

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

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## November 3, 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, Pat Carzo, Patti Addison, Jillian Queen, Deidre Morris. Absent: Kat Bottner, Ken Rolph

**DVI Staff:** DVI Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Melodye May, Michele Hamilton, Jill Morrison, Debra Bradl.

**Public:** Jim Law, Rob Keller, Wayne Marsh, Mary Marsh.

**Welcome and Call to Order:** Chair Lloyd Schmitz welcomed everyone to the meeting. Recognizing a quorum, Lloyd called the meeting to order at the Smyrna Rest Stop at 5500 Dupont Pkwy in Smyrna, DE at 10:00 am.

**Introduction:** New Council Member, Pasquale "Pat" Carzo, introduced himself to the Council. He has a degree in electrical engineering, has been a BlindSight consultant and a presenter at the Joint Finance Committee. Lloyd welcomed Pat to the Council.

**Minutes:** Deidre Morris made a motion to accept the minutes from the Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind October 6, 2017 Meeting, seconded by Patti Addison. Motion carried.

### Director's Report - Elisha Jenkins

**Delaware Industries for the Blind (DIB):** The Production Department continues to fulfill USGS. The transfer of the contract was supposed to be 90 days from August, still waiting. Increase of 24 additional orders resulting from natural weather events, but this did not require additional personnel to complete them. Deidre Morris asked if the number reported in the October minutes included the 24 new orders? no. Fulfillment orders taken during this reporting period totaled \$3,141.61 in sales. Equipment: The Department of Corrections has approached DVI about the equipment, but it is not transferred because it is in use. It is Elisha's understanding that the equipment is the property of the State. Lloyd said he would still like to pursue discussions in creating an entrepreneurial opportunities for visually impaired with this equipment. Lloyd requested to be part of the discussion with surplus services regarding the disposal of the equipment.

**Business Enterprise Program (BEP):** On Nov 15, the BEP vending machines at the Smyrna Rest Stop will be operational. BEP Open House meeting was held on Nov 2. Wayne believes there were 6 attendees. From the January Open House, how many of those 16 people are in training? Only one person completed the required modules. She is pursuing on the job training. How many locations are available? Smyrna Rest Stop after a successful P&L. Del Tech is being transferred because of challenges there. The Strategic Planning process began at the end of September. Blind Vendors and the Division Team met to develop the Strategic Plan for the Program. Six focus areas and innovation to move the program forward, including discussion about locations such as the Dover Air Force Base and higher education institutions. DVI requested the public document to be placed on the website and Elisha will send Lloyd the requested strategic plan. Lloyd asked if there were other locations in addition to Smyrna Rest and the possibility of DTCC? not now. Lloyd asked about a vending route and location New Castle (NC) County, is it no longer available? Elisha said the location, where someone left last year, is under a satellite. Lloyd said DTCC is also under a satellite. It is his understanding it would be an eligible location to be bid on in order to to place an incoming BEP operator. Lloyd asked for clarification on this issue to be available for the December Council meeting. Agreed. Lloyd requested a list of all available locations that are available for new operators. Agreed.

**Transition and Vocational Rehabilitation: White Cane Day** was held on Oct 20 in NC County. Keynote speaker Mary Fernandez, NFB. Awards: Jean May was awarded the Sharon Sutlic Wings of Change and Beth Angelini was awarded the Debbie Briddell Educators' Award. Lloyd and Patti attended and were impressed. Excellent vendors and presentations. Lloyd said he felt the event should be more centrally located in the state. Also, an agenda would have been helpful. Elisha said she appreciated the feedback. Melodye May said another conference is being discussed, perhaps at Del Tech in Dover. **Business Champions Breakfast** was held on Oct 23 in NC county. Keynote speaker Kirk Adams, AFB. DVI and VR organized the event. They recognized current community partners and consumers, provided ADA and sensitivity training videos, and gave an overview of the agency services. Lloyd said he was impressed. Elisha asked them to do this more often.

**Training.** Transition Counselors participated Department of Education's (DOE) Individualized Education Program (IEP) training and were invited to participate in other state training within their "Cadre." This allows DVI staff to make sure blind and visually impaired needs are included. Is DVI participating in **Pathways Program**? yes. Is DVI participating in **SEARCH** from DelDot? no. Lloyd encouraged DVI to participate in SEARCH. DVI will look into it. The **Transition Conference** is scheduled for Dec 5. Lloyd asked what can be done to increase participation? Deb said although feedback was good, students don't want to miss school. Jillian was surprised, since as a TVI, it was mandatory for her and for students. The students really enjoyed it. Perhaps talk to school districts. Elisha said students' commented that they were not integrated well. Is DVI on the planning committee? no, but DVI shared comments with the planners. Plans for the students to act as ambassadors and introduce speakers, has been discussed. DVI will encourage students to participate. **Transition Plans.** Lloyd asked if there are mentors mentoring students, and student work opportunities, planned for transition students during the year and the summer? yes, both. Deb Bradl is meeting with Technical Assistance group to provide guidance. There is a proposal in very early stages for provision of these services by community organizations. There are five required and nine authorized services. The Federal partner is assisting DVI to clarify the plan. Lloyd would like an update when available. It is an on-going process, participating in technical assistance and webinars. DVI will attend the CSAVR (Council of State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation) conference in a few weeks where decisions of this nature are shared. **IEP meetings.** Last month, Transition counselors were not receiving all the IEP meeting invitations. Has the issue been resolved? Deb will check on that progress. Lloyd said DVI is not the only one having this problem and it will be brought up at the monthly Cadre VI working group meeting. Deb will check with the liaison as well. **Videos.** The VR Team has completed a video series on Orientation and the Benefits of Vocational Rehabilitation for individuals with blindness. The videos were played at White Cane Day. **Transition Clients.** Lloyd asked the number of transition clients served? There are two number totals reported. Pre-employment clients from 13-21 years and Transition clients are from 14-24 years. Elisha said would it be better when Shirley is here next month to have totals for each age? Lloyd said that would be good.

**VR Closures.** 30 closures, employed 90 days or more. Target was 28. Serving ~320 individuals. DVI is looking into all of the programs to make sure the numbers are as accurate as possible. Jillian asked if there is a criteria for your closures. In a program Jillian was managing, outcomes were based on unpaid employment before paid employment. The program declared students that did not go through the unpaid employment portion were unsuccessful outcomes. Jillian was concerned that DVI's outcomes might be adversely affected by similar criteria. Jill Morrison said a process in place to jump over criteria if an individual finds matching employment. The client's outcome is still positive.

**(DVI) AIM Center.** 95 media requests for education students and 60 additional equipment requests received. Through the AIM (Accessible Instructional Media) center? yes. Areas reviewed to expedite materials include research to see if a requested book is already produced and purchase it. Repository of equipment? yes, and some purchased. Video magnifiers, BrailleNotes, etc. are returned for inventory and sent back out. Delays? not for equipment, but media requests vary in type and length of production time. This led to the review to find the materials instead of producing them when possible. Jillian said TVIs would contact the DVI Materials Center directly because the AIM center would refer all VI adaptation to DVI anyway. Elisha clarified the AIM center discussed here is the AIM center at DVI, not the State AIM center at Udel.

**Meetings.** Lloyd said he and Elisha attended a good meeting at DOE on Educational Services meeting yesterday. The Secretary was there. Lloyd said that interestingly, a statement was made not to focus on the limitations of the funding, but focus on the needs of the consumer and the unit. Let the legislatures know of these needs. Lloyd was not aware about budget meeting. He would have participated. He asked Elisha to share when these meetings are scheduled so that this Council may participate. Agreed.

**Remote training.** Technology Center exploring Statewide remote training, but especially in Sussex County. Hopefully, this will open doors for additional opportunities to participate in workshops and AT trainings. Lloyd would like to see this move forward. He would like to see DVI use Skype or similar technology for more people to participate. The goal is for people to participate from the comfort of their home or local DVI office.

## **Education**

**Continuity of Operation and Emergency Preparedness.** Just starting to visit schools to implement a communication protocol agreement in the event of an emergency. Upon approval, the agreements will be placed in the student's IEP, the school's emergency plans, and disseminated to the TVIs and O&M teachers assigned to the student. 15 schools have been visited so far. **Staff Training.** DVI Staff attended the "**Outside the Box**" conference in Oct. Topics included IEPs and Assistive Technology. **TVI Certification Program:** Eight teachers are in their second semester attending the TVI Certification Programs at the University of Nebraska or Kutztown University. **Emergency Certificates ending.** Effective Oct 15, 2017, Department of Education (DOE), will no longer issue emergency certifications for TVIs. The teachers

working under current emergency certifications must complete their certification or be enrolled in an authorized Alternate Route Teacher Certification program no later than June 15, 2018. Otherwise, they would not be allowed to teach. None of the teachers will complete the TVI program by this date. Delaware universities do not offer the standard or alternate certification programs for TVIs. DVI is in discussion with Delaware State University, University of Delaware, Kutztown University, and University of Nebraska at Lincoln, to establish alternate route certifications.

**End of Report.**

**Independent Living Report** Meloyde May

**IL Statistics.** IL 2017: 123; IL 2016: 120. Elderly 2017: 337; Elderly 2016: 322.

**Outreach.** Newark Senior Center Health Fair, Cokesbury Village Outreach, Stonegates Outreach, Delaware Pride Event, Veteran's Mental Health Summit, Cape Henlopen Health Fair, Trap Pond Fall Festival, Frontier Day, Veteran's Stand Down, National Guard Health Fair. Lloyd said that there is an opportunity at the Dover Air Force on Nov 18. Meloyde took note of the event. **Upcoming Outreach.** Delaware Diabetes Expo and Holiday Baking in December.

Lloyd asked if the stoves work at DVI? there's only one and it works. Training center to train people in the kitchen is functional? yes. **Workshops.** Advisory and Advocacy groups June; Fall Prevention Workshop July; UEB Braille August; September Healthy Lifestyles. **Topics.** Communication, and goals such as signing name, operating appliances, talking books and reading mail largest categories. How many people have attended the workshops? Range 6-12. Fall prevention was well attended. Suggestions: Open workshops for other individuals. Explored, but cost and space are factors. It could be advertised subject to space and funding. Include Skype usage to workshops and video tape as well. That is being explored and considered.

**Transition.**

Summer Activities were reported: ILS Summer Academy. Plan to expand this program and provide it during the school year breaks as well. BELL Academy. Definitely planned again. Lloyd said there was an issue with overlap of Campabilities? no, they did not. The schedule was planned the week after Campabilities and one student participated in both. How many participants? 3 participants in BELL. 3 participants in Campabilities, but one dropped out. How many youth would qualify to participate? out of 272, over 200; 60 are ages 0-5 and some are under transition age. Was there discussion to not have the Campabilities program during ESY time? no, unfortunately, the time slot is locked in due to the staff travelling distances, but ESY will be provided before and during breaks. Elisha shared ideas to increase participation: implementing evenings and weekends during the school year, get the word out earlier, activities for new students, information session for parents who do not understand the program.

**White Cane Day.** Oct 20 at the Route 9 Library and Innovation Center in NC. The event educated attendees on the importance of the white cane as well as technology that assists individuals with visual impairments complete tasks and function more independently. Thirteen organizations exhibited at the event Representatives from Microsoft, Vision Support, Comcast and NuEyes facilitated breakout sessions that highlighted the importance of technology and how its evolution enables the blind to be more independent. Activity with Microsoft successful? Participant number? ~30. Deidre said it was well-attended.

**Sensitivity Training.** The ILS Unit provides Sensitivity Training to employees, DVI staff members, business and the health care community. Nov 1, two 2-hour sessions were facilitated for the Division of Social Services team to increase awareness of issues that impact individuals who are blind, adaptations, technology and devices that are used to foster independence, sighted guide techniques and tips on how to interact with individuals who are blind. Lloyd said he and Patti Addison recently presented to DART drivers, which might lead to another opportunity for sensitivity training.

**DART.** Lloyd asked Patti Addison to share the DART presentation. Patti said that Meloyde was very helpful answering questions at the presentation. Patti presented at Wilmington and Kent Co. on the topic of Safety for VI people traveling on DART buses, key points to drivers that focused on safety awareness for VI people. Attendees asked a lot of good questions. Concerns were pointed out: the drivers do not have a place to put their belongings, so they are placed on the floor, creating a tripping concern. Patti did, indeed, trip. The driver agreed training is needed from day one. Jim Law asked if the session was presented to paratransit only? Patti said she presented to Paratransit. Lloyd presented to fixed route drivers as well. Lloyd said his presentation with Fixed Route drivers in Kent Co. was very good. There was discussion of Lloyd going to Wilmington for their next safety meeting. Fixed Route drivers aren't as familiar with the needs of visually impaired because they ride Paratransit. Cost is also a factor in Kent and Sussex counties because they are outside the ADA areas. They pay \$6 a fare vs \$4 fare. The paratransit is a fillable application is online in an accessible format. Pat Carzo asked if these agencies have training programs, compliance programs, ADA coordinators? They do. Lloyd said he can provide Pat with the appropriate people. Pat said his job is to verify federal regulations compliance in, for instance, safety training programs, and he signs off if that is in place. State of Delaware does have a training dept.

A video on working with individuals with disabilities is available, but there isn't a specific training program available. Lloyd said if Pat would like to explore it further, he can provide the training coordinator's contact information, or if Pat would like this Council to explore this issue further, we can put it on the agenda for next month and discuss it. Pat said it is a good idea. Patti said that drivers were still asking concerning questions as she was leaving. Lloyd said anyone with issues that need to be addressed may be sent to Richard Rodriguez. He will bring them up at the meeting on their behalf.

**Professional Development.** The unit was accepted into the Older Individuals who are Blind-Technical Assistance Center's Training and Technical Assistance (TA) program, facilitated by an OIB-TAC TA Team from Mississippi State University assigned to ILS program for up to a year to assist us in developing new programs and evaluations, providing workshops to staff, improving client services and solving particular programs. That sounds very exciting.

**State Independent Living Council (SILC) Meeting** was held on August 28th. Pat Maichle presented concerning the restructuring of three entities: Developmental Disabilities, IL, and TBI programs, into a single state grant program. IL is funded, in part, by Part B funds, which might be eliminated. This will significantly affect the services to the 18-54 aged population. Pat Maichle suggested, explain the issue to consumers, who may write to congressman. Lloyd asked Wayne to send him the draft of the informational letter and contact information. The agency can't lobby, but this Council can assist. Melodye will get permission to send the letter she received that went out to consumers.

**Caregivers' Support Program.** Partnering with BlindSight DE, the program will support consumer's families and friends. Provide resources, discussion and training on blindness awareness and issues. The first session Nov 30. Lloyd asked if this is the webinar? no this is different. Patti said there will be a daytime session and also an evening session to accommodate work schedules. Considering other locations. A well-attended session was held at a Methodist Church. Melodye will send to Deb Tally to advertise. Newline? no, has not been uploaded. Skype? Patti said Pat Carzo is on the Board and installing the teleconferencing system. Pat said the installation should be completed by Monday.

**A Matter of Balance Program.** Fall prevention program through Volunteer Delaware 50+, focusing on fall prevention strategies for visually impaired. Melodye May and Jean May attended a refresher training course in October. DVI will partner with the Division of Aging to facilitate the program.

**Initiatives for this year:** The four initiatives for the IL Unit have been met: Continue to Partner with DSSAPD to cost share outreach events and collaborate; Establish consumer driven community learning opportunities; Offer ongoing Transitional Programming for students; and Support staff professional development.

**Weather.** Lloyd asked are you planning to have workshops once a month? yes, but starting in March because of inclement weather. Lloyd asked the Unit to consider providing year round workshops, once a month, using technology so people don't need to travel when the weather is poor. Melodye said she will take that under consideration.

#### **End of Report.**

#### **Public Comments:**

Rob Keller shared that he was asked to work on next year's election campaign. Everyone congratulated Rob.

DABA & BlindSight. Patti Addison said DABA is doing Rock Climbing, Nov 11, 11-1, in Bear. Bowling in Dover, Nov 18, 11:30-2. BlindSight will have Chic Fila calendars on sale soon. She appreciated the support for the Boscov Fundraiser and thanked DVI for their support and answering her questions. Monday, Nov 6, SILC meeting. They will use BlindSight for their meetings regularly. A Newsletter will be out next week. Jim Law and other volunteers have reinstated Bingo. Dates will be advertised when available. Patti thanked Mel for her help going to locations. She said the program is growing, and Sussex Co is growing. Door is always open for questions and suggestions.

Elisha Jenkins said she is happy to be back. She wanted to congratulate Patti on her award since she wasn't here. Happy Thanksgiving!

Deb Bradl said there was news story about a marathon runner, who is blind. He is using an IBM GPS device.

Lloyd reported Michele placed the GACB Meetings on the Smyrna Rest Stop calendar for the first Friday of the month, except for July.

Lloyd Schmitz said that next month the Council Chairperson is up for election.

Rob asked for prayers for a person he knows, diagnosed with breast cancer.

Lloyd said that Addie Pack, NFB Central Delaware, passed away 27 Oct. Her services will be on Nov 18. Contact Lloyd for further information.

**Call for Motion to Adjourn.** Patti Addison made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Deidre Morris. Motion carried.

**Adjournment:** Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 12:31 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By,

*Jillian H. Queen*

Jillian Queen, Council Member