

April 11th NAHT Board Meeting Minutes

Present: John Chesser, George Belitsos, Maggie Tinsman, Tom Barr, Kim Smith, Mike Tupper, Grace Lohse, Bernadette Rixner, Alyse Hardin, Deanna Jensen, Stephanie Olson, Jessica Hagin, Alka Khanolkar, Shirley Fineran, Linda Harrell, Lyna Debner

Excused Absence:

Absent:

Guests: Aaron Seydell, Chelsea Hoyer, Gretchen Brown-Waech

I. Call to order and attendance.

Meeting was called to order at 2:31 pm.

II. Legislative Committee update (Maggie, Chelsea, Threase). Update on task force bill and other trafficking related bills.

Hoyer reported that March 31st was the second legislative funnel and bills needed to clear a certain threshold by the time to survive. Legislators are now moving towards working on the budget process. Adjournment is currently set for April 28th but will maybe go over this date. Hoyer noted that a Safe Harbor Task Force bill was drafted this year and was passed by the Senate unanimously. It was then sent to the House but did not meet the second funnel deadline. Hoyer also noted that they had meetings with Representative Holt of the House to help get the bill through the second funnel but it was ultimately unsuccessful due to outside politics. Hoyer reported that in other meetings with House members and got good reception overall including with Representative Lohse. Representative Lohse had a meeting with Representative Holt about the bill and got a guarantee to assign the bill to Lohse in a subcommittee.

Fineran noted that she reached out to Representative Holt and in their exchange he said that he did not like the term task force and it should be changed in the future. Hoyer said that it is important to keep building relationships with legislators who were not receptive to the bill so that it can move forward in the future. Tinsman suggested that the NAHT should come up with a plan with Representative Lohse on how to move this bill forward for next year. Tinsman also noted that they should consider not making DPS the leaders of the task force as well since they do not want to lead this task force. Rixner noted that part of the problem is education because some legislators don't know what is in the law and the NAHT may want to make an effort to educate these legislators.

Tinsman noted that it may be helpful to rewrite the bill a little bit and keep the same solution. Fineran suggested that they could have Representative Holt be part of the conversations to see if that helps get support. Barr suggested that they should consider reattaching expungement for minors in the bill moving forward. Belitsos noted that since DHS and DPS do not want to guide the task force maybe they should ask the Attorney General's Office to do it since they are already going to be asking \$5M in additional funding for victims services. Brown-Waech noted that the legislature would have to be the ones to reach out to the Attorney General's Office.

Hoyer reported that a few bills that are still alive in the legislature are SF 522 and HF 594 address the mandatory restitution of \$150K. The Senate file would allow discretion for judges and the House file would apply to offenders that are victims of human trafficking. Another bill is HF 630, which would increase the penalties for the facilitation of human trafficking. It would increase it from class D felonies to Class B felonies or Class A when the victim is a minor. It was passed unanimously through the House already and has moved through the committee process in the Senate.

Hoyer reported that they are also asking for an additional \$5M from the Attorney General's Office for victim's services and for the language to include victims of human trafficking as well. Tinsman noted that she spoke to a representative in the appropriations committee and they said they would feel more comfortable with the ask for increased funds if it came from the Governor or the Attorney General. Fineran asked what they could do to help that process. Hoyer responded that they should reach out to the Chairs of the Justice System Appropriation and those people are Brian Lohse and Julian Garrett.

Chesser noted that if any of the board members have questions regarding legislation to reach out to himself, Belitsos, or Tinsman and they will get back with an answer.

III. Pieper Lewis legal team presentation April 13 in Ames. George would like the NAHT to sign on as a sponsor of this event (see “Pieper Lewis Legal Team Event”)

Belitsos noted that all NAHT board members are welcome to attend this event. There will be an NAHT booth set up at the event. The speakers will address how Iowa needs to change its approach for minors who are victims of trafficking. Chesser asked Belitsos if he would give a report about the event at the May meeting and Belitsos agreed to do so. Tinsman asked if they would be promoting legislation that is currently in the system. Belitsos responded that the speakers are aware of and support the bills and it will be talked about at the event.

IV. Proposed NAHT budget for 2023 (George)

Belitsos noted that the budget was reviewed and accepted by the Executive Committee at their meeting last week. Belitsos also said that Mailchimp is now charging a monthly subscription cost of about \$40. Mailchimp is used to send out the blog post to all the subscribers. Tinsman asked how many tech consultants are going to be included on the budget. Belitsos responded that it has been cut down due to him not being the chair anymore and will be looking to have two consultants. Belitsos moved to approve the budget and it was approved unanimously.

V. Consent agenda items: March meeting minutes, March Treasurer’s report, March website statistics.

Chesser asked if there were any revisions to the consent agenda items and there were none. Belitsos moved to approve the consent agenda and Barr seconded it. The consent agenda was approved unanimously.

VI. Research Committee update

Olson reported that the committee had a meeting and talked about some of the things they need to start working on to determine the direction Iowa can go in in trafficking prevention. One of the things they will look at is the Shared Hope International report card, which lays out some of the gaps and areas they can improve in. The committee is currently looking through the report card. They will also determine how they can fill the gaps and leverage some of the funding to fill these gaps. Olson also noted that they will eventually look at things like introducing cohesive language for all Iowans to use. Brown-Waech noted that it is important to have a cohesive language that is consistently used because it can help give consistent messaging that are survivor led. Belitsos noted that the federal government passed a bill that mandates all government transportation hubs post human trafficking information.

Rixner noted on the website that the stickers are still referred to as rescue stickers and Belitsos responded that they are now referred to as hotline stickers and will make the change on the website.

VII. Discussion of the strategic plan

Chesser noted that the first two items listed are external items from the Network. Belitsos noted that the third item would include creating an annual report for statistics that would gather a more comprehensive set of statistics overall. Belitsos also noted that to do this they would need to reach out to non-state-funded organizations that provide services to get their statistics on the number of and type of services they are providing. Brown-Waech said that state-funded programs currently have to report their statistics. Brown-Waech also noted that there is a lack of a list/information that points out the types of services that are available for people to find so this is something that could be included as well.

Rixner noted that if they are going to get these statistics they need to directly inform all the groups involved of what they are looking to collect. Fineran said that it's important to approach these groups in a way that is not demanding groups to provide information but explains what the NAHT is looking to do. It would also need to ask for suggestions as well. Olson noted that it is important to do everything as a team and listen to input from survivors, coalitions, and service providers. Rixner suggested that they have a meeting with representatives from coalitions and service providers to explain what the Network is looking to do. Tinsman asked who would do this. Chesser noted that a committee would

have to pick this up. Belitsos noted that it was never intended to send out a form but to consult with each group and tell them what the Network is trying to do.

Chesser noted that this will likely be a very complex project to do and will include doing things like having people who have connections with groups reach out asking for information.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:59 pm.