

Minutes of the meeting of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, Interpreter Licensing Committee(ILC).

Meeting held January 8, 2025 at 6:00pm.

Meeting was held remotely via Zoom and posted to the agency YouTube page.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Swenson called the meeting to order at **6:01 PM**

Commissioners present via Zoom: Commissioner Swenson, Commissioner Sienko, Commissioner Thompson

Commissioners absent: None

AAG Elise Phalen

Staff Present via Zoom: Carmen Green Smith, Nikki Soukup, and Chyla Dalton-Nava

Announcements

None.

Review/Approval of Sign Language Interpreter Applications

Commissioner Sienko moved to recommend the names below, to the Interim Executive Director for issuance of an Interpreter License. Motion seconded by Commissioner Thompson ; motion carried unanimously.

The following applicants are approved for licensure, based on education, examination and experience requirements.

1. Adoree Eubanks	31. Joel Hill
2. Amber Burley	32. Juliana Apfel
3. Barbara Sutherland	33. Kaela McCorkle
4. Bernadette Iulucci	34. Kelsey DeLonis
5. Casey Kasperson	35. Kendra Hatle
6. Catherine Stanly	36. Kristi Quist
7. Cherish VanEmon	37. Kristina Kulik
8. Christina Dixon	38. Lasheria Murphy
9. Christopher Birdwell	39. Lindsey Flowers
10. Cory Stellmack	40. Lisa Reynolds
11. Crystal Valdes	41. Marisol Aragon

12. Danelle Jansen	42. Megan Hoyt
13. Daniel Vilhauer	43. Melanie Hodson
14. Darla Cornett	44. Melissa Lanty
15. Debra Morgan	45. Mia Morge
16. DeeLayne Roark McCoy	46. Michael Nader
17. Del-Afton Preston	47. Natasha Aymami
18. Denise Esterley	48. Olivia Krise
19. Diane Dorrell	49. Patti Tomlinson
20. Donovan Williams	50. Rebecca Buchan
21. Elise Melito	51. Rebekah Schafli
22. Ellen Patricia Wiest	52. Robin Meeks
23. Erica Stricklin	53. Sandra Busby
24. Ezra Moore	54. Sarah Grubb
25. Genevieve Alvarez	55. Sharon Williams
26. Ginnelle Dowdy	56. Tiffany Ramseyer
27. Holly Brigman	57. Timothy Crain
28. James Polhemus	58. Tracy Inches
29. Janelle Paccione	
30. Jared Vollmar	

Public Comments

None.

Interpreter Complaint/Inquiries

Regarding Aaron Johnson-Committee Chair Lisa Swenson provided a summary of the complaint. This complaint was filed by Heather Donnel against interpreter Aaron Johnson. It is an allegation of alleged violations of professional conduct (Tenant 5) stemming from reporting to work on multiple occasions smelling strongly of alcohol. The complainant, interpreter Heather Donell, reported specific instances in January and February 2025. A corroborating witness, Torrey Massager, also reported smelling alcohol on Mr. Johnson on several dates. Mr. Johnson reportedly admitted to drinking heavily late into the night before an 8:00 a.m. assignment, attributing the smell to a

hangover. Mr. Johnson was employed at the University of Arizona for six weeks and was terminated effective February 12th, 2025, with the lead interpreter confirming the reason was alcohol odor on the job. The evidence gathered, including corroborating witness statements and Mr. Johnson's admission supports the inquiry into unprofessional conduct, which violates A.R.S. 36-1976 A. The investigator recommends a letter of concern, noting that as of January 17th, 2026, Mr. Johnson will no longer be licensed in Arizona, which limits the full board's options for action. The report concludes that the accounts establish a clear pattern of problematic behavior that reflects poorly on the profession. Chair Swenson opened the floor for discussion. Commissioner Sienko asked about the status of Mr. Johnson's license; asking if it had lapsed, or if it had been revoked? Carmen Green informed the committee that Mr. Johnson's license will expire on January 16th, 2026. Elise explained to the board that they have a few disciplinary options to choose from. These include: a civil money penalty, also the board could send a reprimand or a letter of concern. Elise emphasized that even a lesser action like a letter of concern will not be overlooked, as this history will be shared with other states if the individual applies for a license anywhere else in the future. Commissioner Thompson asked what could be put into a letter of concern or reprimand. Carmen explained that any correspondence, even a letter of concern, is drafted based on the discussions and decisions of the Commissioners. A letter of concern could escalate to a letter of reprimand, but the content of either letter would be determined by what the Commissioners voted on.

Commissioner Sienko moved that the ILC recommend to the Board that a letter of reprimand be sent to Aaron Johnson on the grounds of being intoxicated on the job, which created a potential for harm to the individual and others. Furthermore, we should recommend that the individual undergo relevant training, utilize resources, or attend meetings such as AA. Mr. Johnson should also be informed that they are welcome to reapply for licensure in the future; Commissioner Swenson seconds the motion; the motion carried with Commissioner Thompson voting in opposition.

Approval of 2026 Meeting Dates

Commissioner Swenson moves to approve the following dates for ILC meetings in 2026: March 13, 2026, May 22, 2026, July 24, 2026, September 25, 2026, November 13, 2026, January 22, 2027 ; Commissioner Thompson seconds the motion, the motion carries unanimously.

Adjournment

Commissioner Sienko moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:03 PM; Commissioner Thompsom seconds the motion, the meeting ended at 6:52 PM.



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KATIE HOBBS
GOVERNOR

Nikki Soukup
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Dated this 12th day of January, 2025 at 5:00 pm by Chyla Dalton-Nava, Assistant to the Executive Director.