



# West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## August 7, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

**Commission Members Present:** *Mary Anne Clendenin, Paul See, John Burdette, Dawn Embry-King, Meegan Wolfe, Nancy Gillispie, Christine Firkins, Crystal Law, Angela Wilson, Gloria Hollen*

**Commission Members Absent:** *Regina Woodcock, Clayton Birch, Mekell Golden, Rae Bates*

**Commission Staff Present:** *Erik Essington, Gwen Bryant*

**Community Members Present:** *Mary Ann Jividen, Earl Hollen, Sylvia Mick, Christorpher Mick, Erin Fulton, Jean Marie Hunter-Suddreth, Joann Parker, Ashley Adams*

**Interpreters:** *Convo*

**Meeting Documents:** *Agenda, Staff Report*

AGENDA TOPIC	FACILITATOR	DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY	ACTION ITEMS
Call to Order	Paul See	The meeting was called to order at 9:11 a.m., followed by the reading of the WVCDHH Mission Statement.	
Introductions	Gwen Bryant	Each attendee introduced themselves and provided a brief description of their role within the Commission or the community.	
Public Comments	Paul See	Opened the floor for public comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mary Ann Jividen expressed concern regarding the lack of information sharing, noting that many individuals in the Eastern Panhandle are unfamiliar with the Commission and emphasizing the need for improved collaboration and resource sharing.</li><li>Ashley Adams noted her concern that the WVCDHH's efforts seem primarily directed toward children and highlighted the need for broader collaboration with other state agencies, such as correctional facilities.</li></ul>	
Staff Report	Erik Essington Gwen Bryant	A summary of the staff report covering the period of August 7, 2025, through November 14, 2025, was presented. Comments and questions were as follows:	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board Appointments</b> - Gloria inquired why there is not an interpreter representative on the Board. Angela explained that this had been attempted previously, but there was limited interest from interpreters. Paul noted that adding such a position would likely require an amendment to state code.</li> <li>• <b>Accessible Smoke Alarm Project (ASAP)</b> - Paul questioned the age of the equipment and proposed efforts to distribute the equipment or modernize the technology. Gwen Bryant shared that the program was initiated under Executive Director Marissa Saunders, around 2010. Erik reported that he has been in contact with the Michigan Commission to explore possible methods for distributing the equipment.</li> <li>• <b>Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Night Event with the Dirty Birds</b> - Paul asked if the Commission set up an informational table. John recommended sharing information about the historical connection between baseball and the Deaf community. John recommended incorporating or sharing the history of Deaf contributions to baseball. Erik agreed that both were excellent ideas for next year's event but emphasized the need for board members to volunteer to assist.</li> <li>• <b>WVCDHH Education, Interpreting Services, and Legislation advisory committees</b> - John inquired about the individuals serving on the Committees. Erik confirmed that a list of committee members would be provided to the Board. Mary Anne stated that she had not been invited to participate in the committees established by the Commission. Gwen explained that the formation of these committees had been discussed at the two previous board meetings and that all interested individuals were invited to apply for membership. Gwen also inquired about the Low Incidence Coordinator position at the WVDE. Mary Anne clarified that the Outreach Center, under her direction, along with her staff, serves as the primary educational resource for data and related inquiries.</li> <li>• <b>2024-2025 Local Education Agency (LEA) Information Request</b> - Mary Anne shared that the West Virginia Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee (established with the passing of HB 4414) provides an annual report. They are currently training districts on how to enter and report language assessment data on students 3-5 years of age.</li> <li>• <b>Current Budget Report (FY2026)</b> - Paul asked for clarification regarding the Association Dues expenditure in the WVCDHH budget. Erik explained that this cost is incorporated into the office rental agreement. Gloria inquired about the Miscellaneous expenditure, and Erik responded that it represents costs associated with Commission activities and events. He added that he and Gwen will be meeting</li> </ul>	
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		<p>with finance staff to gain a better understanding of the budget and will provide an update to the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SSA Virtual Workshops</b> - Gloria expressed concern about the challenges of virtual SSA workshops, noting that many Deaf participants rely on visual communication and may find it difficult to focus on small screens for extended periods. She suggested weighing the pros and cons of virtual versus in-person workshops to determine what best serves participants. Paul commented that while the presentations are valuable, it is difficult to view both the PowerPoint and participants during virtual sessions. John recommended providing the PowerPoint to attendees in advance rather than displaying it during the workshop. Erik responded that copies of the PowerPoint are available upon request and recognized Kimberly as an excellent resource. He added that the Commission works to ensure interpreters are visible during presentations. Kimberly noted that she is open to accommodating individuals who prefer to attend in person.</li> </ul>	
<b>Board Member/Agency Reports</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>WVSDB Outreach Update</b> - Mary Anne shared an update from the Outreach Center, noting that the Center was established by the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and has recently added two new staff members, including Jennifer Casto. Current projects include assisting with the enrollment of early intervention providers and supporting mentorship activities led by Jennifer. Mary Anne also shared links to EIPA workshops offered by Boys Town and said she would share the QR code and link to the WVSDB Outreach request form.</li> <li>• <b>WVACEEC</b> – Dawn provided an update on the West Virginia Advisory Council on the Education of Exceptional Children (WVACEEC), noting the recent creation of brochures and business cards, which have greatly improved communication and outreach. The brochure includes information about the Council’s purpose and membership, along with a QR code allowing parents and community members to complete a survey on available services. Upon submission, respondents receive information on Policy 2419 and other relevant supports. Dawn added that when parents share concerns through the survey, those issues are reviewed during upcoming meetings, and she follows up directly with the families afterward.</li> </ul>	
<b>Adjournment</b>		<p>Gloria moved to adjourn the meeting, and John seconded. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.</p>	