Members Present:
Traci D. Branch
Shantell D. Lewis, Au.D.
Timothy R. Patterson
Susanne B. Wilbur, LCSW
Carrie N. H. Humphrey, NIC
Kathi A. Mestayer
Colin H. Wells
Jason M. Zuccari

Members Absent:
Roy B. Martin, IV

Staff Present:
Eric H. Raff, Director
Rhonda S. Jeter, Business Manager
Christine C. Ruderson, Technology Assistance Program Manager
Karen Brimm, Community Services Manager
Elaine Ziehl, Virginia Quality Assurance Screening Coordinator

ASL Interpreters / CART Provider:
Laurie Malheiros
Bernadette C. Mayhall
Rhonda D. Tuck, Cavalier Reporting

I. NETWORKING – COFFEE & REFRESHMENTS
On Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 9:30 a.m., the members of the Advisory Board of the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) convened in the conference room at the VDDHH Central Office, 1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 203, Henrico, VA 23229-5012.

II. CALL TO ORDER
At 10:00 a.m., Chairperson Traci D. Branch called the meeting to order. All members and staff were welcomed and introduced themselves.
Director Raff announced that Ms. Hutcheson was unable to join the meeting, but Elaine Ziehl would be present to provide the report on interpreting services. He recommended that Advisory Board members having their terms expire this summer contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office to notify the Secretary of their desire to continue to the Board.

Chairperson Branch requested the record show that the board had at least five members present and the quorum was established.

No corrections or revisions were requested to the Advisory Board membership roster.

No corrections or revisions were requested to the meeting agenda. The motion to accept the agenda as written was made by Ms. Humphrey, seconded by Mr. Zuccari and unanimously passed.

No corrections or revisions were requested to the meeting minutes from February 6, 2019. The motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Ms. Humphrey, seconded by Ms. Mestayer and unanimously passed.

III. STRATEGIC PLAN
Director Raff presented specific background on the agency’s Strategic Plan. The last update to the Plan was submitted for the years 2016-2018. VDDHH will submit the next Strategic Plan with major changes to the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) by June 30, 2019. The guidelines from DPB to update the plan is arduous.

The discussion of the Strategic Plan followed with the details as they appeared:

Strategic priorities, mission, vision and goals - Members provided feedback about the wording of the VDDHH mission statement and scope of services and programs, with the emphasis on providing clarity and consistency to its consumers, partners and stakeholders.

The TAP and Outreach will be considered as separate. The definitions of Outreach and TAP have changed. The emphasis of Outreach renamed Community Services is more information related specifically to VDDHH. The focus was information & referral, education, training, etc. The Plan provides a good opportunity to consistently clarify the programs and services provided by the agency. Community services replaces what was previously referred to as Outreach.

Board members reviewed the VDDHH brochure which provides a clear explanation about what VDDHH offers. Discussion ensued about using terminology in VDDHH publications that is inclusive, neutral and balanced.

The members moved on to reviewing the long-term goals of VDDHH as delineated in the Strategic Plan. The major discussion regarded a broader inclusiveness of individuals who have speech disabilities because that would fall under “promoting accessible communication.” Ms. Ruderson elaborated about assistive devices and support groups available to this population. Director Raff stated that in the Code of Virginia does not address all that VDDHH does in serving individuals with speech disabilities.
The Board recessed from 11:15 to 11:25 a.m.

**STRATEGIC PLAN (CONTINUED)**

During the recess, Director Raff reviewed the Code of Virginia, which briefly mentions serving individuals with speech impairments under department duties and within the context of TAP and Relay. Board member proceeded to review and provide input about the goals on the current Plan:

1. Clarifying the “culture of preparedness” goal to include the more comprehensive “emergency management” or to move this under the state agency goal as an objective.
2. ISP and CART goal: Members discussed the goal in regard to quality, availability and utilization.
3. Accessibility, loop systems and captioning: VDDHH could consider adding another goal related to communication access for hard of hearing individuals, and expanding on the vision for Community Services under a separate objective.
4. Using consistent terminology, e.g., difficulty speaking or speech disability.

Rhonda Jeter announced that the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office had been previously informed by email in February that four Advisory Board members desired reappointment by the governor. She will follow up on this.

**WORKING LUNCH: Board Member Reports**

**Carrie Humphrey:** The Virginia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (VRID) will have a mini-conference at Reynolds Community College (RCC) on June 22 with an emphasis on mentorship. Members of the deaf community can attend at no charge. RCC is working with VCU on a pathway to a Bachelors Degree in interdisciplinary studies for interpreting students.

RCC is in contact with the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind and the Department of Education to set up a training for language proficiency in ASL. They are looking at getting the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview to Virginia, at a cost of $15,000 to provide training for interviewers. RCC is working on expanding training to include Support Service Providers and interveners for individuals to work with deafblind people.

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Region 2 Conference will be held July 16–19, 2020 in Richmond. RID would like to offer a series of workshops geared to deaf interpreter training. RID has established CASLI, a limited liability corporation, to conduct national testing and is looking for local and regional centers. Ms. Humphrey inquired into the possibility of VDDHH becoming a testing site or proctor.

Director Raff stated that he has already discussed VDDHH being a testing site with Ms. Ziehl and Ms. Hutcheson, and VDDHH is interested.

**Ms. Mestayer:** She will be attending the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Conference in Rochester and helping to present a workshop on jury duty for individuals with hearing loss. She is involved with HAT, a joint program between HLAA and Gallaudet that trains people to provide presentations about hearing assistive technology. Ms. Mestayer is in talks with William & Mary and advocating the installation of loop systems in new buildings and
renovations wherever possible. The Governor of Maryland signed legislation requiring loops in public assembly areas in any new buildings or refurbishes using state funds, and she has shared that information with William & Mary.

Dr. Lewis: She is collaborating with Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles on an ongoing project to improve services to the deaf and hard of hearing regarding promotion, exams, license plates with HI lettering, effective communication with customer service, and driver’s licensing. She brought to DMV’s attention that its website includes some videos that are not captioned. Dr. Lewis proposed that DMV have promotions about deaf and hard of hearing services one month out of the year, starting with one branch with the eventual goal of making it statewide. Drivers can request a code on the back of their driver’s licenses so police officers will know they are deaf or hard of hearing. There is also a contact form to use in cases of emergencies that will alert police officers. Many people, however, are not aware of these.

Ms. Ruderson recommended to consider the promotion for two months in the year (May and September) and have displays for people to look at while waiting in DMV lines.

VI. Public Comment
No public comment was offered.

V. Staff Reports
Technology Assistance Program: Ms. Ruderson, Technology Assistance Program Manager, shared that her department was on their way to Williamsburg to set up an exhibit at the Triad conference. TAP had a successful booth on April 30 at a conference for disabled voters. They attended the Shaw Convention, trainings with board of elections, and have reached out to community sponsored housing centers. Ms. Ruderson and Brittany Howard have worked with Director Raff to establish a new contract for TAP specialists. Overall, it has been a busy time for TAP.

Executive report: Director Raff reported that the State Interagency Task Force (SIT) will host a Town Hall meeting on June 29, 2019 in Richmond at the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and he encouraged board members to attend. Other locations are scheduled throughout the state as well. VDDHH hired Karen Brimm as Community Services Manager, who began in April. Director Raff has convened a work group of various representatives to discuss support services providers (SSP) for individuals who are deafblind. The next meeting of the SSP work group will be in May; the meeting was postponed in April due to the weather. The long term goal is to establish an SSP program in Virginia, as some other states have done.

Virginia Relay: Director Raff reported that some changes in the Virginia Relay contract removed Devaney Associates as the third-party subcontractor that handled public relations and marketing; Hamilton will take over those tasks and it will be cost-saving. VDDHH recruited for the Virginia Relay Manager position with interviews to be held in May, and hopes to have the manager in place this summer.

Interpreter Services Program (ISP): Elaine Ziehl presented the Interpreter Service Program (ISP) Manager report for Ms. Hutcheson. On March 14, Ms. Hutcheson and Ms. Ruderson met with
Supreme Court staff regarding assistive technology requests from the courts and explored the possibility of the Supreme Court purchasing the technology or setting up a loaner program with VDDHH. The Supreme Court and ISP also discussed private interpreter coordinator agencies and the procedure for preauthorization for overnight accommodations for court interpreters and overcap payments. ISP has a statewide training for court clerks on their agenda slated for September.

ISP is receiving many requests from out-of-state interpreters to add their information to the interpreter directory. VDDHH decided not to include them into the directory as they are working for video remote interpreter (VRI) industry and the directory is intended for community interpreting. ISP continues to work with the General Assembly for the 2020 session. The ISP ‘agreement’ which replaces the ‘contract’ will launch June 1. Ms. Hutcheson provided a presentation about the ISP at Liberty University on March 21 to interpreter training program students.

**Virginia Quality Assurance Screening:** Elaine Ziehl reported that results and diagnostics continue to go out to candidates well within the 90 working day timeframe. Scores are improving for candidates who use diagnostics. Data from candidates taking the Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment (EIPA), both written and performance, are now uploaded directly to Boys Town National Research Hospital in Nebraska which allows for faster results and a smoother process. Regarding the QAS, we are redoing the interactive interpreting piece based on feedback from raters and the new version will be standardized.

**Community Services Program:** Karen Brimm shared that since coming on board as the Community Services Manager, she has been learning the new position and actively introducing herself to partners of VDDHH Community Services program. During the third quarter, Community Services provided ADA consultations and training for state agencies and other organizations, including ongoing training with criminal justice academies, 911 dispatchers and emergency management. Community Services conducted outreach to community groups, including partnering with the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities on their grant funded "I Can Accessibility Project" at VCU to create an ASL and captioned version of the brochure "Understanding Protective Orders in Richmond, VA."

**VI. NEW BUSINESS AND FUTURE MEETING AGENDA**

Director Raff suggested inviting Ken McCabe, budget analyst with the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) assigned to VDDHH, to present at the next Advisory Board meeting regarding the 2020-2022 budget process. The biennium budget will be submitted in September.

Ms. Metstayer inquired about the FCC comment period about whether automated speech recognition software should be allowed for captioned phones.

Members were asked to provide feedback on both the catering and seating arrangements.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Ms. Humphrey, seconded by Ms. Wilbur, to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 p.m.