

## **Minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors meeting held August 13, 2019**

Present: Dr. George Belitsos, Lauren Camp, Jonathan Causey, Sister Shirley Fineran, John Hageman, Dr. Taylor Houston , Shana Kargbor, Jennifer Kerger, Katie Kyker, Sgt. Elizabeth Quinn , Shirlee Reding, Roxanne Rieserg, Bernadette Rixner, Jessica Rohrs, Mike Tupper, Suzie Wright

Guest: Stephen Bayens, Sister Mary Patricia Conlan, Terry Cowman, Shanon Findlay, Gretchen Brown-Waech, Allison Welch (Iowa State University Intern)

Excused: Alyse Hardin, Dr. Joseph Moravec, and Maggie Tinsman

**Belitsos called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.**

**Report from the Department of Public Safety Office to Combat Human Trafficking:** Belitsos introduced Terry Cowman, Assistant Director and Stephen Bayens, Commissioner of Iowa DPS.

*Terry Cowman* began by thanking NAHT for the invitation to speak. He gave an overview of DPS Office to Combat Human Trafficking which involved three parts:

- Operational Support where they help provide equipment and surveillance type techniques to local task forces that are involved in the operation of prostitution and trafficking,
- Secondly, provide staff support for analytical planning, collecting, and analyzing information that is later disseminated to law enforcement partners.
- Lastly, as outlined in the Office to Combat Human Trafficking legislation that was passed in 2016, they assemble the human trafficking annual report that goes to the General Assembly every year on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Part of the report involves the training of law enforcement and outreach programs. Recently, a number of PROs (Public Resource Officers), who are safety education officers within the Iowa State Patrol, have been trained. Those troopers are located in the field and can routinely go through 16 school districts using a training technique for human trafficking. They are really the eyes and ears of what education and training needs are for the law enforcement and the education partners.

In regards to information to date, it seems that the leads and tips DPS gets from the national human trafficking hotline have increased. Thus, far in 2019, DPS processed 35 trafficking tips from the Polaris national hotline. He wanted everyone to know that those tips have leaned heavily toward reported Eastern Iowa and the Des Moines Metro area, which had remained unchanged for the past 3 years. Most of the victims are reported to be adult sex-trafficked females and the tips received are coming from concerned community members.

DPS is working with local law enforcement to pass on that tip information to help them follow up with criminal investigations. Last year in Iowa the Office to Combat Human Trafficking saw a 30% increase in the number of national hotline tips that came into their office, which also followed the national trend.

They are also partnering with the US Department of Human Services' Blue Campaign to provide materials to local law enforcement officers. Please note: *Blue Campaign is a national public*

*awareness campaign, designed to educate the public, law enforcement and other industry partners to recognize the indicators of human trafficking, and how to appropriately respond to possible cases. Blue Campaign works closely with DHS to create general awareness training and materials for law enforcement and others to increase detection of human trafficking, and to identify victims*

In response to a question from Rixner, Cowman will see that a list is sent to NAHT of the Public Resource Officers from the 16 different regions who could be contacted.

Reding asked if they are receiving tips from the Iowa Victim Services Hotline. Cowman responded that they are but since the state hotline is not as well published as the national hotline they are not getting as many. He also stated that they do have an email line that they receive tips from as well.

Rohrs oversees the Iowa hotline and she reported that since the training for officers was set up using the national hotline, this number has become more published. The NAHT rescue stickers and posters are helping to publicize the Iowa hotline number. However, for trafficking victims needing services, officers are referring these victims to the statewide hotline. The hotline has only been around the past four years. In meetings with Chief Dave Lorenzen (DOT) and Gretchen Brown-Waech from the Attorney General's office, they have been working on an interactive map to be placed on the Iowa DOT website as well as a call center hotline partnership.

**Commissioner Stephen Bayens** began by giving his background information. He was a son of a police officer in Colorado Spring, Colorado. He attended Iowa Central College and then went to law school at Drake University. He served at the Iowa Attorney General's Office, worked for a judge at the Iowa Court of Appeals, transferred to the Polk County Attorney's office in the juvenile division working on child in need of assistance cases, moved into the Polk County's Drug And Gang Bureau, and then joined the US Attorney's Office in the Southern District of Iowa as an assistant attorney assigned to the Project Safe Neighbors. Before leaving the US attorney's office to join the Department of Public Safety, he had an the opportunity to work on a federal prosecution involving human trafficking that came out of the central Iowa area with US Attorney Virginia Brunner. Brunner had the expertise on the human trafficking field, and he had the expertise on criminal street gangs. In the prosecution of the central Iowa case, he came across one of the victims which he personally knew. She happened to be a neighbor's daughter who lived next door to him in Beaverville, Iowa. This was extremely eye-opening to him as it showed that human trafficking can happen even in Iowa and made the prosecution all the more valuable.

He is new to his position as Commissioner but knows that the DPS's Division of Intelligence and Office to Combat Human Trafficking does an absolutely fantastic job. The analytical work done by OCHT to identify how human traffickers operate is remarkable. He has been leaning heavily on their information and expertise for the prosecution of the case.

Bernadette asked if the analysts provide information primarily to law enforcement and would that be available in the annual DPS OCHT report. Bayens stated that a lot of intelligence information collected is confidential by statute and is used for investigative leads and the like. What most of the analysts are actually doing is helping connect phone numbers and social media accounts, identifying individuals using a variety of investigative techniques, and supporting the investigators in the field by providing them the analytical support to better identify how these organizations are working with one another. Cowman added that the type of information collected by a DPS analyst is not the same as the type of information that might be collected by a business.

Belitsos mentioned that on the NAHT agenda is making HF455 one of the Network's legislation priorities for 2020 and asked Cowman and Bayens if they support us in that legislation. Cowman felt that they will have to wait and see the legislative bill. Bayens stated that he would be happy to review this proposed legislation, but they would have to check with the governor's office to see if there is a conflict. He would also need to know if the funding would come out of their budget so that he can make sure there is adequate funding. This would be another assignment to their office to keep track of the hotel human trafficking training along with keeping a registry for sex offender, narcotics, and homicide investigations. If the Legislature is asking them to add this, they would be willing to do so, but funding will be the challenge as they are already being asked to do more with less.

Belitsos invited Bayens and Cowman to attend the NAHT's Day on the Hill at 10 am on Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup> in the Rotunda where the Governor will be signing a proclamation declaring January Human Trafficking & Slavery Prevention and Awareness Month. A NAHT board meeting in the Capitol will be following the signing and Belitsos invited Bayens and Cowman to again update the NAHT board.

**Consent Agenda** Belitsos reviewed the consent agenda. He noted that a motion to accept the July 2019 treasurer's report was listed twice and apologized for that. Rixner asked if NAHT did an omnibus bill, would HF455 be included? The answer was yes. Riesberg stated that she would have to abstain on the motions especially the endorsement of HF455 as she represents the Iowa Department of Human Services on the Board and would have to remain neutral.

Rixner also had concerns about committee chairs having to meet monthly for an Executive Board meeting. Belitsos stated that the Executive Board had to agreed to meet quarterly unless a need arises for a special meeting. Belitsos asked to take off the motion to engage an accountant to file a 501(h) election on behalf of the NAHT for further discussion. A motion by the Executive Committee was made to accept the following motions:

- Motion to approved the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minute of the NAHT Board of Directors
- Motion to accept the Treasurer's report for July 2019
- Motion to approve changes to the Board member Job Description and Board Function
- Motion to authorize the Chair to sign a consultant agreement with Mary Kate of Des Moines to coordinate the Central Iowa Hotel/Motel Project at \$15 an hour for 10 hours. This expenditure is in the NAHT budget and is fully funded by the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines
- Motion to endorse HF455 regarding hotel/motel training as 2020 legislative priority
- Motion to authorize the chair to sign a technology consultant contract with Savannah Maynard at \$13 an hour for 5 hours a month. Savannah is a linguistics major at ISU

Motion passed with one abstain by Riesberg.

Belitsos stated that Tinsman, who chairs the NAHT legislative advocacy committee, would like to hire a lobbyist to work with the Legislative Advocacy Committee. He mentioned that one of the concerns is whether the hiring of a lobbyist by NAHT would jeopardizes their 501 (c) 3 designation with the IRS by devoting a significant part of NAHT's expenditures' towards lobbying. Since NAHT has not budgeted for a lobbyist, Belitsos said that Tinsman will attempt to raise approximately \$4,000 to hire a lobbyist consultant. Causey recommended that NAHT file a 501(h) election, which doesn't change NAHT's 501(c) 3 status, but allows a nonprofit to spend up to 20% of its expenditures on lobbying efforts. He along with the Executive Committee felt that NAHT needs to position itself to better accept donations

that would go to find a lobbyist. Belitsos stated that the Executive Committee had asked him to consult with the accountant Kevin Houston felt that it was a good idea especially if NAHT was planning on engaging a lobbyist. However, when filing IRS tax returns, the, NAHT would need to file a long form instead of the short form in 2019. The cost for filing would run around \$400. For the last 3 years, Houston has filed the short form for the NAHT and has not charged us for his CPA services. As NAHT had not budget \$400, Belitsos recommend that we file a 501 (h) in 2020.

Motion to engage an accountant to file the 501 (h) election in the year 2020 was made and approved.

**Johnson County Human Trafficking Coalition** Shannon Findley reported that they have been working pretty effectively with the Johnson County Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) in planning for a two day conference in April, 2020 with one day being specifically devoted to human trafficking. Right now, they are working on Keynote speakers. They have two speakers coming from the National Network of Survivors who will be giving a couple lectures along with breakout sessions for the conference.

They are estimating the cost of speaker's fee and travel cost to be around \$5,000 and hoping to pin down that expense. The 100+ Women gave the NAHT a donation of \$8,500, and this gift will be spent in Johnson County.. What money they have left will be used to focus on an awareness campaign. Belitsos reiterated that part of the awareness campaign should be hotel/motel training and the distribution of the human trafficking rescue stickers by the Johnson County Coalition, which was part of the agreement with NAHT in distributing the donation from 100+ Women. The NAHT has already ordered 2,500 stickers at the cost of \$400 to come out of the \$8,500 donation and encouraged the Coalition to be dispersing them.

Findley stated that the Coalition has been discussing the hotel/motel training. They had been partnering with medical students who hoped to get back on board with this project and would be reaching out to recruit new students in August. One of the big challenges they are facing is connecting with local hotels in the area. If anyone on the Board has a contact with the hotel industry in Johnson County, please contact her. She also mentioned that the Coalition is planning a "power hour" where they will be devoting an education session on the topic of human trafficking and health care at the public library.

**Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Slavery** Belitsos invited a representative of the Tri-State Coalition to describe their service area and anti-trafficking activities. This is the first time the NAHT Board has heard from this coalition. Sister Mary Pat stated that the area the coalition covers is portions of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa. Presently, in the Galena Territory (Galena, Illinois) they are working with several hotels using the hotel/motel training that the NAHT and Suzie Wright has provided. They are also working with the schools as well as the law enforcement in the Galena. In Wisconsin at a clinic of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, they are working with social work students at the university, and the general public. They are coordinating with these groups to find out how they can work better together and collaborate to stamp out human trafficking both in the university and the smaller surrounding communities. Some of the groups they work with include:

- Family Resources in Davenport, Iowa and Friends of the Family out of Elkader, Iowa,
- Sisters of Franciscan in Clinton, Iowa,
- US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (United Nation),
- Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and

- MercyOne Center in Dubuque.

Their focus is on human trafficking training, education, and awareness to schools, hospitals, law enforcement, and the public. Sister Mary Pat stated that the Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Slavery meets the first Tuesday of every month.

**Launch of the Demand an End Campaign** Gretchen Brown-Waech, Trafficking Coordinator Crime Victim Services Division of the Attorney General's Office, began by talking about the VOCA funding cuts and the decisions that were made about the reduction in funding. She felt that there was a lot of misconception about the facts of the VOCA funding. She stated that the decisions that were made from the Crime Victim Services Division of the Attorney General's Office were due to the anticipated drops in funding at the federal level. The VOCA funding comes from criminal fines and penalties, so that a lot of the funding comes from lawsuits that are filed related to violence against women or some other forms of victim assault.

At the current time, these types of lawsuits are not being pursued, so there is no substantial funding on the horizon. Hence, the projections being made for funding are continually dwindling down. As there was a question at the last NAHT Board meeting about the comprehensive VOCA local matching grant funding requirement making it difficult for new organizations to qualify for funding, Brown-Waech stated that the application being used by the Department of Public Safety must comply with federal match regulations. The federal regulations also specify that an organization must be able and willing to serve anyone who is a victim whether that service comes through the organization's program or by referral to another program in the area.

Waech went on to discuss the "Demand an End" program. The launch date is being postponed from August 2019 to January 2020. Hopefully, this program will be launched in collaboration with Human Trafficking & Slavery Prevention Month and Education at the NAHT's "Day on the Hill" where Waech will have materials to be distributed statewide. Training to be used for the "Demand an End" program has not been approved as of yet.

She would like to ask the NAHT Board send her any contacts at the radio and tv stations in their area to help her with getting the PSA accomplished.

Moving to the topic of the reopening of the Provider Service Collaboration, Waech is working with Hardin and Wright on getting all the direct service providers together for a first meeting in the fall. They are working to have the meetings quarterly at different locations around the state and also attempt to make the meeting available by conference call. Waech asked the Board to let her know of any new organizations that are providing services to survivors and are not not part of the NAHT's directors so an invite to join the collaboration can be made to them.

**Next meeting will be a conference call on Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> from 2:30-4 pm.** With no other business meeting was adjourned.