

**Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery (NAHT)**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
January 16, 2020 noon to 1:30  
Iowa Senate Room 116, Iowa State Capitol Building

**Attendee:** Dr. George Belitsos, Jonathan Causey, Sister Shirley Fineran, Teresa Davidson, Jennifer Kerger, Brenda Long, Dr. Joseph Moravec, Shirlee Reding, Maggie Tinsman, and Jim Townsend, Ali Brokaw (proxy), Linda Greenlee (proxy)

**Excused:** Jessica Rohrs, (Please Note: Alyse Harding, Katie Kyker, Roxanne Riesberg are all three on maternity leave), Bernadette Rixner, Lauren Camp, Paul Fitzgerald, Mike Tupper

**Speakers:** Kevin Winker, Director of Investigative Operations, DPS Office to Combat Human Trafficking; Stephanie Simbric, Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (LEA) Human Trafficking Trainer; Jessie Jonson, Coordinator of Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Services; Rachel Pointer, Nebraska Partnership Against Trafficking of Humans (PATH); Julissa Ponce, TAPS Case Manager; and Jerry Ingrisano, Assistant Director of Iowa LEA

**Guests:** 25 guests joined the meeting, including three legislators

**Annual Board Photo**

Directors in attendance posed for an annual NAHT Board photo which will be posted on the Network website

**Call to Order and Roll Call. Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Belitsos at 12:10 PM. Board members and 25 guests in the audience introduce themselves. Agendas, Strategic Plans, meeting minutes, and 2020 Legislative Priorities were made available to guests.

**Executive Committee 1/7/20 meeting report and approval of consent agenda**

Belitsos reviewed the proposed motions recommended by the Executive Committee. Tinsman asked Belitsos to review and discuss the eight new 2020 goals in the Strategic Plan. Belitsos read and explained each goal.

- Motion to approve December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors
- Motion to elect Jim Townsend and Shannon Findlay to the Board of Directors
- Motion to nominate and elect the following as NAHT Board Officers (one year term begins on February 1, 2020): Chair George Belitsos, Vice Chair Jonathan Causey, Secretary Maggie Tinsman and Treasurer Jim Townsend
- Motion to approve the December 2019 treasurer's report
- Motion to accept with regret the Board member resignation of Suzy Wright and Dr. Taylor Houston effective January 31, 2020
- Motion to approve the printing of 2,500 more Rescue Stickers at a cost of \$318.32 (including shipping)

- Motion to approve a revision of the 2020 NAHT Legislation priorities, removing the reference to HF455

The Executive Committee motion to accept the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

### **One year progress report after startup of Rescue Sticker Project and second year plans for statewide distribution (Belitsos)**

Belitsos reported that last year at this time, the NAHT Rescue Sticker Project was launched. In the course of one year, 10,000 rescue stickers have been distributed. Today, there were 1,000 stickers available for anyone interested, along with distribution instructions. All that NAHT asks would be to first get permission to place them in any facility and to let NAHT know by who and where these stickers were placed. The only part of the state that stickers have not been distributed is southern Iowa.

### **Annual report from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (Stephanie Simbric, Human Trafficking Trainer)**

Belitsos thanked Simbric for attending today's meeting to report for the LEA. Simbric recently resigned from her LEA training position. Belitsos commended Simbric for her excellent LEA training career and she will be missed. Jerry Ingrisano reported that the LEA has hired a new Human Trafficking Trainer, and he will inform Belitsos soon.

Simbric reported having trained 1,200 law enforcement officers in the last year. She is the first Human Trafficking Trainer at the LEA and described what progress has been made in course development and expansion.

### **Report from the Legislative Advocacy Committee. Discuss priorities for 2020 legislative session and visits with legislature. Local City Council and Board of Supervisor proclamations. (Maggie Tinsman and Jonathan Causey)**

Tinsman asked that each board member contact their local City Council and County Board of Supervisors to request a proclamation for making January "Human Trafficking and Slavery Prevention and Awareness Month."

As this is the beginning of the Iowa Legislative session, there were no known hotel/motel bills that had been actually filed. Tinsman stated that Angela Davis, the NAHT's Legislative Advocate, would be looking at **DRAFTED** hotel motel bills of both Representative Cindy Winkler and Representative Gary Mohr and would be helping draft changes to the final Hotel/Motel Bill. This is the NAHT's priority legislation.

In the meantime, Tinsman asked that each Board member talk with their Representative and Senator about supporting a bill that educates hotel and motel workers of the signs of trafficking in an effort to stop activity in hotels and motels statewide.

An explanation of a "Safe Harbor" law and how it would work was given by Causey. He also spoke about the need to improve and expand the anti-human trafficking laws and the need for the Iowa Supreme Court to add "human trafficking victims" to Iowa's Rape Shield law.

Tinsman stated that NAHT's Legislative Priorities also includes requesting the restoration of the \$1.7 M cut to state funding for the Victim Assistance Grants in the Crime Victim Assistance Division as well as a **NEW** funding appropriation of \$1M designated for prevention, education, and treatment services without deleting any funds from the Victim Assistance Grants. (*See attachments for 2020 NAHT Legislation Priorities and talking points of hotel/motel training bill*)

**Annual report from Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Services (TAPS) project of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (Jessie Johnson, TIP Coordinator & Julissa Ponce, Case Manager)**

Jessie Johnson reported on the Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Services (TAPS) program. She announced that TAPS is now offering case management services and trainings. Julissa Ponce has been hired as the Case Manager for the TAPS program and is now available to provide case management services to survivors of human trafficking located within a 100 mile radius of Des Moines. Ponce has extensive knowledge in cultural humility and trauma-informed advocacy.

Prior to joining the TAPS program located at the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Ponce worked as a Comprehensive Bilingual Survivor Advocate for an Iowa-based nonprofit serving survivors of human trafficking and is also a certified sexual assault and domestic violence advocate. She has provided training for local law enforcement agencies on human trafficking with a focus on labor trafficking and wide-spread community education on labor exploitation. She is a member of the Migrant Seasonal Worker Taskforce, Anti-Labor Trafficking Association (ALTA), and the Iowa Work Force Development Migrant Outreach team in Iowa. Julissa can be reached at [jponce@uscrimail.org](mailto:jponce@uscrimail.org) or 515-528-7525 ext. 2512.

In an effort to address the issue of human trafficking, and labor trafficking in particular, TAPS training is prepared to respond to community needs. To schedule and discuss a training that is right for you, please contact TAPS Program Coordinator, Jess Johnson, for more information. She can be reached by email at [jjohnson@uscrimail.org](mailto:jjohnson@uscrimail.org) or 515-528-7525 ext. 2513. Also, Ponce and Johnson will be making a presentation to the NAHT Board of Directors on January 16 in Senate Room 116 of the State Capitol Building. The public is invited.

**Presentation by Nebraska Partnership Against Trafficking of Humans (PATH) (Rachel Pointer, Resilience Coach and Anti-Trafficking Consultant)**

Belitsos introduced Rachel Pointer, representing Nebraska PATH. He thanked her for traveling from Nebraska to report to the NAHT. Pointer began by stating that the state of Nebraska has made significant progress over the last few years in anti-trafficking work. One of the reasons that they have made as much progress is because survivors have been at the forefront and leading since the beginning. Survivors of trafficking have been involved in advancing legislation, raising awareness, training law enforcement and service providers, and developing programs. This leadership has been integral in moving the state from a solid "F" rating in 2012 to receiving the only awarded "A" grade in 2019, from Polaris and also Shared Hope (national anti-trafficking organizations).

In 2016 the NE Attorney General's office formed the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF) and obtained a joint federal grant with the Salvation Army's Fight To End Trafficking (SAFE-T) to coordinate a statewide anti-trafficking services. The NHTTF was joined by several organizations and agencies across the state of Nebraska, and made significant progress. The grant cycle ended in 2019, and it was determined by all parties that this would be a perfect time to enter the next phase of anti-trafficking work in Nebraska. The NHTTF remains under the Attorney General's office, and is focusing primarily on legal and law enforcement efforts. Service providers and other entities formed the Nebraska Partnerships Against Trafficking of Humans (Nebraska PATH) to continue the work in partnership with each other without the restrictions of the federal grant. This new group will become similar to the NAHT here in Iowa. The NHTTF is committed to make Nebraska a safer place to live through their anti-trafficking work.

Currently, Nebraska PATH communicates through a listserv as they begin to formalize their structure and continue this critical work. Pointer stated that anyone who would like to be part of the listserv is welcome to contact her and she will connect you.

Pointer thanked the NAHT for allowing them time on the agenda to speak. PATH is open to collaboration or partnership with NAHT. She believes it is important to develop relationships outside of Nebraska. *(The attached documents were provided by Pointer as resources)*

### **Annual Report from the Department of Public Safety Office to Combat Human Trafficking (Kevin Winker, Director of Investigative Operations)**

Kevin Winker, Director of Investigative Operations for the Iowa Department of Public Safety, attended the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery board meeting and provided an update on the activities of the Office to Combat Human Trafficking. Funding for the office remained the same as 2018, steady at an appropriation of \$150,000 (this is half of the original appropriation), the largest portion of which funds a human trafficking intelligence analyst within the Division of Intelligence and Fusion Center. In calendar year 2018, the office received 47 Polaris tips and another 9 tips from other sources. Although calendar year 2019 tip totals are not available yet, it is expected they outpaced 2018 reporting. Also in 2018, a review of court records showed human trafficking cases being disposed of in the following counties; Black Hawk, Dallas, Dubuque, Johnson, Linn, Polk, Pottawattamie, Scott, Warren and Woodbury.

In fiscal year 2019, the Department's Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) played a significant role in 4 human trafficking investigations and so far in fiscal year 2020, have participated in one human trafficking investigation. The DCI is the investigative arm of the Department of Public Safety and any request for investigative assistance regarding a human trafficking investigation is referred to the DCI. These cases are then worked in partnership with the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

Terry Cowman, the coordinator for the DPS Office to Combat Human Trafficking, has been on suspension since last October. Winker suggested that his name and contact information be substituted in the NAHT brochure and the website Resource Directory.

A complete copy of the Office to Combat Human Trafficking Annual Report 2019 can be found at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/DF/1070336.pdf>

**The annual Board meeting was adjourned at 1:35 PM.**

**Next NAHT Board of Directors meeting is Tuesday, February 11, 2020 from 2:30-4:00 PM.**