

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND STATE OF DELAWARE

May 5, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: At the request of Chair, Lloyd Schmitz, who was detained, Ken Rolph called the meeting to order at the Smyrna Rest Stop, Conference Room, 5500 Dupont Parkway, Smyrna, DE at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call

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

Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Michele Hamilton, Administrative Specialist; Jill Morrison, Director of Constituent Relations; Materials Center: Annie Lattanzi, Matt Tseronis.

Guests: Verna Cole (DNS Performance Innovations); Larry Byler; Wayne Marsh (BEP); Mary Marsh; Pat Carpo, Rob Keller

Welcome: Ken Rolph welcomed everyone to the meeting. He started with a moment of silence for the officer who was killed.

A quorum was recognized.

Minutes: April 13, 2017 minutes were emailed. There were two corrections made. Minutes were re-emailed. Clarification: DHSS employee was not a DVI employee. Paragraph re-written. Patti Addison made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Ken Rolph. Motion carried.

Director's Report: Elisha Jenkins

DIB. Since we last convened, one p/t customer service and p/t manager remaining. Scarf supplies arrived and four more people are back to work. NIB parent agency discussed with employment services requested displaced workers' resumes for possible placement in partner organizations. Also to join the ListServ for people willing to relocate. There is a lot of outstanding debt; \$50,000 and \$80,000 expenses, but continuing to collect on these debts. Not as much for payroll because there are six people employed.

BEP. *Healthy Vending.* Governor's initiative, involves the Canteen that covers our vending. Meeting is scheduled to discuss healthy foods percentages, some reported were 50%, but might be about 22%. Also, the definition of "healthy" needs to be determined. How often do you meet? monthly? A meeting is scheduled, but just started, no set schedule yet. The goal is to be assured that the blind vendors aren't impacted adversely. Completion time ~six months. *Food trucks opportunity.* Cabinet Director Dr. Walker initiative to bring food trucks to Holloway campus. Six vendors (not VI) invited to interview. More information to come.

Independent Living. Collaboration between Independent Living and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. 16 students participated in the program last month. Feedback from the students was positive. Elisha shared that a boy said it was good for him to be in the program and make friends. Tour into the colleges, intro to assistive tech products. Going to Ruby Tuesdays. Elisha thanked DABA for covering a lot of those expenses and always supporting the student activities. Still always exploring new ways to engage students.

EDUCATION. Staff. New Spec Ed teacher to work Red Clay school district. A program has offered full TVI scholarships for two of our teachers.

VR. Requested information: How many people were employed in VR? 23. The VR team did an incredible job during spring break with transition age with the two counselors that joined in November. Working on Summer internships and jobs. Habitat for Humanity, City of Milford, a developing a program, and the Department of Agriculture.

Assistive Technology: 1.5 technology employees who provide AT services. Analyzing the program and vendors that are utilized to provide AT. Posted position? Pulled due to the moratorium.

Scheduled Activities. May 18-20 hosting Beach House, 21 students scheduled, which is capacity.

AT/MATERIALS CENTERS. Matt Tseronis and Annie Lattanzi

AT. Mobile devices, tablets, phones, more tools that are web-based so that we can do things outside and in the prison.

Men With A Mission. Braille textbooks 15 positions and 1 supervisor. One braillist and one file technician. Library of Congress best practices Award (2015). LOC Certified: Nine UEB, two still working, five Nemeth (braille math), one Nemeth proofreader, one music, four in house foreign language program. File technicians clean up Digital file formats. After the tragedy at the prison, the MWM program, re-opened first because of the need. Services: customized large print, digital materials, tactile graphics, and braille. Graduates: A file tech is working with DVI to repair Perkins brailers. Great local resource. Matt shared a touching video of a graduate who is now employed at Kentucky American Printing House for the Blind.

Materials Center. New plans to inventory everything and collaborating with the new employees. Maintained current status during the down time at the prison. Currently on standby for the turnaround time for 2017-2018, most requests to date. Challenge replace software with current and increasing number of copies available. Are you producing UEB? yes, unless requested to produce EBAAE, but DVI has not had any requests for EBAAE.

Plan. Initial discussion for a defined plan. Working with DOE, DVI wants to have a plan published for the new staff to show the responsibilities, expectations, checkpoints, guidelines, timelines, materials/services available, and the process to receive materials and services. Plan going to be complete within the next month? It has only been discussed generally right now. Impact to students? No. Why develop a plan? Required through the UEB transition process. Elisha will report progress.

Conference. National Prison Braille, DVI first to present the updates to the conference. Collaborate with other production centers. Products: Orbit reader. 40-cell refreshable braille display, Braille Blaster, new braille transcription tool.

Volunteer program. Stronger every year. Oral reader volunteered to recorded books and tests, now certified as a reader for Learning Ally. Last year 34 volunteers, this year 82. Provided training materials, hours 392 April alone, 1485 hours Jan-April.

Awards. DVI Volunteers awards given for 2016 Governor's Youth Award and 2017 Governor's Youth Award. 100 hours volunteer hours, preparing materials for K-12 and electronic formats, DVI training center, and train volunteers. Administrator will attend and present at the conference.

Training Center. Not working under normal conditions with limited staff. A new team member joined November 2016, eager to learn assistive technology, has been working alongside a contractor. He has been handling some of DVI's VR cases in the home, school, or workplace, doing assessments, product demonstrations, or direct instruction. Still using contractors? Still have funds for contractual services? Elisha answered yes. Approved to prevent delays for VI people with a job or in school. Lloyd said he had been told the new team member mentioned did an evaluation of a blind person in Sussex County? Yes. School was impressed with DVI's service, but wondered if there was going to be a follow up and recommendations? Elisha said recommendations weren't requested at the time, but can be given now. Training Center also welcome a former DIB employee, who has the experience in technology and to hold group meetings to share A.T. information. Two trainers are both upstate. Assistive Technology provided in the Computer labs using more modern methods of delivery making communication easier.

Services. Due to the staff shortage rescheduling was necessary, but the clients were informed well in advance and they were introduced to new trainer. DVI has been proactive and supportive communications with the Materials Center and VR has been very welcoming. Forward movement despite the challenges considering the workload of adults, VR, transition and K-12. The Center also handles general accessibility issues. As the validation tools are more brought to awareness and availability, requests will diminished. Training location was moved to labs that were put together, evaluated, and equipped with more modern equipment and software.

Caseloads: NC: 2016, 22 to 2017, 11. Kent: 2016, 11 to 2017, 2. Sussex: 2016, 5; 2017, 5. This is to date. 2016 referred, but not deployed expediently. This year the person will be contacted within 24 hours. Clients on hold because of the decrease in employees: NC: 10 interview intake; Kent: 1, and Sussex: 1. 29 referrals. Current caseloads: NC 24, Kent 6, Sussex 9.

End of Report.

Old Business:

BEP. No update at this time. Will update when there is movement in the plan.

Vending Machines. Machines are stored in NC office. No response to the MOU questions. Will provide updates.

Carvel Cafeteria. 5-9-17 Grand Opening 11-1.

Healthy Vision Month Troop 3 Dover. May 9; Newark Library May 10; May 11, NC Assistive Tech demo

BEP Trainee update. Two candidates have met all the pre-requisites. Passed initial criteria and reading and credit and background check. They are looking at interviews at the end of May. Initially there were a lot of people interested, now two? yes. Moving forward more quickly now? The process is lengthy and it is going in order, and it also depends on the individuals.

TVI Staff Update. 7 TVIs and 8 special educators with 4 vacancies. Students are being served using summer to make up hours.

Transition. 5/10/2017 Lloyd asked for the total number of transition students eligible for mentoring or jobs, and who have jobs for June's agenda.

New Business:

Healthy Vision Month is the month of May. 5/9/2017, Tues evening. DATI presents an A.T. Demonstration at the Dover State Police Training Academy for the Cadets.

Eye Health Event 5/10/2017 DATI presents an A.T. Demonstration at Newark Library 10-12 am.

Children's Museum Collaborating with DVI and Vision to Learn. Admission is \$2 to obtain a lot of resources.

Smart glasses demo 5/18/2017 NC Easter Seals. More than one type of smart glasses will be presented for the different services they provide. They will also have financing information available. Jill Morrison said a VI marathon runner used the smart glasses successfully. Do the smart glasses help the blind see for themselves? no. Some of the glasses will make a projector image in the glasses lens. For those that cannot be helped with visual images, there are other smart glasses that have someone remotely watching what the blind person is looking at and inform the wearer what is in front of them. **DABA:** Patti Addison expressed her thanks for the support with the event on April 21. Guest speaker was Ed Gorgley, a past state wrestling champion. He was impressed with the DVI personnel attending.

Referrals. Patti said that Blindsight has more referrals from and to DVI, expanding throughout the state, supporting transitioning vision to no vision, from low to no vision. Deb Talley sent the information out from DVI for Blindsight. Any calls for support? yes. Patti said two clients, one in Sussex and one in NC. They are hearing about it more and more. All the materials are being shared. Communication has been great. Are you also doing a group at the Modern Maturity Center? Elisha said that DVI and BlindSight have a contractual telephone peer support. Group support falls under the ACE system who provides that support. DVI refers to ACE.

Resource Guide for 2017: being revised, small and compact. Combining? some discussions reveal that the guide to remain strictly VI. Will the guide available at their facilities and website? yes.

Fiesta Cinco De Mayo Rob Keller shared the event. 5/06/2017 2-10 pm. Downtown Wilmington on Market Street. Rob will be in the parade with the Governor.

Adjournment: Ken Rolph made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jillian Queen.

Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 12:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jillian Queen

Jillian Queen

Council Member