

To: Members of the Oklahoma Association of the Deaf
From: OAD Executive Board
Release date: June 4, 2018
Subject: Transparency of activities within the organization

Dear OAD members,

The Executive Board feels it is time to update you with everything going on with OAD. The OAD board has experienced strife for seven months, more so in the last few months. This strife has been internal and external. We have discussed transparency, to you, our members and how it is time to publicly announce what is going on. We have done our best to remain as professional as possible and, we will continue to try to be professional. We have had hardships within the board, dealing with belittling and disrespect to board members. It has taken a long time to clean this up. As well, another group has been making it nearly impossible for us to continue with our business for the past few months. We are finally closing that chapter, and able to move on. We have given over hundreds of hours to OAD over this mess. We have not ignored what has happened. We have had to discuss, re-evaluate and ensure that we remain professional at all times to represent you, our members, our organization and community.

It has come to our attention that our recent member only zoom meeting was recorded without our knowledge or approval and released to specific unidentified people. To further complicate things, along with private OAD information which was not released to others, including but not limited to: private conversations between OAD President, 2 OAD auditors and the former OAD treasurer, internal memos and copies of checks from 2015 and 2016. These were internal issues for the Executive Board to do their business. This information was never to be released, yet the information has been shared externally. This is not the first time a meeting was recorded without knowledge or approval, nor is it the first time that similar information of internal Executive information has been shared outside of the Executive Board. The person responsible for this mis-conduct, is no longer on the Executive Board. To prevent rumors or concerns, we want the members aware, we are aware of this and we have already handled the situation. We have approved a motion for an ad-hock committee to create guidelines for such issues should they occur again.

We continue to get backlashed publicly for asking certain people to resign. OAD Executive Board has valid reasons for every resignation request and we thank our members for trusting us, which is the majority of our membership. We have heard from many of you via texts, phone calls and emails. We cannot say thank you enough for all of the support you have offered despite the online and public bashing.

During March and April, OAD has had so many things going on plus we've had board members resign which has taken time and attention. We thank you for your patience and understanding as we went through process to replace this position which took 2 full months before it was resolved. Motions will be uploaded in 2 weeks, which will show the course of actions of what has happened with the timeline. The Vice President, Brent Denham also resigned on 6-1-18. The position is vacant. If any members are interested or want to nominate someone, please contact OAD Board.

In addition, it is important that you all know that the money in OAD bank account was withdrawn without prior knowledge and without approval from the Executive Board of Directors. The Board was made aware of the situation after 7 weeks after the funds were withdrawn without our knowledge. This information came to light May 1st after a member who came into possession of the information. They informed us of the rumor of withdrawn money and that \$100.00 was left in the account. The Board took immediate action when we learned this was true. With the money withdrawn, OAD was put in the negative due to outstanding

motions/checks. The negative balance was because checks were written per motions-and during this time, that name had already been removed from the bank account and 2 others were added.

The money was put back in the account that same day. The money never actually left the bank and the check was made payable to OAD, but was not in OAD's account. Furthermore, the majority of the board was unaware of this. 7 weeks passed before anyone brought it to our attention. This is unacceptable and thus why protocols will be put in place. We will have extra direction from a reliable CPA/Audit Agency who has already been contacted to set up Agreed Upon Procedures. The audit company will work with the board to ensure that protocols are in place. They will not be charging us. It is important that we protect our funds, and our organization. This is not the first time this has happened. It is time to take preventive action.

In light of the withdrawn money without our consent, we are approving forms that will be an extra safety measure and require 2 signatures for every single transaction whether it is credit card charges, checks written, or with-drawals. No longer will anyone be allowed to withdraw without the consent of the board with a motion stating the approved withdrawal or removal of money. 2 signatures on a special money form will be mandatory. Any withdrawals made, checks written, or debit used without a motion will be immediate termination. A motion is in process to set this new protocol in place.

We apologize to the members that only 1 signature has been used for the past year prior to, and after the 2017 Conference. With a witness from the board present, the President had to sign 3 checks that had motions waiting to be paid during the time of the internal issues. This is what caused the overdraft amount to happen since the board was not aware that we did not have money in OAD account. The President then realized we must go back to 2 signatures on a check and re-establish that requirement. The board agrees. We know this is what the members expect and it should never have been done differently. This was done due to only one line on the checks because Arvest does not offer or recognize 2 line checks. The board discussed at the recent board meeting Saturday, we will be looking at a new bank to find 2 line checks to mandate 2 signatures and without 2, the bank won't pay it. In the meantime, there will still be 2 signatures-one on the line and one above the signature.

We are now doing better to track and establishing protocols to ensure this does not happen again. To further ensure that all is well, the President and Board of Directors have called for an immediate audit of our books. We checked with an audit company and was told from the audit companies that it is 10k to do an official audit. To protect OAD, they suggested instead that we do an AUP-- "Agreed Upon Procedure" in we will develop further protocols to further protect our accounts and they will review. This is not optional, but mandatory to ensure that this does not happen again. The President has called for an internal immediate audit of our books by OAD auditors. The auditors will be working on 2017-2018 books. Section 4 of our bylaws says "The Treasurer shall be responsible for all monies of the Association; shall keep records of all transactions..." However, at any given time, no money should never be withdrawn without approval of a Board and a motion from the Board of Directors, especially in large amounts. In this case over \$25,000.00 was taken from the account and converted into a cashier's check made payable to OAD. The stated reason for the removal of money was to protect OAD funds and because OAD does not hold bond insurance at this time to protect said funds. Regardless of that, we must prevent this from happening again. It has happened in the past as well prior to this. Prevention is mandatory with better protocols in place.

The OAD Board has done our best to follow the bylaws. People interpret things differently. Any actions of any not following, has never been intentional. In 2019, we will have a set of strong bylaws created by our members through our committee. OAD will make sure that committees have a good balance of people, which will include making sure there is not a majority of people who might have conflict of interest.

We now have forms in good standing which were approved at the recent meeting. These forms include: Confidentiality, Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest which is for the Board of Directors, all volunteers and committee members, and appointed persons working with us. It includes information with other agencies/organizations to ensure that private information is not leaked again in the future. In addition, the Code of Conduct will hold the Board of Directors and Committee Members to a higher standard of behavior.

Last but not least: We have approved a motion for a guideline committee for developing a working relationship with other groups, businesses, agencies, or organizations. This committee will develop ground rules and communication procedures. We hope to have that set in place soon.

This is important because we need to co-exist with DGM-OK. We will do our best to work with DGM-OK on a professional level. When the guidelines are ready to be agreed upon, OAD will call a meeting with DGM-OK and discuss business. We ask that our members be in attendance at that time.

Should DGM –OK have any business with OAD, we will listen to see how we can support DGM-OK, without compromising OAD. We will look to work with them through an appointed liaison until further boundaries are established. If any OAD member wishes to be the liaison for OAD, please contact us.

Furthermore, we are asking DGM-OK refrain from demanding answers from OAD especially on public platforms. DGM-OK is a part of our Oklahoma Deaf Community and OAD will do our best to try to work with them but we ask for respect. We are two different organizations but have the same purpose to support and promote deaf individuals in Oklahoma. If there is something OAD can do for them, they can let us know through the liaison. In addition if there is something we need from them, we will reach out through the liaison. If they continue to demand from us, meddle in our business/defame/slander us, we will cut all ties until such time changes occur.

The only way we can work together, is to set rules in place, respect each other, respect boundaries, and agree to disagree. A working relationship must be formed. We remind our community, we have standards and integrity to uphold to stay in good standing with our members and with those who are vital links to our future.

We reiterate the purpose of this transparent memo, is to keep the members updated, keep the organization in good standing with our members, and to show that we are setting up boundaries, protocols and standards to prevent misrepresentation and misuse of executive control and additionally, to co-exist.

Thank you for being upstanding members of OAD and continuing to support us. We know there have been a lot of questions due to the recent chaos, and we appreciate this vital link of trust. We will continue to serve to the best of our ability and engage in and build a stronger organization. Once again, we thank you for your continued full support as our organization grows and prospers, and as we endeavor uncharted waters.

2017-2019 OAD Executive Board