



Idaho Council *for the* Deaf and Hard of Hearing

12592 W. Explorer Dr., suite 100, Boise, ID 83713

Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 21, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM Mountain Time

Zoom Video Conferencing

Transcripts available upon request, dawn.wells@cdhh.idaho.gov

ATTENDEES

Council Members *(quorum = 5 or more than 50% of positions filled)*

	Steven Birkby, <i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Member who is Deaf and represents an organization of people who are Deaf</i>
	Emilie Banasiak, <i>Vice Chair</i>	<i>Hard of hearing and represents an organization of people who are hard of hearing</i>
	Dr. Abe Vore, <i>Executive Committee</i>	<i>Member who is an audiologist</i>
	Sonny Cabbage.....	<i>Member who is Deaf</i>
	Matthew McGraw.....	<i>Member who is Hard of Hearing and over the age of 60</i>
	Valerie Player.....	<i>Member who is a parent of a child who is deaf</i>
Absent	Vacant.....	<i>Member who is a physician</i>
Absent	Vacant.....	<i>Member who is a parent of a child who is hard of hearing</i>
Absent	Vacant.....	<i>Member who is an interpreter</i>

Ex-officio Members

	Steven Snow.....	<i>Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CDHH)</i>
	Kelli Toohill.....	<i>Public Utilities Commission/Idaho Telecommunications Relay Service (Idaho TRS)</i>
	Monique Marshall.....	<i>Idaho Sound Beginnings (ISB)</i>
Absent	Paula Mason.....	<i>Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB)</i>
Absent	Erin Olsen.....	<i>Idaho Commission on Aging (ICG)</i>
Absent	MiKayla Monaghan.....	<i>Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)</i>
Absent	Terry Gammel.....	<i>Idaho Department of Labor (DOL)</i>
Absent	Tabitha Edwards.....	<i>Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses (DOPL)</i>
Absent	Vacant.....	<i>Office of the Attorney General (AG)</i>
Absent	Vacant.....	<i>Idaho State Department of Education (SDE)</i>

CDHH Staff

	Steve Snow.....	<i>Executive Director</i>
	Dawn Wells.....	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>
	Tara Adams.....	<i>Human Services Program Specialist</i>
Absent	Vacant.....	<i>Executive Interpreter</i>

Other Attendees: LaVona Andrew Carson (interpreter), Sierra McIver (interpreter), Joelynn Ball, (guest), Destiny Rose (ISU student), Saige Grover (ISU student), Saige Grover (ISU student)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Chair, Steven Birkby, called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM and welcomed everyone. Introductions and representations were made.

NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEM – Emilie moved to approve the agenda; Sonny seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM – Emilie moved to approve the minutes as amended; Matt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Steve Snow

At the National Level

1. Federal Government reopened on November 12th after the longest shutdown in US history which lasted 43 days.
2. Biden Administration provided sign language interpreters for all press briefings and at the White House. When President Trump took office, he stopped that practice. NAD in partnership with a law firm filed a lawsuit against the White House to restore interpreting services. ASL interpreters have been provided with only press briefings but not for all briefings.
3. DOJ ordered all local, state, and federal government websites, including those campaigning for office and their content/social media, to meet or exceed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) by April 2026. Small agencies have until April 2027.
4. FCC created a rule mandating all video conferencing platforms to be required to have built in captions and other accessibility features including access to sign language interpreters by January 12, 2027.
 - a. VRS companies like Convo VRS or Sorenson VRS have a feature in their app to click, and an interpreter will come on screen ready at no additional charge.
 - b. FCC covers the cost as this is considered telecommunications.
 - c. Impacts telehealth, schools, and more.
5. DOJ has paused any updates or adjustments to the ADA while they do full analysis on the law. They are looking for redundant information or content that could be streamlined.
6. ISB relies on 2 grants of which the funding will remain stable.
 - a. Grant - HRSA funding was restored.
 - b. Grant - CDC data collection grant was cut, then the cut was delayed for 1 year.
7. Director Snow is Vice Chair of NASADHH which is the National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. They are encouraging states to establish a program of Certified Public Health Workers to include deaf people.

At the State Level

1. State of Idaho continues the 3% budget holdbacks through Fiscal Year 2027. This impacts CDHH as we currently have 2 vacancies. The holdback has caused the Communications and Outreach Coordinator position to be discontinued. Restoring the position requires a request to legislature.
2. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) looks for excess that can be cut at the federal level. The state level DOGE has been reviewing agencies and where there can be eliminations or agency streamlining. Recommendations are based on the complexity of the agency. Fortunately, CDHH is considered a "high hanging fruit".
 - a. Review and discussion to merge CDHH, Commission on Aging, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Council on Developmental Disabilities but that has been shelved.
 - b. Review of Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind has also been shelved.
3. The Rural Health Transformation Program Grant is \$1 billion federal dollars that goes towards rural healthcare. Health & Welfare applied for the grant (\$200 million per year for 5 years) and expects to know by December 31st. This is an opportunity for CDHH to partner with them and improve healthcare for many deaf Idahoans.
 - a. NASADHH had a Rural Healthcare Summit which looked at programs with community healthcare workers. These programs were very effective, CDHH will look at implementing something similar in Idaho.
4. Child Protective Services (CPS) will often just show up to a school, needing to talk to a deaf student. In those situations, CPS will require a school interpreter to provide access, which is highly inappropriate. CDHH has repeatedly said that cannot happen. The interpreters used in these situations must be licensed and school interpreters are trained for educational settings like classroom and extracurricular activities, not legal issues. CDHH has now had to go above CPS to the Department of Health and Welfare.
 - a. The high employee turnover at DHW creates a lack of awareness.

- b. There needs to be a policy in place.
 - c. DHW was not aware of the liability for the school, the interpreter, and DHW.
5. Shelters and accessibility for deaf people have compounded recently with a growing number of individuals without a home. Phones often must be turned over at night. Video Relay Services have been installed at Bosie Rescue Mission and Interfaith Sanctuary.
 - a. CDHH is educating shelters on how to minimize communication barriers.
 - b. CDHH is working with more shelters on installing VRS.
6. Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections worked with CDHH on drafting a communication policy for deaf or hard-of-hearing youth in the system. This will ensure they have access to classes and resources to help them improve their future. Will be looking at online modules for training the IDJC staff on accessibility.
7. Idaho needs a statewide mandate on newborn hearing screenings. We are one of 4 or 5 states that do not have a mandate. CDHH has begun working with Paula Mason, the Interim Superintendent for IESDB, on a draft legislation. The intent is to have a small team with Idaho Physicians Association and Monique from Idaho Sound Beginnings.
8. DMV will be making a handbook in ASL to coincide with the signed DMV exam. Several companies have submitted bids for this project. After the handbook, an updated ASL exam will be produced.
9. CDHH Staff Interpreter position was a full-time position and has been vacant since May. The position was posted, however not filled. Due to feedback from the interpreting community, it will be split into two part-time positions. HR should have the position posted before the end of the year.

At the Community Level

1. CDHH partnered with IdahoRID, IAD, and Saint Alphonsus in a pilot workshop that brought the deaf community, parents with deaf children, and interpreters into one space. The workshop presenter was a deaf doctor which also met with deaf teens interested in the medical field. CDHH was able to collect data on gaps in the healthcare system. It was a wonderful experience
2. The CDHH Holiday Family Gift Drive will bring extra cheer to 3 families this year. Keep an eye out for the wish lists and donation requests being sent out any day.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

Kelli Toohill, Public Utilities Commission/Idaho TRS

1. The PUC had a new liaison, Allison, begin in September.
2. Advisory Council met in September, including Director Snow. Our contract was extended for 2 more years.
3. Outreach services contracted with Hamilton had to be scaled back.
4. Yesterday there was a meeting with the FCC and an open agenda discussing modernizing the TRS Rules. Many rules are 35 years old.
5. Hamilton Relay will be coming out with the high school student scholarship. Contact us if there you know of a deserving high school student.
6. Hamilton Connections mailing has a Satisfaction Survey. Feedback on improvements or needed services would be appreciated. Contact us if you need access to that survey.

Monique Marshall, Idaho Sound Beginnings

1. Welcome Monique to ISB,

2. The transition of ISB from DHW to IESDB was able to move forward upon the government's reopening. There will be a meeting to review the final steps and submit for a final review. Once approved by Federal HRSA, the transition can be completed, hopefully by the end of 2025.

ADJOURNED

ACTION ITEM – Sonny moved to adjourn; Valerie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:33 AM

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, January 15, 2026

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Capitol Meet & Greet and Quarterly Council Meeting