**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND MINUTES 09/09/2016**

**Call to Order:** Chair, Lloyd Schmitz called the meeting to order at the Smyrna Rest Stop in Smyrna, DE at 10:05 am.

**Roll Call:** Council Chair Lloyd Schmitz, Deidre Morris, Jillian Queen, Ken Rolph, Marjorie Deska, Nancy Frankl **Absent:** Jim Law.

**Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Staff:** Daniel Madrid, Director; Elisha Jenkins, Deputy Director; Michele Hamilton, Olu Ogunsola, Mark Ridenour.

**Guests:** Larry Byler, Willian McCafferty. Kathleen Schmitz, Rob Keller

BlindSight Delaware: Janet Berry and Kristy Harmon

**Welcome:** Lloyd Schmitz welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Minutes** – Jill Queen. No corrections were made. Nancy Frankl made a motion to approve the minutes of August 5, 2016, Deidre Morris seconded. Motion carried.

**Division Visually Impaired (DVI) Report – Daniel Madrid**

**Services:** September 30 student count. Breakdown of students? Internal, yes. Grade level and level of services internally, i.e. consultative, direct instruction, technology goals, etc. Extended School year (ESY) vs entitlement? That is tracked internally as well. Lloyd asked when a summary of the education with the breakdown of the categories shared: number of students, pre-school, grades, direct instruction vs consultative, ESY vs entitlement, any categories you have, could be made available to the Council? November into December. Lloyd asked for this summary to be added to the December Council meeting agenda.

**Staff:** 10.3 TVIs currently, one on maternity leave, one to start Oct 1, 11.3. Approved to hire more. Recruiting at all the established TVI programs with presentations and working with DOE. Discussing starting a TVI program with University of Delaware, next summer or Fall 2017. Recruiting for O&M as well? Yes.

Principal position was offered to someone with TVI and O&M experience credentialed in another state, just finishing a doctorate. Should know by the October meeting if everything is received and verified by DOE, salary discussion, and if the candidate has accepted.

**Services:** Each TVI has 8-10 hours of Direct Instruction (DI). The caseload number of students may vary, but the service hours are distributed more evenly. Colonial resource room teacher agreed to support more students as an itinerant. DVI talking with them about their hiring technology coordinator to assist with the services there.

Concern: DVI is not able to keep up with the services in Capital and Red Clay. Seeking to hire more TVIs to cover, using contractual staff. In interim, Spec. ed. coordinators have a TVI contact for their questions. Agency is banking hours that need to be made up. Two consultative students not receiving services? Two consults and two other students who were reduced from 4 to 3 sessions a week. Number of students in areas of concern? 18. How will DVI get more TVIs? Doing everything possible, incorporating three agencies to assist.

**Posted:** Two transition counselors, technology specialist- one VI applicant that was eligible to date, two O&M, principal, two administrative assistants—just posted, but not sent to Council. Job posted for one week? Yes. Not enough opportunity for the visually impaired to apply. The department has a one week posting limitation, then determines the need for extensions. Council can request OMB to change this policy? Can be discussed. Posted as selective? DHSS does, but others may not. Jane Hahn would know. Lloyd would like to set up a meeting to put together a plan and invite her to a Council meeting.

**Technology:**  Distribute old technology to the visually impaired progress? Program licenses, no, those will be transferred. Other devices, yes, as long as it meets certain criteria. Viable equipment goes to state surplus. Purchased with VR or DVI funds, may be redistributed to the VI. Exiting students’ software licenses follow them? If they are purchased with VR, DVI, or Education funds, not district funds. Assessments are made for seniors to determine the appropriate technology needs.

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**Materials Center** is reportedly doing an admirable job this school year with braille and adaptation. Materials Center is able to keep up with the demand? With the assistance of the AIM (Accessible Instructional Media) Center at University of Delaware. Usually, the AIM Center passes all visually impaired needs to DVI Materials Center. When requested, they have assisted. TVIs access the materials database? Yes, all TVIs are Digital Rights Managers (DRM). Nancy Frankl said that she’s been getting materials on time and staff has been very helpful at the Materials Center.

**Summit Update:** Last meeting was yesterday with Jerry Petroff and Annalisa Ekbladh. Developed a strategic plan to improve educational services for students with blindness and visual impairments. Public unveiling of the Plan is Oct 4th, 3-5 pm at the Duncan Center in Dover. Registration through Annalisa’s email and phone. The Plan addresses five areas of goals and objectives. The draft is a comprehensive overview of an action, strategic plan for our future. The outcome is for improved services for the children.

End of Education Report.

**Business Enterprise Program Report (BEP) – Daniel Madrid**

**Vending Machines:** Conference call meeting about Smyrna Rest Stop vending machine. DelDOT is willing to negotiate the terms for partnership for the snack and soda vending machines. DVI submitted a proposal. Waiting for a reply. DelDOT was supposed to provide sales numbers? Not received. What are the goals? To take over the vending completely. Lloyd said that DelDOT is asking for a percentage, however, they will offer onsite storage which is very important. Hotdog cart? Not yet.

**Gift Shop:** Nancy Frankl reported some change. More signs are needed. Merchandise better, not displayed well. Nancy knows someone who would like to sell products there. Process? Contact Rob Schmidlkofer. Bill McCafferty said unfulfilled out of stock orders result in lost sales.

Overall discussion: Slow and frustrating process. 1.5-2 years planning. Dan reported 3000 customers served, close to breaking even. Report questioned, based on known income and overhead expenses. Council has made repeated requests, i.e. Business plan and financials available? Yes. Here? No. Will be sent electronically. Lloyd requested Dan go over the previous recommendations from the Council. Lloyd tabled the discussion until the Council can review business plan.

**Del Tech Cafeteria:** 3rd week in operation. Sales $700-800/day. Staff: 3 people. Need 1-2 full and 1-2 part-time more. Lloyd asked about staff that are related family members? 2 of 4 are related. Visually impaired? No. Nepotism a problem in the agency? No response. No visually impaired new staff? Jobs have been offered to VI candidates. One visually impaired applicant. VR counselors are aware and promote jobs at Del Tech? Yes. Interest? No. Suggestions: Present jobs as a work potential while students are pursuing education in career choice, promoting jobs as experience and pocket money through VR counselors, job fairs, mailings, etc. Suggest weekly meetings with staff to brainstorm.

**DelDOT Building:** Lloyd said DelDOT is renovating their Dover administration building. They are requesting a waiver to put in an outside food service in the cafeteria there. Waiting for waiver request. Perhaps opportunity of placement there.

**Report - Olu Ogunsola**

**Reports:** Successful closeout as of June 30, 2016. All reports in and up to date fiscal– Federal, State, quarterly? Yes. Outstanding accountables? Current. Reviewed weekly. DVI pays bills and DIB pays DVI. Overhead costs? Yes, credit card processing, internet access. These obligations are not reflected in reports. Profit and loss reports will not be accurate without this vital information. Will be researched.

**Income:** Combined income statement for July and August: $40,708.36. Payroll ~ $20,000. Military contract brings $14,000 income monthly.

**Payroll:** System glitches with E-Star system just came on board. State payroll and the holiday did not match. The BEP managers were not coded a paid holiday, reduced by 8 hours. The adjustment was made and the coding has been fixed.

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**Funding:**  Applied for application grant and received $155,000 Special Education sub awarded from DOE. Funds for assistive tech devices, professional development, supplies, materials. Prior received $100,000, so it is a 50% growth. In anticipation if increased BEP and VR needs, also applied for an allocation grant for $500,000. Received $222,000 in additional funds. Mainly salaries for the new positions. State matched? 21.3% has to be matched in State dollars. MASS90? No, that is DIB. More federal fund opportunities in the future? Yes.

**Historical Research:** 2011-2014 one set of reconciliations doesn’t work. PNC Bank needs to give records for those and they are historical. Why audit from the past? Old records are being checked for reconciliation. The period between 2011-2013 there was significant loss. Nothing suspicious. Seeking sources of funding and an opportunity for full disclosure. The plan is to be completely reconciled by December.

**Delaware Industries for the Blind (DIB) Report – Elisha Jenkins**

**Staff:** 19 employees, 12 VI, 2 other handicapped, 5 undisclosed. 5 DVI employees in supportive roles.

Receptionist position person was redeployed to work on scarfs. DVI person is now doing the receptionist role. Warehouse people transferred to engraving and screening.

No sales rep? No. Goal for that? The goal is to have one, but we were not able to make that commitment. What about redeploying the original sales person? That is being discussed. Could be split? Customer service person is needed more. It’s not off the table? No.

One resignation of part-time quality control person. Made us drop shipping for about a month. Increase in complaints? When the vendor pool was much larger, yes; fewer vendors, but more quality.

Two terminated employees. Reportedly not sufficient grounds for termination for one of them. Findings? A response is forthcoming next week.

Are employees aware of selective placement in Vocational Rehab? Yes. Is Agency providing assistance to get them listed? Yes.

Phone and Intercom system? The phone number now will rollover. The telephone system has a broadcast mechanism. Paratransit arrives and is announced.

**Products and Services:** Laser Stamp: Four types are offered. 40 stamps that are produced. 40 average for embroidery as well. Engraving, silkscreening, embroidery, about the same average. Few outside orders, like Kool Pop, may request additional products. Not doing anything for the gift shop? No requests since the beginning of the year. Scarves: Olu said there was 1.5 people? No. Five people redeployed. VI? Yes, three. Scarves inspected? Yes. Federal inspections. Past issues with that have been resolved.

Concerns: ISO accreditation for federal contracts? Some. Drop ship is not ISO policy. No, not current with ISO now. Emblem taken off emails, letters, distribution? Yes. A real business plan is still needed. Only an outline was received. Working on a transitional plan now. Council needs the assurance that we are serving vision impaired and giving vendors the assistance they need to become independent. DVI said they will need assistance in this area from the Council. Consulting with Terry Smith. Not setting up people for failure. Agreed.

**Final Comments:**

DIB staff attending the national conference? Announced and encouraged.

Next meeting is scheduled for October 7. October 7 is in conflict with other events, as is Oct 6. Next Council meeting rescheduled for October 14th.

November 4 Meeting will be in the Farmington/Felton Room of the DelDOT administration building.

**Adjournment:** Nancy Frankl made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ken Rolph. Lloyd adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

**Jillian Queen**

Jillian Queen

Council Member