

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND STATE OF DELAWARE

February 2, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

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.

Roll Call

Council Members: Council Chair Lloyd Schmitz, Patti Addison, Ken Rolph, Jillian Queen. Absent: Pat Carzo, Deidre Morris, Kat Bottner.

DVI Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Debbie Harrington, Deputy Director, Michele Hamilton, Shirley Bryson, Debra Bradl, Jill Morrison.

BEP: Rob Schmidlkofer, Wayne Marsh

Public: Mary Marsh, Rob Keller

Minutes: Ken Rolph made a motion to accept the minutes from the Council on the Blind December 2017 meeting, seconded by Patti Addison. Motion carried.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Report Rob Schmidlkofer.

Training: One candidate is in training who has completed 2/3 of the requirements. Reviewing internal written tests within the Training Program to align better with Hadley School for the Blind courses and also reduce the number of tests required. Hadley is used for a lot of the written requirements, leaving the emphasis of the internal program on OJT, which is their forte. The goal is to raise the 40% success rate of the old training program to exceed 80%. Training includes: Quarterly sessions with Terry Smith or Nicky Gacos; Operational training on new vending equipment and food handling, updates and new policies affecting BEP. Other areas would include self-training with Hadley free and paid courses. Encouraged attendance at Conventions, such as BLAST, Sagebrush, and NAMA and monthly Blind Vendors Council meetings. Rob said he the BLAST Convention was very informative. Rob is working on the training schedule now. He is also contacting vendors about guest speaking about their products. Lloyd asked for the schedule when it is complete. Agreed.

Operators & Locations: BEP vacant locations available for satellite or new operators? Three facilities available. Rest Stop, Del Tech, and a site that is currently satellite. **Smyrna Gift Shop:** Closed for the winter and will re-open April 1. Lloyd asked about direct to custom garment printing? Elisha said no forward movement has been given to that because the location has continually lost money. Also, the vending machines operation just started. It can be explored. Closing gives the opportunity to review and research whether the gift shop has the potential to make a profit. Discussion about a new strategy to move away from consignment to improve profit and doing more of the work themselves. When will the changes be implemented? Debbie said that they will be in discussion with BVC. A new operator expressed interest in the Gift Shop. Although that's not certain, the new operator will need to make those decisions. The silk screening equipment is available? yes, but the machinery is too big for this location. The Del Dot contract started Nov 15. A report will be shared as soon as it is ready. Would you please include the number of vending machines and types in the report? Agreed.

DTCC: Del Tech had some great months in the beginning of 2017. Last quarter showed significant loses. The situation with the catering issue with using outside sources resolved? yes, resolved with the new manager. It is the second year of the 3-year contract; Stanton or Wilmington been contacted? yes, but no word yet, but still in contact with them. The contracts will be up soon. Georgetown is happy with Lighthouse, so they will not enter a contract with BVC.

Evaluation: Terry Smith made a professional evaluation of the program in comparison with other programs. Our operators do not profit as well as in other programs, but ours is a small program. The evaluation produced a strategic plan, a review of the Randolph Shepherd, and recommendations for changes. Most states have open meetings for elections. Keeping 100% transparency, monthly BVC meeting are open to the public and shares Operators' P&L. **Growth:** Substantial growth. 2017 22%, in our gross sales. Highest for at least the last 16 years. College at \$20,000 in gross sales. New potential location contact with Dover Air Force Base.

Alignment: The program is in alignment with Florida, Texas, Arizona, and Tennessee top programs of its kind. Five policies approved out of DC and 14 waiting for approval. RSA is a slow process.

Equipment: Researching 21st century technology, hardware, and products to provide services to the growing population of Millennials and Gen X. Exploring cashless, using apps and interactive systems. Cost of the technology? it's still in prototype, called "LISA", cost of upwards of extra \$2000. Lloyd asked if money is not the issue, then why not have purchased the speech output vending machines discussed last month? Is that a commitment to purchase all future equipment that is accessible? Elisha said that every effort will be made to do so. Prior approval will be needed if it is in excess of \$5000 per unit for the adaptation. Lloyd said the machines were not in excess of \$5000. Lloyd said the purchased equipment must be accessible.

BEP program audit update. Wayne Marsh said that they have determined the firm that will do the audit. Del Tech has to be finished first. BEP will have different type of audit—evaluated against your policy, are you following "Agreed Upon Procedures." The scope of the audit is done, but it is now Tax season.

End of Report

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Report Shirley Bryson

Consumers: Successful closures (individuals employed more than 90 days) FY2017: 30; FY2018: 0 and 10 individuals that are currently employed less 90 than days. As of 02/1/2018, 284 caseloads. There are 31 individuals that are ready to work. Finally, there are 75 individuals that are currently in training or a higher education program. 96 transition age students (age 14 – 21) and 118 transition age students that are (14-24).

Innovations: Interns and Volunteers provide an opportunity for 12 young professional (University of Delaware, Delaware State, Delaware Technical Community College and Wilmington University) to be introduced to blind and visually impaired community. Service video presentations - info about the program and services provided. Tested by consumers and staff, although not finalized. Target audience: outreach, orientation for staff, consumers. Lloyd is interested in that. It has proved to be useful for new staff. YouTube channel? Shirley said that there is educational YouTube, no specific channel yet. Lloyd said he would like to see the videos available outside DVI without having to go to Facebook. He asked if DVI had talked to Andrea or Joselyn from Department of Labor VR Unit? no. Good idea. Lloyd said that he received an email from the Pathways transition program. Deb Bradl got a copy of the email. Connection is there for the programs integrate. Lloyd requested Elisha and Debbie be added to the distribution list for future mailings.

Recognition: DTCC recognized VR as a star Community partner at their annual breakfast. New Castle County Summer Youth Program recognized VR for hosting 2 summer youth. Saint Francis Health Care recognized VR program and staff for being a dedicated volunteer partner. VR has been a partner with Saint Francis Health Care for approximately 3 years, providing them with several transition age and adult volunteers.

Partnerships: Partner in Transition Conference 2016/2017. Partner and participated in Disability Mentoring Day and White Cane Day. DVI Staff participated in the Delaware Park Health Fair providing information to over 300 employees at Delaware Park. The human resource director introduced two new employment recruiters and they have pledged to provide more opportunities for VI population. Assisted Boscov's in welcoming and helping shoppers with special needs. Aforementioned, Saint Francis Hospital partnership. Did St. Francis keep any of our consumers on, working past the training? yes. That's good.

Meetings: The Vocational Rehabilitation business consultants attended the 2nd joint meeting for business consultants with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor. The agenda consisted of items such as Career Pathways, Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) Impact on Business, and proposed training topics for the year. The group will convene each quarter and have an annual meeting. Delaware is on the cutting edge in providing Delaware's businesses support and services. Attended WIOA leadership and convening's for staff monthly to insure that the state plan goals are meet for WIOA.

Transition Activities: Two transition students participated in the Junior Partners in Policy program this year. Two transition students participated in the NFB STEM program this summer in Baltimore. Spring Break for Transition Student - During the spring break holiday, the VR, O&M, ILS and Education staff provided a variety of opportunities for our transition age students. The VR transition counselors lead the charge in coordinating activities for transition age students.

Consumer Success Stories: One consumer has become a merit employee for the DVI. One returning consumer obtained employment as the Support Coordinator with BlindSight of Delaware. A BEP training participant received 100% test score this week. Four transition students have registered for the Envision Summer week long camp in Kansas. The Envision program's "Heather's Camp" is an annual program designed to allow age 5-20 year olds who are blind or visually impaired experience the same exhilarating summertime activities as their typically-sighted peers with a total of over 200 camp participants. A state assistant deputy attorney worked with the VR team and he expressed that he was extremely pleased with our services and support. A Delaware State University professor said she was grateful for our support in helping her return to work. Kansas considered sheltered employment? no, it is competitive employment. It is integrated. Would National Industries for the Blind count that as a success for the VR statistics? will check on that. Lloyd said that Deldot and Christiana Hospital have set aside job shadowing throughout the year in conjunction with their education. Every three months switch roles.

End of Report

DVI DIRECTOR'S REPORT Elisha Jenkins

Business Enterprise Program (BEP): With the 40% inclusion of healthy items now in all DVI vending machines, sales increased by approximately 12% (1,257 units), which makes December 2017 the strongest sales month to date since the Governor's Healthy Vending initiative began in July. Discussions with the Division of Public Health and the American Heart Association are being planned. Does DE still have the group to discuss Healthy options? Delawell? it exists, but Heathy Initiative is what the state is working on currently. On January 25th, the Division of Public Health met with the Blind Operators to discuss taste tasting and expansion of healthy vending to the operators' vending machines. Working with the Governor, trying to avoid the tax other states apply which would affect operators' profit. Doing a lot of analysis on buyers' selection processing—i.e. buyers buy at eye level and left to right. Interesting.

BEP Food Truck Program: Experienced difficulties with the on-set of colder weather. Despite advertising the trucks on the Holloway Campus Marquee and providing blast E-mails of the various trucks presence on the Campus, business has declined considerably and the vendors have decreased their attendance to almost non-existent at this time. The path forward includes: Communication with current vendors suspending operations through March and following-up on outstanding payments due to BEP. The new time-frame for vendors to provide food truck services on the Campus shall be April through October. Rather than a 10% variable fee due to the BEP for profits earned while on Campus, each vendor will pay a flat fee monthly. By putting on the credit card readers, are you incurring an additional cost? no the charges are absorbed by the customer. DVI is researching competitive rates. DVI is considering contracting with four (4) to five (5) food truck vendors to be on Campus every Friday, rather than depending on one (1) truck each day of the week.

Delaware Industries for the Blind (DIB): In its final stage of fulfilling contractual obligations for USGS. Although the last day for new orders was December 31st, 85 orders remain, 47 are in production or process of billing. The agency that has assumed the contract is interested in purchasing some of the remaining stock. Closing within the next 30 days and getting the products to the customers. Lloyd asked about a particular DIB employee, will that person be reassigned? yes, although some of his time has been reassigned already, (such as transportation for visually impaired consumers), as soon as his DIB duties are fulfilled, he will be permanently reassigned to support other areas of the Agency—perhaps the Materials Center or continue with transportation services. So you will not lose that slot? no, not unless it is given away, which Elisha is not going to do. Can it be re-formed? no, additional employment, reclassified, roles are being formed. But he will have a employed slot? yes, Elisha said that she would like to see the Materials Center become the DVI Materials Center where everything is done in the same place. Lloyd would like to see more direct service to the consumers and less people that do not provide this direct service. Enhance the service to the visually impaired populations.

Outreach: During this reporting period, two O&M Specialists provided training to the New Castle Co Police Cadets on interacting with the visually impaired as a part of Diversity Day. The Division's Education video has been posted via social media through the work of Deb Tally et al. Wayne said on YouTube there were 3500

views, and on DVI's Facebook page, 55 shares and produced "likes" and positive comments. The video will also be posted on the Division's website and used as a marketing tool for outreach events and posted on Schoology for education personnel. DVI and Blindsight will be a vendor at the Winterthaw Conference. Winterthaw is the annual conference sponsored by the Ophthalmology Association and Patti Addison will be working at the event. She found it very interesting. It provides an opportunity to network with medical professionals and vendors.

Low Vision Services: Low Vision Program has been expanded to include Kent and Sussex counties. Dr. Daniel Baruffi will provide low vision services one time a month in DVI's Milford Office. This will address the delayed appointments due to availability of the low vision providers. How is this service provided? mobile unit. 6 consumers per day. Lloyd said that was reasonable.

Independent Living Services: The Independent Living Unit kicked off their 2018 Workshop Series with a teleconference on Deaf/Blind resources in Delaware on January 26th. Delaware's NFB chapter affiliate president, Kat Bottner, facilitated the workshop. She discussed a variety of resources available to blind and deaf-blind. 11 participants attended. February's teleconference is focused on the Newline.

BlindSight Collaboration: Patti Addison shared that the first Caregiver Session will be on 2/22/18 in collaboration with Blindsight from 10-12. The Workshops are available on DVI's website, sent via robocall two weeks in advance, and will be mailed to all in the coming weeks. Therapy sessions for the staff, but not just for vision. Patti Addison said she is a hearing impaired and blind person who is a caregiver. So, sessions are necessary for consumers who are facing these situations. She provides simulator glasses to show spouses and children what the blind person sees. Lloyd said that is outstanding! Anything in Kent? in discussion to use the conference center at DVI in Milford to pull the people in Sussex. Patti shared that programs have been scheduled downstate and no one shows up. Teleconferencing is available. That's good. Patti shared a concern. She was just contacted by Pat Carso about a group at the VA that want to start here in Kent county for veterans. There is concern that ACE is in conflict with BlindSight. ACE is with DVR not DVI. BlindSight funding for outreach is with two grants, SILK and DVI, for collaboration. Peer support groups funding was transferred many years ago to DVR. They provide support to everyone except VI people. Lloyd asked if Kent County is underserved? Elisha said it is possible because in this service area, DVI serves NC and Sussex, ACE serves Kent. Wayne asked if DVI is collaborating with ACE? no. ACE has not requested assistance from DVI. Lloyd said it is the responsibility of this Council to represent visually impaired individuals state-wide. He would like to understand the level of services to ensure that all visually impaired people are served. Elisha said that Patti and Melodye May work closely together providing services, but there is a division and definition of services. It will be explored.

Summer Services 2018: Planning for the upcoming Summer Academy 2018 commenced on January 25 at a multi-disciplinary planning meeting. ILS will again collaborate with other DVI units and outside organizations to provide programming to agency transition students. The tentative date for the Summer Academy is July 9th – July 16th at both DVI locations. More expanded core curriculum activities will be incorporated into the daily schedule to introduce and reinforce age appropriate daily living skills.

Education:

Update on Teacher Endorsement: There are six fully certified teachers, total of 14. The teachers enrolled in the TVI endorsement program have completed two courses and enrolled in the second semester. All the teachers that entered the program are still in the program? yes. Is the program in Delaware? no, the courses must be taken at accredited institutions, but not necessarily in Delaware. Lloyd said the Bill allowing three years to gain certification passed the house, passed the senate, and is waiting for the Governor's signature. Will it reduce the teachers that have been on board for a year? Elisha said it could. Some of the teachers will complete the 17 additional credits for the certificate alone. Those pursuing an additional Masters degree in Vision Impairment will take longer. DVI is in discussion with DOE to justify keeping the TVI emergency certificates in place by proof that the affected teachers are moving forward toward full TVI certification. Okay. **Student Advisory:** DVI's Education Team is kicking off several activities over the next month. The first Student Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled next week. They are geared to meet centrally and will elect officers. The first parent meeting is March 2nd in Milford. The teachers arranging incentives and planning the first event. Parents are interested in learning braille. Education facilitated workshops will be shared as well.

Technology Update: Lloyd asked Matt Tseronis offered a tech update? Discussion about the district purchasing their own braille embossers. If DVI does the formatting, the districts can emboss their own braille. Debbie Harrington said she didn't hear about that. Lloyd said that braille embossers costs have reduced. Districts purchased embossers for \$1600. Jillian Queen said that there may be issues with the Districts purchasing embossers. She shared that some braille embossers do not produce quality braille. Tiger embossers produce great quality tactile graphics, but poorly formed, misaligned braille. It is important that someone knowledgeable in braille formation quality be involved in those purchases.

Orientation and Mobility: DVI is finalizing contracts with two Orientation and Mobility Service providers. These contractors will begin providing compensatory services within the next few weeks. DVI is addressing compensatory time for students and delayed adult referrals. They will be prioritized if there is a safety issue.

Adaptation: In summary, Lloyd asked if we can be reasonably assured the consumers are being supported to be successful. Lloyd said we recommended the AIM homepage announce that requests for adapted materials be in by March 15 for the following school year. Jillian Queen said that TVIs have always requested the materials by March. Lloyd said but now the Districts' DRMs (digital rights managers) will be responsible to input the VI students' materials to AIM, so the TVIs won't need to do that. Jillian said the problem isn't the requests input to AIM or DVI Materials Center. The problem is getting the materials from the teachers and the Districts. Also, a book may be submitted for adaptation, but the curriculum changes or the issuance of another edition of the book is offered, after March. Then another book will be needed immediately. It's an on-going struggle. The need is there, but the compliance is legitimately delayed. Debbie said it is the best practice and the Districts know that, too, but she understands the delays as well. DOE will bring this up at the Cadre meetings where there are 43 education agencies in Delaware.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

BlindSight: Patti said they will be putting a newsletter out and please submit by the end of February to be included. Elisha said okay. Lloyd said he sent Cathy Hatten? yes that is the right person. yes.

BlindSight Bingo is going to start again. A new coordinator starts next week. The store is open and the store is going on the road, too. Patti shares the contact information and about the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) program at her presentations. DATI will bring devices for individuals to try at their presentations. They are talking about another employment hire which will be published in the newsletter when it is decided. DABA Cruise April 22-29 still taking more people, 21 people going. Setting up Kent and Sussex county activities, Skating later this month. Definitely Bowling, last turn out was 27 people. A Concord High School student would like to play baseball. The entire team will play beep baseball. It's going to be a great experience for them. Campability asked BlindSight to help with the Beach House weekend again this year.

Smyrna High School: Rob Keller shared Feb 24 will be the 25th Annual Smyrna High School Day. The Governor and State Senators will be in attendance. The events starts at 8 am.

Technology: Lloyd asked if Delaware were purchasing any Smart Glasses? There is a pair of New Eye smart glasses in New Castle. Clients come in to look at them there. Lloyd asked if the Low Vision specialist coming to Milford could bring them there? yes. Lloyd asked Elisha, not for today, but to share with him how the technology centers are being promoted? okay.

DE Joint Financing Session: Elisha said the next DE Joint Financing Session will be on Feb 20.

Passing of Ed Bordley: Patti said Ed Bordley passed away in December. Ed was an attorney and wrestling champion and a great advocate for the visually impaired. He was totally blind. A memorial is being planned. Patti will share when that is scheduled.

ADJOURNMENT Ken Rolph made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jillian Queen. Motion carried. Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jillian H Queen

Jillian Queen, Council Member