

NAHT Board Meeting Minutes 6-10-25

Attending: George, Maggie, Stephanie, Shirley, Teresa, Tom, Linda, Austin, Kim, Lyna, Karl, Bernadette, John

Excused absences: Heather, Brittany, Chief Thein

Guests: Threase Harms, Elle Sweborg

Legislative wrap-up.

Summary of the session: Threase Harms provided a slide show summary of the 2025 legislative session, which saw the passage of several key initiatives, including a hands-free driving law and state paid leave for maternity and paternity, while failing to advance proposals on child care and preschool funding. Only 142 bills were sent to the governor, a low number. Less than 10% of bills introduced passed. She noted that the state budget increased by 5% to \$9.4 billion, with a \$1 billion shortfall covered by one-time reserves. In this tough environment we nevertheless obtained at least the \$150,000 for human trafficking victims to be distributed by the AG's office. On the other hand, Rep. Brian Lohse's omnibus HT passed the House but was blocked in the Senate.

Future legislation: The group discussed challenges in protecting trafficking survivors, particularly those who may be involved in recruiting others. Stephanie raised concerns about survivors being criminalized and the difficulty of implementing effective laws in this area. George also noted that the Lohse bill includes language protecting minor trafficking victims from criminalization. John suggested discussing these and other issues with state agencies during the interim before the next legislative cycle. Answering a question from Maggies, Threase provided information on the grooming definition from Iowa Code, which could be relevant for future discussions on trafficking laws.

Agenda for 2026: The group discussed developing a legislative agenda for the upcoming session, with a focus on refining and advancing a new version of the Lohse bill. Threase emphasized the need to start this work immediately, as January will be too late. Therefore the legislative committee should meet in the next 3-4 weeks to establish agenda items and finalize them by mid-August or early September. George suggested that casino employee have the training requirements for human trafficking awareness as hotel and motel employees, noting that Illinois has implemented mandatory training and reporting procedures for casinos. The group agreed to explore introducing similar legislation in Iowa. Threase said she would find the Illinois law for reference. The group also discussed the Take it Down Act, a federal law criminalizing non-consensual sexually explicit images, including those generated by AI, for any age group. The committee scheduled their next legislative meeting for July 8th at 2:30 PM.

Board minutes and treasurer Report

May minutes. The board reviewed and unanimously accepted the minutes from May, correcting a few errors, including the spelling of Threase Harms' name and clarifying that Linda McConley is a web designer, not a webmaster. George moved acceptance of the

minutes and Bernadette seconded.

May treasurer report. George gave a brief overview of the May treasurer report, pointing out that although income was low in April (\$200 total), our 20th anniversary fundraising campaign is already showing results with donations from two board members (\$200 each), a donor Pauline Miller (\$200) and a donation from a casino (\$900). As a result the executive committee decided to seek grants from other Iowa casinos. Maggie moved to accept the treasurer's report, which was seconded by Shirley, and the board approved it unanimously with no amendments. The conversation ended with a discussion about the procedure for approving minutes and treasurer's reports, with George requesting the recording of formal motions in the minutes for clarity.

Election of Sara Kellums to the board

After motion by George and second by Teresa Davidson, the board elected Sara Kellums, a survivor and advocate with Braking Traffik (Family Resources) in the Quad Cities, to the board. Teresa Davidson, Tom and Maggie praised Sara enthusiastically for her extensive experience working with survivors in many contexts. George moved the nomination and Teresa Davidson seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The conversation ended with a brief discussion about bylaws and board membership, noting the absence of several members.

Compensation of survivor board members

John updated the board on the executive committee recommendation that, in accordance with a provision of the NAHT bylaws, the survivor board members be compensated for their time spent in board duties. Stephanie noted that this is best practice and offered to provide documentation on appropriate compensation amounts for survivors. George suggested that it should be the same hourly rate structure as the NAHT technology consultants at \$15 per hour. Austin suggested that adoption of this practice could be a relevant element in NAHT grant applications. John noted that after Jackie White's resignation, the board has only one law enforcement member and requested ideas for additional law enforcement members.

Fundraising

Tom announced the organization's anniversary month and encouraged board members to help with fundraising efforts through donations and spreading the word to their networks. John added that upcoming events would be opportunities for fundraising, including World Day Against Trafficking on July 30, National Night Out on August 2 and the Red Sand Project. Teresa explained that the Red Sand Project is an annual event which involves pouring red sand into cracks of sidewalks to make the point that children who 'fall through the cracks' often end up in trafficking. Chains Interrupted has participated since 2018 and the project has been successful in various locations across the state. Teresa offered to share contact info with board members about Red Sand and especially

to share approved messages, otherwise people write myths and inaccurate statistics about trafficking. George noted that Teresa had agreed to write an article for the July newsletter to promote the project.

Church donations and casino funding

Responding to a question from John, George explained that two Ames churches, including NAHT emeritus board member Jan Beran's church, have been donating annually for several years (\$500 and \$250). John asked the board whether they thought it was a good idea to apply for grants from casinos. Maggie, Kim, Karl, Austin voiced support for the idea. Teresa said although she had struggled with this question, should concluded that it was right to take casino money to fight trafficking since it is something that happens in casinos. The board agreed to pursue casino funding without taking a formal vote. Elle suggested that we connect with a former Davenport police chief now working as head of security at Rhythm City Casino on this topic.

State Department Delegation sponsored by Iowa International Center

John announced an upcoming meeting with a South American delegation from the State Department, scheduled for Friday at the Denton's Davis Brown law firm in Des Moines. Austin and Dorothy's House were hosting a separate session with the group on Thursday.

Miscellaneous

Elle followed up with another thought on the retired Davenport police chief, adding that he could be a potential new board member. John mentioned that the next regular board meeting will be on August 12 and to remember the legislative committee meeting on July 8th. George reminded John to invite representatives of the state agencies and other entities that compile HT statistics for Iowa to send their 2024 numbers to us, as well as to invite them as guests to upcoming meetings. George also said that he was unable to find the 2025 Advocacy Strategies contract in his records despite having made payments on it. Threase Harms agreed to forward the contract to George.

The meeting adjourned at 4pm.