

Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind
Smyrna Rest Stop
5500 DuPont Pkwy.
Smyrna, DE @ 10:00 am.
November 9, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Welcome and call to order: Recognizing a quorum, Lloyd Schmitz, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Members Present: Lloyd Schmitz (Chair), Patti Addison, Deidre Morris, Pat Carzo, Jillian Queen

Members Absent: Kat Bottner, Ken Rolph

Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director, Sandi Miller, Deputy Director, Jill Morrison, Mark Ridenour, Michele Hamilton

Public: Wayne Marsh, Blind Vendors Committee Chair, Mary Marsh, Rob Keller, Gail Buck-Carroll, and by phone: Carol King- Reis.

Minutes: Deidre Morris made the motion to approve the October 5, 2018 meeting minutes with corrections. Patti Addison second the motion. Motion carried.

Division for the Visually Impaired Director's Report-Elisha Jenkins-

Independent Living Services (ILS) Activities:

ILS serves 164 individuals (primarily adults, but also transition age students).

The final visit from Mississippi State, Blind Older Individuals Technical Assistance Program, was held October 12 & 13 and it encompassed low vision training curriculum for staff. The program with Mississippi State has approximately six more months; at the end of this period, a report will be presented to ILS.

DVI will be looking at reworking the workshops (topics, time and outreach) to try to improve the attendance. The feedback on the topic of transportation is being taken into consideration. DVI facilitated workshops utilize the state Skype program and Zoom.

Throughout the month of October, the Independent Living Unit is hosting a nutrition program facilitated by Anita Lowman from the University of Delaware's Cooperative Extension Program. The purpose of the program is to educate consumers on making smart food choices, food preparation, and portion sizes.

October 24 – A workshop on Emergency Preparedness, DEMA, Smart 911, Office of Vulnerable Preparedness was held at Long Neck Cheer Center

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR):

Individuals receiving employment services (Vocational Rehabilitation): 294

VR has 35 successful closures. State Plan has been in effect from 2018-2020.

October 17- One transition student attended Disability Mentoring Day, which featured interactive session pertaining to career interests, soft skills, and social media.

October 18- The Division's Vocational Rehabilitation Unit hosted their annual Business Champion Breakfast at Delaware Technical and Community College, Terry Campus.

October 19- Vocational Rehabilitation Unit staff presented on the services and programs offered through the Division at the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Kent County One Stop meeting in Dover.

Overview of VR Staff: One VR district Administrator, 2 Administrative Support Specialist, 5 VR Counselors (two are designated to Transition), and three Employment Specialist/Business Consultants.

Education/Orientation and Mobility:

Students with visual impairments receiving education services: 278

Orientation and Mobility Services: 159

October 19-21- DVI hosted transition-aged students for a weekend of activities at the Children's Beach House. Nine high school students attended. Traditionally, there has been one event at the Children's Beach House with students ranging from fifth grade to twelfth grade. DVI is planning to host the same event for younger students in the spring.

Technology/Materials Center:

Assistive technology assessment and training services: 44

October 18- The Division's Independent Living Services Unit, Vocational Rehabilitation Unit, and Technology Training Unit sponsored a Technology Fair at Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC) at the Terry Campus in Dover. The event showcased examples of new and forthcoming technical equipment for the blind and visually impaired. Staff from each of the Division's program units were present to answer questions and provide information regarding the Division's services, while staff from the Division's Technology Training Center provided demonstrations of equipment.

October 24- An awards ceremony was held at the Dover Downs Hotel. The Delta Gamma Sorority has been selected to receive the 2018 Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Award in the field of Education and Literacy. One of the main duties the Delta Gamma Sorority has performed is helping the Instructional Materials and Resource Center (IMRC) complete various production tasks, as well as the collection of customer satisfaction survey data for Technology, Orientation and Mobility, and Independent Living Services programs.

Business Enterprise Program:

Lloyd Schmitz questioned the P & L Report on the breakdown of operating expenses Line items not matching up on the second page versus the first page. DVI responded that after a review of the report it was determined that page one and page two are in the correct position.

Lloyd Schmitz continues to question the losses at DTCC. DVI and BVC responded that there had been a host of issues ranging from personnel, purchases from the offerings of the menu and the loss of catering outside events. DVI and the BVC have offered to review the report with Lloyd.

A Request for Proposal is in the process of being developed in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget, Government Support Services, and the Division's Business Enterprise Program for the establishment of a Micro-market in the Carvel State Office building in Wilmington. The Division and OMB surveyed the employees in the Carvel Building regarding the Micro-market. The survey was designed to see if building employees would use the market and gain a perspective of products they would purchase. Eighty-seven responses were received. DVI has shared the results with the Office of Management and Budget and with the blind operator in the Carvel building to use as a basis for food service

Micro-markets seem to be the next platform for BEP locations. Micro-markets offer great potential for Randolph-Sheppard blind entrepreneurs. One challenge is ensuring that Micro-market kiosks are accessible to blind users. Vendors are being pressured to make their systems accessible. BVC received a request from the Delaware Psychiatric Center inquiring about Micro-market kiosks for their employees.

Lloyd Schmitz questioned why he received a draft copy of Rules and Regulations. Wayne Marsh, BVC Chair responded that he was not sure as to why he received a copy marked draft but no changes to rules and regulations have been made since 1990.

The Division and BVC continue to review and develop policies and state rules despite the staffing shortage at the federal level. Thus far, 20 policies have been submitted. The federal partner stated with the hiring of new staff, the backlog should be addressed in the coming year.

BVC meetings regarding discussion on policies are open to the public. When discussing a policy it is listed on the agenda, no discussion on policies are outside of these meetings.

BEP currently does not have any individuals interested in becoming an operator. BEP currently has five operators who currently run their locations, and two staff administrators to oversee operations.

BVC plans to recommend changes needed regarding the Randolph Shepard Act through legislation.

Pat Carzo asked and recommended that state legislators be invited to attend the meeting. He stated that more action and response from state legislators might be received from community request.

An RFP is in the process of being developed in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget, Government Support Services, and the Division's Business Enterprise Program for the establishment of food trucks on state properties in 2019. The goal is to publish the RFP in January for an effective April date.

DVI and BEP are collaborative partners with DeIDOT who expressed interest in opening a Micro-market, but there was no mention of any food truck.

The one-year anniversary is approaching for vending at the Smyrna Rest Area; it appears to be what is making the location profitable. The gift shop itself and the traffic that comes through there is not what makes it profitable. BVC changed the business model for the location in April of 2018. Sales improved, but not enough to be profitable. Lloyd Schmitz would like to have a traffic account (breakdown monthly) for the Smyrna Rest Area.

Lloyd Schmitz will put together a list of questions for Education and Technology for DVI response at the December meeting.

DVI Agency vacancies:

Teachers for the Visually Impaired - 7

Technology Trainer/Educator - 1

Orientation and Mobility Trainer/Educator - 2

Deidre Morris questioned what programs are available for adults. DVI responded that all units (ILS, O&M, VR, and TC) are available to adults. The Education Unit is the only exception.

Public Comments:

Blindsight sent out invitations for their Christmas Party, deadline is December 4, 2018 for Sussex, December 6, 2018 for Kent, and December 8, 2018 for New Castle County.

November 2, 2018 was the Disability Ball, chaired by Matt Denn, Attorney General, 459 people attended. Next year's event will be on November 1, 2019 at the Chase Center.

The documentary "Boundless" was very successful and well attended.

The NFB- Newsline (<https://nfb.org/nfbnewsline>) is working and should anyone have questions they may contact Kat Bottner.

Next meeting is December 7, 2018; at this meeting, Council Leadership Elections will be held.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Patti Addison and second by Deidre Morris. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.