

**Iowa NAHT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, December 12, 2016**  
**Conference Call, 2:30 to 4:00 pm**

**Present on call** George Belitsos (Chair), Liz Cox, Teresa Davidson, Sr Shirley Fineran, Brynne Howard, Cathy O’Keeffe, Shirlee Reding, Maggie Tinsman, Ruth Buckels  
**Excused** Jan Beran, Ruth Buckels, Steve Eckley, Stephen O’Meara, Bernadette Rixner  
**Absent** Gail Sheridan-Lucht  
**Resigned:** **Emily Devine**  
**Guests:** Taylor Houston (Mt. Mercy University), Celine Villongco (Iowa Attorney General’s Office)  
**Taking minutes:** Margaret Epplin

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call. Introduction of guests.** Belitsos called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. and welcomed Celine Villongco and Taylor Houston. Belitsos noted that Taylor Houston will be voted on as a new Board member later in this meeting. Houston works on human trafficking legislation and Safe Harbor Laws, and has been consulting with the Board.

New Board member Brynne Howard, replacing Ann Naffier, introduced herself. Howard has been a managing attorney at Justice for Our Neighbors for 6 years where she represents victims of crimes such as domestic violence and trafficking. Howard is excited to get more information on trafficking. Justice for our Neighbors is based in Des Moines but Howard travels throughout the state for legal work. Howard has a 3-year-old and a 1-year-old.

Belitsos re-introduced Villongco who works as Human Trafficking Coordinator for the Attorney General’s Office. Villongco will not join the Board as a member, but will continue to receive meeting packets and will attend meetings when possible.

2. **Review agenda.** The agenda was reviewed and approved with the addition of the introduction of the Blue Compass Be Merry and Choose a Charity contest explained by Tinsman. Blue Compass will give \$1,000 to one of four nonprofits, one of which is NAHT. Tinsman encouraged all Board members to vote daily for NAHT on the Blue Compass website. Belitsos will send an email with all voting information.

3. **Continue to Discuss Priorities for 2017 legislative session (gavels in January 9, 2017)**

a. **Erin’s Law:** Belitsos reported that Heartsill will reintroduce Erin’s Law this year. Heartsill could not attend today’s Board meeting, but asked Belitsos to pass along his appreciation of NAHT’s support of his bill for Erin’s Law. Belitsos stated that 26 other states have passed Erin’s Law, and the law is doing a lot of good in those states.

b. **Improvement to the Rape Shield law to include survivors of sex trafficking and proposed rule change by Supreme Court. Find a bill sponsor. (Tinsman)**

Tinsman reported that Roxanne Ryan suggested contacting David Boyd to see if this recommended improvement to the Rape Shield law could be approved as a rule change by the Supreme Court instead of going through the legislative process. Tinsman has not been able to contact Boyd yet, and will continue to call. Tinsman has not looked for a bill sponsor since the improvement might be done through a Supreme Court rules change. If Boyd and the Supreme Court do not respond in a timely manner, Tinsman will get a Republican Senator to sponsor the legislation in addition to Senator Kinney.

Tinsman will talk to her Senator Robbie Smith to see if he will sponsor the Rape Shield Law changes or if he can recommend another Senator, if the change is not a Supreme Court rules change. Tinsman asked for recommendations from the Board. Houston recommended to look at 2015 and 2016 bills on trafficking that were passed to see who signed on. Tinsman suggested Amy Sinclair might be a possibility.

Tinsman will report at the next Board meeting on the result of her request from Boyd. Belitsos thanked Tinsman for her efforts.

**c. Human Trafficking legislation is being introduced by Senator Kinney. AMP, DPS, Attorney General, Rep. Baltimore**

Senator Kinney reported to Belitsos that he is working on a bill to compensate victims of crime including human trafficking survivors. Belitsos recommended that Kinney contact the Attorney General's Office. Tinsman added that Kinney needs a Republican to introduce the bill.

Belitsos reported that members of AMP Councils, composed of about 1,000 youth in foster care from across the state of Iowa, will emphasize support of Erin's Law at their Day on the Hill.

Belitsos emailed Roxanne Ryan asking if DPS is introducing any human trafficking legislation. Belitsos did not receive a reply from Ryan.

Villongco reported that the Attorney General's office is not recommending any human trafficking legislation.

**d. Continued funding for DPS Office to combat human trafficking and for law enforcement and county attorney training**

Tinsman recommended that NAHT request the Governor include in his budget a continuation of the \$300K DPS appropriation for additional staff and law enforcement and county attorney training, especially since legislators look at the Governor's budget to get ideas. The \$300K in state funds is in addition to \$600K federal VOCA funds in AG office.

**e. Continue consideration of an Iowa Safe Harbor Law. Celine Villongco report into research into Safe Houses in Minnesota. Are they locked?**

Villongco investigated the Minnesota Safe Houses and did not find any written rules that required houses to be locked. Villongco will send the NAHT Board the link to the online information she researched about the Minnesota Safe Houses.

Villongco explained that, if youth picked up for trafficking are processed as CINA, they are not prosecutable but rather referred to DHS. Belitsos noted that, in general, prosecutors are not diverting youth accused of prostitution away from prosecution by naming them CINA, in part because all youth shelters are unlocked and there is a fear that the youth will run away and come under control of traffickers again.

Belitsos explained that the word "may" should be changed to "must." That is basically what the Safe Harbor Law does. Houston added that the issue of running away from Safe House continues to be a concern. The debate is still going on and some feel locks are needed while others believe locked houses are another form of injustice.

O'Meara has reported to Belitsos that Nebraska has a Safe Harbor Law, and Nebraska continues to have problems with the survivors running away from shelters when they are not prosecuted as delinquents. O'Meara advised against having a Safe Harbor Law in Iowa until Iowa has a way to make the survivor a CINA and still be able to detain the survivor. Since the Safe Harbor Law has unintended consequences, Belitsos said the Network should see how other states are handling the Safe Harbor Law, and recommended that this NAHT Board not make passage of an Iowa Safe Harbor Law a legislative priority in 2017.

For additional information, Redding reported that she had asked her nephew who is on St Paul Police Department what he knew about Safe Harbor Laws, and he knew nothing, so there is education needed. Belitsos explained the emergency youth shelters in Ames and Mason City have staff trained in trauma informed care and support victims of human trafficking and are unlocked facilities. Currently, these two shelters have victims living there, one age 14, and one age 17.

**4. Outcome of Discussions with Lt Governor Kim Reynolds.** Reynolds informed Belitsos that she has accepted our invitation to be an Honorary Member of the NAHT Board. She is a high profile person who wants to be an advocate to help prevent trafficking. Reynolds will be sent NAHT Board packets. She will be welcome at any Board meeting, and she may speak at Board meeting but cannot vote. She will be added as Honorary Board member through the Consent Agenda. Additionally, since Governor Branstad has been nominated to be the ambassador to China in the new U.S. administration, Reynolds will become Iowa's first female governor when Branstad is confirmed.

Reynolds worked with the Governor's office to set up a Press Conference about human trafficking on January 9 at 9 a.m., Room G9. This will be followed by the signing of a Proclamation by the Governor naming January as Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Month. All NAHT Board members are encouraged to attend the press conference and proclamation signing. Belitsos will send out the sample Proclamation and asks that NAHT Board members encourage this same proclamation be adopted by their local city councils, boards of supervisors, etc.

The NAHT Board will hold its regular January meeting at the Capitol from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. following the proclamation signing.

January 9 will also be Anti-Human Trafficking Day on the Hill, and all NAHT Board members are asked to come to the Hill to advocate for Erin's Law and the change in the Rape Shield Law.

**5. Volunteers to Chair Advisory Council, Research Evaluation/Best Practice Standards Committee, Fundraising Committee**

The Advisory Council will focus on public policy legislation and advocacy. O'Keeffe and Cox agreed to co-chair. Belitsos already has several non-NAHT Board people from across the state who have volunteered to serve on the Advisory Council and, if needed, will put an invitation to join the Advisory Council on the NAHT website. The first step is to form the Council, and Cox and O'Keeffe said they would look at what is being done in other states. Belitsos recommended Cox and O'Keeffe talk to O'Meara since O'Meara was appointed by the Nebraska Governor to serve on the Nebraska Advisory Council. Cox and O'Keeffe will look at the list supplied by Belitsos, and when 9 or 10 agree to serve on the Council, the Council could study things NAHT does not have time for such as Asian massage parlors. The Council will also invite VOCA-funded direct service human trafficking providers to participate. Belitsos hopes meetings will begin in January and suggests the meetings be held by conference call since people are from across the state. Belitsos asked other board members to help with recommendations of names for Advisory Council membership.

Research, Evaluation, and Best Practice Standards Committee. Houston, Davidson, and Reding agreed to lead this new committee. Belitsos noted Houston's contribution through academic research in this area. Houston and Davidson have had discussions about the need for research. Houston can bring in students to help in research during the summer.

Fundraising Committee. Belitsos reported that he has sent a request for donations to 908 names on his human trafficking blog. Tinsman's suggested that names of all NAHT Board members and their location be listed down side of the letterhead. She also suggested that the four officers should sign the thank you letters since Tinsman feels people from areas outside Des Moines need to know NAHT Board members are from their area. Belitsos shared that, in the past, several NAHT Board members did not want their name or location listed because fear traffickers.

Tinsman **made a motion** that Board members' names with their towns be listed on the margin of NAHT stationery and that, in the future, the officers sign the thank you letters. Any NAHT Board member who does not want their name and city on the letterhead can opt out. Fineran **seconded.** **Motion carried** unanimously.

Belitsos noted that he will wait until after the 2017 officers begin their new terms to list their names at the bottom of the thank you letters. Also, the NAHT does not currently have stationery, since all

correspondence is electronic.

## **6. November 18 Executive Committee Meeting Report and Approval of Consent Agenda**

- Motion to approve November 14 meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors
- Motion to accept with regret the resignation of Emily Devine
- Motion to nominate Kim Reynolds as an honorary member of the Iowa NAHT Board of Directors
- Motion to nominate and elect the following for 2017 officers of the Board: George Belitsos, Chair; Maggie Tinsman, Vice Chair; Jan Beran, Treasurer; Teresa Davidson, Secretary
- Motion to nominate and elect the following to fill two of the four open seats: (1) Dr. Taylor Houston of Mt Mercy University, and (2) Jennie Kerger, Salvation Army. Their 2-year term will begin January 1, 2017
- Motion to approve updated 2017 NAHT Strategic Plan Goals
- Motion to approve 2016 annual progress report on 2016 NAHT Strategic Plan Goals

Executive Committee **motion** to accept the Consent Agenda with the addition of “nominate and elect Kim Reynolds”. **Motion carried unanimously.**

## **7. Report from Davidson on outcome of the November 17 Cedar Rapids Conference *Human Trafficking: Not in Our Town*. Plans for Western and Central Iowa HT Regional Conferences, and Southern Iowa (Red Oak) Training**

Davidson reported that over 210 attended the Cedar Rapids regional conference. This included 210 from a variety of agencies including DHS, local high schools, Free Medical Clinic, Police Department and Iowa Workforce Development. Davidson reported that networking at the conference has resulted in new collaborations. After the conference, Davidson reached out to Iowa Workforce about Labor Trafficking. Area high schools suggested a community information day for parents of students. A Clarion hotel manager who attended now wants to become a leader in human trafficking prevention efforts.

As a result of the conference, Davidson has received a number of emails and calls from people who think they know someone who is being trafficked or know children being groomed online. Davidson asked for advice in handling these calls. Belitsos advised that Davidson ask the callers to call both the Polaris national and the Iowa state hotlines.

Davidson shared several examples of how communication has been opened due to the conference, and she has been asked to give speeches. Hopefully, the information received, especially by law enforcement, will result in action being taken when the public report human trafficking concerns.

O’Keefe has had good experience with law enforcement taking action when internet crime (a federal crime) is reported in the Quad Cities. O’Keefe asked Davidson to call and they can talk over alternatives if action is not being taken when trafficking is reported to local authorities.

Belitsos congratulated Davidson on a very successful conference and noted that, as a result of the conference, a “Stop the Demand” group has been formed. A local pastor previously addicted to pornography is working with this group as there is a link between pornography and trafficking.

Belitsos reminded the Board to continue to provide him with any new resource information for the website list of direct services. He also asked Board members to post speaking engagements and human trafficking events on the website calendar. He and Davidson have written a Cedar Rapids conference report which will be posted on the Network website. Belitsos also noted that plans are being made for regional conferences in Central Iowa and Western Iowa for 2017.

## **8. Progress Report on Formation of Victims of Crime Minority Coalition to Include Human Trafficking (Norio Umezu)** Not discussed and added to January meeting agenda.

## **9. Increasing Concern over Asian Massage Parlors and Sex and Labor Trafficking (Belitsos).** Not discussed and added to January meeting agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 4 p.m. The next NAHT Board meeting will be a face-to-face meeting held January 9,

2017, at 10 a.m. at the State Capitol. The Executive Committee will be held December 19 from 2:30 to 4 p.m.