



1 WEST WILSON STREET, ROOM 551
POST OFFICE BOX 2659
MADISON, WI 53701-2659

State of Wisconsin
Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Telephone: 608-266-3118
Fax: 608-267-3203
Web: <https://dhhcouncil.wisconsin.gov>

Wisconsin Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Executive Meeting Minutes Draft
Wednesday, July 23, 2025
3:00 PM to 4:00 PM

- I. Welcome and Introductions by:** Jonathan Petermon
- II. Council Members Present:** Jonathon Petermon, Leia Sparks, and BJ Ermenc
Council Members Absent (Excused): None
Council Members Absent (Unexcused): None
DHS Staff Support Present: Christopher Rawlings and Zachary Davenport
Sign Language Interpreters: Chantel Wiedmeyer and Nicole Keeler
Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) Service Provider: Margo Lucas
- III. Meeting called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Jonathan Petermon.**

The meeting took place via Zoom:
<https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1611766373>
- IV. Review and Approve July Agenda**

Leia Sparks motioned to approve, and Jonathan Petermon seconded. Motion passed.
- V. Review and Approve May Executive Minutes**

Leia Sparks motioned to approve, and Jonathan Petermon seconded. Motion passed.
- VI. Public Comments on Issues Affecting the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind (3:15-3:30 p.m.)**
 - Jason Anderson will be running as Hard of Hearing member and is interested in running for chairperson or vice chairperson once the current individuals' terms are up.
 - Brian Peters commented that WI Eye continues to fail to provide closed captioning on all broadcasts.
 - Judith Greaves introduced herself and she is the Association of the Late Deafened Adults (ALDA) interim representative for District 2.
 - Evan McKenzie spoke as representative of ASL Interpreter Union (OPEIU). Their goal:



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- To get the big VRS c companies (Sorenson and ZP) to stop ignoring OPEIU. They have been trying to establish a union for 1.5 years and it has not come to fruition yet.
- VRS conditions are bad-the companies are reducing breaks as well as reducing the 10 seconds before another call gets routed to an interpreter.
- The companies are having trouble retaining interpreters.
- There is a lack of Tri-lingual and Deaf interpreters.

Their asks:

- They want the companies to remain neutral. No retaliation against those who unionize.
- BJ Ermenc requested Evan for talking points to be submitted to the council. Evan complied with the request.

VII. Federal and State Legislative Updates-Zachary Davenport

- On July 15, 2025, the federal reconciliation bill was released. It has impacts on healthcare and nutritional assistance. DHS is looking deeper into the bill and what this means for Wisconsinites.
- Base allocations have increased, and the DRC is working on how funds are distributed.
- Independent Living Centers (ILC), career programs, home health also received increases.
- The cost to continue Medicaid, as is, is \$2 million.
- There will be a minimum fee schedule for DHS fund family care
- 10% increase for paratransit aids
- There is a bill at the state level related to Alzheimer's Support Caregivers. This could become law in late August 2025. It would remove the income requirement.
- SB357 is also recirculating. This bill makes English the official language of the state of Wisconsin and also states the use of AL in lieu of in-person interpreters (all languages).

VIII. Action Items

- a. Invite WisEye to a future quarterly meeting.



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IX. ODDH Website Recommendations

Christopher Rawlings stated the website will not be a place to find answers. The team is standardizing with other organizations that must include accessibility and including the other Governor appointed councils. The council Facebook page will be dismantled.

X. Organization Liaison Discussion

Jonathan Petermon motioned to table the discussion regarding the organizational liaison. Leia Sparks seconded. Motion passed.

XI. Develop September 2025 Quarterly Meeting agenda

The September quarterly meeting is virtual!

- Discuss 2026 quarterly meeting dates and agendas
- Four meeting dates will be in March, June, September and December of 2026
- Each of these meetings will have one speaker to present related to our four goals.
- Jennifer Koehn will be asked to speak to our group in September regarding employment.
- Conduct elections to replace outgoing council members.
- Work on aligning GCPD
- ODDH will present on their budget work.

XII. Adjournment

BJ Ermenc motioned to adjourn meeting at 3:59 p.m. and Jonathan Petermon seconded. Motion passed.