

## **Iowa NAHT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Tuesday, September 14, 2021**

**Present:** Thomas Barr (proxy for Alka Khanolkar), Heather Brown, Dr. George Belitsos, Ruth Buckels, John Chesser, Teresa Davidson, Alyse Eagan, Dr. Shannon Findlay, Lori Freudenberg, Alyse Hardin, Kim Hilby, Katie Kyker, Brenda Long, Dr. Joe Moravec, Shirlee Reding, Linda Harrell, Bernadette Rixner, Traci Stubbe (proxy for Jessica Rohrs), Maggie Tinsman, and Mike Tupper

**Excused Absence:** Shirley Fineran, Alka Khanolkar, Jessica Rohrs

**Guests:** Roxanne Riesberg (Child Protection Program Manager for DHS), Carol Olson (Director of Senator Grassley's Des Moines Office), Gretchen Brown-Waech (Iowa Attorney General's Office)

### **I. Call to order and introduction of John Chesser and other guests. (Belitsos)**

Belitsos declared a quorum and began the meeting at 2:30 PM. Belitsos introduced John Chesser who has returned to the Board of Directors. Belitsos also introduced Tom Barr, who is the proxy for Alka Khanolkar. The three presenters will be introduced later.

### **II. Presentation and update from DHS regarding child sex trafficking intakes, assessments, and services. Also, review of human trafficking training provided by DHS. (Roxanne Riesberg)**

Belitsos introduced Riesberg as a former member of the NAHT Board of Directors, and works with the DHS. Riesberg returns to board meetings to report for DHS every six months. Riesberg introduced herself as the Child Protection Program Manager with the Department of Human Services. Riesberg noted how she oversees everything that relates to child abuse from intake to assessment.

Riesberg gave a quick review on what she presented in a previous NAHT board meeting six months ago. She explained the different trainings for the Child Welfare Department that DHS provides, which includes basic training for child protection workers, foundations of social work case management practice, child abuse mandatory reporter training, and mental health fundamentals training.

Riesberg also noted that there are other resources in addition to this training that are available for staff, including a help desk to help facilitate through child protective assessments. They also have a sharepoint that is set up to specifically have resources on human trafficking. Riesberg explained how human trafficking cases make up less than 1% of all of their cases, and though this is gravely underreported, the workers tend

to not feel as confident in their expertise in this area as they do not deal with it nearly as often. This sharepoint provides many resources on human trafficking in addition to that help desk.

Riesberg went on to explain how every foster parent before their license goes through a pre-service training, which is a number of meetings that cover all things that foster parents need to know. In the ninth meeting of this program, they go over human trafficking, and this are some supplemental handouts that go along with this training. This is a three hour training that was organized by one of our own board members, Ruth Buckels.

Riesberg asked if anyone had any questions before we moved into the data piece of the presentation. Hardin asked what training is done with the workers in response to children and youth in placement for children who have eloped (runaways) to screening for human trafficking. Hardin explained how in Davenport that is a protocol that they are supposed to follow. Riesberg responded and said that the DHS has federal regulation around what their requirements are when it comes to children who elope from care, and have requirements to assure that they are working with authorities to secure their safety. Hardin asked if she could send Riesberg an email with what local protocol is in Davenport, and if Riesberg could confirm that that is an accurate protocol and to talk about this further. Riesberg agreed to this.

Moravec explained how they are putting together some training opportunities for the IBAT program. He asked if she has any resources or trainings that could be used for the public or the community that would be a good addition to the IBAT program. Riesberg responded and noted how she herself is still looking for some good resources for the public as they are having some problems with their website and accessing the videos they do have posted. She noted that the Hidden in the Heartland video on YouTube is a good resource to start with.

Belitsos replied to this and said that the video Any Kid Anywhere would be a good resource, which was created by Hardin's agency.

Belitsos asked if anyone else had a question for Riesberg. Harrell responded and asked if PS Map is a part of the training now. Riesberg responded and said that they do get some training for the PS Map in the pre-service training.

Rixner asked who staffs the help desk, and how they are trained. Riesberg responded and said that the help desk is staffed by DHS veterans and social workers. She noted that one of the workers has been with them for 35 years. She also noted that they are in

charge of having answers when staff comes to them. If they do not know the answer to a question, they research that topic more, they talk with their attorneys, and other external partners. She said if they are not experts in a topic, they will talk to experts to get this information. Finally, she added that if this is something that is not specified in the manuals they will bring it to Riesberg's attention as something that may need to be added.

Rixner asked if the training on human trafficking also includes labor trafficking. Riesberg responded that both trainings include labor trafficking. Rixner offered the movie Grid Shock as another resource for Moravec to use.

Buckles asked about the DHS manual. She said that there is a preference for when a youth is coming out of foster care or a shelter to place them as close to home as possible, which sometimes means putting them right back into the hotbox. Buckles was wondering if there is consideration for this. Riesberg responded and said that it is a consideration that they look into, especially if the case has a concern for trafficking.

Belitsos asked Riesberg to move into the data report of the child sex trafficking assessments. Riesberg stated that this data covers the months of January through August 27th. She learned that we had 107 incidents of alleged sex trafficking. Of those 107 cases, only 17 of those were alleged at intake. 90 of those were identified during the course of a child protective assessment. Riesberg explained how interesting this is because that means the majority of these cases are being identified by the child protection workers when they are out on cases.

Of those 107 incidents of alleged child sex trafficking, three of those were rejected, and did not meet the standards to open an assessment, but the other 104 were accepted. 91 of those 104 cases were not confirmed. Only in 13 of those cases were they able to substantiate. Riesberg noted that this data shows that there is still a lot of work to do with mandatory reporters identifying trafficking victims to report concerns. She noted that she knows law enforcement is definitely seeing these cases, and mandatory reporters as well, so it concerns her that in the last 8 months only 17 reports have been made.

Riesberg noted that in the data she pulled, they identified 90 incidents of concerns regarding child sex trafficking. The majority of those did not pan out to be founded, but she feels a little bit more confident knowing that they are being identified in the field.

Findlay asked if there were any trends in what these reports were originally reported as, or if it was all over the field in different categories of abuse. Riesberg stated that denial

of critical care was overwhelmingly the most reported, and second would be dangerous substances.

Hardin asked if Riesberg was able to share the criteria that makes a potential child sex trafficking case founded and why some of these cases were did not fit this criteria. Riesberg responded and said they have different factors that lay out the specific information that is needed to meet, and she said she will send this information to Belitsos to send out to the board.

Tinsman asked why there are such few incidences that are found to be human trafficking, and why don't they meet the criteria required to be a founded case. Riesberg responded and said that there is such specific criteria that has to be met, which is all taken from legal definitions. She stated that most of this comes from state and federal law, but she will send out the information so we know exactly what determines if a case is founded or not.

Carol Olson asked if a case is not founded, if that means that there is not sufficient evidence that an arrest can be made. Riesberg responded and said that the DHS only determines an outcome as to whether or not abuse occurred as defined by law. She stated that their outcomes are based on a preponderance of evidence, meaning that there only has to be 51% of the evidence, so more likely than not that the factors are met.

Barr asked if this is a case of the child recanting a concern for abuse. Riesberg stated that it's not necessarily recanting, but it is definitely a huge factor in that when they talk to children about these things, they are very protective of who is taking advantage of them. She noted that this makes it really hard for them to make a case unless there is some really good evidence somewhere else.

Buckles stated that everyone needs to remember that the average person who talks about human trafficking denies it seven times before they are straight with people, so this is part of the problem. She reminded everyone that they can't blame DHS for not getting this information out of them, and that these victims won't talk about it until they have 100% trust in someone, which takes time. Hardin responded to this and agreed with Buckles. Hardin stated that another part of the trouble is the timeline that the DHS has to get this evidence and the findings, and that is not their fault.

Rixner asked when the NAHT Board members put out resources and handouts, if it would be overwhelming or helpful to try and include the toll free confidential reporting number for the DHS. Riesberg responded and said that this would be wonderful, and

that they will always take calls from anyone who has concerns about trafficking of a minor or other potential abuse of minors.

Belitsos thanked Riesberg for sharing this information with the board, and how helpful her presentation was. He looks forward to having her back to another board meeting in a few months to see what has changed and hopefully improved.

### **III. Update on Federal Anti-Trafficking legislation and federal funding. (Carol Olson, Evelyn Fortier- Representing Senator Charles Grassley)**

Belitsos introduced Carol Olson stating that she is the Director of Senator Grassley's office in Des Moines. Belitsos asked Carol Olson if she wanted to be moved up earlier on the agenda, and Olson said she would. After making this agenda change, Olson introduced Evelyn Fortier, who specializes in this issue and is a senior counsel on Senator Grassley's judiciary committee.

Evelyn Fortier introduced herself stating that she has been working on Senator Grassley's committee for the last seven years, both on the finance committee for two years, and the Senate judiciary committee. She noted that she has worked on the Senate judiciary committee for other members, and has been on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. for about 20 years. She noted that for most of her career she has handled crime policy, including human trafficking. Fortier explained how most recently Senator Grassley has sponsored a bill to reauthorize the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2018, and is currently working on another extension of the program that is authorized under legislation.

Fortier explained that she wanted to give the board her contact information as they are always looking for ways to improve programs that serve victims that are authorized under that statute, or give prosecutors new tools to pursue the perpetrators. Her direct contact number in DC is 202-224-4324, and her email is [evelyn\\_fortier@judiciary-rep.senate.gov](mailto:evelyn_fortier@judiciary-rep.senate.gov).

Fortier began her report by stating that one of the things she is inclined to work on with Senator Grassley is the human trafficking of crossover youth, or youth that are involved in both child welfare and the juvenile justice system, as well as foster youth. She explains how any youth person in the US can fall victim to child sex trafficking, but research shows that runaways and youth in foster care are at the greatest risk compared to their peers.

Fortier explained that some studies suggest that as compared to other forms of sexual

victimization, running away from home is uniquely associated with the risk of human trafficking. She gave the statistic that 60-90% of all child sex trafficking victims have histories in the child welfare system. There was a study in 2019 of youth in Florida's child welfare system and they found that foster youth who were involved in human trafficking, while in a runaway episode, were much more likely than their peers in the system to be female, experience prior physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, run from care at a younger age, experience more foster care placements, and experience more foster care runaway episodes.

Fortier also explained how these children do not trust the police, so when they are arrested they are not always diverted into the child welfare system where they belong, and local police may not correctly perceive them or treat them as victims. Because of this, Fortier explained that if they don't trust the police, the most likely person to pick them up at the police station would be the trafficker, and the cycle continues.

Fortier said that they are searching for things to do that may help this population. She explained that Senator Grassley did convene a hearing on this when he was the chairman of the judiciary committee in 2016. They were told that dual status youth or crossover youth who have had contact with both the juvenile justice system and the child welfare system are very traumatized as well. Fortier explained how there is a disconnect between those two systems, so it is common for crossover youth to go undetected. Because of this, they teamed up with Senator Gary Peters from Michigan to propose legislation that is designed to better identify and meet the needs of these kids. This legislation is known as the Connect Act.

Fortier explained how Congress has also adopted legislation in 2014 that is known as the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act which updated a federal foster care program. This ensures the state child welfare agency has procedures for identifying, documenting and responding to certain juveniles.

Belitsos asked if anyone had anything that they could offer to Evelyn that might be helpful in their deliberations in the Senate. Harrell asked what the term crossover youth means, and Fortier explained how the term refers to a kid who is involved in foster care and also ends up having contact with the juvenile justice or criminal justice system.

Barr asked about the open borders on our southern border, and the influx of hundreds of thousands of undocumented people. He was wondering if we are feeding more children into human trafficking. He asked why we can't shut down the influx and mentioned how he thinks we are creating a bigger problem. Fortier said she understands this, and is asking the board if they have any ideas on how to fix that

problem.

Belitsos mentioned that he thinks we need to be more careful about where these immigrant children are being placed, especially on the West Coast. Fortier responded and said that is technically a different community, but that is not to say they couldn't do something relating to those youth and how they are being treated. Fortier warned that this could be controversial because it implicated immigration, and how human trafficking advocates in Washington D.C. are urging them to stay away from immigration issues because once you start putting any form of immigration language into this it opens up the bill to being amended and other stuff potentially dying.

Davidson explained to Fortier her services, and offered them to Fortier, and said she would be more than happy to help Charles Grassley in any way that she can. Belitsos asked if anyone else had a question or comment for Fortier and Olson. Olson mentioned that the Department of Homeland Security offers a human trafficking awareness training which is geared towards law enforcement so that they can better recognize and detect both labor and sex trafficking. She mentioned that this is being offered in about 6-10 states, but she is going to explore if this could be brought to Iowa as well.

Belitsos thanked both Fortier and Olson for their time, and mentioned that they will have Olson back in a couple months to see how this legislation goes.

#### **IV. Approval of Consent Agenda (Belitsos)**

- Motion to approve the August 10th, 2021 meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors.
- Motion to approve the Acting Treasurer's report for July 2021.
- Motion to approve the Best Practice Standards for Survivor Services.
- Motion to approve the executive committee nomination of John Chesser to fill the vacant board seat.
- Motion to approve the Anti-Trafficking Award nomination for the Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking.

Belitsos asked if there is anything on the consent agenda that anyone wants removed. Findlay mentioned that she has not had enough time to go over the Best Practice Standards for Survivor Services as it is such a long document, and does not feel comfortable giving her opinion on it yet. Belitsos asked Hilby her opinion on if she wanted this to be pulled. Hilby stated that this document has been sent out to board members a few times in the past few months, and asked Moravec and Fineran their opinions as well. Moravec stated that he wanted everyone's input on this document, but

it will be a living document and will hopefully be reviewed every year or two.

Moravec asked if Findlay had a specific amount of time that she thought was reasonable to finish reading this by. Findlay stated that she could be finished reviewing this by the next board meeting. Findlay also asked who the audience of this document is, as that may change her opinion. Belitsos responded and said it is for the service providers whose agencies primarily serve survivors of human trafficking. Hilby added to this that the standards apply to service for adults, and that there would be another document for juveniles. Brown-Waech mentioned that it is important for the board to know that this is from the perspective of a provider.

Belitsos mentioned that Hilby has worked very hard on this, and that it has been discussed in several board meetings, but proposed that they should push back the approval of the Best Practices Standards for another month. Moravec and Hilby agreed to this. Findlay asked if she had corrections who she should send it to, and Hilby responded that these revisions should be sent to her.

After postponing the Best Practices Standards vote to October, Belitsos called for a vote and declared that the consent agenda **passed unanimously**.

**V. Update from Survivor Service Provider Collaboration and outcome of the September 2nd quarterly meeting. Recommendations on 2022 legislation. (Hardin, Buckels, Rohrs, Tracy Stubbe, Davidson)**

Hardin began by saying that service providers talked about the Best Practices guidelines, and how board members should send their feedback to Hilby. She spoke about how they had a really good discussion on some of the issues that have been hitting around the state including staff shortages, closings, shelter staffing and that everyone is fighting the same funding problems right now. She is hopeful that the Legislative Committee will work on some solutions for this soon.

Hardin also mentioned that the legislative priorities that they discussed included the 4 priorities from last year. They are recommending the Safe Harbor bill become the first priority to be moved forward. She mentioned that the conclusion of this meeting was that they want to invest in victim services, and that service providers need funding to keep going on and providing services. Hardin challenged the board and Legislative Committee to keep funding for service providers at the forefront of the priority list, because she does not believe that we will exist without state funding for those programs.



Belitsos asked if any of the other collaboration members had anything else to add. Brown-Waech mentioned that everyone should expect that funding will be lower for probably at least the next two years. Because of this, she stated that it is even more critical that everyone get behind the push that is being spearheaded by the statewide Coalition on Victim Services to ask the state legislature to increase the state appropriation for victim services.

## **VI. Discuss legislative priorities for 2022. (Tinsman)**

Tinsman began by stating that she just talked to Angela Davis, and that she is conducting conversations with legislators right now over the interim to determine which kind of priorities might have the most momentum so we can continue to pass valuable legislation.

Tinsman mentioned that we first needed to discuss the four 2021 priorities that were not passed to determine which priorities we wish to continue for human trafficking. She also asked for other suggestions that board members might have. She explained that she will also be telling the board what came out of both Braking Traffik and the provider collaboration suggestions.

Tinsman began with the NAHT four ranked priorities. She mentioned that there were originally five priorities, but since the massage establishment one has passed, this can be removed from the list. The first priority was to adopt a Safe Harbor law. She asked the board if we want to keep this on as a priority of the Network. Davidson stated that she would like to keep this on. Belitsos stated that from what he has heard from the Collaboration providers and from other board members, is that all four of the 2021 priorities that did not go anywhere last year seem to still be very much in good currency with what they want.

Davidson explained that so many agencies are struggling right now to provide the services with either a lack of funding, or the inability to find staff. She explained that the Safe Harbor law in Minnesota came with funding for those services, so instead of charging minors with crimes, they would provide services. But, with the mandate to provide services came funding for this, and this is why Davidson is a strong supporter of the Safe Harbor law.

Tinsman explained that the second priority was to pass the law for expungement of crimes committed by human trafficking survivors. She stated that this might be something that can be adopted with the Safe Harbor law, and they will have to see if that can be part of the same legislation, or if it has to be separate. She said she

assumes that this should still be on the priority list, and Belitsos confirmed that it should be.

Tinsman explained that the third priority was to request schools to provide employees, parents, and guardians with training, awareness, and prevention of child sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. She mentioned that there has been a suggestion that the amount be increased to \$250,000 for training for child trafficking preventive services in school budgets. She asked what the board thought of this.

Hardin asked who would be doing these training sessions. Tinsman responded and said people like Family Resources. Hardin replied and asked what would happen if we do not exist in the next year due to funding problems. Belitsos stated that this concern is why the NAHT must put staff funding as one of the 5 priorities. Hardin replied and said that it is something we really need to consider, and ask who is really equipped to do those training. Tinsman said that this training would not be done by the teachers within this system, it would be done by the outside system coming in.

Hardin suggested that this legislation could be written more specifically to explain this. Findlay agreed with this and said that if we are going to support something like this we need to have a plan in place because educating this many people is a lot, so a plan would be vital to making sure that this is successful. Tinsman responded and said that won't be part of the legislation, just allowing it is what is part of the legislation.

Hardin stated that Braking Traffik's budget has already been cut for this upcoming fiscal year, and their priority is going to be serving the survivors, rather than going to the schools and doing this prevention and education. Hardin wanted to remind everyone how much manpower this would take to do all of this training in the schools. Tinsman responded and said that this was suggested by her provider collaboration group. Hardin replied and said she understands that, but thinks that we need to put more things in place, and offered to help Tinsman with this.

Barr suggested that we do not quantify a dollar figure because we would be utilizing third parties, and since school districts vary so widely it might be best to remove the dollar amount, but to go for the encouragement of prevention and education.

Davidson explained that as we continue to educate people, they are identifying people that are being victimized. However, then they have nowhere to put these victims. She urged that we must get these services better funded and in place prior to educating.

Tinsman explained that the next priority was that the Iowa Supreme Court adopt rules or

that the Iowa legislature adopts legislation to add human trafficking to the Iowa Rape Shield Laws. Tinsman updated the board by stating that Tom Waterman has been contacted and said that he will be working this fall with a supreme court committee for a resolution in 2022 through a rules change. The only reason human trafficking is not in the Rape Shield Law is because there was no law when the Rape Shield adopted. Tinsman suggested that we need to keep this on our list, but it might not be a legislative priority as it is in the Supreme Court right now.

Tinsman explained another priority that has come up is increasing the penalties for buyers, and that she thinks this will be high on the list. Another priority that has been presented is increasing the victim services item in the justice appropriation. She also mentioned thinking of an appropriation of \$500,000 for direct services for victims of human trafficking as well.

Belitsos asked if there were any other priorities that Tinsman had not mentioned. Davison said that she would like to see a legislative mandate for education with people who would have licenses in healthcare. She explained how many other states do this, and she would be happy to move forward with that with the Network's support.

Tinsman stated that she will now talk with Angela Davis and the Network's legislative advocacy committee which will meet in October regarding what they could be successful in passing. Belitsos thanked Tinsman for her update. He also noted that the board will be voting on priorities for 2022 and that this should be based on needs and not on which legislation has the best chance of passing.

## **VII. Report from the Fundraising Committee. (Kyker, Freudenberg, Forsyth & Belitsos)**

- Development of donor record spreadsheet.

Kyker explained that they have been working with one of the technology consultants, Aaron, and have been creating a donor record spreadsheet to track the donor gifts the Network has received. From this they can get as much information as possible, this way they can send the donor an appeal letter, or to invite them to an event.

- Encourage Board members to please make a once annual gift to NAHT.

Kyker also explained that 17 out of 20 of the board members have made an annual contribution. She explained that they would love to see this at 100%, and encouraged board members who have not donated in 2021 to do so, at any level.

- Donor giving software program proposed by Dr. Joe.

Kyker explained that they had a presentation from Dr. Joe and one of his colleagues who have been working on a donation program to present to the network. Basically, this is a donor directed giving platform. This will allow donors to donate to several organizations of their choosing. Kyker explained that this is exciting because 1% of all donations will come back to the Network. Kyker explained that there is a recording of the presentation if anyone is interested in seeing it.

Belitsos asked Kyker to create and negotiate a MOU with the Foundation for Inspired Giving and to have the Fundraising Committee review it at the next board meeting, if possible. Belitsos asked for a vote on the committee recommendation to draft a MOU. Belitsos asked for any discussion or questions. Hearing none, the motion passed **unanimously**.

**IX. Report from the Evaluation/Research and Best Practices Committee. (Moravec, Reding, Freudenberg, Davidson and Hilby)**

- Best Practice for Survivor Services Subcommittee report and how to distribute the Best Practice Standards and how to get the standards certified by DHS, Attorney General's Office, or another state agency. (Hilby)
- Hotel/Motel Training Subcommittee and progress on the training video completion. Plans to send the training video to 10 coalitions and plans for training local volunteers. (Moravec)
- Progress report on the implementation of the MOU and collaboration with the Iowa Secretary of State to create a new awareness training and recognition program to be called Iowa Businesses Against Trafficking. (Reding)
- Addressing/Ending the Demand Subcommittee and Trafficking Free Zones. (Freudenberg)

Moravec explained that he will send out the PowerPoint presentation, as well as the recording of the meeting.

Reding explained that they will be meeting this week with the Secretary of State's office again to start developing a program of education. They had asked Reding what literature, programs, or documents the Network would recommend they put on their website. Reding expected that this would be a big discussion. She expects that the Network would use documented training programs, and hopefully the hotel/motel video.

Rixner said she was under the impression that under the IBAT program, any business that was interested would be referred to their local group, and was wondering if this

would still be part of the process. Reding responded and said that it should be. Rixner asked if there is any kind of process setup, and asked if someone is going to inquire, or will there just be a list of places where they can look online to get information. Reding replied and said that is where they are all starting and will have to look into. She mentioned that they have a few large businesses interested, and once they have these companies saying that they will endorse this that other businesses will follow.

Belitsos stated that we are getting close to 4pm and need to end the meeting, but asked if there was anything quick that Moravec wanted to add. Moravec just explained that filming is done for the hotel/motel video and that it should be coming out this month. Davidson added that they are working on the training handouts for the in-person hotel/motel trainers. A meeting is scheduled for this Thursday.

Rixner asked if anyone knew how long approval was going to take. Reding said that they would be expecting it a few weeks after submitting it, and that they are geared up and ready.

Belitsos apologized for having to cut discussion here, but said a lot of important information had been shared and the Board did get through all the agenda items.

**Meeting was adjourned at 4:03 pm.**