

Meeting Minutes

Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking Board of Directors

April 19th, 2022

Present: Dr. George Belitsos, Mackenzie Bills, John Chesser, Lyna Debner, Sister Shirley, Alka Khanolkar, Tom Barr (proxy), Katie Kyker, Linda Harrell, Bernadette Rixner, Maggie Tinsman

Excused Absence: Ruth Eley, Alyse Hardin, Katie Kyker

Guests: Marielle Roth and Gretchen Brown-Waech

I. Call to order. Introduction of guests. (Belitsos)

Belitsos declared a quorum at 2:30 pm. Belitsos welcomed Brown-Waech to the board meeting. She will be presenting her annual report today.

II. Annual report and 2021 human trafficking statistics from the Victim Service Call Center. (Jessica Rohr)

Was unable to review this agenda item due to illness. This report will be moved to the May 17th board meeting.

III. Final plans for May 10th and 11th Human Trafficking Summit: Fighting Trafficking in Iowa. 2021 Annual Report and Human Trafficking Statistics from the Crime Victim Assistance Division of the Attorney General's Office. (Gretchen Brown-Waech)

Brown-Waech announced that as of this morning, 132 people have registered for the Summit, with 7 exhibitors attending, including the Network. Brown-Waech explained that there will be some phenomenal speakers from around the country, and encouraged all board members to sign up if they haven't already. She explained that the deadline to sign up is the following Monday, April 25th.

Brown-Waech began her annual report from the Crime Victim Assistance Division of the

Attorney General's Office. She first shared that the numbers that she is giving out are not from their office specifically, but from all of the victim service programs that they fund through their office.

During the past fiscal year, they have served a total of 642 sex trafficking survivors, and 145 labor trafficking survivors. Belitsos mentioned that the number of sex trafficking survivors represented a large jump from the previous year which was around 500, and asked Brown-Waech what she thought caused this jump. She responded and said that it is hard to pinpoint a definite source. She explained that one cause for the jump was the pandemic, but there will not be a definite source, and she does not think there ever will be.

Brown-Waech explained that the 145 labor trafficking survivors floored her because she said that in the past, Iowa has not been great at identifying labor trafficking survivors. She thinks that Iowa is getting better at this.

Brown-Waech said that last year, she conducted about 20 different trainings, which reached 679 people and this was a significant drop from prior years, but due to the pandemic, it has been hard to keep these numbers up. She also mentioned that she is starting to do in-person training again, so if the NAHT knows of someone who is requesting training, she would be happy to help.

Belitsos said that he was impressed with the number of survivors served in 2021. At the same time, we need to be concerned with these numbers as it has raised a lot over the past year. He also mentioned that these numbers do not include reported victims from law enforcement, or other nonprofit survivor service programs that are not under the Crime Victim Division. Belitsos thanked Brown-Waech for all of her hard work over the past year, and thanked her for sharing her statistics.

IV. Progress report from the Legislative Advocacy Committee. (Tinsman)

Tinsman began by sharing that we are having real difficulties getting to the Iowa Senate to pass File 2464 (the Safe Harbor legislation). She explained that Threase Harms and Chelsea Hoyer are also on the line, but they have been working on some amendments for this legislation so they can get some consensus from all of the various parties to get this bill passed. Tinsman called on Threase Harms to share more.

Harms explained that they have worked very hard and closely with the Attorney General's Office on House File 2464. Harms mentioned that they still have some outstanding differences with DPS, as well as the County Attorneys. She explained that a lot of the issues come from the language of the legislation. Harms said that they thought that they were addressing the DPS concerns, with DHS's lack of secure housing for teen victims. However, as of yesterday afternoon, we thought that the DPS has come to an agreement on amendment language that would put together a study committee during the interim with various departments and organizations to hammer out

recommendations for the 2023 legislature to implement Safe Harbor legislation.

After they thought that they had put together an amendment packet, and got feedback from lots of organizations, then the DPS came back and said they did not like the expungement language either. Harms expressed that this is very frustrating, and it feels like the finish line keeps getting moved farther away. She explained that currently, they are working on a different language that may be easier for them to agree on a language for an interim study committee.

Harms explained that this is important because the Senate essentially gave the car keys to the bill to the DPS, and said you tell us when you are okay with this bill, and this has forced them to have to play under the DPS's terms. She also explained that there are more senators with a law enforcement background, and they are talking with DPS about what they think needs to be added/changed, etc which is making this much more difficult. Harms explained that they are currently learning that DPS is ok with the creation of a workgroup for all of these issues during the interim.

Harms explained that this is their first year working with the Network to bring this legislation forward, but in this year they have learned a few things. One is that not all of the legislators are up to speed with all of the issues regarding human trafficking. They do not understand or know the depth of the type of issues. Harms expressed one idea which is that if they could get a few key people or staff to attend the Summit on May 10th-11th that this would go a long way in helping to educate them. Another thing they have learned is that there is a lot they need to do in the interim with policy makers and getting the key individuals to help them to understand why DPS is opposed to this. She explained that during the legislative season it is hard to be able to have these conversations with them. Harms expressed how upsetting this is for them, but they think that they will be able to make more movement in this legislation while working during the interim.

Tinsman asked Harms to list the key players needed to get this legislation passed. Harms said that right now it is the Attorney General's Office Victim Services Department, the County Attorney's, Justice Attorney's Group, the Victim Service Organizations, Local Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice Bar, Department of Human Services, and Mental Health Professionals.

Belitsos suggested that adding a foster care group and a survivor to this list would be helpful. He also proposed adding one or two anti-trafficking providers who are working with minors. Harms said that this is possible if the NAHT insists, but wanted to caution us that making the list too long can make them not interested, and end up hurting our effort instead.

Tinsman asked when this working group would give their presentation to the legislature, and Harms responded with January 10th, 2023.

Brown-Waech asked if what the DPS is stuck on is that these minors need to be arrested and locked up so that they can not find their way back to their traffickers, and Harms responded yes.

Chesser asked what is the objection to expungement? Hoyer responded and said that they are being vague, but was trying to compare immunity vs expungement, but are not giving much rationale. Chesser asked if they are hiding the ball, or if there is another reason deeper down? Harms responded and said that is a great question, but she is not sure.

Barr asked if we could kind of target the DPS for training. Harms responded and said we will try to do this. Harms explained that DPS is calling this a philosophical difference, and they believe in prosecution, and they need to arrest the victim to get to their end goal of the trafficker.

Tinsman asked Harms to name the DPS Commissioner for the board, and Harms said his name is Stephen Bayens.

Tinsman ended this conversation by saying there is not really anything that the board can do to help, but this is kind of up to Harms and Hoyer to move this forward.

V. Review and approval of Consent Agenda. (Belitsos)

- a. Motion to approve March 8th and March 23rd meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors.
- b. Motion to approve the February and March Acting Treasurer Reports.
- c. Motion to endorse Grassley legislation to renew the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2022.
- d. Motion to approve the contract for consulting services by ISU student Isabelle Elwood beginning May 7th, 2022. Isabelle will be taking the place of Emma Kern who graduates from ISU. Isabelle will be paid \$12 per hour.
- e. Motion to authorize the Vice-Chair to purchase a Pro-Zoom license at a cost of \$15 per month per license host. John Chesser will apply for a 50% discount through a non-profit organization called Tech Suit.

Belitsos asked if anyone wanted to take anything off of the consent agenda for more information or discussion.

Tinsman said she had a few questions on letter b- the treasurer report. Tinsman asked why there were differences in the amount of money being paid to the technology consultants, and why they were different from month to month. Belitsos responded and said that they are consultants who are paid by the hour, so it can differ. They are not employers who get paid a regular monthly salary. Tinsman asked what they are doing.

Belitsos responded that they are paid by the hour and prepare the agendas, minutes, blog posts, graphic design, financial reports, and various other correspondence. Belitsos said that if she wanted, he could send Tinsman their billing forms which will show what they will do hour by hour. Belitsos said that he would not be able to function as the board chair without the technology consultants. Tinsman asked again why the amount changes month to month, and Belitsos said it changes based on the needs for tech support by the NAHT, there were two board meetings in March, so there was more time needed. Belitsos will send Tinsman a detailed report on the important work being done by these three consultants.

Tinsman asked a similar question with Ratherthanrunning, the webmaster, and how her hours changed. Belitsos explained how this also changes with NAHT needs, and how she needed to work on different assignments every month. He believed that the higher billing charge was due to putting up the IBAT web page and then taking it down a few days later due to the objections of the secretary of state office.

Belitsos called for a vote, and the **consent agenda passed unanimously.**

VI. Outcome of vote by Rotary International Board regarding the adoption of an anti-trafficking resolution originally proposed by Iowa District 6000 and submission of a grant proposal for 17 Iowa Rotary clubs to launch community anti-trafficking prevention and education projects starting April 1st, 2022. (Khanolkar)

Skipped this item.

VII. Executive session for board members only. Follow-up to special board meetings held on April 5th and 12th. (Facilitator MacKenzie Bills)

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Next Board Meeting: Tuesday May 17th, 2:30 - 4 pm

