

West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Minutes

November 8, 2024

Virtual via Zoom

Commission Members Present:	Commission Members Absent:	Commission Staff Present:	Public Visitors:	Interpreters:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paul See• John Burdette• Nancy Gillispie• Gloria Hollen• Roy Forman• Mary Anne Clendenin• Meegan Wolfe• Angela Wilson• Julie Shoeman• Rachel Hatfield• Clayton Burch• Dawn Embry-King• Rae Bates• Christine Firkins• Regina Woodcock	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mekell Golden	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sarah Lowther• Erik Essington	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Steven Semenik• Crystal Law• Chris Mick• Sarah Shapero	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lorena Baker• Jac Terrio

Call to Order

- Paul See called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Reading of Mission Statement and Introductions

- Paul See read the Mission Statement.

Public Comments

- Chris Mick
 - WVAD will be having a Christmas party in December.
 - 2025 WVAD Biennial Conference will be held on August 7-10, 2025.
- Sarah Shapero
 - She needs assistance providing interpreting services for a deaf client in her private practice.

Minutes

The minutes from the August 2, 2024 meeting were reviewed. John Burdette made the motion to approve the minutes. Roy Forman seconded. Minutes were approved.

Staff Reports

Erik Essington and Sarah Lowther shared information from the written board report.

- The term for the Otolaryngologist/ENT position on the board expired in June 2020. Applications can be submitted to fill this position.
- On August 22, 2024, Meegan Wolfe was appointed to the Board as the Teacher of the Deaf representative. The term expires on June 30, 2027.
- WVCDHH staff met with Kim Nuckles, the State ADA Coordinator, on October 16, 2024. The meeting was held to discuss options for making changes to codes to assist with scheduling contracted interpreters and updating standards for educational interpreters.
- The WVCDHH website and social media are updated on a regular basis.
- On the WVCDHH Facebook page, we have gained 90 followers since August 2024 for a total of 2,905. There have been 44 posts made. Audience statistics - Men - 17.20% / Women - 82.80%.
- The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) is setting new guidelines for who is allowed to take the VQAS. Effective May 10, 2024, to be eligible to register for and take a VQAS Written or Performance Assessment, a candidate must be able to provide documentation verifying that they live, work, OR attend an interpreter training program in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The policy allows a transition period for outside candidates to phase out of the VQAS by December 31, 2027. After this transition period, we will no longer utilize the VQAS. Instead, we will implement the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) certification program.
- WVCDHH hosted a Family Day at Pipestem Resort State Park on Saturday, August 24, 2024. Families came, gathered with other families, and enjoyed activities on the lake. There were over 60 people to RSVP to the event.
- Erik attended the West Virginia Audiology Association Fall Conference at Canaan Valley Resort on September 27-28, 2024. He met with members of the Association to explore the creation of a hearing aid loan program for K-12 Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in West Virginia.
- Sarah and Gwen attended the WV Hands and Voices Open House Picnic as exhibitors on September 28, 2024, in Hurricane, WV.
- WVCDHH is sponsoring another free fifteen-week virtual ASL 1 class provided by Dr. Christine Firkins. There were over 100 people that signed up to take the class. The class began on October 12, 2024, and it will end on January 18, 2025.
- Deaf Awareness Day 2025 will be held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025.
- WVCDHH is collaborating with University of Charleston's School of Arts and Sciences to develop an ASL Studies Minor program launching in Spring 2025.
- WVCDHH would like to sponsor, organize, and provide more workshops for interpreters and the Deaf/Hard of Hearing community throughout the state soon.

Committee/Task Force Reports

- Executive Committee: No report.
- Nominating Committee: No report.

Board Member Reports

- Christine Firkins
 - She is teaching another fifteen-week ASL 1 class sponsored by WVCDHH. Most of participants in the class have a D/HH family member. The class is going very well.
 - She is designing an LMS group for the University of Charleston. ASL I classes will also begin in Spring 2025.
 - She is working with Ali Stevenson, the WVSDB Statewide Literacy Coordinator. She attended a bedrock training and will be assisting with making videos in the future.
- Paul See
 - He is now on the Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children.
 - He recently saw a pamphlet for new parents of children with Down Syndrome. He thinks that a similar pamphlet could be created and provided in the hospital to parents who have a D/HH child that would include educational resources and options.
- Dawn Embrey-King
 - She provided a link to a survey for the Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children that allows anyone to provide input to the Council on concerns or needs of D/HH children.
- Mary Anne Clendenin
 - She shared an update from WVSDB Outreach via email. The email details current projects and events.
 - There will be a Deaf Social event held on December 14, 2024 in collaboration with DSC and EPDA.
- Rachel Hatfield
 - DRS is in the midst of decreasing funding. The budget has been reduced, which means that people in need of services may be put on waiting lists while services are placed on hold.
 - Only the most significantly disabled individuals will be served, which is about 60% of current caseload.
 - Public meetings will be held to discuss this further.

Future Meeting Dates

- March 20, 2025 – Charleston, WV
- May 16, 2025 – Charleston, WV
- August 7, 2025 – Davis, WV

Adjournment

Paul See made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Rachel Hatfield seconded. The motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.