

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery Board of Directors Meeting**

**October 11th, 2022**

**Present:** George Belitsos, John Chesser, Chelsea Hoye, Lyna Debner, Shirley Fineran, Thomas Barr, Linda Harrell, Maggie Tinsman, Shirlee Reding

**Excused Absence:** Alyse Hardin, Sister Shirley Fineran, Alka Khanolkar, Bernadette Rixner

**Absent:** None

**Guests:** Aaron Seydell (Tech. Consultant), Christy Johnson (Secretary of State Office), Ray Fiedler (Department of Public Safety), and Chelsea Hoye (Advocacy Iowa)

#### **I. Call to order. (Belitsos)**

Meeting was called to order at 2:34 pm.

#### **II. Secretary of State update on IBAT signup campaign. Feedback on what the NAHT can do to help to promote and expand IBAT Learn Something/Do Something. (Christy Johnson)**

Johnson reported that they have 592 businesses signed up for IBAT across the state. There are businesses from 89 Iowa counties currently. Johnson noted that Paul Pate recently went to Colorado to present about IBAT with the National Association of Confidential Address Programs and encouraged other states to go back to their Secretary of State and their Attorney Generals to start a program similar to IBAT. Mississippi has recently just launched a similar program and other states are looking into launching one as a result.

Two recent companies in the state of Iowa to join IBAT are HyVee and Casey's. Paul Pate has also been speaking at several Rotary Clubs and encouraging businesses, organizations, and communities to think about IBAT. Some of the ways NAHT Board members can help spread IBAT is to talk to local businesses and share information about the program. Johnson noted that Charles City is showing Grid Shock free of charge at one of their local movie theaters as part of their commitment to IBAT. Johnson also noted that Paul Pate's schedule is very busy now with speaking engagements so people should contact the office well in advance to schedule him to talk about IBAT. Belitsos will write an IBAT update for the NAHT blog post/newsletter to help to promote IBAT.

#### **III. Update from Department of Public Safety on hotel/motel employee training and certification (Ray Fiedler)**

Fiedler reported that they have certified 609 hotels and trained over 18,000 employees who have both watched the online training videos and taken a test. Some thing that DPS has going on is community training on human trafficking and are booked for training in November and December. Fiedler noted that DPS is seeing an increase in awareness of human trafficking because they are getting more tips on the hotline number compared to prior years. Fiedler also noted that over 3000 employees have trained using the video that the Network put together for the DPS training.

Belitsos asked if there is anything the Network can do to help. Fiedler responded that the Network should continue to help promote and share about this hotel/motel employee training as well as increase awareness.

Fiedler noted that there is a current concern with the national hotline where people who call the number are on hold for 15-20 minutes and never speak to an actual person. Belitsos asked if the Network should promote the DPS number instead. Fiedler responded that the tip line on the DPS website is a good tool for reporting. Fiedler also noted that they are looking to be able to respond to these calls and tips 24/7.

**IV. Review and approval of Consent Agenda. Reminder: If you wish to remove any motion from the consent agenda for additional information or debate you may do so. No second is required. (Belitsos)**

- a. Motion to approve September 13th meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors. (see attached)
- b. Motion to approve the September Treasurer Report. (see attached)
- c. Motion to elect Jessica Hagin to fill the vacant board seat due to Ruth Eley's resignation
- d. Motion to elect Chief Mike Tupper who wishes to return to board
- e. Motion to authorize the Board Chair to sign a 2023 renewal Memorandum of Agreement for Advocacy Strategies services for \$5000.

Belitsos asked if there was any agenda item that the board had questions about or concerns. Hearing of no request to remove any item from the agenda, **Belitsos called for a vote on all five items and they were approved unanimously.**

**V. Report from the Ad Hoc Board Member Search Committee and nomination of Stephanie Olson as a new member of the board of directors (Chesser, Rixner, and Hardin)**

Chesser noted that the ad hoc committee of three was impressed by Stephanie and her resume and cover letter. **Belitsos called for a vote to elect Stephanie Olson as a new member of the Board of Directors and it was approved unanimously.**

Chesser noted that the ad hoc committee hasn't been able to meet recently due to outside commitments. He believes that they will have other nominees to approve at the November meeting.

**VI. Report from the Legislative/Advocacy Committee. Impact of the Pieper Lewis sentencing on the 2023 top priority to pass Iowa Safe Harbor Legislation. Outcome of the work group meeting held yesterday at the State Capitol Building (Tinsman)**

Tinsman noted that yesterday's work group meeting fostered good discussion where issues and concerns were addressed. Hoyer said the meeting had a good turnout with twenty attendees representing many different organizations, legislators, and departments. This meeting overall was a good first step and helped move people closer to reaching a compromise. They will be meeting again at the end of October.

Hoyer and others will be putting together a comparative analysis of other states' Safe Harbor laws that included information about what they look like, how its going to be implemented, and how it fits in with the other systems currently in place. They will then pick out things that they do and don't like from each of these states to compile legislation that covers everything they want as well as something that everyone can agree to.

Hoyer also noted that they will be looking to ask the legislature to increase funding so that these programs are possible. Tinsman noted that it's important to do the comparative analysis because people want to know how successful the legislation has been in each state. Chesser noted that he felt it was important that everyone at the meeting acknowledged that there were issues that needed to be fixed and that is a great step to take.

Belitsos noted that Hoyer and Tinsman are going to also be proposing a change in legislation to allow exceptions for victims of rape or trafficking from paying restitution to the family of an offender who they kill.

**VII. Startup of the North Iowa Coalition Against Trafficking and Coalition meetings, trainings, events, and future plans (Debner)**

Debner reported that her and Melody Stone have been working together on starting this new anti-trafficking coalition. One thing they did was this summer at a RV rally in Winnebago County they teamed up with Truckers Against Trafficking to setup a table to hand out material and share about human trafficking. There was between 1000-1500 people at this event. Jared Arbogast gave a presentation at the event and raise a lot of awareness.

Another activity Debner reported that she and Melody Stone are working on is reaching out to local police departments, courthouses, and healthcare centers. Debner was able to hand out material to many of these places in Charles City including a local theater and as a result, they will be showing Grid Shock at their theater. They will also be showing Grid Shock at the Mason City and Clear Lake Libraries. Melody Stone has set up training with local law enforcement within the 12-county coalition service area.

Belitsos noted that January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month and that the NAHT has a proclamation for city council and boards of supervisors to sign so that is one thing they could do as well.

**VIII. Review proposed changes to the NAHT Bylaws (see attached)**

Belitsos noted that proposed changes to the Bylaws were highlighted yellow. At the last Board meeting the board already has eliminated two of the seven by law standing committees in Article V.

Other proposed changes include wording to the Article IV.. Tinsman suggested a change of a verb from “select” to “elect” in Article IV. Tinsman also noted that in section 4 she suggested that Executive Committee be changed in favor of Vice-Chair. Belitsos read 10 sentences to be added to a description of the duties of the Chair. Not only does this individual set the tone of the rest of the board, they are usually a highly visible, representative and spokesperson for the organization to the media at public events. The chair shall strive to form a strong and respectful working team or relationship with all board members and act as a role model and motivator for board members. The board chair appoints the chairs of all board committees and task forces. The Board Chair is an ad-hoc member of all committees and should be copied on committee meeting announcements and minutes.

Belitsos called for a discussion of the changes and additions. **Barr motioned to approve the changes to Article IV of the Bylaws and Tinsman seconded the motion. The changes were approved unanimously.**

Tinsman suggested that under section 8 of Article IV that the board member responsibilities of the treasurer can be delegated to a technology consultant. Tinsman also asked why resignations read that it needs to be received by the secretary and not the chair. Belitsos agreed that it should read chair and motioned to approve these suggested two additional changes. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### **IX. November 1st deadline for nominations for the Outstanding Anti-Trafficking Service Awards (See attached)**

Belitsos reminded the board that last year they made changes to the procedure for selecting awardees. In priors years one could put in a nomination at any time but it was changed to include a deadline and limit the number of recipients to five total. Belitsos noted that there has been only one nomination submitted up to this point and it is in the board packet. Belitsos encouraged board members to submit nominations. He will be submitting a nomination for Leland Schipper who was a teacher for Pieper Lewis and advocated for her by posting a GoFundMe that raise over \$500K.

#### **X. Update on Tri-State Anti-Trafficking Coalition’s request to edit the hotel/motel training film for use in Illinois and Wisconsin (Chesser)**

Chesser noted that they were contacted by Deb Albert and she agreed to give a list of the changes they wanted to make to the NAHT Hotel training video to show it back in Illinois. Chesser said that he has not received that list yet and he will reach out to ask about it. Chesser also noted that they were going to check with their video production company to ask about the cost of editing the video to see if they could afford to do so.

**XI. Adjournment. Upcoming Board Meetings: Tuesday, November 11th, 2:30-4:00 pm  
Monthly NAHT Board Meeting. (Chesser will send the agenda and Chair the  
November 8th meeting)**

Meeting adjourned at 3:59 pm.