

Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired  
Meeting Minutes  
March 27, 2015  
Pierre, SD

Members Present: Eric Rippentrop, Bill Molseed, Julie Briggs, Lyle Cook, Patrick Czerny, Ken Rollman, Lynda O'Connor, Bruce Micheel, Connie Sullivan, Linda Biffert, Gaye Mattke

Members Absent: Steve Kelsey, Tim Neyhart, Karla Bucknall, Teresa Nold, Marilyn Steffen

Others Present: Sandy Neyhart, Nancy Hoyme, Twyla Eggers, Dorothy Leigel, Becky Blume

Eric Rippentrop, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Linda Biffert made a motion to approve the agenda. Julie Briggs seconded. Motion carried.

Bruce Micheel made a motion to approve the updated version of the minutes from the December meeting. Bill Molseed seconded. Motion carried.

There were no public comments.

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA includes reauthorization of the Rehab Act. Gaye discussed the impending Notices of Proposed Rule Making that will address details in implementing the WIOA. Bill Molseed informed the Board that Department of Labor & Regulation (DLR) will also be impacted by the proposed rules expected spring 2015. The Departments of Labor and Education plan to concurrently publish five Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs) to implement WIOA. One of these will be a joint NPRM involving jointly

administered activities including unified and combined state plans, performance, and aspects of the one- stop system. Another NPRM will implement the remaining provisions of Title I and Title III that are administered by the Department of Labor. Three additional NPRMs involve Department of Education programs, including one implementing Title II Adult Education and Literacy and two implementing the Title IV Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 of WIOA. These five NPRMs will be published in the Federal Register and posted on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), where public comments can be submitted following publication. The Departments of Labor and Education will analyze the public comments, and anticipate issuing Final Rules implementing WIOA in early 2016.

Update: The five notices of proposed rulemaking related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), were made available for public inspection on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and can be found at the Federal Register Public Inspection Web site at <https://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection>. The notices for proposed rulemaking are scheduled to be published on April 16<sup>th</sup> with a 60 day public comment period.

South Dakota is in a better position than other states for the requirements between vocational rehabilitation and labor since most office locations are already co-located. The law focuses on employment outcomes and in South Dakota, partnerships have already been formed. In-service training is no longer in the Act. Training will still take place, but will be funded with the regular vocational rehabilitation allotment. Funding will be separate for each Title and programs under the Titles. The funding will be dispersed by formula grants.

Bill and Gaye shared that reauthorization of the Act is a safety net for the programs in South Dakota. Constituents (of any age) looking for employment are transitioning from one area of life to another. Our programs are not supporting them; we are helping them to support themselves.

In the past Supported Employment funds were 100% federally funded. WIOA requires that 50% of the Supported Employment allotment be used on transition services and a general fund match is required. Since the SBVI allotment is only \$6,000, Gaye and DHS Budget and Finance staff decided to relinquish the allotment to the Division of Rehabilitation Services to avoid the burden of reporting and tracking. This will not impact services as SBVI has adequate Vocational Rehabilitation funds to provide services including supported employment services.

Public meetings have been scheduled, but since SBVI does not need to do a State Plan this year, other topics will be discussed at these meetings. The Department of Human Services is conducting a review of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will be seeking public input. Gaye suggested this may be a good topic to discuss at the public meetings. Meeting the Challenge (MTC) is the organization DHS contracted with to do a review of accessibility in DHS and they are working with the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities to schedule meeting(s) and collect public input. Lyle Cook commented that hotels in Sioux Falls are not very accessible. Julie Briggs will be following up on this issue.

In addition to ADA and access, public meetings will address WIOA. SBVI Board members are encouraged to attend and facilitate the meetings. Dates, locations, and member facilitation are listed below.

\*\* April 28, 2015 at Sinte Gleska University in Mission from 11-2 Central time. Lyle Cook and Connie Sullivan will be attending and facilitating. This meeting will be in conjunction with BVR and SILC. April 29<sup>th</sup> is the back-up date. Sandy has been coordinating the event with Burdette Clifford.

\*\* April 30, 2015 via DDN from 4-6 p.m. Central time, with sites in Pierre, Aberdeen, and Sioux Falls. Connie Sullivan and Bill Molseed will facilitate at the Pierre site; Steve Kelsey in Aberdeen; and Lynda O'Connor, Julie Briggs, and Eric Rippentrop in Sioux Falls.

\*\* May 1, 2015 in Rapid City at the Eco Adoba Hotel from 4-6 Mountain Time, in conjunction with National Federation of the Blind convention. Patrick Czerny and Ken Rollman will facilitate.

South Dakota Association of the Blind and National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota support and help promote the public meetings. In the past, the Board has agreed to a specific amount for certain portions (i.e. transportation, hosting). In talking with the president of each organization, Gaye suggested the Board consider \$500 for support of the public meetings. This will cover all expenses associated with the meetings including meeting space, promotion and transportation. Julie Briggs made a motion that the Board pay \$500 to each blind organization (NFB and SDAB) for hosting public meetings. Lyle Cook seconded. Motion carried.

## Employer Paid Work Experiences - Draft Program Guide

Twyla Eggers presented the Board with Draft Program Guide 2015-02. This guide, drafted by Bernie Grimme, outlines DRS/SBVI support for people who want to obtain or maintain employer paid work experiences which is temporary in nature and not directly connected to the person's career or employment goals. This type of employment would be beneficial for people to build basic employment and work hardening skills. It is not a job placement package, and wages are paid by the employer. SBVI would be able to authorize hourly services such as job coaching. Counselors will decide on a case by case basis whether the work experience will help the people they serve to reach their employment goal.

Bill commented that some employers would be willing to hire anyone as long as the person wants to work. The labor and vocational rehabilitation programs can work together to get the most for the client. Job retention is covered by VR. If a person needs accommodations to continue to do the job, they should contact the VR office and apply or re-apply for services.

Ken Rollman made a motion to approve the Draft Program Guide as it is currently written. Pat Czerny seconded. Motion carried.

## SBVI Program Updates

*Business Enterprise Program (BEP):* Nancy Hoyme reported to the Board that the healthy vending will affect vendors who operate 20 or more vending machines including the BEP vendor in Pierre. The federal General Services Administration has their own requirements that 50% of beverages and 25% of snacks are healthy. New machines were purchased for the Aberdeen federal

building so soda, juice and water can be distributed. BEP is trying to figure out how to post calorie and nutrition content for each item in the machines.

Amy Chappelle is retiring after 38 years as a BEP vendor. There were two applicants for her position. Amy is currently training her replacement.

Due to financial irregularities at EROS Cafeteria, SBVI hired an outside accounting firm to conduct a review of financial practices. Due to the findings from the review, the vendor was terminated at that location. Nancy has started the process of searching for a new vendor. EROS management has been very good to work with during this process.

*Independent Living Older Blind:* Sandy reported on the Assistive Technology Access Project. SBVI has contracted with DakotaLink to provide 5 hours of training for individuals so they have better access to their computer and/or mobile devices. Thirty two individuals have been referred to the program. There is no age requirement, but the individual must own the piece of equipment and software they wish to be trained on. Some of the topics covered are accessibility, voice over on iPhone, JAWS, adjusting contrast, email and saving photos on iPad, etc.

If there is enough interest, SBVI and DakotaLink will set up community based trainings. These will be held in locations other than Sioux Falls, since assistive technology training sessions are available at the Rehab Center. A consumer satisfaction survey will be mailed out to make sure this project has met the needs of those who participated in training. There have been requests

for additional training. Gaye, Sandy, and Patrick discuss these requests for additional training time to determine whether to approve them based on individual circumstances. The question was asked whether 5 hours is enough training time. Patrick reported that about ¼ of the individuals have requested additional time.

Sandy reported about the upcoming staff training in April. Debra McKay-Sokol, a nationally known speaker who was referred by the American Foundation of the Blind, will present to SBVI staff on adaptive techniques and devices to help individuals who have vision loss and need alternative techniques to manage their diabetes.

New CCTV's were purchased for the CCTV lease/loan program in 2014 and older machines purchased in 2004 and 2005 were donated to others who could use them. Currently the CCTV program has a small waiting list with a low incidence of units turning over.

Independent Living Older Blind caseload numbers are similar to the number of applications, eligibilities and people served in 2014. Staff has been doing outreach by attending health fairs and conducting in-service trainings.

*Rehab Center for the Blind:* Melanie Dumdei has been hired to replace Deb Skyberg as Senior Secretary at the Center. Krista Pick was recently hired as program specialist to replace Ardell Fiedler. She worked for the State Division of Veteran's Affairs and is also a veteran. Jennifer Geffre will be back for the summer. She intends to pursue a master's degree in orientation and mobility.

Transition week is June 14-18. Participants will hear from a presenter and will develop a 1-page profile with the help of a Person Centered Training coach along with other activities during the week.

JoMarie is continuing with the Saturday Outreach Classes. Nine classes have been scheduled. Three classes (Dec., Jan., and Feb.) were cancelled due to no participants. The iPad/iPhone training had the largest number of attendees. JoMarie has had 20 people email, call, FaceTime, or walk-in for assistance for a total of 6 hours and 40 minutes.

*Vocational Rehabilitation:* Twyla Eggers reported that Case File Reviews are scheduled for April 21-23 in Pierre. This is a good training exercise and helps ensure consistency with the work of counselors throughout the state. Transition specialist, Karen Gerety, will be resigning soon. This position is in Aberdeen at the School for the Blind. SBVI had to change the agreement with the school after RSA disagreed how it was done. Gaye commented that with WIOA, the agreement will probably be done the way it was in the past.

Outreach Efforts: SBVI Counselors are reporting their outreach and education efforts in public and private agencies and have been asked to visit each school in their territories to meet school Special Education and 504 personnel to discuss SBVI services. Compared to the same time period last year, we have increased applications by 23 people.

Kellie VanGerpen has been participating in training through Mississippi State University's Vision Specialist



Program. She will attend onsite training in April and May.

### Board Committee Updates

*Disability Advocacy Network (DAN):* Connie Sullivan represented the Board of SBVI at DAN meetings. SB190 and HB1190 were discussed at the meeting. She did not sign off on letters that were written to legislators since the topic was not pertinent to citizens with vision loss and the correspondence was not discussed with the whole Board. Members agreed that Board of SBVI should continue to have a representative attend the meetings.

*National Disability Employment Awareness Month:* Gaye received an email from Colette Wagoner regarding the proposals that have been received and asked the Board of SBVI for financial support. The NDEAM committee will meet on April 1<sup>st</sup> and discuss the proposals and it is beneficial for them to have an amount to be contributed by the Board of SBVI. Proposals were received from Aberdeen, Brookings, Madison, Milbank, Mitchell, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Sisseton, Watertown, and Yankton and requests totaled over \$18,000. Lyle Cook made a motion to continue to contribute up to \$4000 to NDEAM activities. Ken Rollman seconded. Motion carried.

Dorothy Leigel retired after working at the State Library for 35 years and recently returned to serve as interim Director of the Braille and Talking Book Program. The House budget committee is recommending zero funding for the Library Services and Technology Act which would eliminate the Braille & Talking Book program and databases.

## Board Vacancies/Terms/Recruitment

Gaye reminded members that even if your term expires on June 30<sup>th</sup>, you are still a board member until the Governor appoints someone as your replacement. Lyle Cook's term expires on June 30<sup>th</sup>. He nominated Nadine Blue Bird; however, she was not selected as Director of the Pine Ridge Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Gaye will wait to hear from Lyle before proceeding with this nomination.

Kay Miller has been nominated to replace Marilyn Steffen. Kay is the head of the Peer Support group in Mitchell and also is a representative payee.

Koni Sims has been nominated to replace Linda Biffert. Karla Bucknall nominated Catherine Greseth to replace her on the Board. Catherine is the Executive Director of the Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills.

Eric Rippentrop has agreed to reappointment. Steve Kelsey, who has been on the Board for 10 years, submitted his resignation and Alan Vandenburg has been nominated to replace Steve as SBVI Counselor on the Board.

Gaye received an additional nomination of Rose Moehring; however, this nomination does not fit a requirement at this time.

Gaye explained that Sandy Neyhart is a member of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and will serve as a liaison to the SILC. She was not nominated to the Board as that would result in three board members being employees of SBVI.

## Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Sandy reported to the Board that SILC met on March 19th. The SILC is required to do a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) every 3 years in order to receive funding. The SPIL is similar to the SBVI state plan with goals and strategies, with an overall goal to improve access to opportunities for independent living for citizens with disabilities. The SILC has four active workgroups which focus on issues related to individuals with disabilities access to Housing, Outreach/Public Awareness, Assistive Technology and Consumer Services.

The Assistive Technology (AT) workgroup is led by David Miller, and other members include David Scherer, Steve Stewart, Craig Eschenbaum, and Monte Tschetter. At the March 19th SILC meeting, a report was submitted summarizing a variety of presentations completed over the past year related to individuals with disabilities access to assistive technology in South Dakota. The report states (in part) Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired has sufficient resources to provide assistive technology services and training to the individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation program; but older workers and citizens in the Independent Living Older Blind program are largely unserved.

The entire report is currently in draft and SILC members have been asked to respond to the recommendations in the draft report by April 18<sup>th</sup> before it is finalized. Sandy will email the document to Board members for comments so her response can include input from the Board of SBVI. Responses should be sent to her by Thursday, April 2nd. Information submitted to Sandy will be shared with the Board of SBVI Assistive Technology Advisory

Committee (ATAC) chairperson and liaison for further action. ATAC members will receive an email with details regarding a conference call to discuss this on April 13.

The next SILC meeting is scheduled for June 15<sup>th</sup> in Sioux Falls.

### Director's Comments

Eric Rippentrop received a letter from SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities requesting the SBVI Board to participate in Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol in February for a \$100 contribution. The timing of the request did not allow the board adequate time to discuss participation in the event this year. Julie Briggs participates as Business Research Network director and offered to represent both the BRN and SBVI in the future.

Gaye provided her draft response to the SDAB Resolution on audio description to the Board as requested at the December meeting. She provided handouts and read the Resolution and her draft response. Discussion was held on whether or not to address the assumption that SDAB/David Miller meant Telecommunications Adaptive Devices program when stating Communication Access Program. It was decided not make that assumption and to keep the response as Gaye has it written. Linda Biffert made a motion to send the letter from Gaye as it is written. Connie Sullivan seconded. Motion carried.

Department of Human Services (DHS) is conducting an Americans with Disabilities Act review of its programs and offices. DHS is serving as a role model in state government and will develop an ADA Toolkit for state government agencies to utilize to assess accessibility and

compliance with the ADA. Meeting the Challenge is conducting the survey on behalf of the Department.

2015 legislative session was quiet for DHS. SBVI did not ask for a budget increase. State employees will receive a 2% salary increase. The state will implement performance based raises in two years.

The next Board meeting was scheduled for June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Julie Briggs informed the Board that this year is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADA. Sioux Falls will be having a one day conference with social following. Credits will be offered for those attending the conference on July 13<sup>th</sup>. She asked the Board to consider contributing to the ADA conference. Lyle Cook made a motion to contribute \$250 for the ADA conference. Ken Rollman seconded. Motion carried.

Bill Molseed informed the Board that Patrick Czerny has visited all Department of Labor and Regulation offices to provide training on service accessibility. Bill thanked Patrick for his time and expertise.

Bill Molseed made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ken Rollman seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.