



# 2024 ADC Statewide Meeting

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Call to Order

The Alaska Deaf Council (ADC) Statewide Meeting was called to order at 1:08 PM on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at HOPE Community Resources Center in Anchorage, Alaska.

## Roll Call

### Present

Byron Jensen, President  
Sean Gordon, Vice President [Z]  
Elise Veatch, Treasurer  
Tyler Veatch, Member at Large  
Markus Porch, Member at Large  
Ryan Di Giovanni, Member at Large, Parliamentarian  
Michael Merritt, Member  
Geraldine Klapak, Member  
Sharon Miranda, Member  
John Miranda, Member  
Duane Mayes, Member  
Evelyn Ooten, Member  
Tracy Pifer, Member  
Aaron Foust, Member  
Clara Baldwin, Member  
Mary Rios, Member  
Na'Shante Fearington, Member [Z]  
Kristeena Brinkley, Member [Z]  
Madison H, Observer\* [Z]  
Janelle C, Observer\* [Z]  
Favor W, Observer\* [Z]  
Ischa Miles, Observer\* [Z]  
Dale Boam, Interpreter\*  
Alyssa LaComb-Brown, Interpreter\*

[Z] ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

\* OBSERVERS ARE NON-VOTING AND DO NOT HAVE VOICE OR VOTING PRIVILEGES

### Absent

Shawn Schramski, Member at Large





## **Introduction of Alaska’s State Motto “North To The Future”**

President Jensen explained ADC’s intention to embrace the state motto as part of ADC’s restructuring and will explain more during the State of ADC.

## **Meeting Etiquette**

Parliamentarian Di Giovanni went over the rules and procedures for this meeting under Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.

## **Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was unanimously approved as presented by President Jensen

## **Approval of Minutes**

President Jensen reported that there were no minutes from the previous Statewide Meeting to report due to the lack of follow through from the previous officers before Covid-19.

## **State of ADC**

President Jensen introduced his agenda for the State of ADC. All Officers, Members at Large, and Committee Members were introduced by name, role, and where they were from. President Jensen then explained everything that happened with ADC since the last Statewide Meeting in 2023 where the previous Board of Directors were replaced, and that the organization underwent restructuring. That ADC is now a stronger organization with new leadership, website, and resources for the community. The ADC is board driven and will focus on Advocacy, Fundraising & Crowdsourcing, and working with the communities by providing educational workshops and collaborations.

## **Reports**

### ***Financial Report***

Treasurer Elise Veatch gave the Finance Report and stated that ADC had two separate financial accounts for the operating budget and one that is earmarked for Scuba Diving lessons as the money was provided by the Lions Club of Mt. View as a grant.

*\*Member Michael Merritt had a question about how does the ADC earn money? President Jensen responded that ADC relies on donations from the community and does not collect membership dues.*

### ***Membership Report***

Vice President Gordon gave the Membership Report and stated that the ADC now has a new website on [www.akdeafcouncil.org](http://www.akdeafcouncil.org) and that information and resources would be posted on there. There will be real-time updates for information and events. The ADC is





also on Social Media on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. ADC is involved in the Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened communities. We currently have a reach of over 837+ people across all the social media platforms and will focus on Public Policy & Legislative, Education & Outreach, and Youth Membership.

### **Legislative Committee**

Member at Large Di Giovanni shared that the committee has recommended that the ADC share key pieces of legislation on the website as a resource such as HB 111 and SB143. That the ADC will have a representative in Juneau on November 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Governor's Mansion for a social function. Encouraged ADC members to reach out to their representatives and ADC when it comes to issues impacting their communities.

### **Education Committee**

Treasurer Veatch shared that the ADC is exploring a partnership with the Alaska State School for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and that the committee was monitoring the progress of HB 111 and SB 143.

*\*Member Duane Mays asked if there was any possibility of a member joining the Legislative committee. Duane then explained that he had extensive experience in this area in his former roles with the State of Alaska and would like to help ADC out. President Jensen smiled upon seeing this and said that ADC would welcome all the help that it could get.*

### **Media Outreach Committee**

Member at Large Veatch shared that the committee recommended the ADC contact local media stations, newspapers, and online resources to promote awareness about Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late-Deafened communities in Alaska. Veatch also encouraged all organizations that ADC partners to share information about ADC and events.

### **Fundraising Committee**

Member at Large Porch recommended ADC explore Grant Writing to bring in donations for events and programs. Also look at sponsorship opportunities using newsletters and websites. President Jensen added more information that the ADC relies on donations and that we needed to seek opportunities to earn money to support the organization.

*\*Member John Miranda asked a question about how does ADC make money from events? Member at Large Di Giovanni responded that it is the organization's hope that all future events such as AANO will have the support of the restaurants, breweries, or event space by donating a percentage of the proceeds since we are a non-profit organization. These businesses would benefit from making donations to ADC for tax reasons.*





### **Bylaws Committee**

Member at Large Di Giovanni shared that the Bylaws committee has been hard at work with creating a stronger organization by meeting in July, August, and September. President Jensen appointed Di Giovanni to become the organization's Parliamentarian. The committee reviewed bylaws from 2019 and drafted amendments that were approved by the Board of Directors to present to the membership at the Statewide meeting. More information to come in new business.

*\*Member Duane Mays asked which version of the Bylaws the current Officers have and explained that he wrote the original bylaws back in 1991. President Jensen explained that the only version that we had was from March of 2019 and Member at Large Di Giovanni explained that the Bylaws committee reviewed the 2019 Bylaws and found a lot of inconsistencies and that it was not very effective but that the organization hopes to change that.*

### **Deaf-Blind Committee**

Member at Large Schramski was absent from the Statewide Meeting so President Jensen took over and shared that the committee proposed to disband this committee due to a lack of activity or involvement from the DeafBlind community in Alaska but that the ADC would still share resources and information for the DeafBlind community on the website.

## **Unfinished Business**

Member at Large Schramski was absent from the Statewide Meeting, so President Jensen took over and shared that the Board of Directors was able to complete all of the previous unfinished business left from the previous Statewide Meeting.

## **Intermission**

*The Statewide Meeting took a ten-minute break from 1:51 PM to 2:01 PM.*

## **New Business**

President Jensen turned the floor over to Parliamentarian Di Giovanni who then explained that in order to be able to vote on New Business that people needed to be a Member of the ADC and wanted to verify who was a Member. Treasurer Veatch went over the Roll Call to verify who was a Member or Observer for the purposes of voting. Parliamentarian Di Giovanni established that there were 16 eligible voters and that in order to achieve majority vote there needed to be at least 9 votes and for 2/3 vote there needed to be at least 11 votes.





## **Amendments to Bylaws**

Member at Large Di Giovanni suggested two different options on how to proceed with the Bylaws revisions. The first option was to read through everything and then discuss the bylaws or the second option was to go through each section of the Bylaws and move down to the next section if there are no objections or revisions and then accept the amended Bylaws as a whole with one vote. By unanimous vote all of the voters decided on number two.

*\*Member John Miranda asked about section 1.2 if the Alaska Deaf Council still had their non-profit status. President Jensen affirmed that the ADC still held their 501(c)3 nonprofit status with the Internal Revenue Service.*

*\*Member Sharon Miranda asked for clarification on section 2.2.f.3 Other Technical Services and what this meant? Member at Large Di Giovanni explained that this would cover all auxiliary aids such as Cap Tel, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), or any other forms of technology that assists Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing, or Late Deafened people.*

*\*Member Clara Baldwin asked how ADC would protect Youth Members from people who are not in good standing with the community or have a previous criminal conviction. Member at Large Di Giovanni mentioned that the ADC recently adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy that would address this, and that the organization does not tolerate discrimination of any kind, nor will it allow any one dangerous to participate in ADC or any of the events that it hosts or sponsors.*

Member at Large Di Giovanni made a motion to suspend the Statewide Meeting so that everyone could review the Zero Tolerance Policy that is posted on the ADC website. This motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was suspended at 2:23 PM.

## **Intermission**

*The Statewide Meeting was suspended from 2:23 PM to 2:29 PM*

*\*Member Evelyn Ooten asked if the ADC had a Conflict-of-Interest policy that prevented spouses from serving on the Board together. Member at Large Di Giovanni replied that there was an amendment on 5.2 that required Board Members to disclose any and all potential conflicts of interest and that they shall recuse themselves from decision making action on issues that may be affected by the conflict. As an example Treasurer Veatch and Member at Large Veatch is not a conflict of interest with this amendment, however Tyler would not be able to run for office while Elise is Treasurer.*

*\*Member Tracy Pifer wanted to go back to section 4.3 and asked what ADC would do if they were unable to find a Member at Large in a specific region. Member at Large Di Giovanni*





*replied that the ADC shall do their utmost to seek a qualified candidate and will leave that vacancy open with the intent of filling it. That it was not an option to leave the seat vacant and a reasonable amount of time would be needed to seek such a qualified candidate.*

Member Clara Baldwin made a motion to recess for an unspecified amount of time and said that she had a surprise for everyone. The motion was passed unanimously, and the Statewide Meeting took a break at 2:41pm.

## **Intermission**

*The Statewide Meeting took a ten-minute break from 2:45 PM to 2:55 PM. During the break Member Clara Baldwin introduced Alaska State Representative Jamie Allard who recognized Member Duane Mays for his contributions to the state of Alaska and the Deaf community. Member Duane Mays was recognized with the Alaska State Legislature Award.*

*\*Member Sharon Miranda pointed out that section 9.1.f Youth Membership had the incorrect spelling for the Alaska School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (AKSD). There is no “the” and in the amended Bylaws proposal it originally stated, “Alaska School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing”. A motion was made by Sharon and seconded by Member Evelyn Ooten. The vote was unanimously passed to strike “the” from that name in section 9.1.f.*

Member at Large Di Giovanni recapped that there was only one revision to be made in section 9.1.f Youth Membership and that change was already voted upon and put to the vote for the membership to accept the amended Bylaws and stated that at least five votes from the membership were needed. The motion passed unanimously with all votes from the Members present at the Statewide Meeting.

## **Motions from Members**

Member Clara Baldwin moves that the Alaska Deaf Council have active involvement and engagement with the Alaska State Bill 143 “Deaf Children Bill of Rights”. Member Sharon Miranda seconded this motion and Member at Large Di Giovanni turned the floor to President Jensen to facilitate discussion. Member Sharon Miranda mentioned the challenges of educators having a voice with this SB and Member Clara Baldwin encouraged the ADC to reach out to legislators and help draft or make changes to this SB. Parliamentarian Di Giovanni asked President Jensen to conduct a vote and this motion was passed unanimously and referred to the Education and Outreach Committee.

There were no further motions from the membership.





## **Board Elections**

President Jensen shares that there are two vacancies right now for office (Vice President and Secretary) and opened the floor for nominations. Member Clara Baldwin nominated Member at Large Di Giovanni for the role of Vice President to which he accepted. Member at Large Di Giovanni made a brief two-minute speech and then left the room while the members deliberated and voted. Member at Large Di Giovanni was then elected Vice President with a 2/3 vote.

President Jensen then opened the floor to nominations for the role of Secretary. Member Evelyn Ooten nominated Member Sharon Miranda to which Sharon declined and then Member Clara Baldwin nominated Member Mary Rios to which Mary declined. President Jensen asked if there were any more nominations, Member at Large Di Giovanni nominated Vice President Gordon to which Sean accepted. Member Tracy Pifer nominated Member Evelyn Ooten to which Evelyn accepted and then President Jensen closed the floor for nominations.

Vice President Gordon made his two-minute speech and then was asked to leave the Zoom Videoconference while Member Evelyn Ooten made their two-minute speech and then left the conference room. The members deliberated and voted for Member Evelyn Ooten to be elected Secretary with a 2/3 vote.

## **Member at Large Elections**

President Jensen then opened the floor to nominations for Member at Large. Member Clara Baldwin nominated Sean Gordon and Member Sharon Miranda nominated Kristeena Brinkley for Member at Large, Interior Region. The members discussed both nominees briefly and then voted to accept both Sean Gordon and Kristeena Brinkley as Members at Large.

## **Announcements**

### **Alaskan ASL Night Out**

Member at Large Markus Porch shared that Alaskans ASL Night Out schedule was published on the ADC website from November 2024 through October 2025 and that AANO is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month in Anchorage, Eagle River, Girdwood, or in the Valley. Member at Large Di Giovanni also mentioned that ADC would contact all restaurants, bars, breweries, or event spaces to donate some of the revenue to ADC to support the Deaf community.

### **ADC Pioneer of the Year Award**

President Jensen announced that ADC would start recognizing people in the community with an award “Pioneer of the Year” whose leadership, service to the community, and commitment to philanthropy are exceptional. President Jensen then announced that Clara





Baldwin (Assistant Director of Alaska State School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing) was the 2024 recipient of the Pioneer of the Year Award. Clara made a brief presentation and thanked everyone because AKSD would not be successful without the community's involvement and encouraged everyone to continue supporting AKSD and ADC.

### **Community Recognition**

President Jensen then thanked the following individuals, organizations, and businesses for their support of ADC. Aaron Foust, Tracy Pifer, AKSD, RNR Interpreting, Lions Club of Mt. View, HOPE, Dale Boam, Alyssa LaComb-Brown, Choice Access Interpreting, Challenge Alaska, and the UAA ASL Club. President Jensen also recognized each Officer and Member at Large for their contributions outside of the Board and within ADC. Member at Large Di Giovanni then recognized President Jensen for all of his work with resurrecting ADC and making ADC a stronger organization thanks to the Board.

### **Adjournment**

The Statewide Meeting was adjourned at 4:28 PM.

Gregory "Byron" Jensen  
President

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