

NAHT Board Meeting Minutes 12-9-25

Present: John, Stephanie, Sr. Shirley, George, Maggie, Lyna, Bernadette, Teresa Davidson, Tom, Austin, Karl, Sara K.

Guests: Rep. Mark Thompson, Threase Harms, Catherine Pollard

Excused Absences: Heather, Kim, Chief Thein, Linda

Key takeaways

- Representative Mark Thompson presented his legislative efforts to combat human trafficking, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach that coordinates investigators, prosecutors, and victim care facilities.
- The board approved five nominees for anti-trafficking awards to be presented on January 22nd.
- Teresa Davidson was unanimously elected as the new Vice President of the board. John agreed to nomination as chair and George as treasurer.
- The board discussed strategies for securing the \$1 million in funding for anti-trafficking efforts, noting challenges with Senator Garrett who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee.
- The Day on the Hill event is scheduled for January 22nd, 2025, with efforts underway to secure the Governor's attendance.
- Maggie, Karl, Lyna, Heather, George and Tom agreed to renew their board memberships for another two-year term

Legislative Update with guest Rep. Mark Thompson

Representative Thompson shared his efforts to combat human trafficking in Iowa. He drafted the bill in 2023 that increased penalties for human trafficking and is now working on new legislation to create a dedicated organization to investigate and prosecute trafficking while coordinating with victim care facilities. Rep. Thompson emphasized the need for a proactive rather than passive approach to trafficking investigations. He estimated \$10 million would be needed to fund his proposed three-element system (investigators, prosecutors, victim care facilities). George expressed support for Thompson's assessment that Iowa is failing victims and survivors. Austin asked about funding strategies for the proposed system.

• Conclusion

- The board expressed support for Thompson's legislative efforts
- Thompson encouraged board members to make human trafficking a "political imperative" when speaking with elected officials

Legislative Strategy Update

Threase Harms provided updates on legislative efforts and strategy. She reported continued conversations with policymakers over the past four months, noting that the legislature will reconvene on January 12th with budget, eminent domain, and property taxes as priority items. Threase mentioned plans to meet with the Senate President and

Judiciary Committee chair next week to determine where House File 1036 will be assigned. She added that the state is facing a \$1.3 billion budget shortfall according to the Revenue Estimating Committee and added that the governor is considering a surtax bill (tobacco, alcohol, gambling taxes) which could be a potential funding source for human trafficking efforts. Maggie suggested getting organizations like Rotary to write letters to the governor.

- **Conclusion**

- The board will continue focusing efforts on the Senate, as the House has already passed HF 1036.
- Threase will send contact information for senators to board members who are having trouble reaching them.

Massage Parlor Licensing Legislation

Karl inquired about the status of massage parlor licensing legislation. Threase confirmed the Iowa Massage Therapy Association is bringing forward legislation, adding that Jason Schultz will introduce it in the Senate and Jane Bloomingdale will introduce it as a study bill in the House State Government Committee. George noted that NAHT had previously advocated for this legislation

- **Conclusion**

- Threase will send the bill number to the board when available
- The board will support the legislation when introduced

Minutes

Bernadette noted that the November minutes mistakenly listed her as absent. With that correction, Maggie moved acceptance and Sara seconded. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

George presented the financial status of the organization. NAHT received over \$2,000 in income for November. He noted donations through PayPal, American Online Giving Foundation, and individual contributions. George cautioned against sending cash in the mail for donations. There were \$735 in expenses for November.

- **Conclusion**

- Acceptance moved by Stephanie and seconded by Maggie. The Treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

Fundraising Committee Report

Tom provided an update on fundraising efforts. He reported approximately \$6,300 raised (84% of \$7,500 goal) for Giving Tuesday and noted about \$16,000 raised (82% of \$20,000 goal) for the 20th anniversary fundraising campaign. Austin shared information about Walmart's SparkGood grants program, which allows organizations to apply to up to 25 Walmart locations for grants ranging from \$250-\$5,000.

- **Conclusion**

- The board will coordinate on Walmart grant applications to avoid overlap
- Applications for the current quarter must be submitted by December 31st

Anti-Trafficking Award Nominations

George presented the slate of five nominees for anti-trafficking awards who had been vetted by the executive committee.

• Conclusion

- The board unanimously approved the five nominations for presentation on January 22nd on motion by George and second by Teresa Davidson
- George will prepare the certificates and plaques for the awards

Board Member Renewals and Officer Elections

John reported that Maggie, Karl, Lyna, Heather, George and Tom had terms expiring and all agreed to another term. Teresa mentioned that Heather is currently in the hospital for another surgery. George nominated Teresa Davidson for Vice President. Teresa expressed concern about making a future commitment to chair position but agreed to serve as Vice President with assurances from John that there is no such expectation.

• Conclusion

- The slate of officers (John as President, Teresa as Vice President, George as Treasurer) was unanimously approved on motion by George and second by Maggie.

Day on the Hill Event

John provided updates on the January 22nd event at the Capitol. He reported being in touch with the governor's scheduler and noted the event was moved to the second week of the legislative session at the request of the governor's office. George mentioned the Secretary of State cannot attend this year. Teresa suggested Brenna Bird might attend as Nicole is receiving an award.

• Conclusion

- The event will proceed on January 22nd regardless of which officials attend

Blog and Outreach Updates

George highlighted recent blog content and outreach efforts. He drew attention to the December 1st blog newsletter showing increases in child exploitation, trafficking, and sextortion and added that the new LinkedIn page has 250 followers. George reminded members to get local proclamations declaring January as Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Maggie reported securing appointments with multiple cities and counties for proclamations. George mentioned work on a brochure summarizing trafficking statistics for the Day on the Hill event.

• Conclusion

- Board members were encouraged to read the blog and follow the LinkedIn page
- Members will continue seeking local proclamations for January

Challenges

- Securing the \$1 million in funding faces opposition from Senator Garrett, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee.
- The state is facing a \$1.3 billion budget shortfall, making new funding requests difficult.
- Coordinating Walmart grant applications among multiple anti-trafficking organizations to avoid overlap.
- Ensuring board member attendance at the Day on the Hill event due to travel and work commitments.

Action items

• Teresa

- Facilitate a meeting between a trafficking survivor from Knoxville and Senator Garrett

• Tom and Austin

- Coordinate on Walmart grant applications to avoid overlap between organizations
- Submit Walmart grant applications before December 31st deadline

• George

- Prepare certificates and plaques for the five anti-trafficking award recipients
- Work with Maddie to create a brochure summarizing trafficking statistics for Day on the Hill

• Threase

- Send contact information for Senator Kate Andre to Bernadette and Shirley
- Send the one-pager and sample letter to John for distribution to the board
- Send the massage parlor licensing bill number to the board when available

• All Board Members

- Contact local senators regarding support for the \$1 million funding
- Bring t-shirts to the Day on the Hill event for donations
- Pursue local proclamations declaring January as Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month
- Follow and promote the organization's LinkedIn page

Contact legislators before the Day on the Hill to arrange meetings