

Joe Lombardo  
Governor

Richard  
Whitley, MS  
Director



DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION  
*Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.*



Dena Schmidt  
Administrator

---

## NEVADA COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING – GENERAL MEETING

### DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

**Date and Time of Meeting:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025  
9:00 AM

**Location of Meeting:** ZOOM  
**AGENDA**

#### 1. **Roll Call and Opening Statement:**

Members: Eli Schwartz, Eric Wilcox, Jaime Vitale, Susan Beckett, Catherine Nielsen, Lance Ledet, Laura Fussell

Guests: Chanel Cassanello, Lee Bullock, Shannon Council, Beth Jones, Kerry Durmick, Autumn Blattman, Kim Johnson, Linda Anderson, Paula Koerwitz, Rique Robb, Sam D'Ambrosio-Garcia, Tammy Sever, Shelly Freed, Kimberly Schaub, Lori Lutu, Marie Coe, Stacey Shinn, Shauna Brennan.

Accommodation: Becky Van Auken, Captions; Carolyn Ball, Interpreter; Kelly Bunting, Interpreter.

Staff: Obioma Officer, Executive Director; Lorraine Belt-Dolan, Administrative Assistant III.

#### 2. **Public Comment:**

- Catherine Nielsen wanted to let us know that on the evening of March 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Reno area they are viewing a live screening of the film our world in our words, and it does include Beth Jones's daughter Alexis Jones in that movie. So, if you're in the area we would love you to join us, it's starting at about 5:00 pm at the Reno automobile museum on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and there will be registration going around soon that we'll make sure to send to the commission as well. Thank you.
- Eric read a comment received via email: Shelly Freed on behalf of the deaf community we are asking to see if the Commission for the Deaf could so a newsletter to simplify the information that we've posted on the ADSD and the Deaf Commission websites. I feel that they're not communicated that

the community is not being communicated to on what's going on with the commission and the actions that have been made preferably this would be in ASL if possible. If not, then simplified English would be fine for the time being. That is one public comment which we'll take into consideration.

- Shelly Freed on the Olmstead Plan. I see that Eli Schwartz was seated on the Olmstead committee. I don't see any feedback or having Deaf or hard of hearing participants in the surveys or such or any representation on behalf of our community in the Olmstead Plan. I'm sending this email to request why or why not is the Deaf community not being informed or participating in the feedback on the Olmstead Plan. We the Deaf community would appreciate if we shared informed or participated in the designing of the Olmstead Plan.
- Eric Wilcox, I don't think we can have a discussion of that item in public comment period, but we'll take that into advisement and draft a communication to the community about Deaf representation in the Olmstead Plan.

3. **For Possible Action:** Approval of Minutes of November 13, 2024, meeting.

- Laura Fussell made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Eli Schwartz seconded, motion carried.

4. **For Discussion Only:** Follow-up from Aging and Disability Services (ADSD) regarding accommodation and find out why we have open seats still in response to Eli Schwartz Request.

- As far as the open seats are concerned Rique Robb and Obioma Officer have been in contact with the person at the Governors office that oversees the application process, and they reported that they will be speaking to the Governor about the application process this week so we are hopeful that we will soon see some of those vacant seats filled. We do have applications for many of the seats and they are going through the process.
- When it came to the budget Dena did try to find some ARPA dollars for the accommodation but as we're in a flat budget she was not able to do that at this time, unfortunately there is no funding in the full budget for accommodation. However, the Governor's budget does have about \$7,000 increase for the Commission's overall budget that could be used for accommodations.
- Eric Wilcox did mention that the State does have interpreters on the payroll and they could be interpreting the meetings for us at no cost to the state or the commission but that they consider that a conflict of interest and we disagree with that as we should be able to discuss the CAS team without it being a conflict but that is a continuing discussion and something we will have to agree to disagree about for now.

5. **For Discussion Only:** Introduction to State Innovation Exchange (SiX) and collaborative efforts for legislative education for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Session of Nevada Legislature.

- Stacy Shinn is the Nevada state director for State Innovation Exchange (SiX) which is a national nonprofit organization that serves progressive state legislators, and they do that by, for and with the people. She spends half her time building relationships with state legislators. Their strengths, what they need support on and their passions to connect them to the community. The other half of the time is in partnership with the community, via coalitions, meetings with partners, and impacted folks on the ground so she knows how best to connect them to legislators. She helps train people how to go to Carson City, to lobby, how to testify, how to get a bill sponsor, and how to get your bill passed. We have two bills with sponsors Assemblymember Tracy Brown-May (our disability community champion) and Assemblymember Erica Roth. We had a webinar with nine of our legislators, where we discussed the problems and then how to solve them with these pieces of legislation.
- Moving forward Stacy would like to do a lobbying 101 training prior to Deaf Day so folks understand what to expect when they get to Carson. She can help set up 1:1 meeting with legislators for those who wish to speak directly to them.

6. **For Possible Action:**

**a) Vote Needed:** All Voting is Local presentation by representatives Chanel Cassanello and Kerry Durmick requesting a letter of support for Accessible Voting poles.

- Chanel Cassanello gave a presentation that can be found here: [https://adsd.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/adsdnvgov/content/Boards/NCPWADH/HSI/Meetings/2025/2\\_12\\_All\\_Voting\\_is\\_Local\\_Action\\_LA\\_Bill\(24-364\).pdf](https://adsd.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/adsdnvgov/content/Boards/NCPWADH/HSI/Meetings/2025/2_12_All_Voting_is_Local_Action_LA_Bill(24-364).pdf)
- Eli Schwartz made a motion to draft a letter of support for All Voting is Local Action's BDR 24-364 legislation, Catherine Neilsen seconded the motion, motion carried.

**b) Possible Vote Needed:** Senate Bill (SB)78 – Revises provisions relating to boards, commissions, councils and similar bodies. For discussion and approval of advocacy approach, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission Educational Letter, and/or Commissioner testimony.

- Eli Schwartz made a motion to approve the educational letter, Catherine Neilsen seconded the motion, motion carried.

**c) Vote Needed:** Review and approval of Position Statements to be used starting in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session for the purpose of testimony development, educational advocacy, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing State Planning.

- Laura Fussell made a motion to approve all 15 Position Statements with knowledge that there will be small edits, Jaime Vitale seconded the motion, motion carried.

7. **For Possible Action:** Legislative information: The 83<sup>rd</sup> (2025) Session of the Nevada Legislature will be from February 3, 2025, to June 2, 2025, (120 days).

**STATE OF NEVADA**

Here is the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS), link for the 2025, 83<sup>rd</sup> session of the Nevada Legislature:

[83<sup>rd</sup> \(2025\) Session \(state.nv.us\)](https://legis.nv.gov/83rdSession)

[Click here to view upcoming legislative meetings](#) –

**a) Possible Vote Needed:** Identify, Review, and approve support for any Bill Draft Requests that can be or are related to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

- Eli Schwartz made a motion for the Chair, Vice-Chair working with the Executive Director to identify two potential individuals to send as representatives of the commission for bills that may arise during the legislative session and speak on our behalf based on the talking points in the position statements that we approved in item 6 earlier in this meeting, Lance Ledet seconded the motion, motion carried.

**b) Vote Needed:** Discussion and Updates on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bill Draft Concepts and approval of Testimonial Representatives on each Concept.

- There are 2 BDR's, 1 sponsored by Tracy Brown-May, that includes closed captioning and funding for a Deaf School study. There is also 1 sponsored by Erica Roth that is about interpreting in Medical Settings.
- Eli Schwartz would like to be the primary on the BDR sponsored by Tracy Brown-May and Eric Wilcox would like to be the alternate.
- The bill sponsored by Erica Roth about interpreting in Medical Settings is from Las Vegas Deaf Seniors and as a representative for LVDS on the Commission Jaime Vitale would like to be the commission representative and Lance Ledet would be the alternate.

- Laura Fussell made a motion to approve the appointment of those representatives to the legislative sessions on the above-mentioned BDR's, Jaime Vitale seconded the motion, motion carried.

8. **For Possible Action:** Review, Discuss and Approval of Recommendations Director & Chair Reports: Budget updates, seat details, community requests, Communication Access Services Report, partner engagements and upcoming outreach.

- The Director and Chair Report can be found here: [Director-Chair Report 2.12.2025](#)
- Eli Schwartz made a motion to approve the draft letter of support for the EDHI, Susan Beckett seconded the motion, motion carried.
- Laura Fussell moved to approve the draft article for ADARA, Jaime Vitale seconded the motion, motion carried.

9. **For Possible Action:** To review, discuss, and approve recommendations presented by each subcommittee as detailed in their respective reports, all reports are accessible in the meeting materials.

Obioma Officer, Interim Chair of Accessibility Subcommittee

- We did not meet in the last quarter as we did not satisfy the quorum.

Jaime Vitale, Chair of Interpreter Subcommittee

- We have a request to develop a survey and to partner with CAS for the survey on interpreting in the state and to send it out to those with lived experience in the state.
- Eric Wilcox made a motion to approve the development of the survey, Eli Schwartz seconded, motion carried.

Eli Schwartz, Chair of Legislative Subcommittee

- No requests currently.

Eric Wilcox, Chair of Education Subcommittee

- The education subcommittee is seeking to put out a questionnaire to students, families and staff in schools to collect data from the community on education in the state.
- Eli would like to add a question about cochlear implants and amplification devices
- Eli Schwartz made a motion to approve the survey with the addition of potentially adding a question about amplification devices and listening technology. Laura Fussell seconded the motion, motion carried.

10. **For Possible Action:** Approval of Tentative Agenda Items for Next meeting May 14, 2025.

- Eli would like a presentation by NERC, about how they could support us and enforce the NRS.
- The community request about Olmstead and involving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

11. **Public Comment:**

- No Public Comment.

12. **Adjournment: 11:57 AM**

---

**Accommodation Requests and Meeting Materials:**

**NOTE:**

- Supporting documents referenced above in the “for possible action” items may be requested from Lorraine Belt-Dolan, Commission Administrative Support, ADSD at [Lorrainebelt@adsd.nv.gov](mailto:Lorrainebelt@adsd.nv.gov) and is/will be available at the meeting locations and ADSD website at [Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired \(nv.gov\)](http://Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired (nv.gov))
- To request document translation or interpreter please contact [lorrainebelt@adsd.nv.gov](mailto:lorrainebelt@adsd.nv.gov)  
Si quiere este documento traducido, por favor escriba a [lorrainebelt@adsd.nv.gov](mailto:lorrainebelt@adsd.nv.gov)

**AGENDA POSTED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:**

Notice of this meeting was posted at the following Aging and Disability Services Office at 1550 E. College Parkway, Carson City, NV. 89706. Notice of this meeting was posted on the Internet through the Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division website at [ADSD \(nv.gov\)](http://ADSD (nv.gov)) and Nevada Public Notices website at <https://notice.nv.gov>