

Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery (NAHT)

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 18, 2018, 2:30 to 4 p.m.

Conference Call

Present: George Belitsos (Chair), Jan Beran (Treasurer), Liz Cox, Teresa Davidson, Taylor Houston, Jennie Kerger, Katie Kyker, Elizabeth Quinn (proxy for Fitzgerald), Shirlee Reding, Bernadette Rixner, Kelly Saul (proxy for Egan), Mike Tupper, Suzanne Wright

Excused: Maggie Tinsman, Sr Shirley Fineran, Stephen O'Meara

Absent: Joy Fopma, Alissa Stoehr

Guests: Celine Villongco, Human Trafficking Coordinator at Iowa Attorney General's Office
Terry Cowman, Coordinator of IA DPS Office to Combat Human Trafficking
Erika Rist, NAHT Legislative Research Consultant
Lara Marsh, NAHT website technical support

Taking Minutes: Margaret Epplin

Call to Order and Roll Call. Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Chair Belitsos. Roll call was taken. New Board member, Katie Kyker, representing the Southwest Iowa Coalition on Human Trafficking, introduced herself. Kyker has been the Development Coordinator at Jenny Edmonds Foundation for the Jenny Edmonds Hospital in Council Bluffs, Iowa for the last 2 years. The Southwest Iowa Coalition on Human Trafficking was formed about 1.5 years ago. The Coalition has representatives from community non-profit agencies (e.g., Salvation Army, Catholic Charities) and committees which are assessing the anti-human trafficking needs of the community and are developing a strategic plan to address these needs. The Coalition is developing a website and materials. Kyker will share the strategic plan with Belitsos.

Kyker moved to Iowa from Chicago where she had been employed by the Illinois Bar Foundation. Belitsos asked that Kyker consider chairing the NAHT fundraising committee.

Review today's agenda. Any changes?

There were no changes to the Agenda. Houston's report was moved up earlier on today's Agenda.

Report of the Research, Evaluation & Best Practice Standards Committee. Should the NAHT Board add any of the 6 recommendations to our strategic plan? (Houston & Reding)

Last week, the Belitsos blog post included a summary of recommendations and a link to Houston's 61-page research report, *The State of Support: Identifying Best Practices and Barriers of Human Trafficking Victim Services within the State of Iowa*.

Houston reviewed the six recommendations.

1. Develop a set of best practice standards for delivery of services to survivors of sex and labor trafficking.

The Survivor Services Collaboration, which includes NAHT Board members Fopma, Fineran, and Davidson, is ready to take up the project of developing best practice standards for survivors of sex and labor trafficking. Belitsos has sent the Collaboration a link to the *State of Support* report and an NAHT request that the Committee work to develop a best practices proposal. Houston is scheduled to attend the next meeting of the Collaboration to provide information and support.

2. Develop a public awareness campaign for labor trafficking and services specifically for its victims. Future projects should place equal emphasis on sex and labor trafficking.

Houston reported that labor trafficking is often ignored, and sex and child trafficking is emphasized. Houston thinks part of the reason is the overlap between labor trafficking and immigration. Most research around labor trafficking shows it is more common but much less identified by law enforcement, and victims are not provided survivor services. Houston believes NAHT can conduct a labor trafficking awareness campaign and improve services to victims of labor trafficking.

Rixner said that it is currently difficult to identify labor trafficking, and NAHT will have to undertake a significant amount of self-education. In addition, Rixner noted the lack of services targeted to labor trafficking victims and gave an example of a labor trafficking victim who received services at a local domestic violence center because there was nothing else to serve him.

Houston said that the NAHT, while engaging in self-education on labor trafficking, should reach out to groups that work with labor issues. e.g., fair wages, labor rights. Unions might have a better connection with a labor population that might be exploited or trafficked. NAHT can learn from any non-profit groups that work in Iowa to protect migrant laborers working in meat processing plants.

Rixner mentioned that Proteus included labor trafficking in a session at the recent Iowa Human Trafficking Summit.

Villongco suggested the NAHT communicate with Braking Traffik since Braking Traffik received a state grant to reach out to migrant workers. Braking Traffik could not give ID information but could identify needs and gaps they identify while doing outreach to migrant workers. Braking Traffik has asked Villongco to investigate migrant worker housing needs.

Belitsos asked Egan's proxy, Saul, to ask Egan to report to the NAHT about Braking Traffik's migrant, foreign national, and temporary worker grant. Belitsos will add their report to NAHT's August agenda. Rixner asked if the grant were successful enough for NAHT to advocate for continuation. Villongco said the grant is funded by fines. The amount of fines collected has decreased, so the grant will not be funded in 2019, and maybe in 2020. Villongco doesn't know why the amount of fines collected has dwindled.

Beran cautioned that NAHT add emphasis on labor trafficking only if NAHT has enough volunteers to work on this project. Beran suggests that NAHT survey what other immigration advocacy groups are already doing. Beran noted that Belitsos does a lot of work for the Network and it is not good to take on another project without adequate volunteers. Beran also reminded that NAHT doesn't have much money.

Belitsos noted all the volunteer time that many on the NAHT are giving. Belitsos will place more focus on labor trafficking in a revision of the NAHT brochure and the policy titled *Clarification of Mission Statement*. He will send these document revisions to the Board for review and comment.

Quinn (proxy for Fitzgerald) reported that AMOS (A Mid Iowa Organizing Strategy) has been working with the Story County Sheriff's Office to reach out to immigrant population. Beran added that AMOS also works on livable wages and housing. Beran mentioned that she and Belitsos serve on a local Refugee Alliance.

Belitsos reported that the Iowa Attorney General's Office has funded 4 minority grants to provide labor and sex trafficking services. Belitsos has contacted all four groups, written descriptions of the four grant-funded organizations for the NAHT resource directory and has sent the write-up to Villongco for approval. These groups were not previously listed on the NAHT resource directory. Belitsos will send these four agency descriptions to NAHT Board members for review and comment. He will next add the list to the Network website resource directory.

Rixner said that the NAHT needs to start learning as much about labor trafficking as possible.

Belitsos said he will add several labor trafficking items to the August Agenda: (1) A report on Braking Traffik's labor trafficking grant, (2) an increased emphasis on labor trafficking to the NAHT brochure, and (3) adding education and public awareness of labor trafficking to the NAHT 2019 strategic plan.

3. **Develop specialized services for male and transgender victims of sex and labor trafficking. Future projects should include these groups.**

Houston noted that this recommendation is directed toward service providers and not the NAHT.

4. **Develop an improved and expanded directory of organizations and individuals providing services. Implement this directory as an online interactive map.**

Belitsos reported that this recommendation is already in the 2018 NAHT Strategic Plan.

5. **Foster better relations between culturally specific and nonspecific service providers.**

Houston noted that this recommendation is directed toward service providers

6. **Growing anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment is a barrier for victims of sex and labor trafficking. Solicit more support from congressional delegation and Iowa legislators which will further anti-trafficking goals.**

Houston said this NAHT should continue to work on this recommendation and advocate for funding for sex and labor trafficking immigrant and refugee services. Belitsos also pointed out that he recently signed a federal grant letter of support for the Des Moines Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. Beran mentioned that she and Belitsos serve on a local alliance.

Service providers rely on state funding, and Houston's interactions with service providers revealed that one of their most significant worries is inadequate and cuts to state funding.

Executive Committee meeting report and approval of Consent Agenda

- Motion to approve May 21 meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors.
- Motion to approve the treasurer's report. As of June 1, the NAHT recorded \$717 in the savings account and \$1442 in checking.
- Motion to approve the 2017-18 Strategic Plan mid-year goal progress report.
- Motion to approve the updated Advocate and Allies roster
- Motion to authorize the Chair to sign a letter of support for the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Des Moines Field Office for a federal grant from the Office for Victims of Crime.

Executive Committee **motion** to approve the Consent Agenda. **Motion carried.**

Introduction of Terry Cowman, newly appointed Coordinator of the Department of Public Safety's Offices to Combat Human Trafficking and progress being made in 2018

Cowman thanked the NAHT Board for the invitation. Cowman has spent most of his 23-year career in the Division of Criminal Investigation where he supervised the staff who entered the information that goes into the public sex offender registry and the agents throughout Iowa investigating criminal non-compliance cases of people on the registry. His background allows him to see the original crime of sex abuse offenders and what happens through the plea-bargaining process.

As the new Coordinator of DPS Office to Combat Human Trafficking, Cowman works with senior analysts. The 2017 DPS human trafficking annual report was comprehensive, and Cowman hopes to add to it in 2018. Cowman clarified that Sgt Deskin previously held this position but was moved to a new DPS job position.

Belitsos asked for more information about the recent arrests of 7 traffickers and the rescue of 5 minors in Central Iowa. Cowman said that his office was not involved, and he doesn't have criminal investigation and arrest info on these specific cases. Cowman also did not have any information on the 5 minors that were rescued. Cowman noted that police departments worked these cases independently of DPS help, and the Office to Combat Human Trafficking was working on getting more information on these cases. Belitsos noted that the FBI was involved in at least one of these cases and asked if the Iowa Office to Combat Human Trafficking worked with the FBI. Cowman replied that his office does work with the FBI.

Rixner noted that Belitsos sent a list of questions to Commissioner Ryan and received an answer from Ryan providing statistics to NAHT. Cowman said that his office can provide some sex trafficking arrest data and encouraged NAHT Board members to reach out to him and he will provide what he can.

Belitsos asked if the Office to Combat Human Trafficking has data on labor trafficking. Cowman said "no" all the information now is regarding sex trafficking.

Wright asked if Cowman reaches the whole state and how NAHT Board members can secure DPS trainings or statistics. Cowman said his email is on the NAHT email chain and he encouraged NAHT Board members to contact him with law enforcement training requests. Cowman will talk to an analyst to see if there is data he can share.

Belitsos gave a historical perspective on the Office to Combat Human Trafficking. The NAHT Board, along with other groups, worked very hard for several years to create and fund an Office to Combat Trafficking in the Iowa Department of Public Safety. This year, when the Governor requested that the Office to Combat Human

Trafficking budget be cut to \$75,000, the NAHT Board successfully advocated for the legislature to fund \$150,000. Belitsos asked if the staff at the office can provide more outreach services and more data collection with the additional \$75,000 funding. Cowman thanked the NAHT for advocacy and said the extra \$75,000 helps provide overtime pay, more data collection, and possibly speakers for trainings. Belitsos thanked Cowman and invited him to join the NAHT meetings anytime.

Volunteer legislative research consultant's progress report (Erika Rist)

- Research and write a H.T. legislative history for 2006-2012.

Rist reported no progress on this history write-up. She will have it before the next meeting.

- Build a case for Iowa to adopt a Safe Harbor law (those under age 18 will not be charged with prostitution).

Rist is comparing what states have done to pass a Safe Harbor law. The Safe Harbor Law, passed in the state of Illinois, has been particularly effective, and Illinois has passed 6 additional laws pursuant to the passage of the initial Safe Harbor Law.

Rist would like to reconceptualize prostitution and labor trafficking as commercialized domestic violence. Rist believes people understand domestic violence in a way they don't understand commercial domestic violence. Rist would like to show legislators that it is economically more expensive to charge and jail victims than to provide services.

In Iowa, the Safe Harbor bill did not make it out of committee this year, so there are no official notes. Rist is researching which legislators might support the Safe Harbor Law in Iowa, in addition to legislator Nunn who introduced the Iowa bill. Belitsos reported that he talked to Nunn and that Nunn attempted to push it, but it didn't gain any traction.

Cox did not talk to Nunn but believes that NAHT needs to be very narrow and focused in contacts with legislators. Cox reported that passage of such a bill is a long process, starting with finding an advocate in both the House and Senate the first year and educating other legislators in both houses to support the bill in the second year. Cox believes that it is more successful to have mirroring bills in each house and NAHT needs to find a champion on the Senate side. Cox recommends NAHT keep contact with Nunn to get his perspective on passage of a Safe Harbor Law in Iowa. It is not necessarily a failure not to make it out of committee, as the next year, NAHT can build on the previous year's work.

Cox has shared information with Rist on passage of Safe Harbor Laws in other states which Rist reported was very helpful. Rist acknowledged that Belitsos sent contact information for a University of Denver group which is doing a national study, and Rist has now reviewed the study. Rist is focused on specifically how groups in various states approached legislators and will have a written plan to the Board before the end of summer.

Belitsos asked if Rist received the work/study grant from the University of Iowa to do this legislative research work for the NAHT Board, and Rist reported that she did receive the grant.

- Build a case for Iowa to increase penalties for buyers of prostitution.

No progress was reported by Rist.

Annual report by website provider RatherthanRunning on monthly user dashboard, blog posts, and subscribers (Lara Marsh).

Marsh thanked NAHT for the invitation to report to the Board. Marsh provides hosting services for the NAHT Board and does any changes to the NAHT website, website posts, and Facebook posts.

Marsh reviewed the handouts which were attached to the Agenda: The Annual Website Report and the June 4 Mail Chimp Report.

Google Analytics reports the traffic to the website which is reported on the Annual Website Report. From January 2018 to June 2018, page views of the website are way up over all of 2017. The list of resources has most website visits.

The average pages per visit is more than 2, which is considered good

69% find the NAHT website through online search engines such as Google, which is wonderful and shows that NAHT shows up high on the list of the search engine.

21% type in directly not through a search engine, which is also a high number.

5.4% visit via referrals, 4.4% visit via social media (almost all Facebook).

The second report, June 4 MailChimp Report, shows data from eNewsletters (total recipients, dates sent, opens and clicks). Mail Chimp does not charge for eNewsletters sent to up to 2,000 subscriber, and NAHT has recently met the strategic plan goal of 1,000 blot post subscribers.

Marsh said opens of eNewsletters are trending higher, and, in general, NAHT has a very engaged loyal audience of blog post followers. Belitsos is writing 2 blog posts per month with 4 in the month of January 2018.

Marsh says click rates could improve and made 3 suggestions: (1) To allow for better social media interaction and photo layout, continue to separately configure MailChimp campaigns (newsletters), rather than automatically have them created based on blog posts, (2) Reduce text in eNewsletters to allow for better skimming, and (3) Highlight “Calls to Action” to attempt to increase engagement. Belitsos will work with Marsh to implement these recommendations.

Letter of concern about labor trafficking (Rixner)

Belitsos sent out Rixner’s letter of concern to the entire Board in late May. Rixner said that NAHT needs to continue to educate about labor trafficking. Belitsos will add labor trafficking to the 2019 strategic plan for approval at the August NAHT meeting.

Report of the Survivor Services Collaboration (Fopma, Fineran, Davidson)

Davidson reported that 20 attended the last meeting of the Collaboration at the DOT. There was lots of good networking and information. The DOT revealed their new interactive map of human trafficking service providers which will be on their website. At the end of the Collaboration meeting, there was a recommendation to take on the project of developing best practices for serving human trafficking victims.

Belitsos reported he was very impressed with DOT interactive map. The user clicks on a county and a list of human trafficking resources comes up. The DOT map makers have taken NAHT’s expanded list of resources and they are checking to make sure all the information is correct and that all services provided are listed. Belitsos said no one does a better job making maps than the DOT, and Davidson agreed that the map will be a great resource. Belitsos will share information about the DOT map on his blog post. The map is not finished yet and it does not take the place of the statewide call-in service for intervention or the national hotline. The map is mostly for providers or law enforcement who are looking for services.

Belitsos also added that he has shared on his blog post the times that the Truckers Against Trafficking display will be at the State Fair. The blog post also informs anyone how to schedule the display in their area.

Report from the Central Iowa, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, and Iowa City Hotel/Motel Employee Training Projects. Startup plans in eastern and western Iowa. (Reding, Davidson, O’Meara, Rixner)

Reding reported that, when the hotel/motel trainings first were offered, it was not clear to hotels that to earn the certificate the hotel would need to have a significant number of people attend the training. Reding emphasized that all employees of the hotel need to have the training, especially the housekeepers and floor staff since they are the ones seeing the trafficking. Instead, in some cases, managers attended the training and then provided the training to their workers. This is because hotels view the training as time consuming and, while the training is free to hotels/motels, the hotels/motels must pay employees for the time they spend in the training. Reding reported that Hilton and Marriott have online human trafficking training which is required as part of employee orientation. Reding doesn’t think this online national training informs staff of what is going on in Iowa. Reding is trying to find someone to let her view the online training to see if it is specific enough to Iowa.

Reding is trying to get trainers to fill out forms so that she can track them. Reding prefers to enter data herself so she can see who is doing something or who is doing nothing.

Rixner asked if the hotel/motel training is offered in Spanish. Reding said they don’t have Spanish speaking translators. Usually there are one or two in the audience who can translate, and the Power Point presentation has been translated to Spanish. Reding will send the Spanish version of the Power Point to Rixner.

Davidson is having the same problem in the Cedar Rapids/Waterloo area of managers not sending all staff to the training. Davidson asked if the training could be shortened to fit into a regular hotel/motel staff meeting. Perhaps

the training could be videotaped so a volunteer could show it during a staff meeting. One of Davidson's volunteers suggested that there be a huge sign on the door in the lounge so that all the information is right there for hotel staff to see.

Davidson reported that she recently had a victim and had a hard time finding a hotel to house her.

Belitsos expressed support for a videotaped version of the hotel/motel training.

Rixner reported that she met with O'Meara and the Junior League and will set up a volunteer training time in September in the Western Iowa area for the hotel/motel volunteer training to begin.

Reding suggested that those leading the hotel/motel volunteer training groups, such as O'Meara, in various areas throughout Iowa have a conference call and discuss the issues they are facing and share fresh ideas. Davidson and Rixner both said they would participate. Belitsos suggested that Wright be on the conference call, too.

Wright asked if the NAHT manual has been compared with the hospitality toolkit from the Blue Campaign of Homeland Security. There are very effective posters and signs about identifying human trafficking and how to report in the tool kit for the hospitality industry. Reding said she tried but the Blue Campaign was not willing to mail out the information. Wright went to the website, downloaded posters, and paid for printing. Hotels said if Wright is willing to send to them the link to the file, hotels are willing to print out their own posters.

Belitsos offered to explore the DHS Blue Campaign website and send the information and posters to the entire Board.

Updates on efforts to adopt city massage ordinances in Newton (passed), Marshalltown (introduced but on hold), Altoona (passed), Clive (passed), West Des Moines (passed), Urbandale (passed), Pleasant Hill (passed), Sioux City (on hold), Cedar Rapids (holding 3 hearings), Marion (passed), Newton (passed), Ames, other cities? (all)

The number of cities which have passed massage ordinances is rapidly increasing. A total of 8 have now passed massage ordinances. Tomorrow, Davidson will go to the Cedar Rapids Police Department for a hearing initiated by the Chief of Police. Three public forums are being held to discuss the proposed massage ordinance for Cedar Rapids.

Other

Cox gave an update from the Legislative Advocacy Committee. The appropriations bill which includes setting up a Mandatory Reporter Work Group has been signed by the Governor. The Work Group will consider adding human trafficking identification to the training required of all Mandatory Reporters. Rickman of DHS is convening the Work Group. Anyone wanting to be involved should contact Rickman. Cox hopes to represent Prevent Child Abuse Iowa on the Work Group. Belitsos will contact Rickman to propose he and Timmons serve on the Work Group to represent NAHT.

Cox is nominating Angela Davis, former chair of Iowa Bar Association to serve on the NAHT Board of Directors. Davis is passionate about human rights and is a former lobbyist. Cox asks that the Board consider her nomination and her participation on the Legislative Advocacy Committee at the next Board meeting. Cox will send Davis's resume to Belitsos. Currently there are no vacancies on the NAHT 18-member Board.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

The July 16 NAHT Board of Directors meeting is cancelled due to vacations.

World Day Against Human Trafficking, is Monday, July 30

Next Executive Committee conference call: Monday, July 30, 2:30 to 4 p.m.

Next Board of Directors conference call: Monday, August 20, 2:30 to 4 p.m.