

Meeting Minutes

Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery Board of Directors Meeting

September 13th, 2022

Present: George Belitsos, John Chesser, Alyse Hardin, Chelsea Hoye, Lyna Debner, Shirley Fineran, Thomas Barr, Jessica Hagin (proxy for Ruth Eley), Alka Khanolkar, Linda Harrell

Excused Absence: Maggie Tinsman, Ruth Eley

Absent: MacKenzie Bills

Guests: Aaron Seydell (Tech. Consultant) and Gretchen Brown-Waech (Attorney General's Office)

I. Call to order. (Belitsos)

Meeting was called to order at 2:34 pm.

II. 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 August 9th meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors. (see attached)
- b. Motion to approve the August Treasurer Report. (see attached)
- c. Motion to authorize the Chair to print color copies of the NAHT brochure at a cost of \$78.33 and mail the brochures to the SOS, who is handing them out at IBAT speaking engagements
- d. Motion to accept with regret the resignation of Ruth Eley (see attached)

Belitsos noted that in her letter of resignation that Ruth recommended that her proxy Jessica Hagin fill her now vacant position and that is something the Nominating Committee should consider. **Belitsos called for a vote on the consent agenda and it was approved unanimously.**

III. Report on plans (Date, time, name of trainer) for the survivor-informed and trauma-sensitive board training (Chessser and Hardin)

Chessser noted that they have been talking with Teresa Davidson thus far to discuss details about doing the board training due to her expertise in the topic. Hardin noted that she and Chessser are not quite sure of what they want to do exactly yet but are looking at this training possibly happening at the beginning of the new year. Chessser noted that they are potentially looking at doing this during the NAHT Day on the Hill. Belitsos said that Teresa would be a good trainer to get to do the training. Belitsos also noted that waiting until the new year would be a good idea because we will have brought on new board members by then.

Chesser noted that the nominating committee is currently discussing what kind of people they want to have and the candidates that they believe the current board will want to unanimously add to the board. Chesser noted that three categories they are looking at are candidates who can work on fundraising, communication (PR and media relations), and someone from the Department of Human Services. Chesser asked if anyone knows of someone that could fit any of these categories and is willing to serve to let their committee know.

IV. Decide on Board changes to the list/purpose/goals of 7 NAHT standing committees (See attached). Answer questions as to which committees we need to change, eliminate, and which to continue. Answer the question if the Network disappeared what functions would not get done in Iowa??

Here are some current NAHT functions to consider:

- **Statewide awareness building**
- **The website gets an average of 1000 clicks a month**
- **monthly blog post/newsletter has 1500 subscribers**
- **Statewide volunteer projects eg: rescue stickers, hotel employee training project, massage ordinances, and IBAT**
- **Collaborations with state agencies. Eg: Attorney General's Office, DPS, DOT, SOS, DHS, Governor's Office**
- **Outstanding service awards with 25 already recognized**
- **Collaboration and promotion of 10 local and regional coalitions**
- **Collaboration, promotion, and advocacy for service providers**
- **Day on the Hill each January**
- **Legislative Advocacy**
- **Speakers Bureau**

Belitsos noted that the NAHT is currently at eleven board members, which is the minimum number of board members according to the Bylaws. As a result, most of the committees are not meeting since there is no committee leadership. Belitsos again urged the nominating committee to consider the five prospects that have submitted their resume and a letter of interest in serving.

Belitsos started by questioning whether the NAHT Service Provider Collaboration should continue. Alyse Hardin and Teresa Davidson are planning to create their own network of providers. Belitsos pointed out that current board members do not have the time to lead the collaboration quarterly meetings. Hope Metheny has volunteered to lead the Septemeber 15th and December 15th quarterly meetings.

Hardin noted that she has met with Teresa Davidson and Jessica Rohrs to discuss what they feel is important for networking with other service providers in the state. This new collaboration will be only for those in executive leadership roles where they can learn from each other by exchanging ideas. Hardin also noted that this collaboration would meet quarterly and be member-led.

Belitsos said that he would like them to bring this up at the next NAHT Service Provider Collaboration meeting (which will take place on September 15th) so that they could make others

aware. Belitsos recommend that if another group of providers wanted to set up another collaboration then the NAHT should discontinue quarterly meetings with the current collaboration. Hardin responded that she agreed and would continue to update the NAHT board on the progress made. Belitsos noted that he would continue to mail out training and other resource materials to providers should this new collaboration start.

Barr said that he agreed that the NAHT should discontinue if this new group gets started but we should keep an open line of communication with them. Chesser noted that it would be important to stay in touch and potentially have a person a part of this new collaboration. Hardin noted that she and other direct service members of the NAHT BOD would be able to report what was happening with this new collaboration as it pertains to the NAHT. Belitsos read the purpose of the NAHT Collaboration as follows, "Service Provider Collaboration: This collaboration meets every 2-3 months and bringstogether human trafficking prevention and direct service providers in order to increase the communication and information shared about ongoing anti-trafficking efforts across different providers, regions, agencies, and disciplines in Iowa. The collaboration meetings will give providers the opportunity to let others know about setbacks, problems, successes, or what's new in programming. The goal is to support one another and to stay informed. The NAHT Board members who plans and leads the collaboration should be a service provider."

Fineran noted that it would be important to have a communication line and give input on issues that are important to the NAHT if the current collaboration was to stop. Hagin noted that having a separate collaboration that isn't connected with the NAHT would be fine but it's important to keep on the same page.

Barr motioned to dissolve the current NAHT Service Provider Collaboration in favor of the new collaboration quarterly meetings that is currently being formed with communication being established between the NAHT Board of Directors and the new collaboration. Harrell seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Belitsos proposed to drop the name of "Best Practice" from the Research, Evaluation, and Best Practice Committee. The board has already decided to drop it as part of the NAHT mission. Belitsos would like to rename this committee to Evaluation, Research, and New Projects Committee. This new committee would collaborate with Iowa government agencies, academic institutions, other states, and national/international anti-trafficking organizations to plan and promote new anti-trafficking training opportunities and projects. The committee would evaluate outcomes, research new information and compile statistics. Studies would be carried out ex: the biggest roadblocks and needs for service providers. Each January the committee would organize an expert panel called the "Iowa Freedom Summit".

Barr asked if the research aspect of this committee would be a duplication of the new collaboration that is being put together. Hardin responded that they would discuss it at meetings but would not have the capacity to do the actual research. They could also discuss what to potentially recommend to the committee to research. Barr noted that it would be great if this new collaboration could help identify a specific area for the research to explore and find information on.

Fineran noted that most providers do not have the time to do their own independent research so the NAHT doing this would be needed. Belitsos noted that it is important to remember that “Best practices” will not be a part of this committee because of the past controversy that may be associated with it. In the past this committee had 4 subcommittees including topics such as Stopping the Demand, Hotel/Motel Employee Training, and IBAT startup/promotion. None of these are currently functioning due to the loss of committee leadership. The best practice 65-page document divided the board 50/50 and the decision to not endorse or publish the document created anger on both sides of the vote. This was the prime reason for five resignations.

Hardin responded that as long as the “best practice” piece is out that the committee should stay running because the work of the committee in the past was really helpful to service providers. Chesser noted that he felt that this committee is important in finding gaps and needs to be kept the way that it is currently described in the revised bylaws. Harrell noted that she believes that his committee is an asset to the Network.

Hardin made a motion to continue the Research, Evaluation, and New Projects Committee while dropping the Best Practices piece. Fineran seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Belitsos moved on to discuss the future of the Survivor Advisory Panel. He read the purpose as follows, “this panel will work to make the NAHT more survivor-informed by recruiting and supporting survivors to serve on the BOD, the panel itself, and other committees. The panel will engage survivors in meaningful ways in projects and when advising and assisting state agencies or Iowa Legislature.”

Hardin responded that this committee is currently not ready to renew operation and would like to table it until we get new direct service board members. Fineran noted that at their last meeting they talked about the identification of survivors and that not everyone wants to be identified as such. Some of the other things they need to go over include compensation so Fineran believes they need more time to discuss these things.

Belitsos reminded the board that they had already voted to revise bylaws to allow for compensation for survivors who serve on the board. If the survivor declined compensation this was their choice.

Chesser asked if there was a way to suspend the committee until they are ready to continue. Belitsos noted that it could be taken off as a standing committee and be reestablished at some future time. **Fineran motioned to designate the Survivor Advisory Panel as an inactive standing committee and to be revisited in January 2023. Chesser seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.** As a result of this vote, the panel will be removed from the bylaws.

Belitsos asked if anyone wanted to eliminate, change the purpose of, or the name of the Legislative Advocacy, Fundraising, or Executive Committees. There were no proposed changes to these committees, their names, or their purpose. **Chesser motioned to continue these three standing committees and place them into the revised bylaws. Fineran seconded this motion and it was approved unanimously.**

Non-Agenda Discussion

Brown-Waech joined the meeting to give an update on the Pieper Lewis sentencing. She noted that the judge had deferred her 20-year sentence, given her 5 years in a community-based correctional facility, community service, \$4,000 in court costs, and a restitution payment of \$150K to be made to the defendant's family. Harrell noted that this decision, specifically the restitution, is a failure of the justice system. Fineran noted that she may not be necessarily expected to make this payment but it is a requirement that had to be ordered by the judge.

Brown-Waech noted that she is perplexed that none of the people responsible for trafficking her have been charged and arrested yet. Belitsos agreed and said that he believes they have not done any investigation yet. Brown-Waech said that she hopes that this renews a push for Safe Harbor legislation.

Chesser reported that Unity Point has put together a committee to focus on human trafficking and he will be attending a meeting to develop a relationship with them for the NAHT. He will report back about what happens at the next board meeting.

Fineran reported that Lila Mae's House is currently taking a hiatus due to funding problems. Belitsos expressed regrets and if there is anything the NAHT can do to help to please let him know.

V. Adjournment. Upcoming Meetings: Tuesday, October 11th, 2:30-4:00 pm Monthly NAHT Board Meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:56 pm.