

NAHT minutes March 11, 2024

Attendance

Present: Teresa Davidson, George Belitsos, John Chessier, Sr. Shirlee, Shirley Reding, Lyna Debner, Chief Tricia Thein, Heather Brown, Linda Harrell, Maggie Tinsman, Tom Barr

Guests: Noah Hackbart, Threase Harms, Ray Fiedler, Marielle Sweborg

Excused absences: Stephanie Olson, Karl Schilling, Bernadette Rixner, Kim Hilby, Brittany Sowder, Jackie White

Minutes. The February minutes were approved unanimously without changes.

February treasurers report. There were \$181 of deposits and \$922 of expenses. Beginning checking account balance was \$21,968 and ending balance was \$21,227. Savings account ending balance \$7,438 and CD balance \$21,344.

Legislative update. Threase updated us on our priority bills that made it out of the funnel deadline. Rep. Lohse's bill now HF908 has passed through both subcommittee and committee and is moving to the appropriations process. Rep. Lohse told Threase that the judicial branch would offer several amendments to the bill, including the inclusion of a representative from the judicial branch on the interim task force mandated by the bill and another on the operation of restitution funds. Threase also spoke with Rep. Lohse about our \$1 million dollar request for survivor services funding. Because the revenue estimating committee will meet this week, the budget targets will be formulated in the next couple of weeks. Threase said that next week, March 17-21, would be a good time to urge your representatives to support the 1\$ million in the upcoming budget bills. All of our priorities, including safe harbor language, are included in HF908. Maggie asked Threase about house HF649. Threase responded that this cleans up language in the Iowa code regarding services so that no third party is necessary to constitute the crime of trafficking a minor. HF 669, sponsored by Rep. Mark Thompson, provides for the possibility of expungement for human trafficking victims, a priority that we have had for several years. In sum, all of our issues are still alive in various bills, as well as several related bills on child pornography and the closed-circuit witness testimony bills. On the other hand, HF831 sponsored by Rep. Thompson, is unlikely to pass this year because it has a large appropriation attached to it, she said. Threase added that she thought the various bills on the closed-circuit testimony were likely to pass this year. Teresa Davidson commented that Mark Thompson has creative ideas for how to come up with the money required by HF831.

Guest Ray Fieldler of the Office to Combat Human Trafficking in the Iowa Department of Public Safety. Ray joined us to talk about the new DPS tip line for human trafficking and the new law-enforcement human trafficking task force being developed by DPS. The tip line has been operational for several weeks already (phone number is 855-614-4692). The tip line covers the whole state. The number rings directly to Ray's office. If Ray is not available, it goes to the

analysts of DPS during the day. This will also be posted at the ILEA website. If the call is after hours the caller can leave a voice message. That voice message triggers a text message to Ray, his supervisor Pat Waymire and other DPS employees. They've already had one call. George asked if we should put this on our sticker and Ray said yes. George said he would feature the new tip line as the lead article in the next blog post for April. Ray said that along with the new tip line, DPS had started putting together a new statewide law enforcement human trafficking task force which Teresa Davidson had helped out with. This task force includes the two new human trafficking agents hired within the DCI major crimes unit and includes law-enforcement officials not only in DPS but in local enforcement agencies as well. Because of this DPS can forward calls from the new tip line not only to the local jurisdiction but also to the yet-to-be named statewide HT task force. Ray expected to attract 10 or so participants but they already have more than 30. OCHT began developing the task force in Des Moines and working their way east. Sr. Shirley asked what the difference would be between calling 911 and calling the tip line. Ray said that whereas 911 is for obvious emergency situations, the tip line can be more informational so that the caller can learn whether the situation is actually a human trafficking situation before the next step of turning it over to law enforcement with the police cars and the sirens and so on. Sr. Shirley asked if this were a better option than calling the Polaris 888 number. Ray said that yes because often law-enforcement was often getting no information from Polaris so now around 27 states have their own human trafficking tip line. DPS is also looking at some different ways to get the tip line to victims including things like lip balm in addition to pamphlets, brochures and other typical information pieces. OCHT is also updating its website which should be finished in mid May. Ray said he would forward by email the slide that he uses in his presentation about the tip line to Sr. Shirley and anyone else who would like to see it. Teresa asked Ray to explain when someone should call the Iowa victim services call center versus the tip line. Ray replied that DPS does not offer victim services. On the other hand, if someone calls Iowa victim services that call information will not be shared with a DPS. Teresa mentioned that her daughter was a 911 dispatcher and Ray said that if she could provide the contact information for someone who could forward the tip line number to all the 911 dispatchers in the state he would send that information. Teresa noted that there is currently no code for human trafficking among those used nationally for 911 dispatchers. Chief Thein asked Ray if he had developed any contacts in Northeast Iowa. She added that in metro areas there is awareness among law-enforcement officers, businesses and the public of trafficking but in smaller towns the need for training is still great. Ray mentioned Scott Mullenix in narcotics and Chris Forsyth in the casino in Waterloo. Ray also offered to come up himself and do training in that area. He added that in Dubuque NAHT board member Kim Hilby was starting a multidisciplinary team. George asked about the massage business situation specifically with regard to addressing any loopholes and current legislation. Ray replied that he does not directly deal with legislation but said that DPS had just held a massage business training in February for law enforcement and prosecutors. Their strategy is to approach the problem through the money trail rather than putting the girls themselves in jail. They have shut down one massage business in Des Moines and are currently looking into several

in the Davenport area. One approach is to send letters to the landlords to remind them that they also face penalties if they knowingly lease their space to an illegal massage business. One problem is that each individual masseuse is licensed but the business is not. They hope to obtain 70% compliance just by sending this letter from prosecutors. DPS does not have the manpower to simultaneously investigate the 120 such businesses in the state. On hotel-motel training, DPS is following up to make sure that the hotels maintain their human trafficking training certifications which expire after several years. Of approximately 750 hotels participating in the program at the end of 2024 around 100 still need to catch up with their certifications. Ray added that they are getting so much information on human trafficking cases that the one analyst assigned to it needs more help and DPS is training more analyst to help her. This might be due to the increased penalties under the new 2023 state law for human trafficking crimes.

Nomination of Austin Stubbs to the Board of Directors. Teresa reminded the board that NAHT has been hoping to add Kellie Markey founder of Dorothy's house as a board member for several years. Teresa met Kellie's new development director Austin Stubbs at our awards ceremony in January. Kellie urged Teresa to meet with Austin since he is very interested in the legislative side of the human trafficking effort. Teresa thought that he might be a good board member and asked Kellie herself about it and she agreed. George moved that we elect Austin Stubbs to the board. Maggie second of the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

New anti-trafficking sticker proposal. John reported that the Iowa Secretary of State's office proposed that NAHT work with them, the Blue Campaign, and Fareway Stores to develop a new anti-trafficking sticker. George expressed a concern that by adding the new DPS tip line we might be running out of space on the new sticker, especially if we have to add the logos of the Blue Campaign, the Secretary of State and Fareway Stores. He added that it might not be fair for us to put Fareway on the stickers when Hy-Vee Stores is already a big help in distributing our current stickers and using them in their own stores. George suggested that it might be a good idea to have the SOS make their own stickers for SOS, the Blue Project and Fareway. Tom wondered whether a new design might be able to incorporate all these logos and new information on one sticker. John said he and George would spearhead a committee to look into the sticker proposal. Lyna asked whether anyone knew what was going on with the Polaris hotline. George said he thought under the new administration they might be losing their \$5 million grant so they are currently raising money. Heather said that the National Survivor Network is looking into the Polaris hotline issue right now but it's not clear what the outcome might be.

2025 proposed NAHT budget. George said he compiled information about all of our budgets from 2018 to 2024 and displayed it in one column of this report. The final column is the 2025 proposed budget which is \$23,942. The budget for 2024 was \$23,512 so the 2025 budget is almost the same as last year. The 2023 budget was \$27,000. However, our total income for 2024 was only \$16,000. We still have our CD and our savings account but based on income and expenditure alone we ran a deficit in 2024 of \$6,839. Fortunately since the appointment of Tom as our new fundraising chair income has risen. Tom moved that we accept George's 2025 budget

and Sr. Shirley seconded in the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the budget was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50pm.

Meeting chat log:

14:46:23 From Noah Hackbart to Everyone:

HF 649, Thompson bill that Maggie was referring to.

14:47:30 From Noah Hackbart to Everyone:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=91&ba=hf602>

14:47:46 From Noah Hackbart to Everyone:

HF 602, two-way closed-circuit bill.

14:49:07 From Noah Hackbart to Everyone:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=91&ba=sjr9>

14:49:26 From Noah Hackbart to Everyone:

SJR 9, AG's Constitutional Amendment proposition.

14:57:29 From John Chessser to Everyone:

855-614-4692

15:11:23 From Tom Barr to John Chessser (direct message):

Ask Ray what his Current Web Site is??

15:12:33 From Shirley Fineran to Everyone:

Shirley@lillamaeshouse.org

15:18:13 From Tom Barr to John Chesser (direct message):

When Ray sends his Page from his Website, please share with us and maybe George can add to his PowerPoint presentation on trafficking too