

Katie Hobbs
Governor



Sherri L. Collins
Executive
Director

Arizona Commission

for the deaf and the hard of hearing

100 N 15th Avenue □ Suite 104 □ Phoenix, AZ 85007
acdhh.org

Minutes from the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, Special Board Meeting.

Meeting held January 15th, 2025 at 2:00 pm.

The meeting was held via Zoom Teleconference.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Sienko called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

Commissioners present: Catherine Sienko, Randal Kidd, Harvey Goodstein, Diana Herron, Virginia Thompson, Fred Williams, Andrew Cohen, Melanie O'Rourke, Sarah Bolmarcich, Lisa Swenson, Debbie Venkatesh

Commissioners absent: Scott Madsen, Jennifer Scarborough

AAG: Elise Phalen

ADOA: Brian Westerberg, Stella Cunningham

Staff Present: Sherri Collins, Carmen Green, Nikki Soukup, Sue Kay Kneifel, Ricky Gonsowski, Chyla Dalton-Nava

Approval of Minutes from December 3rd and 20th Meetings

Commissioner Kidd moved to approve the minutes from the December 3rd, and 20th meetings, Commissioner Goodstein seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

Selection of Interim Executive Director

The board began discussing the options they had available for selecting an interim director, with Commissioner Sienko reminding the board that Nikki Soukup had expressed interest in the position. Commissioner Cohen asked if Carmen Green would be willing to serve as interim director, and she expressed that she was interested, but that she also had a few concerns in the process with the Arizona Department of Administration, as she has not received any communication from them or from the Board on whether or not she has been removed from the running for the position of executive director. A discussion followed. Commissioner Bolmarcich followed up with asking whether Sue Kay Kneifel was interested in serving as interim director. Sue Kay also indicated that she would be interested, but that she had the same concerns as Carmen has on where they stand in the process. Commissioner Bolmarcich also asked the ADOA representatives on qualifications for an interim director. Stella Cunningham from ADOA explained that the interim director could be the best qualified internal candidate. Brian Westerberg added that as the interim director is a special assignment for a state employee, the candidate should be the highest

602-364-0990 TTY □ 602-542-3323 V □ 480-559-9441 VP □ 800-352-8161 V/TTY □ 602-364-0581 FAX □ info@acdhh.az.gov

The mission of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing is to ensure, in partnership with the public and private sectors, accessibility for the deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, and persons with speech difficulties to improve their quality of life.



Arizona Commission

for the deaf and the hard of hearing

100 N 15th Avenue □ Suite 104 □ Phoenix, AZ 85007
acdhh.org

qualified candidate. At the time that the executive director search re-opens to the public, then anyone can apply, but at this time for the interim director position, the candidate will need to be internal. A discussion followed. **Commissioner Herron moved to collect interest letters from all interested candidates by Monday, January 20th, and then form a committee to make final recommendations to the board.** A discussion followed. Commissioner Cohen added that as Carmen is currently serving as the agency's deputy director, he feels like it would make the most sense for her to serve as the interim director. **Commissioner Cohen moves to choose Carmen Green as the Interim Director until the posting and hiring of the full time Director.** Commissioner Bolmarcich expressed that she felt Commissioner Herron's motion to form a committee to discuss candidates for the interim director may slow the process, as there is a limited amount of time for the interim director position to be filled. She also discussed concerns with the voting process. A discussion ensued. **Commissioner Cohen withdrew his motion. Commissioner Cohen moves that each commissioner vote on which candidate they support for interim director: Nikki Soukup, Sue Kay Kneifel, or Carmen Green. If the motion is seconded, the board will discuss pros and cons of each candidate prior to the roll call vote; Commissioner Kidd Seconds, Roll Call Vote:**

Herron: No

Kidd: Yes

Venkatesh: Yes

O'Rourke: Yes

Sienko: Yes

Thompson: Yes

Williams: Yes

Goodstein: Yes

Cohen: Yes

Bolmarcich: Yes

The board continued the discussion. Diana Herron selected Nikki Soukup as her choice, as she feels Nikki is the best representative for the Deaf community. The commissioners asked Elise what the process would be for voting, and Elise Phalen confirmed that it would be a majority vote. Commissioner Bolmarcich informed the board that she received a letter from Michele Michaels, the agency's current Hearing Healthcare Program Manager, who would like to be considered for the position of interim and Executive Director position.

Commissioner Bolmarcich moves to amend Commissioner Cohen's motion to add Michele Michael's name to the list of candidates for interim director. Commissioner Herron Seconds; A discussion followed. Commissioner Sienko added Robin Voreck to the list of candidates for interim director. Commissioner Bolmarcich withdrew her motion. Commissioner Bomarcich moves to amend Commissioner Cohen's motion to include the names of five candidates for interim director: Carmen Green Smith, Sue Kay Kneifel, Nikki Soukup, Michele

Katie Hobbs
Governor



Sherri L. Collins
Executive
Director

Arizona Commission

for the deaf and the hard of hearing

100 N 15th Avenue □ Suite 104 □ Phoenix, AZ 85007
acdhh.org

Michaels, and Robin Voreck. Commissioner Goodstein seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Herron: Yes

Kidd: No

Venkatesh: Yes

O'Rourke: Yes

Sienko: Yes

Thompson: Yes

Williams: Yes

Goodstein: Yes

Cohen: Yes

Bolmarcich: Yes

Commissioner Kidd expressed concern with the process of adding the two new candidates, as they have not been vetted. Commissioner Sienko added that four out of the five candidates had interviewed previously for the open position of Executive Director, and had been screened and met the minimum requirements for the position. **Commissioner Bolmarcich moved to defer the decision until the board was able to review the qualifications of the two new candidates.** A discussion ensued. Commissioner Cohen reiterated that the purpose of his motion was to have an open discussion and discuss each person if possible, but that he did not feel that tabling the discussion and moving onto another meeting was a good idea. Commissioner Sienko agreed, and would like to move forward with a vote on the candidates. **Commissioner Kidd moved to begin voting on the five candidates for interim director, Commissioner Sienko seconded the motion, the roll call vote was as follows:**

Commissioner Sienko: Nikki Soukup

Commissioner Kidd: Nikki Soukup

Commissioner O'Rourke: Michele Michaels

Commissioner Williams: Michele Michaels

Commissioner Venkatesh: Carmen Green Smith

Commissioner Cohen: Carmen Green Smith

Commissioner Bolmarcich: Nikki Soukup

Commissioner Thompson: Sue Kay Kneifel

Commissioner Herron: Nikki Soukup

Commissioner Goodstein: Nikki Soukup

As this vote did not lead to a majority vote, the board voted a second time as follows:

Commissioner Sienko: Nikki Soukup

Commissioner Kidd: Nikki Soukup

602-364-0990 TTY □ 602-542-3323 V □ 480-559-9441 VP □ 800-352-8161 V/TTY □ 602-364-0581 FAX □ info@acdhh.az.gov

The mission of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing is to ensure, in partnership with the public and private sectors, accessibility for the deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, and persons with speech difficulties to improve their quality of life.

Katie Hobbs
Governor



Sherri L. Collins
Executive
Director

Arizona Commission

for the deaf and the hard of hearing

100 N 15th Avenue □ Suite 104 □ Phoenix, AZ 85007
acdhh.org

Commissioner O'Rourke: Michele Michaels
Commissioner Williams: Michele Michaels
Commissioner Venkatesh: Nikki Soukup
Commissioner Cohen: Carmen Green Smith
Commissioner Bolmarcich: Nikki Soukup
Commissioner Thompson: Carmen Green Smith
Commissioner Herron: Nikki Soukup
Commissioner Goodstein: Nikki Soukup

Nikki Soukup is appointed as the ACDHH Interim Director.

Sherri Collins followed up by thanking the board for their service, and the group discussed the transition plan with Stella Cunningham. Sherri Collins last day will be January 31st, 2025. **Commissioner Herron moves that Interim Director Nikki Soukup begin her role on January 30th, 2025; Commissioner Kidd seconds, the motion was voted on by roll call with the commissioners voting as follows:**

Commissioner Herron: Aye
Commissioner Kidd: Aye
Commissioner Venkatesh: Aye
Commissioner O'Rourke: Aye
Commissioner Sienko: Aye
Commissioner Thompson: Aye
Commissioner Williams: Aye
Commissioner Bolmarcich: Aye

The motion carries unanimously.

Commissioner Herron moves to table the rest of the agenda items from today's meeting to a meeting to be held sometime during the week of February 3rd, 2025, with the exact date and time being decided by poll; Commissioner Kidd seconds. A discussion follows. The motion carries with none in opposition. Commissioner Herron moves that Commissioner Sienko be authorized to work with ADOA to complete the paperwork related to salary for the interim director, and select a salary within the approved range for Nikki Soukup; Commissioner Kidd seconds, the motion carries unanimously.

Adjournment

Commissioner Herron moves to adjourn the meeting at 4:20 PM, Commissioner Kidd seconds the motion, the meeting is adjourned at 4:20 PM.

602-364-0990 TTY □ 602-542-3323 V □ 480-559-9441 VP □ 800-352-8161 V/TTY □ 602-364-0581 FAX □ info@acdhh.az.gov

The mission of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing is to ensure, in partnership with the public and private sectors, accessibility for the deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, and persons with speech difficulties to improve their quality of life.

Katie Hobbs
Governor



Sherri L. Collins
Executive
Director

Arizona Commission

for the deaf and the hard of hearing

100 N 15th Avenue □ Suite 104 □ Phoenix, AZ 85007
acdhh.org

The undersigned certifies that a copy of the attached notice was duly posted this 22nd day of January, 2025 at 3:30 pm by Chyla Dalton-Nava, Assistant to the Executive Director.