

Meeting Minutes
Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking Board of Directors
February 1st, 2022

Present: Lyna Debner, Sister Shirley Fineran, Barbra Ranck, Alyse Hardin, John Chesser, Linda Harrell, MacKenzie Bills, Katie Kyker, Tom Barr, Grace Byram, Jessica Rohrs, Alka Khanolkar, Kim Hilby, Teresa Davidson, Brenda Long, Mike Tupper, Bernadette Rixner, Dr. George Belitsos, Maggie Tinsman, Dr. Joseph Moravec

Excused Absence: Ruth Buckels, Dr. Shannon Findlay

Guests: Pat Waymire (Department of Public Safety), Gretchen Brown-Waech (Attorney General's Office)

I. Call to order (Belitsos)

Belitsos declared a quorum at 2:30 pm. Belitsos began by introducing a few new board members, and a new proxy. He asked them all to introduce themselves.

Lyna Debner began and stated that she is from Mason City, and is previously from Colorado, and got involved in Denver's anti-trafficking organization. Debner completed a 50 hour human trafficking training program, and then worked as an advocate for the statewide human trafficking hotline for three years.

Barb Ranck stated that her anti-human trafficking experience started about 7 and a half years ago. Her expertise is in education and training, and she started putting on human trafficking conferences. She is also a board member of the Garden Gate Ranch, and does training for them.

Grace Byram explained that she started her anti-human trafficking experience by volunteering in college at the Waverly Women's Shelter. She worked on their social media, which included a lot of research. She is also an NAHT member of the IBAT committee.

MacKenzie Bills previously worked for the State Department Office to Combat Human Trafficking in DC, and worked on human trafficking reserach and the annual report. She is excited to share her expertise with the NAHT board.

II. 2021 Annual Report from the Office to Combat Human Trafficking at the IA Department of Public Safety. Introduction of a new special agent in charge, Chris Callaway (Patrick Waymire)

Belitsos introduced Pat Waymire who is the head of the Office to Combat Human Trafficking within the Department of Public Safety.

Patrick Waymire began by thanking the NAHT for all of their hard work and collaboration on the hotel/motel training video and related written materials. He also mentioned how big of a difference the NAHT truly makes in fighting this horrific crime by creating awareness statewide.

Waymire began by talking about the hotel/motel training and one recent case of a college student being forced into sex trafficking, and reached out for help to a hotel employee. Waymire said that he thinks the hotel/motel training specifically helped this young woman get the help she needed to escape this situation.

Waymire reviewed the DPS trafficking 2021 annual report. He reported drops in cases going forward on the state side. He mentioned that he has gotten lots of questions on why this has happened in 2021. He stated two main reasons. One is that sometimes it is better to not have the victim rehash all parts of their trauma in the court if you don't have to, and also in situations where they are already charged with something else, they may drop cases.

Waymire went on to talk about the Iowa report. He mentioned that DPS numbers of trafficking cases have dropped. One reason he thinks this is happening is because of COVID-19. He believes that people who are out are less likely to give tips to law enforcement.

Waymire went on to explain that DPS is trying to be more proactive with investigations with local law enforcement, working with their prosecutor's, and providing training for local law enforcement and others, including service providers.

DPS is setting up a page on their website that explains how many hotels have been certified, and which ones specifically are certified. Waymire went on to explain that regarding the new Lodging Provider Bill, that over 400 hotels have been certified, and over 13,000 employees have taken the training.

Waymire told the board that they can visit their website at www.stopthiowa.org to see additional information on the report. He stated that in the future they are working towards creating an Iowa specific tip-line, as currently they are all being sent through the national tip-line operated Polaris.

Waymire was asked by Belitsos to talk about a 13-state anti-trafficking project that DPS was involved in. This was set up by the state of Missouri, and occurred in August of 2021. He mentioned that it was very valuable to the DPS, not only for the one day

operation, but also to generate interest throughout the state and law enforcement about the extent of the problem of human trafficking, and how law enforcement can address it.

A total of 102 arrests were made throughout the 13 states, 47 victims were rescued. In the state of Iowa, 11 arrests were made, and 10 search warrants were also completed. Iowa found 5 businesses that were associated with trafficking, and were able to shut them down. They identified multiple victims as well.

Waymire explained a trafficking tactic that some may not know about. This involves rotating the victims around to different states so that the victims are unable to make those contacts needed to reach out for help.

Waymire also explained a new internet discovery system DPS has developed to see how many sexual ads are being posted online, and to see if any of these relate to minors caught in trafficking situations. Their goal is to be able to stop the traffickers on the back end of these ads. In the Des Moines area they were able to find 53 ads that they thought could have been associated with trafficking of minors, and in the Quad Cities area they were able to identify 22 ads.

He also reported that there was a total of over 1 million ads posted in the state of Iowa that were about the sale of sex (prostitution and/or trafficking), and about 240,000 of those were individual and not repeated through multiple sites.

Waymire asked if anyone had any additional questions for him.

Barr asked Waymire with the 1 million sex for sale ads that they had discovered, what time period were those found, and Waymire responded that it was all within two weeks.

Tinsman stated that in the beginning of his presentation he mentioned that cases had gone to the federal courts, and she asked why aren't we prosecuting more situations of human trafficking in the state court system? Waymire responded and said that some of these cases get adopted by the federal side. He mentioned that if a case is taken through the federal side that it is more likely that the trafficker will serve the entire prison sentence, versus on the state side it tends to allow people to get out early for "good time".

Rixner asked if the state tip line will replace the national tip line, or just be in addition to it. Waymire said they will want all of the tips to go directly to their office so they can start acting on them sooner. Rixner asked if they had sent out letters to all of the hotels and motels explaining the training that should be done. Waymire responded and said they

have contacted almost all of the hotels through emails, phone calls, additions to their websites, and he feels that they have all been contacted. He also noted that they told law enforcement to be expecting more tips once this training has been completed in their area, and to prepare for it.

Bills asked why the labor trafficking numbers are so low, as she knows that labor trafficking normally adds up to be three times the amount of sex trafficking cases. Waymire responded and said that the numbers that were given were just the numbers for tips, not cases, but is not sure why there are so many less tips for labor trafficking.

Bills also asked if we need to train prosecutors in our state to really make sure that traffickers are getting sentenced to the fullest extent, and also wondered if we have protection services for our victims so they do not have to experience the full trauma of being in the courtroom during these cases. Waymire noted that the 99 counties in Iowa do not necessarily have the same resources, so bigger counties like Polk County have officers specifically working on human trafficking, while some smaller counties may have one person to handle everything that comes through their office, and may be disadvantaged in this way.

Harrell asked what the ratio of African Americans who are involved in human trafficking, and Waymire stated that he did not have any statistics on that.

Moravec asked how many clicks the hotel/motel video has produced, and he said his 3 team is looking into it, but has not found an answer yet.

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

- **Motion to approve December 14th meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors.**
- **Motion to nominate and elect the following for NAHT Board Officers (one year term begins on February 1, 2022): Chair George Belitsos, Vice-Chair John Chesser, Secretary Maggie Tinsman, and Treasurer Grace Byram (to begin April 2022).**
- **Motion to accept with regret the Board member resignation of Shirlee Reding and election to Emeritus board status.**
- **Motion to elect Barb Rank as a proxy for Brenda Long.**
- **Motion to authorize the chair to submit a \$9,000 request to the Federal Small Business Administration Covid Relief Program.**
- **Motion to elect MacKenzie Bills and Lyna Debner to fill vacant seats on the Board of Directors.**

Belitsos asked if any of the board members wanted to have any of the motions removed from the consent agenda for further discussion.

Tinsman asked about the agenda item regarding the motion to authorize the chair to submit a \$9,000 request to the Federal Small Businesses Administration Covid Relief Program. Belitsos responded and said that he already had submitted it as the due date was in January, and he just received an email that we were given the grant advance. We will not need to pay the advance back.

Belitsos explained that this will go to help pay the paid workers of the NAHT including three technology consultants and a webmaster. Belitsos said that the grant required submitting 3 years of monthly income which was a lot of work, but he is grateful he did it, as we had won the grant. He said he will not count on it until we actually receive the money, but he will keep the board updated.

Kyker asked if this \$9,000 has a time limit within when we need to spend it, and Belitsos responded no, and that it is a cash grant so we will not need to pay interest either.

Hearing no further discussion, Belitsos called for a vote on all 6 motions on the consent agenda. **The consent agenda unanimously passed.**

IV. The outcome of Thursday, January 13th proclamation signing, presentation of 5 Outstanding Service Awards, and SOS IBAT kickoff. City/County proclamations. January 20th Trauma-Informed Care training. (All)

Belitsos asked if anyone had feedback on the day on the hill on January 13th, and any suggestions they would have for next year's proclamation signing and awards.

Moravec stated that he thought that Belitsos did a tremendous job at the event, especially with the governor being sick, and how well he kept things moving. He also mentioned how many people told him what an amazing event it was.

Hilby said that she thought it was a terrific event as well, but she had one suggestion which was that if there is another group who wins an award together to grab their photo quickly, and sit them back down quickly to not waste as much time.

Tinsman thanked Belitsos for everything that he did for this event. She also explained that six different board members went and actually talked with the legislators that day and that she thinks that this is going to make a big difference in the next few months with what will happen with legislation.

Ranck asked about those attending the January 20th training. Belitsos explained that it was a statewide training free event for anyone to attend, and asked if any of the board members attended.

Hilby stated that it was a good training, and that the trainer did a good job of explaining what victims of trafficking actually go through, but she wished there was more information on trauma informed care situations. Rixner agreed, and said that they explained well what not to do with survivors, but expected more along the lines of trauma informed care training.

Moravec also agreed with Hilby and Rixner, and said that he talked to Reding after the training and that they were both a little disappointed as well, but wanted to thank Brown-Waech for providing the zoom service. Moravec also wanted to thank Tinsman for setting up all of the sessions with the legislators, and thought they went very well.

Belitsos asked how many Board members were able to get their local city and county to pass January proclamations, and counted 9 board members. He said that Tinsman was the winner for the most cities to sign proclamations, and asked her to share how many she was able to get. Tinsman listed off 11 cities that she was able to get to sign proclamations, and Belitsos thanked her for doing this.

Rixner spoke up and said that the Siouxland Coalition was actually able to get 12 cities, and Belitsos rephrased and said that she was the new winner, and thanked her as well.

Davidson spoke up and shared the results of a January training entitled: Technology: Our Kids and Human Trafficking training that she presented at the pediatric emergency medical system coalition that has six state coverage, and stated that over 1,000 people were on the call. Belitsos expressed appreciation and admiration for Davidson's trafficking efforts.

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

Tinsman began by reminding the board that the first legislative priority is increasing victim service funding. She explained that we have run into a small problem because Governor Reynolds suggested all department heads have flat appropriations and that is what went to Representative Moor, and the \$5 million increase for a total of \$10 million for victim services was not included in the Attorney General's budget. Tinsman explained that Threase Harms now has gotten Gretchen's information, as well as others to get this proposal of \$10 million to both of the appropriation chairs, both in the House and the Senate.

The second priority is to create sexual abuse prevention policy. Tinsman explained that this has been caught in the political crosshairs, because it has been introduced by the democrats, so you cannot expect the Republican House and Senate to take it on. She explained that they plan to come back to this priority in the summer, and she thinks the republicans will be for it, but the bill must be initiated by them.

The NAHT third priority is the Safe Harbor law. Tinsman explained that both the House and Senate legislative judiciary chairs are very much for this, and have been given information from other states that have passed Safe Harbor laws. She explained that the next step is to get this language to the Legislative Service Bureau so it becomes a bill.

Tinsman suggested that all of the board members talk to their legislators about this Safe Harbor law and tell them how important this is. She explained how important it is that this is done now, as the draft of the bill must be done in the next couple of weeks or it will not be considered.

Belitsos explained that Polaris had a complaint from an Iowan victim because she could not get her record of offenses expunged that she committed while being trafficked. He explained that Polaris wants to help us get that portion for the adults expungement passed. Belitsos explained that we are one of only four states that does not have a viciture law.

Belitsos explained that viciture means if you get convicted of something you can still go back to the court, and it can be expunged.

Hilby explained that she had been to a specific training on this which was done by someone from California. She said that they have different levels of expungement. Tinsman responded and said that Safe Harbor is different, and that it only deals with people under 18.

Brown-Waech stated that records can be sealed, records can be expunged, or convictions can be vacated. Belitsos explained that we are only one of four states that does not have that in the code. He mentioned that he gave the Polaris people the contact information for our legislative liaison, and that they would like to help us.

VI. NAHT Hotel/Motel training site and IBAT additions to NAHT website. Invitation to survivor service producers to join donor giving portal. (Moravec)

Moravec began by sharing that the hotel motel training is up on the NAHT website, and it is underneath its own tab so it should be easier to find. He also explained that he has

pastor Ian Rojas working on the Spanish translation of the video so it should also be up soon.

Rixner asked if we as board members must be certified to be able to put on training. Moravec responded and said no, we are facilitators and board members do not need to get certified to help facilitate these training sessions.

Moravec also explained that the Secretary of State's office is currently working on some more aspects of IBAT, but so far it has launched really well. He explained that he and Davidson are starting to work on the NAHT producing an IBAT training video, which would be about human trafficking in Iowa and how businesses can join the fight against trafficking.

Rixner brought up a concern that she thought she heard Moravec say that the 30 minute IBAT training video would be required for IBAT businesses. Moravec cleared this up and said that it is not required. Rixner explained how important it is that we do not use the word "required" when talking to businesses who may be interested in becoming IBAT.

Moravec explained that the Giving Group platform still needs to be finalized. Once done, this will be a place where someone can go and look at a list of our allies and will be able to navigate the screen to pick one of these entities and donate directly to it.

Moravec went on to explain that he has proposed to the Research, Evaluation, and Best Practices Committee about wanting to share the Suggested Guidelines to anyone who requested some guidance on starting a survivor service program. He explained that the committee feels that the Attorney General's Office should be the one to eventually write and administer the Best Practice Guidelines for human trafficking service providers.

However, he felt that there is still a void within Iowa, and that "providing something in writing is better than nothing." His committee plans to give Kim Hilby's Suggested Guidelines to potential new Iowa providers who request guidance. His committee decided that they also want to keep moving with the research on this. The Guidelines would not be posted anywhere, but if someone requests some sort of guidance, they would be willing to give them this document.

The vote was 7-2, and the motion says: The Guidelines document would be available to those who might ask, and we as a committee want to study and do more research on best practices.

He reminded the board that this is a living document, and they want to be able to support Brown-Waech, Hilby, and others who have put so much time into the Guidelines.

Rohrs asked Belitsos how this is able to happen when both the Executive Committee and the board voted in December 2021 to not go forward with the document, and Moravec's committee is still under the NAHT. Belitsos responded and read from the December minutes the motion that was approved by the board was to remove the best practice guidelines goal from the 2022 strategic plan. In essence, the motion meant that the board did not endorse the Suggested Guidelines.

Moravec responded and agreed that the NAHT never accepted the Guidelines document, but there was never a cease and desist. Because of this, they felt that they should keep trying to do research on this document, as they are the research committee.

Davidson responded to this and reminded us that the NAHT had a board member who was a survivor that resigned from the board over these best practice standards. Davidson also mentioned that the survivor service providers on the board wrote a statement because they felt that saying something wrong is more harmful than saying nothing.

Davidson explained that there are many people out there that do training specifically for helping survivors, but the NAHT tends to typically work on educational, awareness, and legislative things, but not necessarily survivor services. She explained that she was upset that this is all being brought up again after we have had so many debates about this particular topic.

Rohrs went on to echo Davidson's message and said that she feels that this is undermining, and a little bit manipulative, and that she shares the feeling of exhaustion that Davidson feels. Rohrs also mentioned that we may not be seen as a client centered board, and it is tough to hear but she wants the board to reflect on this.

Hardin responded and said that she agrees with Davidson and Rohrs and said that it feels like it is getting to a point where the providers' voices aren't being heard when they are representing survivors.

Tupper spoke up and mentioned that he is frustrated, and that he has tried to reach out to some people privately to make sure that he is understanding what the objections and concerns are to the Suggested Guidelines, but he has been ignored. He also mentioned that he talked to some board members before the December vote on the document, and

was open minded and actually changed his viewpoints. Tupper wishes that the two sides could come together to reach some sort of common understanding and show more mutual respect.

Brown-Waech stated that the programs would reach out, and they would begin to connect to other programs for guidance. So if some group gets that guidance and the mentorship, then they will reach out to the wrong people. She explained that she has personally led three programs to other programs for their guidance. She said that she agrees with the four people who have just spoken, and it has already been voted on. Brown-Waech said that this is not appropriate, and what Moravec said about “sharing something is better than offering nothing,” she strongly disagrees with because saying the wrong thing is the worst thing.

Chesser stated that he is still a little bit confused as to what is wrong with the content of the Guidelines. This has not been specifically mentioned by those who reject this document. Is it really their idea that the NAHT should not be involved in this type of document ever, regardless of the content? He agrees with Tupper, and thinks that the board should decide the answer to that question to determine what they are really disagreeing about, and then go from there.

Belitsos suggested that before we move onto the next agenda item, Moravec should take the board's opinions and information back and talk to his committee. Belitsos said that he does not hear any real objections to them doing their research, but sharing Hilby's Guidelines should be reconsidered based on the united objections voiced by the providers on the board.

Moravec wanted to thank the board for all of their comments, and wants them to know that his committee respects everyone. He does not want to be the final word, but thinks that more research should be done. He said that they need to be able to provide something to those who request guidance, and asked for Belitsos' suggestion for that.

Belitsos said that Moravec and his committee should reconsider this, and hopefully reverse their decision to share the Guidelines, but that discussion to reverse is up to them.

Fineran responded and said that they should guide them to existing survivor service providers within their area to help them. She noted that her biggest issue with the guidelines is that the needs of survivors are different, and there is no one size fits all solution for them.

Belitsos suggested to Moravec again to take this feedback to the committee, and have them continue to do research within this topic, but to leave the Guideline document aside and not give it out to those who ask. Instead, he suggested that new providers be referred to existing providers for guidance and support.

VII. Review and approve proposed 2021 & 2022 Strategic Plan Goals and 2017-2020 goals completed.

Skipped over this topic for time, but they were approved by the Executive Committee and will be put on the next agenda for board discussion.

IX. Report on 2021 donations to the NAHT and fundraising plans for 2022. (Kyker)

Kyker wanted to thank the board for all of their hard work. The Network raised over \$27,000 in donations over the past year in 2021.

Kyker mentioned that they have not had a meeting yet this year, but there will be one coming up very soon. She also mentioned that she is excited to have two new board members on the Fundraising committee.

Belitsos wanted to thank the board for all of their gifts to the network, and stated that 100% of the board gave some kind of donation in 2021.

Rixner asked if we had money to do translations of the hotel/motel video into other languages, and the answer was no. She asked if we have to keep the hotel/motel separate, or if some of the money we have to pay for those translations.

Belitsos asked Moravec if there was any more money left in their account. Moravec responded and said there might be, but not much, and they decided as a committee to give some more money to Terry Pounds, their video producer, as he had to reshoot a few things. He stated that any extra money they could get would be great.

Belitsos stated that if we actually get the money from the SBA Covid grant that we could maybe use some of that money to help pay for the other translations, and he will keep the board updated.

X. Reports from Provider Collaboration and Survivor Service Panel. (Rohrs and Hardin)

Rohrs reminded the board that Davidson, Hardin, and Buckels make up the service Provider Collaboration Planning Committee. She explained that they have been having some hard conversations because they have been getting some feedback from service

providers not agreeing with some of the decisions the board has made, and therefore not wanting to participate.

Belitsos asked if they have stopped their quarterly meeting. Rohrs stated December was the last scheduled meeting for the year but yes, we have stopped as we figure out our avenue forward.

Belitsos asked if there has been a meeting for the Survivor Service Panel. Rohrs reported there had been a meeting. Rohrs stated that during this meeting the group gathered feedback on how NAHT can be more survivor-focused. Rohrs stated the feedback was gathered and prepared to present during an Executive Committee meeting but the Executive Committee Meeting did not have time to get to that agenda item. Rohrs reported the group does have the feedback of how the Board can be more survivor focused ready to go for whenever the Board would like to hear it.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 pm.

Next Board Meeting: March 8th, 2:30-4pm