

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND STATE OF DELAWARE

April 13, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: Chair, Lloyd Schmitz called the meeting to order at DHSS Herman Holloway Campus, 1901 N. DuPont Highway, New Castle at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome: Lloyd Schmitz welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Roll Call

Council Members: Council Chair Lloyd Schmitz, Deidre Morris, Ken Rolph, Patti Addison. Absent: Jim Law, Jillian Queen

Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Dava Newnam, Deputy Director; Michele Hamilton, Administrative Specialist; Jill Morrison, Director of Constituent Relations, Erin Weaver, Melodye May (ILS)

Guests: Wayne Marsh (BEP), Kat Botner (NFB)

Minutes: March 3, 2017 were emailed. No corrections were noted. Patti Addison made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Deidre Morris. Motion carried.

Director's Report: Elisha Jenkins

Communication. Elisha said that Jill Morrison will be handling all the constituent relations. Including the Survey? a work group reviews that, however, that would be in line with Jill's position. Survey activity? not a lot. Facebook feedback? "likes" have increased. Twitter account established. Elisha said Survey and Twitter can be announced in the Newsletter. DHSS has hired a new Communications person. He sends DVI weekly emails about Departmental activities. Increased cross collaboration? yes.

Moratorium on travel, hiring, reclassification, which does not include hiring DVI teachers or O&M specialists. Travel? It has to be involved with work or certification.

DIB (Delaware Industries for the Blind). Elisha reported DIB suspended all commercial operations on March 10, 2017, except Government contracts, scarves and US Geological Survey uniforms. CSR full time? no. Will call back four employees when fabric arrives. Cutters coming in first? yes. Ten employees not place update? Some have contacted their VR Counselor, but it was up to the individual. There were opportunities until March 20 when the moratorium started. How many people did we have interested in state employment that was too late? Just one. Lloyd suggested to inform VR Counselors that Del Tech has hired visually impaired individuals in the past.

Accessible Instructional Materials. *Men with a Message* Braille Transcription Program is now operational at the Smyrna Correctional Institution. Damage to equipment? No.

Kernel Books. Books by the blind for the blind. Are they available in braille? no, they are really meant for sighted people. audio available? yes. They would be great for teachers, students, and parents. Agreed.

TVIs. Five new teachers hired are working in the schools serving students. Announcements were sent to Districts introducing the new teacher. Capital District temporary TVI left. Are students being served? yes. 40% direct students? yes. Students removed from rolls? Two, but they were replaced. Judgement error? IEP Team's level of understanding of the educational impact of a visual impairment. All teachers hired are enrolled in the TVI program? yes. Teachers will start their certification courses over the summer. No other new prospects for new teachers at this time. Continue the QPVI? yes.

UEB Braille Instruction. Teachers UEB education? Frances Mary D'Andrea, Immediate Past Chair of BANA (Braille Authority of North America), presenting ABC's of UEB on June 7-8, 2017 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. for anyone who provides services for our students. BANA non-profit, government? Erin Weaver shared information from the BANA website. BANA is formed from over 15 membership organizations, such as NFB, AFB, APH, CNIB and Hadley, collaborating "to promote and facilitate the use, teaching, and production of braille."

Compensatory Services. Information shared with families. The teachers will be addressing those needs to make up the time required. Not all students that have hours to make up are ESY. All students will be offered in-building programs during the summer in more than one locations.

Bell Program, Camp Abilities. Run at the same time? no, intentionally different times. Students' needs are met? yes. The most important point is that the students' needs are met, maintain grade level, and no one falls behind. Agreed.

Vocational Rehabilitation. DVI Independent Living Services and VR are engaged in taking students on tours of local colleges and participating in ILS daily activities.

Community Needs Assessment. Employment Engagement contracted for Town Hall meetings, surveys, and to determine unmet needs. VR still have 300 caseload? yes. VR closures prediction? not at this time. Council is optimistic to see some good numbers this year.

Town Hall Meeting on Disabilities. April 17, 1-3 pm, Springer Building, Training Rooms 1 and 2 on the campus. RSVP is through Secretary Walker's office.

Presentation response. Positive reflection of the Agency with the Wilmington Police Department City DVI provided awareness training. 130 police officers attended over four sessions. New Journal article, which suggested pushing to program nationally. The program will be implemented in the State police department. Hopefully extended to the Fire Dept as well. May 21 the training will be aired on WHYY.

Vision to Learn. DVI attended the distribution of glasses for students that needed them on April 12. Got to watch students' reactions with their new glasses.

Grand Opening of Carvel Building May 9, 2017. Opening? It's been open for a couple months.

Health Eye Summit. Newark Library on May 10, 2017 10:15 am. Presentation of access to vision services and prevention of major eye diseases.

Healthy Vision Family Night, May 17, 2017 5-8 pm at the Delaware Children's Museum, 550 Justison Street Wilmington, Delaware.

Smart Glasses Demonstration May 18, 2017. Location TBA. Lloyd said there will be personnel to be present to discuss funding sources.

Beach weekend May 19-21 in Rehoboth.

House Bill 2050. May 19, 2017 Medicare implementation of low vision devices to re-evaluate rules for Medicare to pay for low vision devices through local eye care. Pending legislation. Lloyd asked Elisha to send that information to him.

VR. Expectations guidelines in writing? not finalized. **End of Report.**

Independent Living Services (ILS) Melodye May reporting.

UEB. All Unit Members are in the Hadley School for the Blind training. Two people who have gone through the training, but are not certified, present UEB Lessons and they established a Braille Club. Modern Maturity has also started a group. Can they be included in the lessons and the club? yes, open to anyone interested. Vision is to have it available state-wide.

Continuing Education. The AER conference was not funded this year. There are opportunities online for re-certification credits (CEUs) through distance opportunities.

Certified staff? Two people are fully certified. All have completed the course work, but they have not taken the final exam as Vision Rehab Therapists. Are they are the same level? no. Those not certified will have reached the limit of their career ladders until certified. Out of the five ILS people, only two are CVRTs, level 3. There is one upstate and one downstate, which is an improvement. Staff? Five direct services, three admin. Intact, casual seasonal, part-time? yes.

Past Events: Past conferences: Brain Injury, Home and Community Care Annual, Food Bank of Delaware. Veterans and Family Resource at Dover Air Force Base. Lloyd said that the military population is underserved. Agreed.

ILS Workshop in March at Biggs with five participating to discover techniques and skills to help master daily living described last month. Feedback was good and the participants asked for other workshops to be presented in other areas.

Upcoming Events and Outreach: With 55+ Expo at Dover Downs, Food Bank of Delaware Resource Fair in Milford and in Newcastle, Cape Henlopen Senior Center Health Fair, and at Healthy Night Vision activities. Isn't Healthy Night in October? changed. Thursday May 11. There is one at Trap pond is in the Fall.

Transportation options. Thursday April 20 at Biggs building and Friday in Milford. Presentation by Margaret Web from DART. For consumers to learn about program changes that might affect them. Also, alternative methods of transportation, including Uber.

Sensory Garden Workshop will be held on May 26, 10-12. Not only outside growing, but a takeaway for inside garden if you don't have space outside. Para transport tickets are available.

Diabetes Expo. Kat asked about Information on the Diabetes Expo? NFB would like to have a table. Melody will send registration information. That expo is November 14, 2017 at Dover Downs.

Group interest. June 16, 10-12, at the Dover Library. Melodye extended a special invitation to the Council. Advocacy groups, like this Council, to come and share with consumers what services they provide to enhance quality of life for our consumers. Lloyd asked if the Focus group Elisha said that Dan Madrid was the same? no, that has not been established yet. Potential to join the two groups? Will be discussed, but this is for consumers to potentially join the group and service providers will discuss their services for consumers. What about the Client Assistance Program? Will verify on their attendance. SILC State Independent Living Council Chair should be invited. Formal invitations will follow.

Fall Prevention Program. Collaborate with 50+ Delaware, State Service Center. training to become "matter of balance" coaches. Instruction in environmental changes in the home, increasing activity while keeping safe. Location TBA.

Outreach. Outreach part of the grant and we attend a variety of events throughout the state so ILS is visible. In addition to that ILS presents sensitivity training and about ILS so that they know that the services are available. Employers in other groups of state agencies are aware of our services. And they are interested in learning about and increase their awareness of visual impairment. Lloyd suggested to always be aware of ways to get more information to the public. Age-related vision loss population is less likely to leave home. Consider public service announcements reach out to the community more effectively and also in less populated counties. Patti shared that Peer Support has a local meeting in Millsboro. Guest speakers are also invited to those meetings so that they have more than just the county or Delaware offerings. Kent County, where Modern Maturity is located, has their own Peer Support and Patti's grant limits her services. MMC has support then? yes. Reports? monthly and quarterly. Elisha clarified that the SILC grant funding is for Peer Support Groups and ILS grant provides telephone support. The funding is limited to those who qualify for services rather than making it a public event. Be aware that it is limited due to the funding. Lloyd thanked Elisha for her explanation. Perhaps that can be a discussion at the Department level. Elisha said that they collaborate whenever possible. Melodye said they are always open to suggestions to spread the information. Looking how best to reach the populations we wish to serve.

AER Spring Conference. Kat shared that there was a day conference focused with local ophthalmologist group and DVI. This provided a connection that didn't exist before.

Winter Thaw. Less engagement at the event according to the person attending the table. Collect information at these events? yes. That was implemented.

DVI Open House? Lloyd said that DIB used to have an open house. Are there restrictions to open DVI's doors? DVI did that collaboratively with DIB. It was a guided tours. It went very well because they had a guide to understand the different facets of DVI. Kat said that NFB could collaborate with DVI about that.

DVI Technology Event? no every other year; this is an off year. VRAC? not known. In the past, it has been done, but it would need to be an overview. Also, look into training.

Future Workshops: Deaf-Blind Services in November and Holiday Baking in December. Ken Rolph suggested BlindSight to assist with Deaf-Blind workshop. DATI will also provide an overview of their services.

Transition Services. Providing activities for 15 transition students focusing on expanded core curriculums for independent living skills i.e. cooking, grooming, list making, telephone use, and shopping. Also, Delaware Tech visit. All day? 9-2:30. Transportation? Elisha said by the Agency. Summer is a more extensive program with technology and O&M. ILS involvement? the whole program.

ILS Statistics. Population: 18-54 years, 96 individuals since Oct 1, 5% increase in comparison to 2016 fiscal services. 55+ serving 229 individuals since Oct 1, 6% decrease to 2016 fiscal services. Goals most requested: signing name, operating appliances, and reading mail. **End of Report**

Old Business:

BEP Dava Newnam and Wayne Marsh reporting.

Expense. Dava, with advice from counsel, sent a certified letter to the person concerning the expenses, and received a response. BBC was engaged in the discussion to set up a meeting with the person to discuss repayment of the expenses.

Smyrna Rest Stop. Vending machines update? Received via counsel a "settlement" agreement to review, sign, and send back. The agreement states the BEP program will still have first right of refusal for the cafeteria in the DelDot building if they should so choose, once we reach a final agreement on the vending machines. Lloyd asked about subsidies discussed? The agreement also states, DelDot will develop a plan for their cafeteria that will be provided, that will include all language around subsidies. Wayne said that it's basically an RFP. At that point, we will be able to make an educated decision whether or not an operator wants to operate there or waive it. Waiver permanent? no. Stated in the contract? Dava said it would have to be. Lloyd asked if everyone was comfortable? Wayne said it is a one-sided agreement that benefits DelDot. Lloyd said when they use the term settlement, it might mean needs that you have jurisdiction to that location and the vending, but they may be under a different Code Section.. Wayne said counsel's advice was to take it and negotiate with them. Wayne said that the purpose of BEP is to provide the blind individual with a wage and he doesn't feel that this will happen with this agreement. 10% over \$80,000. Up front? no.

Gift Shoppe. Change in the business type? yes, moving away from consignment. There are new items in there as well which are ours and give us a much better return.

Interested Individuals. Update? There are four individuals that have completed the preliminaries. There were 16 interested, but only four started the process? yes.

Cafeteria. Is Open. yes. P&Ls reflect the repairs? no. They will in the next report.

End of report

Public Comments:

DABA (Delaware Assoc. for Blind Athletes) **Activities.** Patti Addison thanked everyone who will be attending the DABA dinner next week. She doesn't need to put the reservation in till Monday. Guest Speaker is from Delmarva, totally blind and a champion. Pass the word and contact her by cell or email. Look forward to working with the different groups as the Chair. Patti wants to get the kids more involved like they used to be. Perhaps bring back a state competitive day by next Spring. A day of fun outdoor activities.

ILAC. Wayne is looking for ILAC members for the committee. One applicant and one interested.

Kernel Books. Kat promoted the books that are in packs of 50. Call 410-659-9314 ext. 3. Good for teachers, parents, students. Very good awareness source.

Raffle Tickets: Affiliate is selling raffle tickets \$5.00 each. Raffling off Amazon dot, fire stick, tablet, winner takes all three prizes.

State Convention: 2nd week in November 2017. Someone from the Governor's office will present this year. All the events will be updated in Newslines.

Newslines is updated by Kat now. Kat said that she can put events on Newslines. Please send it to her.

Independent Resources Incorporated (IRI) has a new Director, Despina Wilson. Ken gave her contact information to Elisha.

Happy Spring! We will meet in Smyrna in May.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Motion carried. Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jillian H. Queen

Jillian Queen, Council Member