

**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND
STATE OF DELAWARE**

September 8, 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, Jillian Queen.

DVI Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Debbie Harrington, Deputy Director; Erin Weaver

Guests: Wayne Marsh, BVC, Mary Marsh, Kat Schmitz

Welcome: Lloyd Schmitz, Council Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Council Members. Lloyd said currently, the Council has five members. Jim Laws has resigned from the Council, effective in March. Ken Rolph and Patti Addison have agreed to remain on the Council. Jill Queen will be asked when she arrives. There are two new members being considered for appointment. The Council membership, according to legislation, is seven. Four members are needed for a quorum. Elisha said it was her understanding that without a quorum, the meeting cannot be held. Lloyd asked if the group wanted to wait a few minutes or adjourn. The fourth member arrived at this time and the meeting continued.

Minutes. Patti Addison made a motion to approve the August 4, 2017 Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind Meeting Minutes, seconded by Ken Rolph. Motion carried.

Director's Report. Elisha Jenkins

Delaware Industries for the Blind. The Production Department continues to fulfill Federal contractual orders for USGS. Meetings with USGS/NIB continue regarding the transition of the contract. It is an NIB affiliate; identity unknown. Fulfillment: 19 orders; Sales \$13,587.97. A clearance sale generated \$3,800. Nothing sold to the prison. Purchases made by employees on the DHSS campus. **Equipment.** DIB engraving equipment was not sold or disposed of. Lloyd had heard that the prisons are now doing engraving. Not with DIB's equipment. The prison is interested in the processing of the service contracts that NIB had been providing, but they are in discussion with OMB. **Debt.** Outstanding vendors' debt has been paid. Supplies and shipping minimal operational costs. If the debt has been paid off, what happens to the profit? It goes back to the Department, DHSS loaned DIB \$600,000. **Staff.** How many VI employees generated \$13,587.97 in sales? two. Anyone brought in? no. CSR is part-time and is in production and Rommy is there. **Building Space.** Floor spaces uses determined? not at this time. The plan is to consolidate the Material Center. All agreed that would be good idea. Consider TVIs relocated into one of the larger rooms to be together? TVIs area was expanded previously and they are in the same area. As more positions are filled, available cluster of desks in another room. Relocating the Material Center is a necessity, since it is in what is basically a garage. Agreed.

Business Enterprise Program: Two new food truck vendors. Service, five days a week on the campus, one per day. Delicious Craving and Gonzo's Kitchen. Positive response from employees and visitors. Pilot period ended Aug 31. In Oct, 10% revenues from the previous month will be deposited into BEP's account. **Vending Machines.** In July, the vending contract was received and at the AG's office waiting to be signed? correct. Has anything progressed? no. DelDot is not allowing it to move forward. Lloyd asked Wayne Marsh if the BVC or this Council can do anything to expedite things? Let them know this Council would like an update. We would like to see it move forward. Elisha said she would. **Open House.** Update on the BEP Open House to be scheduled in October or November? Elisha said it is pushed back to November because of the number of events the agency is coordinating at this time. For our purposes as Council, can we anticipate something in November? yes.

Vocational Rehabilitation: WINTAC provided a two-day training on the WIOA performance measures to the VR team. Insight on the new performance measurements and how regulations will impact their workflow and the services to consumers. **Data sharing.** Common performance measures that are applied to the general agency as well as to employment and training in the Workforce Development Board, DOE and Adult Ed. It needs alignment and MOUs written, but progressing. Is that the DOL and the DOE? yes. A cross entity agreement allow access shared information since it is a combined state plan. **IEP Meetings/IEP Plus.** Do VR Transition counselors participate in IEP meetings? yes, when invited. Department of Transition Education Associate provided training to all the VR counselors on the IEP process yesterday. The level of collaboration has improved, but VR currently does not have access to IEP Plus. Lloyd said access has been requested for 3-4 years. VR counselors should be part of the IEP team. Agreed. It has been requested and approved. The techs are working on it. Elisha said she would keep the Council informed on this progress.

Community Statewide Needs Assessment. Newark Senior Center and BlindSight allowed consultants to obtain responses to questions for feedback concerning VR. Survey Monkey continues to receive feedback. How was this presented? templated questions with available open comment. Lloyd said residents in Kent and Sussex County were not afforded an opportunity to participate? the focus groups are not done. Completion date is tentative for December. Could volunteers make phone calls with the same template to reach more people? yes, Elisha will share that.

Student Trip. Five VI students toured the Comcast Accessibility Lab in Philadelphia. The students were given demos of assistive technology and introduced to VI professionals who detailed career paths as a contractor, an accountant, and within the Comcast Lab.

Videos. A DVI intern will manage videos on Facebook and YouTube. Four of six planned Orientation videos are completed. Permitted to do a YouTube channel? an agency channel would need to be explored. The videos would be the intern's VR assignment.

Consumer Volunteer. A consumer with multiple disabilities volunteered successfully at St. Francis Hospital. St. Francis proved to be a very receptive partner. Goal is long-term employment? yes.

New Partnerships developed. Goodwill, YMCA-Dover, City of Dover, Dover Downs, Hillandale Farms, KenCrest, and Massage Envy, Central and New Castle County Habitat for Humanity; and Bright Spot Ventures.

Transition age work opportunities. How many? Elisha will check. Lloyd said his understanding VR students should be given at least one work opportunity in the last year of HS? Debbie Harrington said the goal is at least one paid opportunity. Volunteer at age 14 or Gr 10. The CSNA Public comments will be complete in December. Include this as a goal? yes. Elisha asked for clarification about the ages requested. Lloyd said from 14 years with age range breakdowns. Okay. It will give the Council an opportunity to see if DVI is meeting these goals and set new goals.

Stakeholders Meeting. Elisha said the stakeholders convened because the agency has at least 5 different plans to streamline. Working within the Federal guidelines, with the partners and stakeholders to determine what information will be recorded to obtain the baseline and set standard goals. Capturing the outcomes as an agency, yes, but overall alignment is needed. Lloyd didn't know DVI was in this process.

Employment First. Lloyd is also chair of the Employment First Oversight Commission, which promotes employment for people with disabilities. The Commission recently requested Elisha and also DOL VR Director to present a summary of the WIOA report. He will keep Elisha informed when the commission requests a presentation.

Employment Outcomes. How many? Elisha will get that information. New data reporting methods finalized? no. The August 10 meeting with the Secretary, and as a community, presented each item, and strengths and opportunities, which will be worked on and establish goals. Meeting minutes available? yes, Elisha will send them.

Summer Academy Bell Program, reported in August, was a very rewarding opportunity thanks to our partners NFB and DABA. Is that the one with three students? yes. Braille skills and other activities. Great NFB collaboration, possibly expand the program as well as a monthly or quarterly activity to bring people together. Elisha said a student wrote a letter of appreciation in braille which is on her office wall. If you could reproduce those letters in braille and print and display them, that would be a really nice wall for the public to see. Elisha said the Materials Center can produce braille and print together. She will look into that.

Advocacy group for parents of VI? no, but a support group is being established. Two agency employees, who are parents of VI student, offered to coordinate, and Wayne offered to help with the kickoff.

Independent Living Services:

Fall Prevention Workshp. "A Matter of Balance" on home modifications, cognitive thinking strategies, and exercises, to help decrease the risk of falling. Patti Addison said they will attend the Easter Seals Caregivers symposium on Sept 20 for resources and to explore different divisions for support and guest speakers. The location is at BlindSight, moving forward to establish a **Caregivers Support Group** by the end of the month. Suggestions were encouraged, to be directed to Patti and Meloyde.

Communication & Outreach: Microsoft. A meeting to discuss a presentation by Microsoft Corporation on using Windows 10 and Office programs' built in accessibility and technology. Suggestions for DVI and Microsoft to develop a Workshop Series. Microsoft agreed. They are willing to pay transportation costs for attendees from Kent and Sussex counties. Planned for October when finalized. It will coincide with White Cane Day and October is Microsoft's month dedicated to community service. Elisha will provide updates. Workshops at the Microsoft facility? no, DVI campus. 3-4 Workshops, limited to 30 participants each.

Conferences: Out of the Box Conference will be Oct 6-7. This is a collaboration with Delaware School for the Deaf and Autism Delaware. DVI has requested to attend the CSAVR conference in South Carolina, addressing employment, veteran services, human resources, changes to the standards for VR counselors. NCSAB agencies are for specific information for blind agencies: BEP, Independent Living, and the impacts of WIOA. Elisha has requested to go.

VRAC attending through the CSRVA section? Elisha had not heard since out of state travel approval was just received. VR Fund grant? Recent changes in the last month state no matter the funding, if not required by job or agreement, it is disallowed. Lloyd said last year a member of the VRAC was not given the opportunity to participate and wants to participate this year. Elisha said the NCSRC have a kick off in April in DC. She doesn't see anything in the Fall, usually in the Spring. Lloyd encouraged Elisha to see if there is interest and give the opportunity to participate. yes. End of Report.

Education. Erin Weaver

Eligibility Requirements: Criteria for visual impairment determination has changed to include impaired visual perception. DVI's FVA and LMA have already incorporated this change. Criteria for determining whether or not students are braille readers will be added to Schoology.

Improved communication: DVI is working through the strategic plan providing guidance to the LEAs. Checking Districts' IEPs for DVI agency and student goals and service frequency as listed and accurate. Does that mean the TVIs and other personnel will be informed about the IEP meetings? many did not even list DVI, so right now we're making contact with LEAs to correct this. Can the VR counselors and O&M specialists listed as well? DVI as an agency is listed; all personnel are included. **Assessment.** Now using a rubric for consistent FVA resulting in quality VI programs. Are assessments done when the student enters transition? All assessments—FVA, MLA, eye reports, etc--- are required tri-annually, but if medical conditions change, done as often as necessary. Is there something in the code or WIOA that states a student entering transition will have an FVA? the student will have an FVA during the transition age, but not necessarily upon entry, unless it coincides with their tri-annual assessment. **LEA compliance.** Are DVI goals allowed on the IEP? yes, when DVI is a listed service agency. Jillian said that she thought this was addressed? not all districts were compliant. That should be mandatory. Agreed. Should DOE be involved? Lloyd said an agency has limitations in what they are able to do. Would they like assistance from the Council? Elisha said Erin has been successful. Erin said that a great deal of the LEAs contacted are correcting it, but she will seek the Council's assistance if needed. **Project Access Partnership.**

Provides professional development to LEAs and teachers of VI students to learn adaptation methods and provides adaptation when the school cannot. Is it local? Udel and DOE statewide collaboration. As this project progresses, DVI will collect and analyze information and benefits toward scheduling training as needed. Sounds encouraging, the Council would like updates on this project. Do the TVIs attend these sessions? Erin represents TVIs at the meetings during the initial stages, then TVI will attend appropriate sessions geared to them. It's management? no, but until it is determined what sessions are appropriate, Erin will attend in these beginning stages. Just for TVIs? no, all of DVI service groups will be included. **Letter to LEAs** outlining the VI students needs as well as the need to schedule time with teachers of VI students to explain materials preparation turnaround time and March collection of textbooks for the following year. O&M access to the school included? yes. Before the school year? yes. This is to improve that communication. In the past, the O&M Specist arrived with the student for orientation to the building, but the school was closed or the floors were being waxed. Now, it may be scheduled before the end of the school year, during the summer, or before the school year begins. **Student ECC opportunities** included Beach House Transition Program, Accountabilities, Bell program, and VR visited the Philadelphia Zoo and Comcast AT centers. Monthly activities are being developed.

Recruitment: Continue our recruitment for O&M Specialists through universities and AER.

Teacher Certification. All spec ed teachers hired TVI programs now? except two new hires of which one is a certified. 15 teachers: 7 certified TVIs, 8 spec ed teachers. Elisha said DVI considers all the teachers to be TVIs. Lloyd said not in terms of qualifications. Is their program monitored to prevent delays? Elisha said the program is designed to prevent delays. Additionally, Erin has supplemented by providing professional development opportunities. Jillian Queen said she missed the total certified teachers? Elisha said they are all recognized teachers of the VI by DOE. Lloyd said he didn't know that. Jillian asked how many of the TVIs are on emergency certificates? 7, maybe 8. This is due to the TVI shortage. Elisha said without them we would be talking about compensation hours. Jillian said DVI is moving in the right direction, but the level of expertise is not consistent for a teacher who has or has not completed the VI program. The understanding was spec ed teachers were hired conditionally to become TVIs, and in the interim, they would not be doing assessments. Correct. They are not. They are present, but they do not conduct the assessments. Okay. Elisha took exception to this line of questioning at each meeting. She assured the Council that ethically, neither she nor Erin would do that. Neither can she differentiate between these highly qualified educators by treating them as paras. Lloyd said no matter how qualified as special educators, they are currently not trained as TVIs, which is why this Council wants to monitor their progress. DVI know when the teacher has successfully completed each course? that information must remain between the employer and the employee. Lloyd asked DVI to continue to monitor this progress to prevent delays.

Compensatory Time. Owed time is banked until a convenient time for the family is arranged. It is logged. School districts are contacted. If a TVI wasn't available for five days of braille lessons, how is that compensated? a braille lesson is 60-90 minutes per session. The TVI would normally have prior arranged with a para or set up the materials for the student. DVI staff could cover if the absence was known in advance. Erin said that advanced knowledge absences were a subject of a professional development. The expectation is that the TVI may anticipate the lesson to set up for the absence or arrange for coverage. Tracked per student or TVI? tracked per student. DVI monitored or TVI informed? both. Jillian asked is tracking TVI schedule driven? yes. The TVI has to sign in and out of the school which provides a written log and available to DVI supervisors.

Process with LEA. Evaluations are done in a process, with permission to evaluate forms sent prior to the new year. Working with educational diagnostician at each step. O&M now provided to every VI student? no, O&M evaluations are completed on all new referrals and the educational team determines if the service is needed for that student. TVIs are trained to be aware of specific behaviors that would indicate the student requires a re-eval. Good. AT evals are also done, and IEPs are checked to make sure AT and all services are listed and service goals and frequencies are accurate.

Adaptations. Where does CDS fit in? Elisha said the AIM Center does some of the adaptations. Does the AIM Center emboss braille? no. Does CDS do FVA evals and referrals? no. Are they aware the Materials Center does the adaptations? yes, CDS, along with DOE, is the parent entity of the AIM Center.

Expanded Core Curriculum assessment is done tri-annually with the FVA/MLA. Additionally, a checklist assessment has been incorporated annually. Where was that developed? Jillian asked if they are still using the Texas School for the Blind Assessments? yes. Is that available online? yes. Erin sent Lloyd a link to the website. Goals are determined from these assessment? yes.

Sensitivity Training. Patti Addison said that was put on hold. Put on the October agenda? yes.

Public Comments

Blindsight update. VR Intern for August went well, with a lot of training and hands-on. Bingo September 20th 6-8. BlindSight's store is open Tues, Wed, and Thurs, 9 to 10:30. Peer support moving forward, group meeting on the 13th. Two more facilities: Cokesbury Program on the 4th Tues each month and the Country Methodist. Always looking for volunteers. If you have clients interested in becoming a peer support volunteer, call Patti. Newsletter went out after the last meeting, and one anticipated in November that will have schedules through the holidays. Next week, Deb Bradl is coming with her group on the comprehensive study. Also, working on getting a blog together.

DABA. is so important throughout the state. Planning ways to inform the public. Many people are unaware about DABA.

Newsline. Are you making any progress with Newsline? not yet, but it will be set up shortly.

Funding Consolidation. Update on the Federal government consolidating the SRC and independent living centers and some of the Federal funds? Discussion is still going on with the Federal government to consolidate some of this money and they are encouraging the public to write some letters if you want to keep your funds. It directly affects independent living centers. Is that correct? yes. Lloyd asked Elisha to send him the information on that. yes.

Independent Resources. Ken Rolph said Nov 3 is a Dinner and dancing at the Chase Center, 6-10 pm, \$65 per person. Tickets: Call 302-765-0191, ask for Nicole. There are flyers and an application to attend. Working with DVI partnership with technology. Lloyd said that there are courses on Microsoft accessibility features workshops. Erin said she would get Deb to call Ken about it. It's not set up yet.

Adjournment: Patti Addison made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jillian Queen. Motion carried. Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 12:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by

Jillian Queen

Jillian Queen, Council Member