

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND STATE OF DELAWARE

October 6, 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, Patti Addison, Jillian Queen, Deidre Morris. Absent: Kat Bottner, Patrick Carzo, (on teleconference) Ken Rolph.

Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Staff: Debbie Harrington, Deputy Director; Jill Morrison, Constituent Relations, Michele Hamilton, Administrative Specialist.

Guests: Wayne Marsh, (BEP); Mary Marsh.

GACB: There are currently seven members on the Council. Deidre Morris, Ken Rolph, Jillian Queen, Patti Addison, Kat Bottner, Patrick Carzo, and Lloyd Schmitz. Roster will be updated by next meeting with members' terms of service.

Minutes: September 2017 correction: Council Member, Deidre Morris, was not listed as absent. Deidre Morris made a motion to accept the minutes as amended, seconded by Patti Addison. Motion carried.

Director's Report: Debbie Harrington

Division Statistics: Services for Students and Individuals: Education: 265; Employment (VR): 330; ILS, including older blind: 172; O&M: 180; AT assessment and training: 22; **Total active service [unduplicated] count: 645.** Lloyd said that he has received the Transition numbers. **Goal:** To serve and meet the needs for visually impaired and blind individuals. The hope is that the numbers will grow.

Outreach: In October, World Blindness Month, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and White Cane Day. Partnered with Microsoft Interactive workshop on Oct 17 1:30-3:30 in the Chapel on the Herman Holloway Campus. 302-255-9810 to register.

DIB: Production continues on the USGS contract. Sales: \$4292.80, which likely does not cover the labor costs of two employees. NIB still in discussion. BISM wanted years of support and guarantees of income; not moving forward. Prison Industries in discussion, but no movement.

BEP: Terry Smith led an excellent strategic planning event Sept 28-29. Discussion: Operations/exploring opportunities and expansion for operators. Wayne Marsh said it was a tremendous informational event.

Smyrna Rest Stop finalized vending transition, mid-Nov or earlier; Daniels has stock to sell. Purchased 20 new snacks and soda machines. Hares Corner Post Office replacement? unknown. VI compatible? will research. AP machines were speech synthesizer capable in the past.

ILS: White Cane Day event Oct 20 10-2 with 14 vendors so far. Speaker: Nell Lewis. Route 9 NC Library. Lloyd was concerned lower DE residents' travel time, especially paratransit, would prevent them from attending. Transportation from Milford, and Video conferencing will be explored to connect as many people as possible to meet the needs of the consumers.

VR: 286 Total: 39 employed successful closures. 25 ready to work, 68 in training, 94 transition age 14-21. 114 transition age student 14-24. Not included in the 330, but Debbie will explore the numbers and clarify.

Videos: Debbie Tally just finalizing to upload videos to the agency website. YouTube channel? not explored yet. Press release first. Then, place videos on the State website. Links will be on FB, Twitter, emails.

Prison Braille: *Men with a Message* is operating. Filling three vacancies. In Aug, a delay reported? yes, there is a backlog of adaptation of books. Is the issue equipment or personnel? The schools have to give DVI the books needed in time. Jillian Queen agreed. Schools do not understand the steps to make a book accessible. It requires knowledge, skill, and a great deal of time. Debbie Harrington will research the reasons for the backlog to resolve them.

Vista Grant: Andy Kloepfer's project has been approved; in the planning, implementation, and execution stages. DVI partnered with Delaware School for the Deaf. Special recruitment of volunteers.

End of Report.

Questions:

P/L request. Lloyd would like the p/l for June and July. Agreed.

DIB. Deidre Morris asked if DOC was interested in Blind Industries? Prison Industries is interested in the equipment, as they already do engraving, and in discussion with OMB. NIB in partnership with Prison Industries? no. Smyrna Rest Stop plan to do engraving? no, briefly discussed in August, but Wayne doesn't know anything about it. This Council recommended reserving the equipment for self-employment for Visually Impaired consumers. DVI Admin said no, but this will be determined by the Attorney General.

State Use Law Commission There are two vacancies; one with a disability requirement, the other not. Lloyd will share the vacancies at the Employment First Oversight meeting next week.

Accounts. Rommy has been trained and is performing the financial accounts position, and focuses on DIB functions as well. Bank account access? no, reconciliation and bill paying done by someone else.

Sensitivity Training. This Council recommended quarterly sessions for DVI staff, other agencies, and general public. No progress due to schedule. Meloyde May and Patti will plan after White Cane Day.

Awards. The Sharon Sutlic Winds of Change Award and the Debbie Briddell Teaching Excellence Award. VRAC accepting nominations until Monday, Oct 9.

BEP audit. Audit bid produced three proposals. Lloyd would like the scope and parameters of the audit. Debbie will get that and a copy of the RFP.

New Business:

2018 Meeting Schedule. Smyrna Rest Stop Conference Room Calendar opens in November. Council meeting every month, except July. Changes made when meetings conflict with holidays. Council members agreed.

VI Questionnaire and Survey. Related to Education, Lloyd sent it out for discussion and consideration, but it might be on the agenda for the new work group first meeting. Consider a questionnaire on VR to see the areas of improvement in that area. Following protocol, send it to the VRAC. Agreed. Lloyd's concern is that DVI's surveys are not shared. Could DVI share feedback from all the departments? Debbie said she will explore that.

Public Comments:

Caregivers Program. Patti Addison reported Sept 21 event had great speakers and good information.

Kick off for Peer Support. Patti shared project is starting in November which is National Caregivers month.

Dart Meeting Presentation. Patti reported it was a good meeting, but the drivers were quiet. Lloyd is doing presentations in Kent and Sussex. Patti will be presenting on the fixed route in Kent as well.

White Cane. Patti said she will be there. Independent Resources, Inc. (IRI) will also be there.

Lions Club Christmas Parties for the Visually Impaired. BlindSight is sending out Sussex and Kent letters. Expansion is in discussion with Lions. Lloyd suggested having DVI also send out the Christmas Parties information. Patti said since there are parties from three counties, it might be challenging to deal with the inquiries. There are 950 names on the mailing list now, not including braille. Responses go to the Lions Club.

Transportation. Lions have not been forthcoming providing transportation. BlindSight used to provide transportation, but stopped the service two years ago. NC Lions changed the event time because of the Saturday paratransit doesn't run late.

Disability Ball. It is a great event. Nov 3, 5:30-10 pm \$65. Deadline next week. 450 people expected.

Reservation application, disabilityball.org, or call IRI 302-765-0191, speak to Nicole. They crown a king and queen at the ball. Patti was impressed with last year's ball. Agency to agency and client to client, all with the same goal together.

Newsletter. Patti asked if Jill and Debbie would please submit a blog by the 23rd. Winter edition will go out in the first week in November.

DABA Oct 21 Midcounty Bowling Lanes. Nov 4 Rock Climbing. Bowling Dover Nov 18. Also, selling the Chic Filá calendars fundraiser for \$10, and coupons for Boscov's Day for \$5.

Newsline. Advertising on Newsline? Patti has not fixed that with NFB yet.

Public Comments: (continued)

Communication: Lloyd asked what methods of communication were being used. Patti said mail, emails, Facebook, and the "Blindvine" in Sussex County for those without cell phones or internet. Jill Morrison said the Blindvine is 4X faster than the internet!

Access Wilmington Award. Jill Morrison shared that **Patti Addison** received the Access Wilmington Award for Community Involvement from the City of Wilmington. Congratulations to Patti! Well deserved. Patti said it was truly an exciting night.

Motion to adjourn: Jillian Queen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Deidre Morris. Motion carried.

Adjournment: Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 11:32 am.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Jillian H. Queen

Jillian Queen, Council Member