

## NAHT October 8, 2024 Board Meeting minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm. John welcomed new board member Heather Brown. Tricia Thein, Stephanie Olson, Lyna Debner and Kim Hilby were unable to attend today due to schedule conflicts. Present: George, John, Maggie, Teresa, Karl, Shirley, Tom, Bernadette, Jackie, Deanna, Linda, Heather. Guest: Chelsea Hoye

**Treasurer's report:** George noted that most of the donations in September were for the \$20 T-shirts provided by Tom. George said that the expenses look higher this month because Linda McConley submitted bills for two different months in September. George reminded John to include the final totals for income and expense for the treasurer's report in the minutes for each month. NAHT received \$367 in donations and had \$1,752 in expenses in September. Our beginning checking account balance was \$22,953.72. Our ending checking account balance was \$21,568.96. Our same account balance was \$7436.52. Our certificate of deposit balance was \$20,997.42.

**Legislative report:** Chelsea has spoken recently with legislators Gary Mohr and Brian Lohse. Chelsea said that Lohse and Mohr are arranging a meeting with Attorney General Brenna Bird sometime in the next month to have a broad conversation about victim services funding. Lohse and Mohr are aware that NAHT is pushing for a special fund dedicated exclusively to services for trafficking survivors. Mohr told Chelsea that Bird needs to include this funding in the AG budget to clear the way for the legislature to budget for it. Chelsea is developing recommendations for the next version of the Lohse bill based on feedback she is seeking from a number of people now; she wants to be ready for a conversation with Lohse as soon as the election is over. Chelsea is preparing drafts of op-eds for Teresa and Maggie. Chelsea encouraged all board members to reach out through the news media to press for our legislative priorities. Chelsea is currently drafting a standalone bill for the \$1 million for survivor services, keeping in mind that eventually it will probably be added to an appropriations bill.

Maggie asked who we should ask to sponsor the bill. Chelsea said that in addition to represented Lohse, Mark Thompson and Cherielynn Westrich on the Senate side and might also be willing. George said that he had spoken with representative Lohse recently, asking him whether he would support a special fund for trafficking victims separate from the general fund for all crime victims. Representative Lohse said yes. Chelsea said that when she meets with the attorney general, she will ask if AG Bird would like the trafficking victim fund to be administered by the AG's office. Bernadette said she had recently spoken with Teresa Grant of the Iowa League of Women Voters who wants to know what we are asking for this year. The LWV has human trafficking prevention among their priority issues. Chelsea said she would work with their lobbyist Amy Campbell so that the league of women voters is informed about our priorities. Marielle added that the AAUW also has trafficking as a priority and is working on a communication to all AAUW members throughout Iowa to support legislation on survivor services funding. George asked about the flyer that Chelsea produces every year to outline our priorities. Chelsea said that she has it drafted and will have it ready soon. Teresa asked to be reminded what the four priorities are; George said they are: \$1 million funding, the Brian Lohse bill, amendment of Iowa code 710a, and to keep Safe Harbor legislation on our agenda, even if it is unlikely to be passed this year.

Maggie complimented Karl on the recent law enforcement training program sponsored by Civitas, the Rotary initiative. Karl replied that Civitas is a collaborative effort of 12 Rotary Clubs in Iowa, and that the clubs recently voted to continue this initiative for another year. Teresa said that she spoke with the main presenter Dan Nash about Iowa Code 710a and 725.1, which Teresa is unhappy with because it allows discretion to law enforcement whether to arrest minors, prosecute them or designate them as children in need of assistance (CINA). Most of the time, she added, the situation goes well for kids in Iowa, but the loophole still exists. Teresa told Chelsea that Nash offered to help us and has a lot of contacts. Nash, a former FBI agent, is the founder of the Human Trafficking Training Center based in Missouri. Teresa noted that DPS played a prominent role in bringing Nash to Iowa for the training session.

Maggie, Karl and Teresa complimented Chelsea on the advocacy training webinar we held on October 7. John will send a link to the recording to everyone who was invited and George will also include the link in the November blog. A link to the recording of the webinar for legislators presented by Teresa will also be sent out.

**Civitas training.** George said that NAHT was well represented at this event, with two tables, including all of our literature, posters, stickers and T-shirts. Several of our Rotarian board members were there, including George, Maggie, Karl and Tom. About 140 people attended the evening event. Over the three years this event has been held it has raised more than \$90,000 for facilities in central Iowa that provide direct services to survivors of human trafficking.

**Hotlines.** Teresa thanked George for speaking up at the Civitas event to support the National Human Trafficking Hotline policy to not share information with law enforcement when Dan Nash strongly criticized this policy. George replied that Nash basically condemned the hotline and felt that his criticism demanded a response. George said it is appropriate that neither the national hotline nor the Iowa hotline supply any information to law enforcement without the permission of the survivor making the call. Teresa noted that this has been a controversial issue for NAHT since the development of the hotel/motel training videos. Teresa added that it's important that everyone knows the difference between a hotline for survivors to obtain help and a tip line reporting crimes to law enforcement, something that can be very confusing for people. George noted that the national hotline has fielded more than 100,000 calls from survivors and deserves our support. Teresa said that Dan Nash's forceful condemnation of the hotline was in her view inappropriate.

Bernadette asked George whether there is an effort in Congress to force the hotline to provide information to law enforcement. George said that there had been but that it did not go anywhere after committee hearings. George added that if the state of Iowa sets up an 800 number for law-enforcement tips, it should be made perfectly clear that it is a tips-only line and not for survivors to call. Teresa said that while the national hotline does have its issues, it is the source of statistics on trafficking throughout the country and therefore she always calls the national hotline because it helps compile statistics on trafficking in Iowa. The Iowa hotline, on the other hand, has more updated and accurate information about survivor services in Iowa. John asked whether it is better for survivors to call the Iowa hotline or the national hotline. Heather said she was part of the National Survivors Network, one of the organizations that made the push not to require the national hotline to provide information to law enforcement. She said that survivors across the

nation were split on whether information should be shared with law enforcement. She added that their survey of survivors shows the majority of them prefer to call local hotlines before calling the national hotline because they could talk to a human being. Heather said that callers can wait for hours on the national hotline before anyone answers. In any case, survivors know that if they're in imminent danger they should call 911. Teresa said that the compromise worked out with DPS on the hotel/motel video was to include both national and the Iowa hotlines, including calling 911 when appropriate. She added that even today there are no codes for 911 dispatchers to use to categorize an incident as human trafficking.

**AG human trafficking effort.** George expressed concern that the AG's office is not devoting the resources to human trafficking that they did when Gretchen Brown-Waech occupied her old job as human trafficking coordinator. John said this discussion was the best left to a time when Jackie could address this issue but her mike and camera or not working today.

**Fundraising committee.** Tom reminded the board that Giving Tuesday is December 3 and we are encouraging all board members to donate to the NAHT at least once per calendar year. We hope to reach out to the Rotary Club, fraternal organizations, the League of Women Voters, the AAUW and all the subscribers to the NAHT blog. The Iowa State intern will work with John to apply for grants.

**Nominations for Outstanding Anti-Trafficking Awards.** John reminded the board that nominations are due in November and that the awards given in January. Teresa said she will be making a nomination. George said that Civitas was going to be nominated and that he has been informed that he will receive the nomination of a graduate student from Iowa who had gone to Haiti to study human trafficking and was murdered in the course of her work there. He added that he had heard that the AG's office was going to nominate Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate for an award. Jackie wrote in the chat box that she intends to nominate Nikki Romer, a forensic interviewer at Blank Children's Hospital. Deanna wrote in the chat box that she also intends to nominate someone.

**The minutes were approved with changes submitted by Teresa.**

**The meeting adjourned at 3:40 PM.**