

NAHT December 10, 2024 Draft Board Meeting Minutes

Board chair John Chesser called the meeting to order at 2:30pm. Minutes taken by John Chesser.

Nominations for Outstanding Anti-Trafficking Awards

George introduced the nominees for the Governor's Outstanding Anti-Trafficking Awards recommended by the executive committee: Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate; Civitas; Iowa Girl Inspired; Ken Garff Auto Group; Monica Peterson; George Belitsos. A motion to approve the nominees was made by George and seconded by Maggie. The nominees were approved unanimously.

Nomination of Brittany Sowder to the NAHT Board

Brittany Sowder is an Iowa trafficking survivor trafficked to Chicago at age 14 and returned to Iowa, eventually living under the foster care of Ruth Buckels. She is now married with two daughters and lives in Pella. Brittany has written a book about her trafficking experience and is now giving presentations throughout Central Iowa. Teresa saw one of her presentations and was impressed. George moved the nomination, seconded by Teresa. The motion was approved unanimously.

Fundraising Committee report and Giving Tuesday Update

Tom told the board that the Giving Tuesday campaign had raised \$3500, which represents 70% of our goal of \$5,000. 12 of 16 board members, which represents 75% of the board, have contributed. The Giving Tuesday campaign will continue through the end of 2024.

November Treasurer's Report

George noted donations received of \$2,446, including Kelly Capital Charities for \$1,371. The beginning checking account balance in November was \$15,721 and ending balance was \$16,242. The report was approved without amendments.

November Meeting Minutes

The November meeting minutes were approved without amendments.

Proposed 2025 NAHT Meeting Calendar

The board agreed to have our regular board meeting on Tuesday January 14, the day before the Day on the Hill. The board will not have a board meeting in person at the Capitol. John will set up a new Zoom meeting link for the rest of 2025 and January 2026. The 2025, drafted by George, will follow the same arrangements as last year: monthly meetings on the second Tuesday and quarterly executive committee meetings.

Legislative Report

Threase Harms updated the board on new committee chairs in the legislature and will send a complete list later. Committee members have yet to be appointed. Threase has requests filed with all the chairs to meet with them to discuss our legislative agenda, which they will have already received, along with the video prepared last fall. She updated the board on the Nov 21 meeting with Iowa AG Brenna Bird, attended also by Teresa, Maggie, Elle and John. The group thanked the AG for including the \$1 million for survivor services in the AG budget. (Threase said she has met with the Governor's staff to express our hope that the Governor likewise reflects this in her budget.) The group expressed our support for the AG's proposed constitutional amendment on the court testimony of minors. Threase told the board there is still time to record a short clip for the previously mentioned video message to legislators. Teresa updated the board on her three-hour joint presentation with Mark Thompson in Manning, where legislators Steve Holt, Craig Williams and Jason Schultz were in the audience. After the presentation, Steve Holt rose to defend the DPS position against Safe Harbor laws. "It was very obvious last night that it was all about what the Department of Public Safety wanted," Teresa said. Threase added that legislators have been willing to listen to us but in the end have followed the DPS line. "We need somebody who can get them to think differently," Threase said. Threase said that she and John met with Brian Lohse on November 18 and Lohse confirmed that he would introduce another bill on human trafficking this session and that he is working to make sure that the \$1 million for survivor services is in the budget. Threase noted that she would be meeting with Jason Schultz on December 18. Maggie noted the Iowa League of Women Voters had placed human trafficking at the top of their 2025 policy agenda. Karl said he met with Ian McConaughy, legislative liaison with the Polk County Attorney's Office to discuss our legislative agenda.

Board Member Term Renewals and Officer Elections

Kim, Bernadette, Stephanie, Shirley, Linda and John agreed to renew board membership for another two-year term. Tom moved that they be re-elected and Lyna seconded the motion. The other board members present re-elected them unanimously. Teresa moved that the board elect Maggie as secretary, George as Treasurer, John as chair and Shirley as acting vice chair. Maggie seconded and the motion passed unanimously. George noted that the bylaws provide that the vice chair is in effect a president-elect and that we should continue to try recruiting someone to be permanent vice chair.

Preparations for NAHT Day on the Hill

The Day on the Hill event is in the Capitol Rotunda at 11:30am on Wednesday January 15th, a date that was chosen to make it easier for Governor Reynolds to attend, John noted. In past years the event was on the first Thursday of the session, but Threase Harms advised us that Wednesday would be better. John noted that he had already contacted the Governor's staff by filling out their online form; calling directly merely results in a request to fill out the form. George reminded John that the direct contact info for Eric

Baker, the Governor's executive scheduler, is listed in the NAHT board directory. John agreed to follow up directly with Eric Baker. George also noted that Threase would be supplying 200 copies of the legislative agenda for the event and that we should make sure that document is updated with current info.

Polk County CSEC Request for Listing

Ashley Artzer of the Polk County CSEC group requested to be listed on the NAHT website under regional coalitions, although they are a closed group consisting of representatives of the local law enforcement, FBI, Office to Combat Human Trafficking, DHHS, juvenile court services, US Attorney's Office and the Blank Hospital Star Center. Chief Thein suggested that listing them could provide us with another channel of communication with the DPS regarding their stance on arresting children. Chief Thein offered to establish contact with the law enforcement representatives to CSEC if contact info were shared with her. George moved that we add the CSEC to the list of coalitions; Maggie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.