



DHHSC BOARD MEETING Minutes

6 PM, Tuesday February 11th, 2025

- I. Call to Order – 6:04pm
Board members Present:
 - Anna Virnig
 - Christian Gentile
 - Nicole Soyland
 - Patty Killough
- II. Approval of Agenda Items - Approved
 - Changed “Old Business” to “Unfinished Business”
- III. Approval of October 2024 & December 2024 Board minutes
- IV. Auditor’s report
 - Auditor, Jaribu Nelson, is absent. Report postponed.
- V. President's Report – Nicole Soyland

My first meeting as President, I haven’t had any official training on how to run meetings or how to do my role as a President but I will do my best to run this meeting and taking over the role. Please be patient with me as I navigate through it. I am also open to feedback or ideas if you would like to approach me with it.

Steve Longo who served as our president for two years just finished his term last December and another board member Jaime Johnson Clay has decided to resign and has submitted her official resignation letter. I wanted

to take my time to thank both of them for their years of service and I do hope both can continue volunteering with our organization from time to time when we do events for the community.

Speaking of official trainings I have been doing research on getting training for the board that we do really need to have. We did have one two years ago with Mark but we were not able to finish it because of technical difficulties we had on Friday night via Zoom then time ran out when we did our training in person the following day on Saturday. I felt that we were left with more questions than answers after that training. I would like to find more simplified training that is easy to understand and follow with what we need to know basics when it comes to the role as a member on this board and with individual assigned roles such as my position as president, vice president, secretary, treasurer. I did have one person in mind and I got a quote on the cost of training. However I plan to wait until we add more board members before setting up a training. There are only four of us right now. So my current primary focus will be on adding more board members. Which will be leading to the next point. I also do want to look for someone else with expertise in fundraising to train us that would be focused on fundraising.

I do know that January has been a very busy month for Michelle and DHHSC as they had to meet several deadlines when it came to filling out for grants and not only that but they also had audits! Which Jaribu Nelson just explained to us in this meeting. I was very busy too with not expected overtime work that lasted for over a month at my job so Michelle and I were not able to meet in person to discuss the different goals and create a plan. But we do brief each other often and stay in touch via text messages and I'm thankful for good communication that we have. We are hoping to set a meeting one on one to discuss goals for the board after this meeting and I can report in our next meeting which would be in May. One of things

we will discuss is recruiting more people and hopefully to expand the board again. If you are interested and willing to make some time commitments for attend our meetings both official and not only that but also various unofficial meetings to follow through things and planning for different events, volunteering for some of our community events, fo help with some fundraisings, to represent the community, and most important of all, have heart and passion for DHHSC then please do let us know! You can either contact Michelle, me, or any of the board members that you are interested. Currently I am trying to get my DHHSC president email set up as it is a new transition for me but I wasn't able to. Hopefully I will be able to soon. If you inform Michelle she will connect you with me during this transition period. Thank your for your patience!

Next big event is A Walk through Deaf History on Saturday April 5 and we will need volunteers for the event and I would like to ask the board members if they would like to join in this event. Last year, Michelle needed volunteers who can play a role of various famous or well known deaf people within our deaf history. If any of the board is willing or the community is willing please do let Michelle know!

Also I wanted to inform you guys know that we already set up all of official board meetings for this year 2025 but not only that but we also already decided on the date for Townhall meeting! It will be Saturday August 23 from 1-3 PM and the community room is already reserved. I am hoping to meet with the board soon to discuss plans for what kind of event we would like to provide and make Townhall meeting more enjoyable than in the past so people would be more motivated fo come. It is also my goal to make this event more community focused where they can express their thoughts, opinion, ideas with us rather than us talking most of time. I would like to see more of an interactive conversations rather than one

sided conversation. Because hearing feedback IS important. Your ideas about this event are also welcome.

Also speaking about community comments, I wanted to let that community know that I will be adding community comments under announcements in our agenda so that way we can give opportunity to ask the community members or audience to express whatever they may need to during this meeting. I am hoping there will be time left for this but if not we will do in our next meeting and on.

Another change to the agenda is the title “old business” will be changed back to “unfinished business” and we will approach the agenda items differently than before. If the board want to bring up any motions to floor please do let me know before the meeting. Please do let me know a day prior the meeting, not on the day of. If it's on the day of it will be postponed to the next meeting. My goal for board meetings is not just about providing reports but also to be productive with discussions and to include the community more. Please do ask if you have any questions about this.

This is all for now with my report, does anyone here have questions?

Thank you!

VI. Vice President's Report – N/A (Position unfilled)

VII. Secretary's Report – Patricia Killough

Gabriel Saucedo and Ruby Mandujano, representatives for DHHSC, have been busy working for their community here on the Central Coast. Both have received security clearance from the Deaf Program with Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE). They have both had the opportunity to meet with our local DHH students there. DHHSC continues to host events as well.

VIII. Treasurer's report – Anna Virnig

Treasurer's Report



Checking/Savings Balance	1,840,008.86	As of January 31, 2025
Accounts Receivable Grants	132,050.94	* Outstanding invoices not yet collected as of January 31, 2025
	+	
Accounts Receivable Interpreting	545,267.06	* Outstanding invoices not yet collected as of January 31, 2025
Accounts Receivable Total	677,318.00	Outstanding invoices not yet collected
Accounts Payable	\$ -	Outstanding bills not yet paid
Board Private Fund Fiscal Year Balance	600.00	** 07/01/2024 - 12/31/2024
Board Private Cumulative Fund Balance	5,558.07	** Pending Reconciliation
Per Profit and Loss Statement (Overall) *	26,206.56	*** As of January 31, 2025 pending

Status on DSS (Department of Social Services)	
Grant Awarded for 2024-2025	\$ 1,034,987.46
Grant funds expended (Estimated)	522,941.90
Unspent balance of Grant	<u>\$ 512,045.56</u>

- * Approximately
- ** To Be Determined and reconciled
- *** Invoicing to be entered and/or collected; approximate

Fund Balance: Nicole - There is a fund balance of \$5,500; this is a running total. It can be used for DHHSC events and / or needs upon a passing vote.

IX. Executive Director's report— Michelle Bronson

Budget Updates:

We are relieved that we are now finished with the 2023-2024 audit, and because we finished before January 31st, we were able to reapply for Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), which we were unable to do last year. Our audit was not done in time last year so we could not apply, but because we finished two years' worth of audits, we were able to reapply for CFC in time. This opportunity is where federal employees select a charity, and we are now listed as one of the charities for them to support. Donated funds are unrestricted, which is nice, so we can use for materials, events, and whatever is needed for DHHSC.

We recently submitted our grant applications for Stevenson Philanthropy and United Way of Tulare County. We are requesting funds from Stevenson Philanthropy to cover interpreting expenses for our Salinas staff when events and booths. For United Way of Tulare County, if approved, this grant is for funds to host monthly Food Socials to pull in our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. We will keep you posted on if our applications were approved.

We will apply for a City of Visalia grant due Friday, which is to host 4-5 socials in the Visalia area. This includes Spring Social, Summer Social, Halloween Party, and Holiday Party. These events are separate from the Food Socials covered by United Way of Tulare. The grant funds assist with covering costs for interpreting, supplies, and staff time.

We will reapply for a grant with Fansler Foundation in March, but we will change the focus of the grant. We have not decided yet, but they have funded our ROCK, Literacy, and YES! Programs for years. We want to do something different this time around, especially to increase our chances of being funded again.

I am pleased to share that Harden Foundation is funding us again, in the amount of \$6,000. This grant focuses on providing educational and fun events and booths in the Salinas area. Thank you, Harden Foundation!

Staffing Updates:

Jamie Reichard's last day is this Friday, February 14th. We are sad that she is leaving and wish her all the best with her next adventure. We are now advertising the position so please encourage interested persons to apply. The position is full-time and includes benefits, and the job description is also posted on our website. Can check there for more information.

Compliance Issues/Concerns:

None at this time.

Agency Updates:

We have our Love & Literacy event on March 15th and our committee is hard at work with the preparations. It will be here at the Fresno DHHSC HQ from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is free to families with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and also for CODAs. We will have different fun stations focusing on literacy development, with focus on both English and ASL.

Our "A Walk Through Deaf History" event is on April 5th and we would like to change some things, especially so that we do not have to rely on interpreters. Same as before, we want to spotlight significant Deaf persons and events throughout history that shape our lives today as Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. We will have two sessions, one in the morning from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and another in the afternoon, from 1:00 p.m. to 3 p.m. Please be on the lookout for when tickets go on sale on our website.

X. Fundraising report –

- There is no formal fundraising report.

XI. General Board comments - None

XII. Unfinished Business -

- New rule for not finished business: The board may bring up any motions a day PRIOR to the meeting, or it will be moved to the next meeting.
- Ratify approval of DHHSC's Mission and Vision Statements, and Code of Ethics & Conflict of Interest Statements, from January
- Mission Statement, approved via email October 15, 2024: *"To advocate, seek equality, and promote self-determination through empowerment for those who seek our assistance; and to enhance the awareness and understanding of Deaf Culture and the unique communication needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing individual."*
- Code of Ethics & Conflict of Interest Statements, approved via email October 15, 2024:
 - *"Given its mission, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center ("DHHSC") has adopted a code of ethics to guide its board members, staff and volunteers in their conduct when acting on behalf of DHHSC. The Code contains broad principles reflecting the types of behavior DHHSC expects from employees, volunteers, interns, board members and the public.*
 - *This policy is not intended as a stand-alone policy. It does not embody the totality of DHHSC ethical standards, nor does it answer every ethical question or issue that might arise. Rather, it is one element of a broader effort to create and maintain a quality organization that gives ethical conduct the highest priority. This Code will be reviewed periodically.*
 - *Board members and staff should:*
 1. *Listen to our community members and make all reasonable efforts*

to satisfy their needs and concerns within the scope of our mission, and to strive for excellence and innovation and demonstrate professional respect and responsiveness to community members and others.

- 2. Make an effort to understand, respect and support our community members from other cultures, exemplified by the contributions of our staff and executive leadership, and to contribute to an organizational culture that respects the diverse, individual contributions of staff and leadership.*
- 3. Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information about DHHSC, its employees, volunteers, board, vendors and customers.*
- 4. Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and fiduciary responsibilities in an effort to create transparency in all of our operations, and abide by the policy of full and fair disclosure.*
- 5. For the board of directors, provide credible and effective oversight to the organization's work without personal bias.*
- 6. Not accept commissions, gifts, payments, loans, promises of future benefits or other items of value from anyone who has or may seek some benefit from DHHSC in return, other than occasional gifts of nominal value that are in keeping with good business ethics.*
- 7. Abide by the governing documents and policies of DHHSC.*
- 8. Maintain accountability for adhering to this Code of Ethics.*
- 9. Conduct fundraising activities in an ethical and transparent manner, with suitable oversight by the board of directors, and following all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations that pertain to fundraising activity.*
- 10. Promote ethical and fair management practices.*
- 11. Act at all times in accordance with the highest ethical standards and in the best interest of DHHSC, its board, employees, clients, customers and reputation.*

- 12. Conduct all publicity-related activities in a fair, honest, and ethical manner, while avoiding any libelous or slanderous activity, and respecting the privacy of any individuals who might be affected by the publicity activity in question.*
- 13. Honor our commitments and promises to the best of our abilities.*
- 14. Appropriately acknowledge contributions from other individuals and organizations who help facilitate our goals.*
- 15. Avoid any act or appearance of deception in our fundraising activities.*
- 16. Avoid conflicts of interest, such as Board members being family of staff or any Board members or staff having a vested interest in a competing business or organization. Any potential conflicts of interest will be reported to both the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.”*

- Vision Statement, approved via email October 16 & 17, 2024: “Although we expect that the next 5 years toward the end of 2025, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC) may face unpredictable scenarios, we will adapt and modify delivery of needed services to our community. We will also provide a variety of exceptional social services to families with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community **in DHHSC's service region**. Our agency will seek more stable funding sources, further develop our staff’s skills, and build on our public relations efforts to expand our community presence in order to provide effective communication access to all individuals.”
- Formally nominated by Patty; seconded by Anna; approved by Christian

XIII. New business –

- Board fees: Discussion to inquire if the current monthly board fee should remain at \$20, increase to add the fee charged by Paypal, or make it a different amount. Due to the limited amount of time, Michelle suggested that we discuss this at a later time. Board accepted / agreed.

- Vice President - unfilled position:
 - Information about the time fulfillment was provided - A board position is for 3 years. Officer positions are held for 2 years. A new board member must wait 1 year prior to becoming an elected officer.
 - Anna nominated Christian; Christian declined.
 - Per Michelle, the position can remain vacant for now.

XIV. Announcements

- Community comments - none

XV. Closed session (if needed)

XVI. Adjournment- 7:29pm