

AVAA Board Members Teleconference call

Thursday November 19, 2015, 2:00pm EST

641-715-3580, Access Code 110-924

Attendees: Nancy Duran (President), Tina Penman (Treasurer & Acting Secretary), Christine Ulinski (Member-at-Large), Sean McClenney (Past President), Denise Goforth (President Elect)

Absent: Rose White (Secretary)

Guest: Dr. Rachel McArdle (National Director- Audiology and Speech Pathology Service- Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services)

Quorum: Yes

Minutes

1. Welcome remarks – Nancy Duran (President)
 - Nancy Duran called the meeting to order at 2:08 PM EST.
2. October Minutes – Tina Penman (Acting Secretary)
 - Minutes of the October 8, 2015 AVAA Board Meeting were approved as distributed to the members of the Board.
3. Treasurer's Report – Tina Penman (Treasurer)
 - Tina Penman, Treasurer, thanked Sean McClenney (Past President) for encouraging Shay Williams (KIVA Consulting) to send her the monthly balance excel sheets. Currently, the JDVAA – KIVA account balance is \$258,068.70 and the CHEP- AVAA account balance remains at \$1,012.38.
 - Tina researched the logistics of setting up a business account through a credit union and bank. The benefits of Unitus Community Credit Union were discussed (shared branching for other credit unions nationwide at no extra cost, only \$5 membership fee + \$10 application fee, first 75 checks written and first 75 checks deposited every month have no fee, etc.). The benefits of using a credit union appeared to outweigh the benefits of using a banking institution such as Bank of America, Chase, etc. However, all signers on the account (ideally the Treasurer and President) must be physically present to sign the paperwork in person to open a new account. This is problematic given the previous President and Treasurers have been, currently is, and probably always will be in different locations across the US. The possibility of using a Federal Credit Union, located on most VA campuses, was discussed. It may be possible that a signer could be added to the same account at another Federal Credit Union location if the Federal Credit Unions communicate well with each other. Federal Credit Unions also notarize documents and can verify identities. Tina noted she would inquire at the Federal Credit Union located at her VA, the VA Portland (Oregon) Health Care System, and would touch base with the AVAA Board over email before the next meeting.

4. JDVAA meeting 12/8 – Sean McClenney (AVAA Past President, JDVAA Current President)
 - Sean noted the meeting is slated for Wednesday, December 9, 2015 at 7:30 PM EST. Items on the drafted agenda include: 1- JDVAA's non-profit status, 2- Bylaws review including the make-up of the Executive Board, 3- Transferring funds from KIVA to Geneva as FDIC insures up to \$250K and the KIVA – JDVAA account exceeds that amount, and 4- Fit To Serve.

5. New Business – Nancy Duran

- a. AVAA bylaws – Nancy

President Duran noted approximately 20 additional people became subscribers to the new listserv through the AVAA website (Mailchimp) following the email sent on November 1, 2015.

Two possible methods of voting on the Bylaws revisions were discussed: 1- Email only and 2- Email and the additional option to vote in-person at JDVAC. Additionally, the email mechanism was also discussed: 1- The VA distribution list (and if it must be used, to what extent) and 2- Mailchimp. Pros and cons of all possibilities and combinations of voting methods were discussed. President Duran remarked she would follow-up with Dr. Henselman about Bylaws changes and guidance.

- b. ASHA report – Christine Ulinski (Member-at-large)

Christine reported she went to Lobby Day with the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) last week. She informed her regional office and the AVAA Board about this activity in advance and she represented only herself on this trip. She noted that ADA, Ingrid Lulis (ASHA Director, Federal and Political Advocacy), and other lobbyists met with legislators and other key figures on Fit to Serve. It was her impression the legislators wanted a compromise and Representative Sean Duffy (R-WI) continues to want this passed. While the [Vantage Point Blog post](#) (Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) provided valuable information, it was observed that other stakeholders may have questioned the blog post's credibility and/or felt it was published too late. Questions were asked about the VA process for disseminating information to Congress and the general public.

Dr. Rachel McArdle (National Director- Audiology and Speech Pathology Service-Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services) joined the call. She first clarified the VA blog post was an attempt to quickly and efficiently refute the claims made by Representative Sean Duffy on national TV just a couple days prior.

She also described the process at which information got disseminated at the highest level. The office of Representative Dan Benishek (R-MI) requested the data on wait times approximately 3 months ago. Central Office gathered this information and sent it to the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs (OLCA) for approval. This is the office that receives and disseminates sensitive information that may be used for official documents, congressional testimonies, and shared with the media. Unfortunately, this office receives up to 1,000 requests per month so there was a slight delay. Additionally, this information was only sent to Representative Dan Benishek's senior staffer because Representative Duffy's office was not listed on the Hill request. Dr. McArdle also answered questions addressing the types of services Veterans receive in Michigan and Wisconsin, including the waiting time for minor hearing aid adjustments, whether or not technicians could perform minor adjustments, the waiting time for services performed only by audiologists, etc. She educated lobbyists supporting Fit to Serve that hearing aid

services are funded under the Medical Care Act which requires the issuance of hearing aids must be supported by a documented medical need. Audiologists are trained to assess medical need through comprehensive examinations. This is why the VA handbook requires an audiologist and not a technician.

As for now, Dr. McArdle noted she hasn't heard much about the current status of S564/HR353 and that it's her hope talks about a possible compromise start to fizzle. It appeared as if everyone on the AVAA Board call agreed a compromise was not necessary given the access data and/or that a compromise between all parties was not feasible. It was understood that nothing else needs to be done at this point, as it's currently unknown if there is another meeting on Fit to Serve, and if so, when it's scheduled.

6. Old Business

a. JDVAC 2016 – Sean McClenney (JDVAC 2016 Chair)

Sean noted registration is ongoing, CEUs are being submitted, and the ACES process is quicker this year. Currently there are 29 field presentations, 16 posters, and 22 exhibitors (~\$89,000 in revenue). He also remarked JDVAC 2016 will feature a Crowd Compass app. The switch from using the SpotMe app saved ~\$10,000. Sean's needs from the AVAA Board, if any, were not documented.

Awards- Denise Goforth (President-Elect)

Denise mentioned 8 out of 10 audiologists have agreed to serve on the committee. She hopes to hear from the remaining two soon. She will also follow-up with Rose regarding the logistics for ordering plaques.

b. Newsletter – Rose White (Secretary)

Due to time constraints, the discussion was tabled until the next AVAA Board Meeting on December 17, 2015.

c. Mailchimp – Nancy Duran (President)

Mailchimp was discussed in the notes above.

7. Open Forum

- Denise encouraged the AVAA Board to think about the upcoming changes to the Bylaws. Specifically, she encouraged the Board to consider the reasons why a member should pay dues to an organization that he or she may already be well-connected to in the first place without being an official dues-paying member. Additionally, the AVAA Bylaws has welcomed all VA audiologists as members, regardless if they paid dues or not. If the Board moves to make VA audiologists pay dues to officially become a member of AVAA, then AVAA membership must be meaningful.

It was noted a benefit of having a dues-paid membership base is that it officially separates VA duties from AVAA membership. Paying dues would also distinguish those who truly wish to be a member from those who were simply a member by default or didn't even know they were a member in the first place. Christine noted she would reach out to fellow VA health professional organizations to ask about their membership makeup, dues structure, and lobbying/advocacy capabilities. She will then share that with the AVAA Board via email.

- Action List:

Nancy- Follow up with Dr. Henselmen re: Bylaws changes

Tina- Check in with VA Portland Federal Credit Union and share findings with AVAA Board via email

Christine- Research fellow VA health professional organizations and share findings with AVAA Board via email

All- Join the JDVAA Board Meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2015 at 7:30 PM EST. Brainstorm ways to make AVAA membership meaningful if the Bylaws changes mandates dues must be paid to become a member.

A motion was made to adjourn, seconded, and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:05pm EST.

Next meeting :
Thursday, December 17, 2015, 2:00 PM EST
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Respectfully Submitted,

Tina Penman
Acting Secretary
December 17, 2015

Nancy Duran
President
December 17, 2015