

NAHT April 9th, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Present: John Chesser, George Belitsos, Maggie Tinsman, Lyna Debner, Thomas Barr, Bernadette Rixner, Mike Tupper, Shirley Fineran, Linda Harell, Deanna Jensen, Kim Hilby, Teresa Davidson

Excused Absence:

Guests: Elizabeth Phan (Technology Consultant), Shirlee Reding (Emeritus Board Member), Threase Harms (Advocacy Strategies), and Andrea K. (Director of Family Crisis Victims Call Center)

I. Call to order and attendance; start recording:

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m. by Fineran, NAHT Vice-chair. Chesser was at the airport and joined the meeting late.

II. Consent Agenda February 13th minutes, Treasurer reports (Chesser and Belitsos):

Treasurer Belitsos thanked Tinsman for the \$4,150 annual gift through the Quad City Community Foundation. There were only two other donations on the income report amounting to 215.

There was no further discussion and Chesser moved to approve both the meeting minutes as amended by Rixner and the treasurer's report. Tinsman seconded the motion. **Both the March minutes and the treasurer's reports were approved unanimously.**

III. Guest Andrea K. (Chesser and Fineran):

Fineran welcomed Andrea K. of the Family Crisis Center of Iowa who manages the Iowa Victim Services Call Center. That is one of the divisions of the Family Crisis Centers. This serves the entire state, all 99 counties, and assists other domestic abuse and rape crisis center programs. A number of nonprofit agencies roll over their overnight calls to the Iowa Victim Services Call Center after business hours, holidays, and weekends. Her call center is never closed and is always staffed.

She then provided a 2023 annual statistics of human trafficking calls to the Call Center. Her team answered about 50,000 calls last year and the people who were identified as a human trafficking victim had 150 calls. Belitsos asked for a further breakdown of the 150 trafficking calls. Andrea reported that 137 calls were for sex trafficking and 12 were for labor trafficking. She points out that this statistic seems low because callers are not required to say anything besides that they want her team's help. There is not enough data to conclude if there are more than 150 human trafficking-related calls since callers are not required to include this information. Her team keeps track of how many calls they receive, what services they provide per call, and what type of intimations they can identify.

She also wants to provide more human trafficking training for their staff. She mentioned finding that victimization can be quite difficult especially because for example, sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking can go hand in hand.

Belitsos asked about the budget cuts for next year. Andrea mentioned that her board of directors is currently looking for other forms of funding and on top of that they are currently privately fundraising. The goal is not to cut services and not to cut jobs. She mentioned that the board of directors is already looking over the next 2-3 years.

Barr asked if sex extortion is a category. Andrea said that it is, however, most of the time it would fall under human trafficking because it's usually both of these categories that go hand in hand.

Rixner asked if law enforcement has given information to asset callers. Andrea said that they could not legally give law enforcement any tips. They do not pass information to the police even if the caller requests to that it be shared.

Tinsman applauded Andrea and her team and appreciated her hard work. Andrea states that people don't realize that human trafficking is usually happening in neighborhoods, in the community, and at the end of the day, it is more likely it is not a stranger, it is someone that they know. She also is willing to give any statistics to any of the board members about her team.

IV. Legislative session update (Hoye):

Representative Lohse's HSB 746 human trafficking bill, was introduced by Representative Gary Moore just last week effort to obtain an appropriation of \$ 750,000 for the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases. This bill was the result of last fall's interim study committee that we worked hard to create and into the final justice appropriation bills. The Interim Task Force met last November 2023 and then there were no recommendations in that report. Essentially, what we had last fall will be repeated for the next 5 years. This was a big disappointment in the NAHT's efforts to get a Safe Harbor bill approved and signed by the governor. The Lohse bill has the following requirements:

- It requires an annual stakeholders meeting every year for the next 5 years.
- It changes the statute of limitations as it increases 5 years for human trafficking victims.
- Allows the use of video depositions.
- Requires Iowa Department of Health and Human Services to develop a plan to increase the availability of restoration facilities and protective services for juvenile trafficking victims
- Allocates a \$750,000 joint unit in conjunction with the attorney general's office to combat human trafficking, which is housed under the Department of Public Safety to investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases.

Hoye stated that we are currently still waiting for the house to vote on HSB746 and she checked in with Representative Lohse with the budget and he said that the budget is in drafting and there is an increased allocation for victim services of only \$500,00 which is nowhere near the 5 million what we are asking. There is no new money as it is allocated to education programs and Medicaid reimbursements. He is trying to fix the Voca dollars which is positive. There will need to be some advocacy to get that into the final version.

With the rapid movement of budgets and the high-priority policy bills, there is a high probability that many human trafficking bills will not make it beyond the second funnel.

Rixner asked if the 5 million dollars is now dead, and Hoye said that we should still let others know about this need for funding even if it's not plausible. Barr also asked if there would still be a debate on some HT/MS bills. He was disappointed that the public school program for children's education on internet safety and human trafficking was most

likely not going to make it through the house. Belitsos agreed that this was very much needed. Representative Lohse was not able to push for the programming of children's education against human trafficking, but when asked if there could be mandatory education for children, he said that was not going to be possible this year. Some members mentioned that they have a hard time engaging schools to discuss any of these subjects. Olson mentioned that it must be clear to administrators and teachers that the lesson

or presentation you are planning to teach is interactive and light-hearted. Barr mentioned that he would like to go forward with fighting for this bill and building public support behind this bill so it can become a priority next year.

Chesser mentioned that since this bill will not be approved for this year, he would like to put this on the priority agenda for next year.

In conclusion, Hoye will discuss with Representative Lohse to provide more clarity on his priorities. She would reiterate Tinsman's comments about reaching out for the 5 million to local representatives and administrators. She believes that even though it is not likely, it is important to get the word out.

V. Vote on the nomination of Karl Schilling to the board (Chesser and Fineran):

There was no time to talk about the nomination of Karl Schilling. Chester will place this on the May agenda.

VI. Web services update:

There was no time to talk about web services updates.

VII. Revision of the list of allies for the website: ask for additions (Belitsos):

There was no time to talk about the revision of the list of allies for the website.

VIII. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.