

Iowa NAHT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 10, 2017

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm Conference Call

Present on call: George Belitsos (Chair), Jan Beran, Ruth Buckels, Teresa Davidson, Sr Shirley Fineran, Joy Fopma, Brynne Howard, Jennie Kerger, Cathy O'Keeffe, Stephen O'Meara, Shirlee Reding, Bernadette Rixner, Erin Schneider, Alissa Stoehr, Maggie Tinsman

Excused: Liz Cox, Taylor Houston

Resigned: Steve Eckley

Absent: None

Guests: Roxann Ryan (DPS Public Safety Commissioner), Sgt Robert Deskin (Iowa Human Trafficking and Homeland Security), Kevin Winker (Assistant Director of the DPS Intelligence and Fusion Center)

Taking minutes: Margaret Epplin

Call to Order and Roll Call. Welcome new Board members (Erin Schneider and Dr. Alissa Stoehr) and guests

The meeting was called to order by Chair Belitsos. New Board members Schneider and Stoehr introduced themselves. Schneider is an attorney and Assistant Professor of Law at Drake Law School where she serves as Chair of the Human Trafficking Subcommittee. She is taking the seat formerly held by Steve Eckley who is moving up to Chair of the Board of the Iowa Bar. Stoehr is taking the seat held by Ruth Buckels. She teaches in both the Sociology Department and the Women's and Gender Studies Program at Iowa State. She teaches two courses on human trafficking: one is an honors seminar and the other is a 3-credit course within the Women's and Gender Studies program. Stoehr feels a moral imperative to work to stop human trafficking. Board members asked about her courses, and she agreed to send her syllabi to Board members. Belitsos attended the ISU Students Against Human Trafficking meeting last week, and a number of Stoehr's students were in attendance and spoke highly of her

Review today's agenda There were no changes to the agenda.

Update from the commissioner of the DPS and impact of cuts to budget of the Office to Combat Human Trafficking. Status of statewide needs assessment, strategic plan, and data collection

Ryan reported that DPS has hired a Criminal Intelligence Analyst to focus on human trafficking issues. This analyst is in the intelligence division; data collected through the intelligence division is confidential and can't be shared. Good progress has been made already. Even if the \$300,000 is cut from the Office to Combat Human Trafficking, the analyst's work on human trafficking work will continue to be done.

Law enforcement trainings are completed; follow-up advanced trainings for law enforcement are starting now. DPS is considering offering a multidisciplinary summit for a variety of individuals and groups involved in human trafficking, to provide a chance to network about programs they have in common and situations for which certain groups are uniquely qualified to handle.

DPS receives all nationally called-in Polaris tips. The bulk of the other data DPS receives comes from local law enforcement. One of reasons it was a priority to provide trainings for local law enforcement was so that they will report to DPS, and their data can be entered in the data base. As data is amassed and trends appear, this allows for more effective intelligence operations, and investigations can be conducted against larger traffickers across the state, region, and country. With this information, DPS can operate in a proactive affirmative way to put a stop to more organized criminal groups. Sometimes DPS can go after traffickers for financial crimes, which do not require victims and survivors of human trafficking to testify. DPS is able to give victims assistance and refer them to resources, but survivors/victims do not have to be put through a court case.

Belitsos asked Ryan to address the budget cuts to the Iowa Office to Combat Human Trafficking. Ryan responded that the Department of Public Safety will continue to do what needs to be done to combat human trafficking, regardless of cuts in state funding. Initial funding was not enough to hire the criminal analyst, but the Department decided that criminal analyst was critical to intelligent law enforcement. DPS will continue to combat human trafficking with whatever budget they get from the legislature and governor.

Sgt Deskin, a member of the Intelligence and Fusion Center team, elaborated on the initial law enforcement awareness trainings which were completed at the end of March. These trainings were very successful, well-received, and well attended by state and local public safety officers. Lots of handouts and resources were presented for attendees to share with their respective districts. DPS is preparing an advanced second training. Katie Keene, criminal analyst, has been in her new position one month.

Winker reported that Polaris tips are effective, and Polaris has created a system to process tips and inform local authorities. Since November 2016, Iowa DPS has received 13 Polaris tips with some duplication. Winker shared a concern that the National Human Trafficking Resource Center often contacts him to follow up on the tips as reported by Polaris. Unfortunately, there are reasons that the number of tips to the Iowa Department of Public Safety is lower than the number listed on the Polaris website. Winker is often asked to explain this disparity. There are several reasons, including sometimes victims ask not to be reported to law enforcement, some of the tips are duplications, and some tips do not meet Polaris criteria for reporting to local law enforcement.

Tinsman asked for further clarification. Winker shared that in calendar year 2016, 202 calls were taken by Polaris for Iowa, but all these calls were related to 76 cases. Of the 76, 31 were referred to local Iowa law enforcement. Winker reported that the priority of the Iowa Division of Intelligence is to report all human trafficking tips they receive to local law enforcement.

Tinsman asked what if local law enforcement officers are not equipped to handle the tips. Winker and Ryan explained that the trainings are held to inform local law enforcement, and there are two tracks for those who have had some training and those who have not. Ryan also relayed that the Attorney General's Office and Law Enforcement Academy reach a different group of people. The aim is to reach all groups throughout the state who are working to eliminate human trafficking. Iowa DPS is also available to help, as needed.

Davidson would like to know more about Polaris criteria for reporting human trafficking. Recently, she received a call about a mother in Pennsylvania who was concerned about her daughter being trafficked and the mother had called the national Polaris human trafficking hotline. The mother was told the child needs to make the call, not the mother. The mother followed up with law enforcement, and by the time they found the child who had been trafficked, she was almost dead. O'Meara shared that, going back at least a year, there have been some problems with the national hotline, resulting in review of their federal contract. In work O'Meara has done, there were some cases that appeared to have not been adequately handled.

Tinsman and Davidson complimented Ryan and DPS staff for successfully establishing the new Office to Combat Human Trafficking. The office is doing a great job in Iowa of convincing local officials that human trafficking exists in local communities and providing effective trainings so local officials know what to look for and hold perpetrators accountable. Tinsman said that it is up to groups, such as the NAHT Board, to encourage local police to come to the trainings.

Rixner asked if most trafficking is in families and gangs. Ryan said there are many different types of human trafficking in Iowa. It's a question of opportunity more than anything else.

Buckels shared a concern that the state is going after large traffickers as opposed to smaller local individuals or groups, which she feels are the greatest threat. Ryan said they are primarily looking at organized trafficking, in-state and across state lines. The primary focus of Iowa DPS is to go after organizations that are victimizing multiple people in Iowa. Buckels fears that the larger groups are breaking down into smaller groups and might escape being caught.

Belitsos asked if DPS is preparing a statewide strategic plan. Ryan stated that a strategic plan report is due November 1, which also includes available data. Time will be spent in the rest of this year putting together a much more specific strategic plan. Belitsos asked if the NAHT Board may be allowed to see early versions and give feedback. Ryan agreed to share early versions.

O'Meara explained that the difference in the number of calls to the national Polaris hotline related to number of tips reported to local law enforcement is consistent across the country. O'Meara suggests three things (which are part of the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force plan) be coordinated to develop a better integrated, multi-disciplinary task force approach to human trafficking, including:

1. Services-Law Enforcement Integration: Develop a closer trust/working relationship between law enforcement and service providers at the local level.
2. Integrated Advocacy: Enhance/integrate the role of victim/survivor advocates, including, with other approaches, advocates within law enforcement (i.e., the Omaha Child Exploitation Task Force Model).
3. Community Partners: Enhance the role of medical service providers, especially forensic nursing (e.g., SANE/SART).

Progress report on the series of 2.5 day intensive training "Multi-Disciplinary Response to Trafficking" (Celine Villongco, Human Trafficking Coordinator) Villongco was not on call. Postponed until next meeting.

March 27 Executive Committee meeting report and approval of Consent Agenda

- Motion to approve March 13 meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors.
- Motion to approve the treasurer's report showing balances of \$3,030 in checking and \$1781.31 in savings.
- Motion to accept with regret the resignation of Ruth Buckels. Dr. Alissa Stoehr to fill Buckels' vacated seat.

- Motion to oppose the ISBA amendments to HB161, Erin’s Law, especially the change “shall” to “may.”
- Motion to support the change in the Erin’s Law HF 161 to a study bill.
- Motion to elect Suzanne Wright from Dubuque to the NAHT Board of Directors.
- Motion to accept the implementation plan for the Legislative Advisory Council as submitted by Cathy O’Keeffe. However, a charter document will not be necessary and a list of Council goals is preferred. Board members may continue to recommend Council participants, but it will be the co-chairs who will decide the Council membership.
- Motion to ask Kevin Houston, CPA to submit IRS Tax Form 990 for the NAHT for 2016. Houston is donating his time.

Committee Motion to approve the Consent Agenda. **Motion carried.**

Progress report from Teens Against Human Trafficking (TAHT) and implementation of the Victim Services Grant (Buckels)

This is the last meeting for Buckels. Belitsos thanked Buckels for her service on Board. As a foster/adoptive mom of many survivors, Buckels has been on the NAHT Board since 2008. Tinsman told Buckels that the Executive Committee considered not accepting her resignation. Stoehr, who is taking Buckels’ seat on the Board, thanked Buckels and relayed that ISU students express that they were greatly impressed with Buckels’ classroom presentations and passion for stopping child sex human trafficking.

Buckels reported that Teens Against Human Trafficking has expanded into over 60 Iowa schools in 18 counties with a goal to be in all the schools in Iowa. In the last quarter, TAHT made 68 referrals of victims to counseling, therapy, or law enforcement; there have been 119 referrals since July 1, 2016. Rixner asked if schools using the Braking Traffik curriculum also need TAHT. Buckels stated that the Braking Traffik curriculum is adequate, and asked that staff using the Braking Traffik curriculum send their referral numbers to TAHT so that statewide numbers can be compiled.

O’Keeffe stated that the two programs complement each other: Braking Traffik educates parents and teens, and TAHT is teen to teen. Buckels reported that TAHT uses information from four different curricula and works with local advocates, faculty, and parents to facilitate keeping the groups active.

Update on 2017 legislative session

- Update on Erin's Law Study Bill. Proposal to ask the Governor for an Executive Order (Cox, Tinsman)
The Erin’s Law Study Bill passed the House 97-0, but was not brought up in the Senate. Heartsill, who sponsored Erin’s Law in the House, told Tinsman that several senators didn’t think it was appropriate to teach K-2 about sexual abuse and human trafficking. Tinsman said that it was a mistake not to include ISEA and ISBA in the work group, but it is now up to Senate appropriation chairs whether they can or want to attach Erin’s Law to the appropriations bill. Belitsos said that the sex abuse education curriculum is age and developmentally appropriate. Tinsman said parents are not opposed to teachers talking to young children about good touch/bad touch and to report inappropriate touch.
Belitsos said if Erin’s Law is not attached to the Senate appropriations bill, the NAHT Board might go to the Governor (which might be Reynolds who is an honorary member of the NAHT Board) for executive action. Belitsos thanked Cox and Tinsman for legislative advocacy and work with legislators.
- Update on adding survivors of sex trafficking to the Rape Shield Law. Proposed rule change by Supreme Court and how you can help (Tinsman)
Tinsman talked to David Boyd Supreme Court administrator who said adding survivors of sex trafficking to the Rape Shield Law was “in the queue” and will be taken up this summer. Belitsos thanked Tinsman for her work to get this change in court rules.
- Proposed 45% cut to state appropriations for Victim Services and Domestic Abuse providers (Rixner)
Rixner reported that her local House representative, who is on the Judiciary Committee, told her the proposed cut was 4%, not 45%. Tinsman said Rixner has done the best job possible. Belitsos thinks the legislature does not want public input and will move the appropriations bill through the legislature quickly before the legislature adjourns on April 18.
- Discuss Federal Reauthorization of U.S.C. 42 and 22 and request Senator Grassley to add language for technical assistance and funding for educating teachers, parents, and students about the warning signs of grooming, trafficking, and how to respond.
Grassley’s Senate Judiciary Committee staff member sent Rixner a couple of pages on training and technical assistance which Rixner forwarded to Belitsos just prior to this meeting. Rixner said the Grassley contact did not want the information spread widely as it was not the final version. Belitsos asked Rixner if he could send to Buckels, Cox, and the Executive Committee. Rixner agreed as long as all of them are told not to forward the information to anyone else.

The contact from Grassley's office needs the feedback quickly, and Belitsos will compile comments and send to Rixner who will report to Grassley's office. Buckels agreed to add this reauthorization to her TAHT legislative agenda.

Proposal to form linkage with the Omaha Coalition on Human Trafficking and identification of a Board member to represent SW Iowa (O'Meara)

O'Meara would like to form a Coalition of representatives of groups fighting human trafficking located within a 50-mile radius of Omaha. O'Meara has identified interested groups in southwest Iowa (Council Bluffs, Red Oak, and Shenandoah) and southeast Nebraska (Omaha, Lincoln). O'Meara envisions that the Coalition would benefit from linkage between the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and the Omaha Coalition Against Human Trafficking. An agenda item appears on the next meeting of the Omaha Coalition on Human Trafficking to seek linkage.

Tinsman believes this is a marvelous idea because the Omaha human trafficking market affects southwest Iowa.

Rixner asked for clarification of the linkage, and O'Meara explained that he or someone else from the Omaha Coalition would participate on the NAHT Board and someone from the NAHT Board would participate in the Omaha Coalition Board.

It was **consensus** to establish linkage between the Omaha Coalition Against HT and the NAHT Board.

Committee Reports

- Outcome of March meeting of the Research, Evaluation and Best Practice Standards Committee (Reding)

Reding and Houston held an organizational meeting the first part of March. The second meeting of the Committee was March 28 and attended by Taylor, Wright, and Reding. The Committee is identifying various organizations around the state that are concentrating on eliminating trafficking. After they find 20, the Committee will conduct in-depth interviews. Taylor can access a research grant which will fund students to carry out the interviews. The Committee came up with a list of questions to use as protocol, which were provided to NAHT Board members. Reding asked NAHT Board members to send her additional suggested questions.

Belitsos and Tinsman stated the questions were good. They suggested that the Committee start with all the different direct service groups currently connected with the Network. Reding agreed, and stated that names from the NAHT list "Allies and Supporters" have been added to the list.

The Committee is studying how organizations collaborate within their own regional networks and has a goal to pick up on new entities that are surfacing.

The next meeting of the Committee will be by conference call on April 25. NAHT Board members who wish to participate on the conference call should let Reding know.

- Progress report on status of the Legislative Advisory Council (O'Keeffe, Cox)
The goal is to have the Committee formed and active before the next legislative session.
- Need for a Fundraising Committee Chair. Postponed
- Need for a Speakers Bureau Committee Chair. Postponed
- Outcome of the University of Iowa March 23 training at University of Iowa and decision to resign from Executive Committee (Davidson)

Davidson spoke on behalf of the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking at the University of Iowa Memorial Student Union. The event was led by Matthew Jack, professor of Anthropology and Events Coordinator of the Human Rights Student Collective. Several students, as well as fraternities were involved in the planning. Belitsos reported that this was the first human trafficking awareness program to be held at the University of Iowa. They showed the documentary "Face to Face with Slavery," which focused on labor trafficking around the world. After the film, Davidson was given 30 minutes to speak, and took that time to present about sex trafficking in the US, Iowa, and Iowa City/Cedar Rapids. Roughly 50 students were in attendance. They were attentive and had good questions. After the training, several students came up in tears, wanting to get involved. Following the program, Davidson also met with Taylor of Teens Against Human Trafficking to better coordinate efforts in schools in this area.

Davidson reported that she has resigned as Secretary of the NAHT Board but will continue on the Network Board. She has become too busy with the expansion of Chains Interrupted. Belitsos thanked Davidson for her service on the Executive Committee. Belitsos asked for a replacement to serve as Secretary and attend Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meets monthly by conference call, prepares the agenda for the Board meeting, and has in-depth discussions on legislative and other issues. Since no one volunteered to serve as Secretary, Belitsos will call on Board members.

Upcoming Meeting Reminders

Next Executive Committee meeting is Monday, April 24, 2:30-4:00 (conference call)

Next Board of Directors meeting is Monday, May 8, 2:30-4:00 (conference call)