

**Iowa NAHT Board of Directors Minutes**  
**Tuesday March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Present:** Dr. George Belitsos, Ruth Buckels, Lauren Camp, Teresa Davidson, Dr. Shannon Findlay, Lori Freudenberg, Alyse Hardin, Kim Hilby, Alka Khanolkar, Katie Kyker, Brenda Long, Dr. Joseph Moravec, Shirlee Reding, Bernadette Rixner, Jessica Rohrs, Maggie Tinsman, Chief Mike Tupper, Heather Brown

**Excused Absence:** Sister Shirley Fineran, Alyse Hardin

**Guests:** Gretchen Brown-Waech, Erin Hanson, and Ashley Sunderman

**I. Call to order (Belitsos)**

Belitsos thanked Dr. Joe for hosting today's Zoom meeting and declared a quorum. Belitsos introduced a meeting guest Gretchen Brown-Waech from the Attorney. Dr. Joe introduced two guests and asked them to give snippets about themselves: Erin Hanson who works with Polk County Crisis and Advocacy Center. Hanson stated that she was a victim advocate, and she works with victims of sexual abuse and violent crime. She is the contact for human trafficking within the office and has been doing it for 10 years. Hanson offered to be a part of the NAHT's speakers bureau. Belitsos added that Hanson shared her PowerPoint which is a well done and accurate PowerPoint. Dr. Joe also introduced Ashley Sunderman from MercyOne. She is the children's outreach coordinator at MercyOne and she is a nurse. She educates nurses and helps with procedures.

**II. Progress report from Johnson County Human Trafficking Coalition and utilization of 100+ woman funding grant (Findlay)**

Findlay stated that they are in the process of forming a Zoom conference the last week in July. The first day will be labor trafficking and the day two for sex trafficking. She is excited about that. Belitsos stated that he felt it was wise to have a Zoom conference since the in person conference has been put off twice already. Belitsos stated he wants to put the conference flyer in the newsletter and the blog. Findlay said she will have more information in the next couple of weeks.

Findlay is waiting to hear back from Ulta about a local trafficking awareness radio ad that they will pay for with money from 100+ women.

She also stated that the Coralville Mall has kept up her trafficking awareness sign and that they have brochures there as well.

**III. Startup of Garden Gate Ranch (Long)**

Garden Gate Ranch is a trafficking survivor home that was born in Long's heart in January 2015. It is now open and serving women survivors 18 and over who have or who are expecting a child or have a child 4 and under. It is in a rural setting, so the ladies get to enjoy the outdoors. Garden Gate Ranch became a nonprofit in July 2017, hired their first part-time employee in October of 2017 and had their first Gala dinner fundraiser in April 2018. Dr. George and Ruth Buckels were there for that event. June of 2019, they purchased property and opened their doors on April 1, 2020. It has been a beautiful journey of the community coming together. They ended up on a 15-acre property assessed at over 1 million dollars and received the property for \$400,000. Just before that someone gave them \$150,000 so in essence, they received the property for \$250,000.

On the property there is a second 4000 square foot building which they are transforming into an education center which is in the works. They are halfway finished, and the remodeling is going along very well. The house capacity is 4 women and 8 children, and they are at ½ capacity right now. Within the house the women have an incredibly busy schedule. Academics take place in the morning, followed by therapy, mental health counseling, substance abuse therapy, evenings there is art therapy, journaling groups. It is a remarkably busy home. Of all the residents that have entered, no one has left yet. It is a 12–16-week program until they can move into the transitional cottage. There, the survivors can find jobs and transition into the community. They would still have their childcare, coaches and therapies available until they are ready to gradually move on. They are looking for groups to donate a cottage to them for use as the transition facility. Long stated she also sees the need for a relief rescue shelter in the city of Des Moines to get survivors off the street.

Belitsos stated "You have to have a dream to make a dream come true" and congratulated Brenda Long on her accomplishment.

Belitsos asked Long about the whether the ranch developed their own curriculum or adopted one. Long replied that she developed their own called "Blossoms of Hope". Along with that they look at each woman with their own individual needs. They also academically prepare based on individual needs. If the women are expecting children, they go through prenatal classes and biblical, forgiveness and communication skills. This helps identify the victim's purpose. There is a core curriculum but also pieces that are individually added. Shannon Findlay asked if the survivors can "opt out" of religious classes, but Long stated that they have a Christian-faith based curriculum and they must comply in order to stay there.

#### **IV. Approval of consent agenda (Belitsos)**

- Motion to approve the February 9th, 2021 meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors.

- Motion to approve the Acting Treasurer's report for January 2021.

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- Motion to approve the revised NAHT policy on Clarification of Mission Statement and Action Steps for Collaboration and Legislative Efforts.

There were no consent agenda items pulled off the consent agenda. Belitsos called for a vote and **there was unanimous approval of the consent agenda.**

#### **V. Plans for zoom webinar on Child Trafficking; Issues and Challenges scheduled for Monday, April 5th from 2:00-4:15pm. (Moravec)**

Dr. Joe stated that 250 people are already registered for the symposium. Mercy College of Health Sciences will be the host. Dr. Steven O'Mara, NAHT emeritus board member, will talk about the legislative and legal aspects/law enforcement side of child trafficking. Dr. Greenbaum from Atlanta is the keynote speaker and a lead researcher in the exploitation of children. Davidson will address trauma informed care and interview two survivors including Heather Brown and Stacy West. Dr. Joe stated it will be an awesome training day with about 50 people in person, all properly spaced, and up to 500 virtually. Belitsos called for all the Board members to sign up early for this symposium. He stated it was very easy to register by tapping the links provided in the March blog post.

#### **VI. Siouxland Coalition Against Human Trafficking "End the Demand" Campaign (Rixner)**

Belitsos began by commending the Siouxland Coalition for becoming the first coalition to begin a "End the Demand" campaign. Hopefully, this will serve as a springboard for other coalitions to do the same. Rixner shared the billboard design with the group. We let Clinton use this same billboard design, and they changed the equation. Men can sign the "Defender's" pledge designed by Shared Hope International. They are also utilizing the Man to-Man campaign model. It should be noted that the Man-to-Man model was created by Truckers Against Trafficking. Belitsos wrote up other details about the campaign in the February blog post.

#### **VII. Report from Legislative Advocacy Committee and progress on five legislative priorities for 2021 (see below). Status and recommended position on SF305 Human Trafficking Task Force. (Tinsman)**

Tinsman started with a discussion about funding cuts to Victim of Crime Services and their federal and state appropriation budgets. Tinsman called on Rohrs to expand on the status of state budget cuts to the Attorney General's Office. Rohrs stated that the VOCA funds are getting cut 8-12% this next fiscal year and a 20-25% cut the year after. The VOCA Fix is being considered by the federal government and if approved this will help to make a system so we

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do not have to go up and down on the VOCA cuts. Victim service programs across the state are looking at some very detrimental cuts the next two years.

Safe Harbor (our top priority) unfortunately does not have any affirmative legislation this year. Next year we should look at working harder on not only Safe Harbor legislation, but also expungement. Tinsman stated that she spoke to Justice Thomas Waterman about the Rape Shield Law and he's looking into the sample we sent him from Arkansas. It is our request to add human trafficking to the Iowa Rape Shield Law. Waterman mentioned that the Iowa Supreme Court had not done much this last year because of Covid, and Waterman promised to address the issue this fall.

We are making human trafficking legislation progress. Representative Mohr believes he has the hotel/motel bill funding for the Department of Public Services of \$159,000 in the budget.

House file 452 the massage business statewide bill has passed out of the House Committee chaired by Rep. Megan Jones, and it passed the House and is onto the Senate. The Senate has a companion bill in the Senate that needs to be passed as well (SF388). Rixner asked a question about massage parlor non-license reporting and it taking 6 months for a slap on the wrist. Tinsman suggested Rixner contact Angela Davis. It has passed the house and if something needs to be changed it must happen in the Senate. The bill gives the massage industry and law enforcement the tools to stop the bad actors. Mike Tupper added that the bill gives law enforcement the tools that they need to address the problems. He doesn't think it puts enforcement on the massage business authority and believes the bill is good to go.

Senate File 521 which used to be SF305, the Human Trafficking Task Force is still alive. Tinsman stated that she testified at the committee hearing and the amendments she proposed on behalf of the NAHT were all accepted. The bill allows for a comprehensive discussion about how Iowa approaches human trafficking. It will be based in the Department of Public Safety's Office to combat Human Trafficking. Four state agencies, law enforcement, prosecutors, the NAHT, and survivor rehabilitation services will all be represented. This will bring the private sector and the public sector to the table at the same time. Tinsman asked if the members of the Network would contact Senators Brad Zaun, Amy Sinclair and Kevin Kinney about supporting SF521 and SF388. She asked members to contact the Senate

because it is important that they know how significant these bills are.

Tinsman referenced the legislative tracking report and prefaced by stating that 6 of the bills the NAHT had supported are now unfortunately dead. HF357, the massage therapist rules is anticipated to moved forward. HF710, child endangerment by a sex offender is alive and out of committee. HF201, has passed the house and is in the Senate. It requires sex offenders to register in other jurisdictions. HF361, the guardian ad litem for witnesses is alive. This bill entitles a trafficking survivor the appointment of a guardian ad litem. Rixner asked what are

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the duties of the guardian ad litem and Buckels answered that it is a person to stand for the child and the child's needs. It has passed the House and is in the Senate. HF425, sexual abuse against a child under 14, not under 12 has passed the house and the senate and is in the governor's office for signing. HF426, the sex abuse kit tracking is doing okay as a bill, but it needs a budget. HF452, the human trafficking offenses, the massage bill has passed in the House as 452. The house put an amendment on that guarantees immunity. SF241, a misdemeanor for giving sexual material to a minor is alive. SF562, sexual exploitation by an adult is passed committee and is ready for debate in the Senate. HF245, preventing sex abuse instruction is dead.

HF414 and SF270 child sex abuse prevention education with amendments is still alive and has passed the house committee. This is one of the NAHT top five 2021 Legislative priorities. SF271, supplemental aid for at risk students is dead. The human trafficking Task Force SF521 is alive and all amendments were added by the committee, which is why we must contact our Senators about this bill. Rixner asked about the budgeting for the task force. Tinsman said the money is not in the bill yet. Once approved, the funds to operate the Task Force would go to the Department of Public Safety.

#### **NAHT 5 Ranked Priorities for 2021**

1. The NAHT requests that the Iowa legislature adopt a Safe Harbor Law that protects minors against prosecution for any crimes committed while they were trafficked. 31 states have already passed Safe Harbor Laws.
2. The NAHT requests that the Iowa legislature adopt legislation to enact the expungement of crimes committed by adult survivors which occurred while being trafficked.
3. The NAHT requests that the Iowa legislature adopt legislation requiring schools to provide child sex abuse awareness and prevention for students, parents, and school employees. The NAHT is collaborating with Prevent Child Abuse Iowa and both organizations will work for passage of this bill.
4. The NAHT requests that the Iowa legislature adopt legislation to add human trafficking

victims to Iowa's Rape Shield Law. Iowa's Rape Shield Law (Rule 5.412 Sexual abuse cases; relevance of victim's past behavior) does not currently extend rape shield protection to victims of sex trafficking. Iowa should enact laws that provide protections for Iowa sex trafficking victims in the trial process.

5. The NAHT requests that the Iowa legislature adopt legislation to create uniform statewide local law enforcement authority regulating massage businesses. The American Massage Business Association, Iowa Chapter has initiated this proposed legislation. If adopted, this would allow local law enforcement in all jurisdictions to monitor massage businesses in order to root out illicit activities such as sex trafficking. The bill would mandate that law

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enforcement in all cities and towns take on this responsibility in addition to the 23 cities which currently have anti-trafficking massage ordinances.

#### **VIII. From Franciscan Peace Counter and Clinton Coalition Against Human Trafficking to become a Trafficking Free Zone and collaboration with US Institute on Human Trafficking (Freudenburg)**

Freudenburg stated that they are contacting local law enforcement and other stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking. The Clinton Coalition is laying the foundation needed to become Iowa's first Trafficking Free Zone. Belitsos reminded the Board that the NAHT has the Trafficking Free Zone as a Strategic Goal and he thanked Freudenburg for taking the lead.

#### **IX. Update from Survivor Service Provider Collaboration. Outcome of March 4th quartered meeting. (Hardin, Buckels, Rohrs & Davidson)**

Rohrs stated that they had a great meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> and the agenda focused on the referral system to expand service providers referral process. The next quarterly meeting is on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **X. Progress report from the Evaluation/Research and Best Practices Committee. (Moravec, Reding, and Hilby)**

- **Hotel/Motel Training Subcommittee and outcome of meeting with DPS office to Combat Trafficking**
- **Addressing/Ending the Demand Subcommittee**
- **Best Practice for Survivor Services Subcommittee (Hilby)**

Reding stated that the 3 subcommittees are working hard and progressing well. They are into the final phases of making sure the appropriate people are on board for the hotel/motel training video. Mark Kirkbaum seems to be a dead end so if anyone has his contact information that would be helpful. Shirlee stated that they wanted to talk to Mark Kirkbaum, but he has resigned as U.S. Attorney. However, they have met with Pat Waymire from the Department of Public Safety who replaced Kevin. She stated they have also talked with the DPS Commissioner and requested another meeting with him. They are talking about the expectations of the Department of Public Safety for the training video. The NAHT has asked the Department of Public Safety to endorse the NAHT video.

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Davidson stated that the committee looked at the Minnesota hotel/motel video and went with similarities with considerable script changes. They comply with the training requirements of HF2259 in all their script writing. They know that the employee audience will be very diverse, so they will have Spanish subtitles and words will be on a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level. They will keep the video language survivor centered, trauma informed, and evidence based. They have hashed through who should be in the video, getting speaker commitments, and they are preparing survivors who will not have to divulge their identity in the video. The committee is to also focus a portion of the training on labor trafficking. They are having difficulty finding a success story that has happened in Iowa regarding a hotel staff member identifying human trafficking, and calling the appropriate authorities. The subcommittee has been reaching out to local police. Rixner asked if the survivor of labor trafficking must be in Iowa. Davidson responded that it would be best. Dr. Joe said that perhaps Mike Tupper could help. Davidson brought up the survivors' compensation for the video, however they have not talked with the committee as a whole about how much to compensate survivors.

Hilby leads the Best Practice Subcommittee and stated that she received a nice resource list. She has it narrowed down to four Best Practice documents. She is starting to involve a very dedicated graduate student who she is meeting with and has typed her bibliography information.

Dr. Joe stated that they have three great subcommittees. Belitsos stated when he first became chair of the Board there were no committees and now the committees are doing most of the work of the NAHT and it is really appreciated.

**XI. The meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.**

**Quarterly Executive Committee meeting: Tuesday, April 6th, 2021 2:30-4PM**

**Next Board of Directors Meeting: Tuesday, April 13th, 2021 2:30-4:00 PM**