

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND STATE OF DELAWARE

August 4, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: Chair, Lloyd Schmitz called the meeting to order at the Smyrna Rest Stop, Conference Room, 5500 Dupont Parkway, Smyrna, DE at 10:00 am.

Roll Call

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

DVI Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Michele Hamilton, Administrative Specialist; Jill Morrison, Olu Ogunsola; Rob Schmidlkofer, BEP Director

Members of the Public: Anthony Paolini (BEP), Ann Jordan

Welcome: Lloyd Schmitz welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

Minutes: June 2, 2017 minutes were emailed. Deidre Morris made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Ken Rolph. Motion carried.

DVI Elisha Jenkins

Dava Newnam has taken a new position. Dr. Cara Walker appointed Dr. Debbie Harrington as DVI Deputy Director, effective September 5, 2017. Lloyd said that Dr. Harrington will bring a new perspective and positive change to the Agency. The announcement with Dr. Harrington's qualifications was emailed to all Council members? yes.

FISCAL Olu Ogunsola

The State FY 18 began on July 1, 2017. DVI and all the state of DE agencies continue to operate with budget reductions. To what extent? FY 17 Funding State General Fund Budget ~\$3,819,900; FY 17 Federal Fund Budget \$1,687,600; FY 18 Funding State General Fund Budget ~\$3,675,500; FY 18 Federal Fund Budget \$1,687,600. \$3.8 million to 3.6 million. Not a significant reduction? no. Not funded for additional contractual requests. Not approved for additional funds for contractual funds. Current contractual funds have been reduced? yes, reduced. Is that part of the \$3.6 million? yes. VR, ILS, Education areas are not affected by these reductions? That is correct. That's good.

BEP Program Audit: Three proposals by private accounting firms will be sent to the BVC to review along with the State Licensing Agency (DVI). How many people are involved in preparing the BEP report? Romi will do the P/L report. Has Romi been trained? Elisha said Romi does need to be trained in the BEP Fiscal processes. At this time, Romi is performing a dual role until DIB ceases operations. Lloyd would like a follow up on the agenda. DIB commitment contract is over 09/30/2017? the Neckerchief work on the contract ended 07/29/2017. USGS contract is until 2019. In collaboration with USGS and National Industries for the Blind, reviewing the processes, staff, and equipment of the operation. DIB will continue fulfilling the USGS contract until another NIB agency can transition. BISM contracted? Might be interested? NIB has asked to share in that discussion and will be on site in the next couple of weeks. When will Romi be able to perform his BEP Fiscal position responsibilities? DVI will report back. Lloyd asked to put Fiscal on the December agenda as a follow up? yes.

Fiscal and VR units have worked together to streamline process. Combined meeting to coordinate processes for more efficient and expedite payments. What about streamlining in other departments, i.e. Education? Lloyd said students aren't getting their equipment until after they are in school and are not trained with the equipment, and they are falling behind. Isn't Rapid Ready still operational? Elisha said the streamlining Olu was taking about is financial: There are processes that need to be followed, such as required amounts that need to be spent on certain places and populations.

Equipment Elisha said that the students' equipment is about very individual situations. If there are individuals calling Lloyd, they need to call DVI. Lloyd said the problem is they are afraid to call. Jill Morrison said that they can call her and she will address their concerns immediately. 15% of VR dollars has to be spent on Transition-aged youth. yes. Discussed at The Task Force, Transition students' equipment would be purchased out of VR funds. Is this being done? Elisha said yes. Technology assessments are being done, but technology changes all the time. Rapid Ready equipment is available: Computer, CCTV. Newer equipment is so individual-based, purchasing decisions need to be made for the best balance for that money's use. Lloyd's request to have a program to re-use equipment is being implemented and an inventory is being worked out. Lloyd said he is concerned that the graduated students entering college do not have their equipment and cannot be successful without it. Jillian Queen asked if the equipment follows the students into college? yes. Also, DVI provides students with temporary equipment. Lloyd asked Jill M. if she would put together an article to post online and in the newsletter to let people know you are there. Elisha said they can put something together, but also not circumvent the correct procedure. Individuals should contact their case manager. Jill M. keeps track of comments and requests. The unit manager is contacted to fulfil the services. Do you generated constituent complaints reports with related departments? Jill M. said the list is small. Lloyd said perhaps it is because they do not know she is available? that is not the case. Elisha said there are cross communications in place were anyone to call. The calls are documented and turned in to Elisha and Jill M.

Reports Lloyd asked Olu if all departmental reports were in and on time? yes. Lloyd commended him. All reports accepted? one had one small change. No more corrective action? that is correct. Good job.

BEP Rob Schmidlkofer

Smyrna Rest Stop Shoppe. Made some improvements. Increased signage on the foot path, increased traffic to the Shoppe by about 80%. Last year June-July and this year, sales went up. Open two days a week last year? five. Four hours a day? 10-2? yes. Open more often? maybe, but major sales 10-3. Staff is here 9-5 M-R 9-5 and F-S 8-6. One or two people here all the time? one, but overlap time between shifts. Business plan? Consignment? Going away from consignment. Purchasing items significantly increases profits. Three consigners (Cool Pop, Waggies, Jewelry lady) at increased commission rate of 35%. Contracts signed? in June. Did they show a profit in June? not in yet. There wasn't consistency, due to contract signatures, perhaps because not all the vendors started at the same time.

Del Tech. Better with blind vendor? Rob noticed a difference. There was an issue that will be discussed with the vendor. He retained all employees during the summer months so he wouldn't lose them. Business was slow, so it didn't make a profit.

Carvel RFP went out. Responses? yes, questions have been answered. Bids opened? They are not accepting any more bids. How many people bid? unknown. Temporary operator? yes. Dunkin Donuts still there? yes.

Any new? small food carts have been BEP requested at the new bus terminals at Lewes and Rehoboth. That will have to go through Jennifer Cohen. Research done to justify the carts? Lloyd said that parking lot is empty a great deal. May wish to send someone there to re-eval.

Vending machines: Received the final contract yesterday and signed it and went to lawyers. The food service was waived. When do you anticipate the vending machines? No date yet. Agreement time frame? Five years, auto extension five years and every five years thereafter.

Strategic Planning. Terry Smith did an initial program evaluation for strategic planning. To develop plan for improvement. Finalized by December 2017? Depends on Terry's schedule. On the agenda for the December meeting.

Trainees coming into BEP? one person went through the entire process, going through the program. Open House? it is anticipated, but need to check the date. There are things that are already on the schedule in October, so it will be in September or November.

Food trucks Deidre Morris asked if the trucks that come to the Holloway Campus are BEP? yes. The only problem is that they are stationed at one place. Are they mobile? the the Division of Management Services needs to be asked that question. It was placed there because of space issues, but it can be discussed. Sidewalks can help.

increase the healthy choice options. Public health and see the trends and see when the next realm of healthy foods. This is happening throughout the country, but the operators income is being watched to not affect them. Anthony Paolini said the food trucks will not affect the operators income. Curious to see if healthy vending will VI using public transportation, there are no sidewalks to get back to the Biggs building. Food Trucks have had positive feedback. Governor's healthy vending plan to for non-assigned vending machines, not BEP operator, to have a more positive impact than when it was tried before. See if people are more open to eating healthy. Maybe if this is successful, do something with the cafeteria on the grounds. Discussion? no, but it has been mentioned, but not serious consideration yet.

Director's Report Elisha Jenkins

DIB What's happening in DIB at this time? Romi is spending hours at DIB assisting orders processing. Three people at DIB? warehouse person? 2 FT and 2 PT people. Anyone in Fiscal is being paid by DIB funds? no. Profitable? those orders are profitable. Accounts Receivable, the majority, if not all of the expenses have been paid, including the credit card. Lloyd said that is a good thing. This is not including repayment to Division or the Department. OMB taken that off the set aside list? no action. No more discussion about DIB equipment transfer? it is included with the attorney, but nothing is going anywhere. There are additional supplies that will be for sale. BEP might be interested? Maybe do a little bit of the engraving? perhaps. All employees are working with their VR counselors for training and employment opportunities.

Outreach

Videos DVI is producing videos that highlight services and the opportunities for VI, including B-roll and interviews that have taken place on 7/18 in New Castle County and 7/25 in Milford and at Camp Abilities and will cover the NFB BELL Academy, O&M, and 1:1 interviews. For viewing? yes, on School-ology, on DVI website. Include the videos in a YouTube channel? that's been discussed. Facebook accessed? can be referred to Debbie. Ongoing project? yes, it is access for educators, parents, students with Pathways to Literacy, Perkins, etc. Are you coordinating with DOE with Michael Watson? no, DOE is providing the access to School-ology, DVI is coordinating it alone. Jill M. is developing it, building our contact lists of Spec Ed Directors, etc. Debbie Talley does a tremendous job in getting the word out. What is the goal? six months to a year.

Education

DVI and ILA Summer Skills Academy. 3 participants. Instruction in money and clothing management. Presentations on adaptive sports, DABA, descriptive yoga, and technology demos. Summer skill Thanks to Patti and DABA for their support. Today students are at the Delaware Rock Wall and a pizza lunch. Emergency preparedness session and a tour of the Minquadale Fire House. Students were allowed to touch the equipment. Same scheduled for Bell Academy next week, three students participating for that as well. Three students seems low? there were other events happening at the same time. Activities in NC? yes, but Sussex decided to come up for the events. Grades? K-12. All notified? US Postal Mail. Maybe email as well.

Camp Abilities. How many students? 24. Lloyd said that he heard not everyone was accepted that wanted to go? there was a limited number of spaces. ESY teachers were all participating at Camp Abilities. Students who wanted to go and could not, wouldn't have the services at all. This needs to be improved. agreed. How much money did DVI contribute towards CampAbilities? \$5,000. That's reasonable, Lloyd heard \$12,000. Ken Rolph said BlindSight program was 6 weeks. CampAbilities is for five days. All the TVI staff were involved and the state spent \$5,000. The students got more out of the BlindSight program for a lot less and only two TVIs involved. The impact was the social skills, life skills, self advocacy, etc. Patti Addison said it provided the kids with self-esteem and it was a great thing to see. DABA sponsored three students. BlindSight can't put a program together right now financially. Patti was very impressed with the Camp Abilities Program. Bell Academy next week will be excellent, too.

Staff Where are we in terms of TVIs? eight certified TVIs and seven teachers that are not. Is the administrator a principal or statewide coordinator? She is a statewide coordinator for educational services. What is the difference? Has that been approved by the legislatures? Vacancy for principal? no. Reclassified? Position is a dedicated supervisor. Lloyd thought the code allowed for a Principal? How did the change occur? Is it aligned with the Delaware Code? no, it is not required because the position is a Program Manager/Administration position now.

VR Internships One consumer interned at a local Senior Center and two explored employment opportunities (i.e. Zoologist) at the Philadelphia Zoo.

Transition During Mission Transition, 10 students participated in the event this year, making it the largest to date, staying at Wesley College. A Vocational Rehabilitation Intern facilitated a budgeting “game” for our students, Game of REAL Life.” Students learn the importance of networking, researching, using and being reliable resources, budgeting, controlling their social media footprint, college costs, living expenses, credit, loans, interest, realistic salary expectations, and more. The class was well received. Two transition students graduated from middle school and two transition students graduated. Four transition students completed New Castle County Summer Work orientation on June 30, 2017. One evaluation said their transition student worker was one of their best workers and has outstanding artistic talent. Lloyd would like follow up on that.

ILA staff training on bioptic devices for drivers who are visually impaired on July 18.

Events

WIOA Partner Meeting in August Technical assistance on common performance measures, memorandums of understanding and data sharing will occur. Understand the performance measures. There is a new reporting method coming to DVR is from Minnesota WinTac. Viewed process for days to make sure that we understand the process in WIOA. Public meeting? not sure, will find out and report.

National Technical Assistance Provider will be on-site to provide the DVI-VR team training will occur specifically on VR Common Performance Measures, Policy and Procedures, 911 data elements, credential attainment, Measurable Skills Gain, and engaging core partners.

Libraries have accessible computers? Elisha will check the status of accessible computers in all the libraries. There were some some upgrades at some libraries.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment The CSNA combines existing information and new information to inform the VR State Plan. Key areas are to assess include the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services, minorities, individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by VR, individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system, and the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state. Stay tuned for opportunities to provide feedback via surveys and focus groups. Are there underserved? Rehab facilities list will be available.

Old Business

Outcomes. Lloyd met with Deb Bradl and Shirley to go over the numbers. There was a misunderstanding because of the way data is presented. The information received did not consider all the different phases of "outcome." For 300 clients and only 30 positive outcomes indicate people in Vocational Rehabilitation for ten years. That is not acceptable. Elisha said they are working with VR to standardize the data in a template. There is an orientation process and they understand the process can be long-term, so they are not reporting the clients as not closures. 29 positive closures, but the July 1 reports are not in. July 1, 2015- September 30, 2017? Federal report, but it under WIOA it is July 1. 10% were successfully closed. Lloyd said that he would like to see that improved.

New Business

Sensitivity Training. Council would like DVI to do something on sensitivity training on a quarterly basis, and open it to the other state agencies and general public. Elisha said Patti and Mel were working on that. Looking at the agenda lists, projects caregivers support group and the previous sensitivity training. Shade, sight-simulated glasses included? yes. Monthly basis? caregivers bi-monthly; State agencies quarterly right now, and then evaluate to see if it also needs to be bi-monthly. For all public and DVI? we can do that. Finalized by September? Patti said meetings should start in October. Update of the plan on the agenda for September.

New Grant. The President's Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) budget proposed a new grant program entitled Partnerships for Innovation, Inclusion, and Independence (PIII). This new program would combine the activities carried out by the State Developmental Disabilities Councils (DDC), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILC) and Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Councils (TBIAC) into a single state grant program by forming a statewide, cross-disability entity. If it eliminates IL-B funding, the funding for the SILC, the DVR IL program, and the DVI funding (the 15% of what comes in from ACL) will be eliminated. This will also impact funding to Blindsight's programs funded by DVR. This is IRI Part B funding. Lloyd asked if Harriet from SRC would she coordinate a response? That might go into a block grant. But the specific memo was for elimination of funding for those programs. There will be a response. All before Oct 1.

Newsletter. Patti said that BlindSight sends out a newsletter. She would like to have something for DVI's newsletter. Debbie or Jill M. are getting a newsletter ready for next week. Monday send something, printing Tuesday. Perhaps not for this one, but Patti will try. Intern from VR working with BlindSight.

Council Appointments. No news for appointments to the council? other councils needed to be approved first because we have a quorum.

Public Comment

Ann Jordan, Wilmington University student, shared that this was her first public meeting. Inspired her to become more involved. She is a Special Education student and is paraprofessional at Christina. She starts the masters degree in January.

Motion to Adjourn: Deidre Morris made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ken Rolph. Motion carried.

Adjournment: Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 12:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jillian Queen

Jillian Queen

Council Member