of every year and then just cancel them if we don't need them in-between without doing any violation of the Sunshine, what that would be?

Because so much, again, time is one of our biggest problems. We meet quarterly and it has to be in the Sunshine, everything has to get done, but at meetings and when ideas come up at meetings or ideas that would require resolution in a short amount of time come up, we've been dealing with that, wow, if we only had time to make this happen... that's been an issue over the years with the -- over the life of this Council.

And so I would just really like to know if the Department of Health would sign off on something like that?

So the last thing we have to worry about is oh, something's hit, oh, we don't have enough time to notice the meeting.

And so that's the last thing we have to worry about, you know what I mean? If that's a possibility.

Because the thing as he was alluding to, Octavio was, and I was as well, is that really because of these time constraints and Sunshine constraints, having more meetings in-between it would do it for us and take care a lot of those problems, but we may not need every meeting and if we decide to cancel them, just to know if we're violating anything.

One of the things about notice, if we have meetings, our meetings bounce around the state and giving plenty of notice for someone to make sure they have gas money and get a hotel so they can truly access one of our meetings and we just cancelled it a week in advance, I can see that irritating people.

But if all they're doing is putting it on the calendar a virtual meeting that we have scheduled and then we cancel it because there's no need for it, it seems like we would be offending a lot less.

So, that's two things I would ask. One thing, how we get our money beyond the budget and what's the steps beyond bureaucracy and all that and second thing is seconding meetings between our meetings, and schedule them and approach and then cancel them if we decide we don't need them

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. We can do that.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: And this is Glenna. We mentioned yesterday, we're supposed to have money for the committee meetings -- or the council meetings quarterly. Those quarterly committee meetings would mean one and a half months between the two, I guess we should have four more meetings locked down and set. But as they finish, we could add more to have those in-between meetings too, as you mentioned.

We did mention that yesterday too. We're supposed to have a separate budget for the committee meetings, that we had included in the contracted services to provide interpreters and CART for the committee meetings. Is that money still there?

>> SEAN ISAAC: This is Sean. There's one contracted services budget. Of that budget, all the different contracts are serving that budget.

So when it comes to your interpreters, when it comes to your audiovisual services, when it comes to your FAR and notices of those meetings, those notices also use money, whether you notice it or cancel it, you will still have to pay those funds.

But as far as it comes to that budget category, that category is still there and the contracted services in those categories are still there.

I think your question, though, is do we have additional funding for more committee meetings that are virtual? And I believe that --

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Virtual, yes, virtual.

>> SEAN ISAAC: And this is Sean, and I believe that that budget is pretty tight currently the way we have it. I'm going to ask Angie to go back and double-check to see where we are and let you know that information as soon as she gets that, okay?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Yes, I agree, we need more meetings between our quarterly meetings so that we can finish our work.

If we... if the committee does work while we're waiting for the quarterly meetings, how do we -- do we still have to wait for the quarterly meeting for a vote?

For example, working on the bylaws. Making those tweaks. We still have to bring it to the Council for a vote.

But if we're working on training materials and the awareness kits or something like that, I think that the Council still wants to see the materials.

Obviously having it yesterday, the Council wanted to see the biennial report for feedback. So we could save time working on the materials if we have it ready to present.

That's just one thing.

Cory, anything? John?

>> CORY PARKER: We're running out of time.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay. I want to thank you all again, all the service providers. I want to thank Sean and Angie for all the work you've done setting up the meeting and listening to our rambling.

[Laughter].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Safe travels -- well, hold on. It's just me and the interpreters, I guess the service providers and me to travel home.

[Laughter].

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Thank you all so much! I think this was a wonderful meeting! It was a good time!

>> CORY PARKER: Yes, I agree.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Any last comments from anybody?

>> DEBBE HAGNER: Keep up the good work and keep fighting!

>> GLENNA ASHTON: We have to say goodbye to Mary! Karen? Debbe? Thank you.

>> JOHN JACKSON: See you in Tampa!

[Laughter].

>> LA'SHAY LEWIS: Are we adjourned?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Do we have a motion to adjourn?

>> JOHN JACKSON: I'm seconding it.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Cory seconds.

>> CORY PARKER: John? And Cory seconds.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Do I have to do the thumb?

>> GLENNA ASHTON: No, just like this.

>> JOHN JACKSON: Can I do this? Pull it from my --

>> CORY PARKER: Second, second, second, and second.

>> GLENNA ASHTON: Okay. Meeting adjourned.

[Concludes at 11:59 a.m.]

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