

Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired

Draft Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2015

Ft. Pierre, SD

Members Present: Eric Rippentrop, Gaye Mattke, Tim Neyhart, Julie Briggs, Lyle Cook, Patrick Czerny, Catherine Greseth, Kay Miller, Connie Sullivan, Marcia Hultman

Members Absent: Alan Vandenburg, Koni Sims, Lynda O'Connor-Ohayon, Teresa Nold, Bruce Micheel, Ken Rollman

Others Present: Cole Uecker, Sandy Neyhart, Twyla Eggers, Becky Blume

Connie Sullivan made a motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting. Patrick Czerny seconded. Motion carried.

Catherine Greseth made a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. Julie Briggs seconded. Motion carried.

Annual Report Overview

SBVI staff are finalizing the Annual Report which is due to the Governor and Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration by December 31st. The layout and theme are similar to the past couple years. Board membership and activities are described with a cover letter from the Board Chair. SBVI programs each have a description of services, statistics (numbers served, eye conditions, type of employment, etc.), satisfaction survey results and success stories. Gaye will have a draft of Annual Report to Board members by December 14th. The deadline for any input or recommended changes will be December 22nd.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

NDEAM events were held in several communities in South Dakota in October. Many SBVI Board members attended an

event in their local community. Kay Miller attended the event in Mitchell and reported a good turn out and a lot of good information.

Catherine Greseth was involved in the planning of the Rapid City event. An attorney presented on the hiring of people with disabilities. A video was also shown and can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG0tmdWhZKM> Catherine reported attendance of 143 people. Patrick Czerny also attended. Awards were also presented, and one of the stories about an employee with vision loss at an auto body shop made national news.

Lyle Cook coordinated the Eagle Butte NDEAM event which had approximately 80 people in attendance. This year an employer who hires individuals with disabilities was honored. Cole Uecker also attended the Eagle Butte event and felt he had a better understanding of the 121 program after attending the walk and listening to the speakers.

Julie Briggs reported that the Business Resource Network partnered with Sanford Research Center to host the Sioux Falls event. This year a panel of employers discussed all aspects of hiring individuals with disabilities, as well as Colleen Moran Assistant City Attorney at City for Sioux Falls, presented on ADA in the work place. The NDEAM is great opportunity to acknowledge the Disability Friendly recipients in the Sioux Falls community. When a Disability Friendly sticker is given to the businesses, Julie also educates them on retaining their employees. Employers and their guests were acknowledged at the event. There were 109 business representatives in attendance

There is a NDEAM debriefing meeting scheduled for December 22nd at a number of DDN locations. Julie Briggs and Eric Rippentrop plan to attend on behalf of the Board of SBVI. Becky will forward the e-mail describing the debriefing in case other SBVI Board members are interested in attending.

Ability for Hire is the Department of Human Services awareness campaign to educate employers on the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. This campaign is the result of Governor Dugaard's Employment First Task Force. You can view more information and television commercials at www.abilityforhire.com

White Cane March

Eric Rippentrop participated in the White Cane March held on October 10th in downtown Sioux Falls. Bob Smith put together a video on white canes that was shown at the library. The video will also be shown at the Sioux Falls Department of Motor Vehicles. The Board contributed \$100 for interpreter expenses for this event.

Fall Conference

A few Board members attended the Fall Conference and reported that the variety of sessions and opportunity to network was appreciated. The target group for this training is vocational rehabilitation staff and providers. All of the tribal VR programs were in attendance.

Sandy Neyhart and Twyla Eggers are on the planning committee. Evaluations have been returned for about a 50% return rate with very positive ratings for the conference. Next year the conference will be held west river during the month of October.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Bob Jahner presented on the Unified State Plan and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. A copy of his presentation is included with the minutes.

Under WIOA, Vocational Rehabilitation agencies (both general and blind) will work with Department of Labor and Regulation on a more formal level to better serve both clients and businesses. A global vision statement and goals have been drafted to address

priorities of all partners in the unified planning process. Each program will continue to have goals and strategies the specifically address the target group for their services. The Strategic Planning and Policy committee will need to review SBVI's current goals and strategies and make revisions before it goes to full Board for approval. Marcia Hultman and Tim Neyhart will be involved with the Strategic Planning committee. SBVI will continue working with Bob Jahner regarding the State Plan and attachments.

Public forums will be scheduled for January and February in conjunction with Department of Labor and Regulation, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Workforce Development Council, and the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation. Board members will be notified of the dates when the forums are scheduled.

The State Plan is due in early March. The Strategic Planning and Policy committee will meet via DDN on December 29th to discuss goals and strategies for the SBVI portion of the unified plan submission.

Gaye will send out a draft of the Input of State Rehabilitation Council attachment. This attachment outlines the Board activities and advice to the Division. Draft copies of all attachments will be linked to the website. All attachments will be forwarded to the Board when they are drafted.

SBVI Program Updates

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) - Gaye reported that BEP has new vendors at EROS Cafeteria and the Kneip Coffee House. Healthy vending and accessible machines are being implemented in the program.

Independent Living (IL) Older Blind – Sandy informed the Board that the statistical information for the IL program will be included in the annual report. There was an increase of approximately 55 people in 2015. The age range and eye conditions of those

served will also be in the report. Comments from the consumer satisfaction survey and success stories will also be included. Forty-two percent of surveys returned (or 57 people) would have considered moving into a higher level of care facility if not for SBVI services. The CCTV program currently has a short waiting list. In the past couple months, several machines have been returned. The AT Access project is ongoing. This project offers one-on-one training on computer, iPhone, and other technology to people with vision loss. The project has provided training to 57 people.

Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) – Gaye reported the Cherie Gerry began employment as the SDRC Rehabilitation Counselor on November 24th. Cherie's experience as a field counselor will be a great asset. Select SDRC staff are reviewing the group counseling model. A questionnaire was developed to obtain input from SBVI staff and SDRC students which may result in some adjustments. Other rehabilitation centers in the United States have been contacted to see how group counseling is done at those centers. A report will be compiled with findings and recommendations. Staff training will be held on December 18th. Dr. Alan Davis from SDSU will present on student teacher boundaries and ethics and Sioux Falls Fire & Rescue will present on CPR and first aid. It was suggested to have crisis training in the future.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) - Twyla informed the Board that she will be conducting interviews for the counselor position in Sioux Falls that was vacated by Cherie Gerry. Gary Frenz will be going to Pine Ridge once a week to do intakes for both SBVI and DRS since the Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Program did not receive funding. VR applicants have increased slightly over last year. The statistics for VR will be in the annual report. Counselors are continuing to visit schools in their territories to educate special education teachers, counselors, and 504 contacts about SBVI services. Counselors continue to build relationships with optometrists and ophthalmologists.

It is anticipated that SBVI will receive a few referrals from subminimum wage changes. Tim Neyhart advised the Board the Client Assistance Program will also be reviewing subminimum wage and refer clients who need additional services. CAP will also be making sure schools are in compliance and make referrals to VR as appropriate.

Twyla explained updates to the financial needs policy. The definition of assistive technology devices (AT) was updated to define AT as any device that connects to a computer. Another revision to exceptions for financial need is related to the services for people who are attending the South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind SDRC. When expenses related to attending SDRC are necessary to determine eligibility and/or the nature and extent of services necessary they will not be subject to financial need.

Tim Neyhart offered SDAS support and willingness to be involved in the subminimum wage meetings.

Director's Comments - A contract is in place with Media One to develop materials that focus on transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). There will be a brochure that staff will be asked to hand-deliver to schools. SBVI will also get new banner stands, one specific to transition and a second for the Sioux Falls office. The Public Relations committee will be working with the Division on the development of the brochure and banner stands.

Bureau of Information and Technology (BIT) met with DHS staff regarding AT and updating the state standards. Procedures will be defined and distributed to state agencies to ensure that state employees have access to assistive technology devices and training.

DRS/SBVI will be training with Bureau of Human Resources staff on resources that are available to state employees with disabilities.

DHS received the corrective action plan from the ADA assessment. A plan will be implemented to address findings. DRS and SBVI staff will be meeting with tribal VR on December 15th in Rapid City.

Person Centered Thinking training will be held on December 16 and 17 in Pierre.

Nick Cotton, Director of Budget & Finance, has resigned his position as of January 8th.

The Governor's budget address is December 8th. Session begins on January 12th. At this time, there are no bills that impact DHS.

Connie Sullivan will represent the Board on the Disability Advocacy Network (DAN). DAN is meeting on December 10th to prepare for legislative session.

Lyle Cook made a motion to have the next meeting on February 26, 2016. Catherine Greseth seconded. Motion carried. Meeting will be scheduled in Pierre with DDN locations also reserved as a back-up in case of inclement weather.

Tim Neyhart made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Julie Briggs seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.