

Meeting Minutes

Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking Board of Directors

March 8th, 2022

Present: Ruth Buckels, 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, Dr. Shannon Findlay

Excused Absence: Dr. Shannon Findlay

Guests: Jacqueline White (Human Trafficking Instructor at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy), Gretchen Brown-Waech (Attorney General's Office)

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

Belitsos declared a quorum at 2:30 pm. Belitsos invited Jacqueline White to introduce herself, but also reminded the board of the article that we had in the March 4th blog post announcing her hiring as the new human trafficking instructor for the IA Law Enforcement Academy. Belitsos explained that Jacqueline will be taking the place of Devon Greiter.

II. Introduction of new human trafficking instructor at the IA Law Enforcement Academy. Update on curriculum, hours of instruction, and training availability for local community law enforcement agencies. (Jacqueline White)

Jacqueline thanked Belitsos for inviting her to the board meeting. She explained that she has approximately 8 years of experience within the law enforcement field, and that was between military time, corrections, and regular patrol. White served in Huxley as a patrol officer, and did various amounts of things. She graduated with her social work degree in 2017, and completed her clinicals with the STAR program, and assisted in forensic interviewing and learned lots of techniques.

White explained that she knows that her background varies a bit between medical and law enforcement, and she wanted to bring this to the Academy, and also wants to make sure that they are serving local law enforcement in every area in Iowa when it comes to preventing human trafficking.

White explained that she would like to say that her availability is pretty open, but she has been booked with a lot of community presentations recently. The objectives that she will go over during training includes new human trafficking laws that have come out recently, new cases in general, like the Piper Lewis case. White mentioned that she

really wants the officers to focus on empathy, and make sure that they have more of an open mind about looking deeper into the cases when trafficking may be present.

Belitsos asked how many hours do the new officers get trained on human trafficking at the Academy. White responded that she teaches two hours specifically for human trafficking. She mentioned that this may not sound like a lot, but she also trains for trauma informed interviewing, sexual assaults, domestic assault, and vehicle stops, and during those trainings she also brings in some information about human trafficking as well.

Tinsman asked in her opinion why in Iowa we don't have more county attorney's trying pimps and traffickers who are behind human trafficking. Tinsman noted that the FBI prosecutes many Iowa human trafficking cases, but local law enforcement doesn't. White responded and said there are a few reasons for this. One is that smaller local departments may not have the funding or the time or law enforcement officers in order to do that investigation, so a lot of those cases are pushed to DCI or the FBI. White explained that whether or not they get tried in court depends on things like how many states or counties they have crossed. Another thing that White mentioned was that you must have a willing victim in order to have a case. This is why teaching empathy to the officers is so important to her, so victims feel that they have someone comfortable to reach out to, instead of a stern presence.

Tinsman also mentioned that some counties plead down the cases of trafficking to sexual abuse. She asked how we can go about changing that and making sure that does not happen. White responded and said that she believes that changes will be happening with the election process, and how ready they are going to be to prosecute. White mentioned that she knows that some of these cases have very limited evidence, so they may not prosecute, and may plead it down so they at least get charged with something. White brought up again the fact that you must have a willing victim, and in cases where they are not willing, it may be best to plead it down so they will be charged with something.

Tinsman asked if a willing victim can have a recorded testimony instead of being in person in court. White responded and said yes that can happen, but it does not happen in all cases. White said that she wishes we could do recordings for all cases as this can be very traumatizing for the victims. In order to do this, we would have to get laws changed, they would have to get prosecutors involved. The best way to do this is to set up a Multiple Disciplinary Team. However, the likelihood to get them to all agree to serve on a team can be a little bit more difficult than you may think.

Tinsman responded to this and said she agrees with what White was saying, but if there is legislation that needs to be changed that she should be in contact with the NAHT to help get it on our list of legislative priorities. White responded and said that this is a very good point, and that she is still kind of getting familiar with her position as she has only been doing it for a month, but will consider it for the future.

Barr asked if White could estimate how much of her time will be spent speaking training on human trafficking. White responded and said that her role will be 90% on human trafficking, and Barr said that he was thrilled to hear that.

Barr also asked if White had considered creating a monthly report to send out to all law enforcement agencies, as she will not be able to reach all of them when every update occurs, and then they can follow up with further assistance if needed. White said that she would like to start something like that. She did mention that when she does training, it normally includes multiple counties, so she is able to train more people at a time than one would think, and is planning on training 1,000 people in one week during April. Barr thanked her for all of her efforts.

Davidson brought up the fact that one of the Strategic Plan goals is to research about John Schools, but in her experience, in order for these kinds of diversion programs to be successful they actually have to arrest buyers. Davidson asked if White felt that Iowa was ready for this, and if police departments have staff, funding, and willingness to do stings? White responded that at this time she feels that everyone has low staffing right now, and that law enforcement is not excluded from that. She mentioned that Davenport is down 40 officers right now. She mentioned that on the financial side, defunding the police is kind of going around the nation right now, and is not sure how that will end up affecting all of their agencies. She says that she knew it was going to be an uphill battle, but is ready for the challenge and is ready to make that happen.

Rixner asked about the week-long training in April, and was wondering if this was going to be new cadets. White said that no, they will receive other training, but the one in April is for current officers. Rixner asked how she got to the 1,000 officer number. White stated that the location holds approximately 1,000 people. Polk County is opening this up to Ankeny, Johnston, and other surrounding counties. They expect that this location will be full because they are also opening it up to prosecutors, legislators, and whoever wants to attend who is within the field.

Rixner asked if she is planning on doing this on a smaller scale in some other areas like Northwest Iowa. White said absolutely, and she is planning on doing some training in Northern Iowa in October. Rixner also mentioned that so many people have received the general information on human trafficking, and if possible to include other things that may not be as known. Rixner let white know that she is from the Sioux City area, and to let her know when the training will be so she can help encourage people to attend.

Debner asked if White had a list of her training locations, as she is in North Iowa but would love to encourage people to attend these training sessions. White responded that it may be easier to email out these training sessions, and that she will send them to Belitsos.

Hilby mentioned to White that if she needs it, the board would love to give her any resources and contact information they have for the local law enforcement agencies. White said that this would be great, and would love that information.

Tupper made a comment adding to White's statement. He stated that he understands that there is a desire to have victims not appear in court, but unfortunately the justice system requires that accused people are allowed to face their accusers in court and there is very little wiggle room on that, especially when talking about adult victims. Tupper stated that if there is going to be a change with that, it would most likely have to come from the national level, and it is not anything the Iowa Academy itself can do.

Bills spoke up and asked if Iowa has any resources when working with victims in court to protect their identity. Specially, does Iowa have access, and/or use witness protection programs, or tools to distort voices to help protect the victims. White responded and said that it varies, but since you have the right to face your accuser in court, it can be difficult. Children are more likely to be protected, as any court documents will just use their initials. White also mentioned she doesn't know of any cases that have actually used voice distorters. Tupper chimed in and said that adult witnesses are generally required to testify in court, but sometimes courts take measures to keep the media away from the victims, so not allowing them to photograph or video them.

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

Belitsos reviewed the six motions on the consent agenda and if anyone wished to remove a motion for further discussion.

- a. Motion to approve February 1st meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors.
- b. Motion to approve the January Acting Treasurer Report.
- c. Motion to approve amendment of the NAHT by-laws to add an exception to Section 3: use of funds to permit survivors of human trafficking to be paid for their time to serve on the board.
- d. Motion to approve revised NAHT Award Selection Procedures.
- e. Motion to accept a \$9,000 SBA federal covid relief advance for financial support of paid technology consultants.
- f. Motion to accept the recommendation of the Fundraising Committee to give 30-days notice that the NAHT intends to terminate the MOU with the Foundation for Inspired Giving to create a giving portal to facilitate the SOS's IBAT initiative.

Moravec asked to remove consent item (f) with which he strongly objects to. Davidson asked to remove consent item (c) for further discussion. Belitsos called for a vote on a,b,d, and e. These four motions on the consent agenda **passed unanimously**.

IV. Report from the Fundraising Committee. (Kyker)

Kyker reported on the outcome of the March 1st, 2022 meeting of the Fundraising Committee. The major committee discussion item was the MOU with the Foundation Committee of Inspired Giving. She stated that the committee discussed all the changes to the IBAT fundraising portal concept and concluded that the MOU no longer is viable.

Kyker stated that the Fundraising Committee negotiated the MOU with Foundation for Inspired Giving. Both parties subsequently negotiated and signed an MOU last December 2021 so that the Foundation for Inspired Giving could create a “giving portal for the NAHT in order to help facilitate the SOS’s Safe at Home IBAT initiative and for Foundation for Inspired Giving to lead the financial online efforts for the NAHT’s partnership with the SOS’s IBAT program.” This concept and intended benefit have recently changed due to objections from the SOS that the state agency wants references to IBAT which implies IBAT is connected to fundraising by the NAHT or its allies.

For this and other reasons, the NAHT Fundraising Committee decided that the MOU and creation of the Foundation for Inspired Giving platform is no longer of benefit to the NAHT nor is it necessary or prudent to have a second giving platform on our NAHT website.

Therefore, the Fundraising Committee decided on March 1st to exercise the 30-day notice clause in the MOU to declare NAHT intent to terminate the MOU effective 30 days from today. We request that no further action be taken by Foundation for Inspried Giving to implement the MOU or to communicate or negotiate with the SOS regarding the Foundation for Inspired Giving portal.

This NAHT Finance Committee recommendation was removed from the agenda by Moravec and reads as follows:

Motion to accept the recommendation of the Fundraising Committee to give 30 days notice that the NAHT intends to terminate the MOU with the Foundation for Inspired Giving to create a giving portal to facilitate the SOS’s IBAT initiative. This was all placed in a memo and sent to Moravec and the full board.

Belitsos called on Morvec to state his objections to the motion. However, first he asked Moravec to state whether he felt that he had any conflict of interest, since he is the President of the board of the Foundation for Inspired Giving. Moravec stated that he did not feel that it was a conflict of interest. Belitsos then read from the conflict of interest statement that all NAHT board members signed.

“No board member should have any beneficial interest in, or substantial obligation to any NAHT supplier of goods or services or any other organization that is engaged in doing business with or serving the NAHT. “

Belitsos then asked the board if anyone felt that this was a conflict of interest for Moravec. No one spoke up. Belitsos gave his opinion that a conflict of interest does arise.

Moravec stated that he was shocked by Kyker’s email message about the 30-day notice. “I and the Community Foundation for Inspired Giving Board members feel totally bling-sighted by your vote and action. I have tried to call, text and have emailed you over the past few weeks to discuss things as they have evolved with the SOS’s office

and you have not answered me. Then you have a meeting that concerns me, the Community Foundation for Inspired Giving, and the mOU and not invite me or Mike Canney to share recent updates and to discuss/clarify old information. We feel this has circumvented due process, lacked integrity and is just plain wrong.”

“On February 22nd Dr. George sent me an email asking for feedback before your meeting and I did so ASAP. As soon after our AM meeting was over the day before your Committee met, I sent you, Dr. George and John Chesser an email explaining the results of Mike Canney and my meeting with Michael Ross.”

“I communicated to all three of you that he and the SOS are now with NAHT and IBAT in our giving efforts. But somehow, that email I sent you and cc’d Dr. George and John Chesser seems like it was not read, misunderstood or it was ignored. Nonetheless, it contained crucial information, central in guiding any Committee’s deliberations. As a result, your committee discussion, conclusions, and vote seems to be based on erroneous, out-of-date information. For that reason, I am imploring you with rationale provided to send this recommendation to the Executive Committee for discussion.”

“As a matter of fact, after much negotiation and time, both parties decided to allow NAHT to keep using Paypal for NAHT donations and not restrict other NAHT giving aspects for non-giving portal IBAT donations.”

“Changing the NAHT Community Foundation for Inspired Giving MOU will change the SOS MOU agreement. Item #6 under the “Responsibilities of the Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery” section, it states: “Develop, provide and maintain online *“Giving Portal” that would list non-profit, anti-trafficking, Iowa-based organizations where IBAT employees or businesses could volunteer, donate, or provide one-time service projects.*” The IBAT initiative is a statewide endeavor potentially reaching over 275,000 businesses that register with the SOS office. The Research/Evaluation and Best Practice Committee wanted to make sure whatever “Giving Portal” that is utilized that iBAT individuals and businesses would potentially give to any anti-human trafficking organization statewide allied with NAHT.”

Belitsos disagreed with Moravec about the intent of the SOS and the outcome of the Community Foundation for Inspired Giving meeting with the SOS. He did not trust Moravec’s interpretation of the position of the SOS as being okay with the connection between IBAT and the proposed giving portal.

Belitsos stated that Moravec had made a serious mistake back in late January when he uploaded the IBAT page and Moravec’s new giving portal onto the NAHT website.

Belitsos next read into the record an email he received the next day dated January 31st, 2022 after the IBAT page went live on the NAHT website.

The memo from the SOS office reads as follows:

“We are very concerned about these new components on your webpage that we link to through IBAT, and are under the “IBAT” header on your page. Particularly,

the tiered “Pathway Partner” program. We have discussed this proposal with NAHT in several meetings and made it clear, multiple times, that we do not want to do tiers. Membership in IBAT requires businesses to learn something and do something. Period. Your website now gives members the impression that there will be tiered levels to their membership and includes a monetary demand. Additionally, you refer to them as “IBAT Bronze (Silver, Gold, Platinum) Pathway Partners. This was never stated in any part of the MOU the SOS and NAHT both agreed to and signed that runs through December 31st, 2022. Tiered membership is not part of the membership in IBAT. We ask that these sections be removed immediately.”

Belitsos reported that he immediately apologized to the SOS on behalf of the NAHT. He next had the NAHT webmaster, Lara Marsh, take down the IBAT page on the website. This is when Belitsos stated “I was quickly losing trust in Dr. Joe and his foundation.” Dr. Joe had placed levels of IBAT participation (Silver, Bronze, Gold) and demanded a donation to qualify for IBAT. The SOS had rejected this approach 2 months ago, but Dr. Joe sent Lara his original plan and told her to post it. Belitsos stated that he directed Lara to take the IBAT page down. Lara took the page down and Belitsos next read Lara’s email message that he received one day later.

“George- I will also tell you that Joe asked three times for the fundraising link to be added to the website: once to you and you replied no, once via his colleague which I forwarded to you and then told him no, and once via a text message to me and I again told him no. He was, in my opinion, clearly trying to “work the system” to get around your opposition. Just letting you know.”

Belitsos started to wonder if the NAHT shouldn’t exercise its 30-day termination notice with regard to the MOU for Dr. Joe’s giving portal. He sent a memo on February 2nd to Kyker and asked her opinion on what the Fundraising committee should do to retain Moravec.

Belitsos ended his comments by stating that he hopes the Board will vote in favor of the Fundraising Committee’s motion to give 30 days notice to terminate.

What followed were comments, concerns and questions by several board members. Rohrs made a motion to hold a special board meeting to review and further debate and vote on the Fundraising Committee’s motion. **The motion passed.** Next Rohr’s expressed concerns about the vote of the Executive committee and asked that this be added to the agenda of the special board meeting.

Belitsos determined as chair that a discussion about the role of the Executive Committee was not germane or relevant to the debate about terminating the Foundation For Inspired Giving MOU motion. Belitsos stated that the MOU termination motion was made by the NAHT Fundraising Committee. The motion did not come from the Executive Committee, nor has the Executive Committee even discussed this MOU termination matter. The Executive Committee only meets quarterly and their last

meeting was January 4th. Instead, Belitsos will send the Board the section of the NAHT by-laws describing the Executive Committee's make-up, purpose, and powers.

Two Board members objected to Belitsos's decision. Belitsos stated that the chair decided on "points of order" and that an appeal of the chair's decision would require a motion and a vote by a majority of the Board in order to overturn. No motion was forthcoming.

Board members selected the date of Wednesday, March 23rd at 2:30 pm for the Special Board meeting. Moravec offered to host the zoom link. Belitsos will send out a reminder notice with the one and only agenda item being to fully discuss and vote up or down the motion to accept the recommendation of the Fundraising Committee to terminate the MOU with the Foundation for Inspired Giving to create a giving portal to facilitate the SOS's IBAT initiative.

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

Tinsman gave an update on progress being made in the Iowa legislature. Two of the NAHT priorities are still alive and moving forward. The good news is that [HF 2464](#), Expungement of Criminal Records of Human Trafficking Victims and Safe Harbor for minor victims, legislative bill is on the House Debate Calendar for Tuesday the 9th with an amendment that includes safe harbor for minors. This bill will prevent the harmful and re-traumatizing effects of arrest and prosecution for crimes committed while a survivor was subject to human trafficking. This bill will help a trafficking survivor's ability to rebuild their life. This legislation recognizes that we must treat victims of human trafficking differently than we have in the past. We must connect them to resources to help them heal and move forward. A copy of the bill is in the written report that Tinsman sent out prior to the meeting. The bill is expected to pass the Iowa House.

Tinsman asked NAHT members to mobilize to get the Iowa Senate ready to take up the HF2464 before the second funnel at the end of next week. Please ask Senator Zaun to urge him to get the bill assigned to a subcommittee ASAP and moved through the Senate Judiciary Committee. Next ask your own local Senator to support HF2464 when it comes up for a vote.

Next Tinsman covered the 5 million funding request. Please reach out to members of the [Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee](#) and urge them to include an additional \$5M in the victim services budget. If passed this will also cover service to trafficking survivors. Please contact Rep. Gary Worthan and Sen. Julian Garrett to encourage them to put these funds and the language in their budget.

Here are some talking points to convince the legislature to invest an additional \$5 million for services to all victims of violent crimes:

- Ensure access to rights and services. Iowa currently invests just \$5 million in state funds to crime victim services and limits funds to domestic and sexual violence services.

- Homicides increased 40% last year in addition to a surging demand for crime victim services overall. We must be able to provide services to all victims, including those who are human trafficked.
- Federal funds enhance program capacity, but state funds pay for the staff and infrastructure agencies that need to provide services.
- More resources are needed to be able to provide the minimum necessary support for victims of these crimes.

Finally, Tinsman spoke about the 3rd NAHT priority, Prevent Child Abuse's bill. [HF 414](#) is officially dead after not advancing through the first legislative funnel. We will work on introducing a new bill next year.

VI. Progress report from the Evaluation, Research, and Best Practice Committee. NAHT Hotel/Motel training site and IBAT addition to NAHT website. Based on feedback from the February 1st board meeting, reversal of committee vote to make Suggested Guidelines available to new start-up survivor service providers and instead to call on current providers to provide guidance. (Moravec)

There was insufficient time to hear this report.

VII. Review and approve proposed 2021 & 2022 Strategic Plan Goals and 2020-2021 completed goals. (Executive Committee)

There was insufficient time to hear this report.

VIII. Outcome of vote by Rotary International Board regarding adoption of 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)

There was insufficient time to hear this report.

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 pm.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday March 23rd, 2:30-4 pm and Tuesday April 12th, 2:30-4pm