

# **Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired**

Draft Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2016

Ft. Pierre, SD

Members Present: Eric Rippentrop, Gaye Mattke, Koni Sims, Bruce Micheel, Alan Vandenburg, Catherine Greseth, Kay Miller, Lynda O'Connor- Ohayon, Ken Rollman, Patrick Czerny, Connie Sullivan, Tim Neyhart.

Members Absent: Teresa Nold, Julie Briggs, Marcia Hultman

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

Bruce Micheel made a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. Patrick Czerny seconded. Motion carried.

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

## Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan Submission

The Unified State Plan was initially due by March 3<sup>rd</sup>; however, the Rehabilitations Services Administration (RSA) extended the due date to April 1<sup>st</sup>. SBVI intends to submit the plan prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> if the portal is available.

Public forums were held in January. Comments from Board members who attended included: Eric stated it was a good learning experience about the big picture of WIOA. Tim felt he learned a lot about Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) services and the programs for young people post-school. There is an opportunity to connect our clients to DLR more effectively. Connie agreed with comments from Eric and Tim

The public input document is an appendix to the Unified State Plan. Once the plan is submitted, regular meetings on implementation will be held.

Gaye sent the SBVI section of the state plan to Board members for their review. No recommendations were made for edits; Ken Rollman made a motion to approve the plan for submission. Dr. Lynda O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.

With implementation of the Unified State Plan, there will be new initiatives. A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be released for delivery of pre-employment transition services by entities such as Centers for Independent Living or Career Learning Centers to work with schools and students. There will also be an RFP for employer-based work experiences. Contracts are in place for subminimum wage reviews which will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Three contractual staff will conduct the reviews; all 3 staff were previously employed in vocational rehabilitation and are Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. Tim asked if there will be information regarding CAP given during the reviews. Cole plans to attend the training for the reviewers.

Implementation of WIOA will be a standing agenda item for future meetings.

#### National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Update:

Eric attended the NDEAM wrap-up conference call with members of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and others. There were approximately 14 communities that held events to bring awareness of hiring people with disabilities. The wrap-up was held to discuss what worked, what didn't work, and to begin planning for 2016. The requests for funding were due today. Catherine Greseth volunteered to represent the Board of SBVI on the committee as long as there isn't a conflict due to her role for the Rapid City NDEAM event. Discussion included that she could recuse herself for review and making recommendations for the Rapid City event. Board members are encouraged to attend NDEAM events and costs will be covered for registrations.

The total amount of the requests in 2015 was over \$18,000. In the past, the Board of SBVI has contributed \$4000, but this amount could be increased.

Question was asked if there is a way to measure the impact the contribution from the Board has on SBVI. Response was that it was

difficult to measure the impact of outreach is hard to measure since the intent is to impact through system change and societal views.

Ken Rollman made a motion to contribute \$5,000 to NDEAM events. Koni Sims seconded. Motion carried.

Connie Sullivan and Tim Neyhart are members of Disability Advocacy Network (DAN). They gave an overview of legislation being tracked by DAN and the group's stance on specific bills.

Transition brochure: Media One prepared a rough draft of the transition brochure to be distributed to schools by VR counselors and the transition specialist from the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Discussion was held on the reference that transition services start at age 14. Tim Neyhart suggested that transition could begin with personal learning plans for 8<sup>th</sup> graders entering high school. The transition specialist can track students earlier than 14 but an age is included in the brochure as a guide for educators. It was suggested that VR be involved in the personal learning plans, which address curriculum based on students' interests.

Gaye will work with Media One to discuss the suggested changes. She will send the next draft to the full Board and ask them to respond by a certain date. Gaye would like brochure to be finalized and printed before the Special Ed Conference on March 22<sup>nd</sup> so it can be distributed at this event.

#### Program Updates:

*Business Enterprise Program (BEP):* Nancy Hoyme reported that BEP had received notice from General Services Administration that they were seeking vending services at the Brown County Courthouse. A combination machine was purchased for that location creating another vending site for the BEP vendor in Aberdeen.

The Kneip Coffee House is in the process of getting new countertops and shelves. Customers have had positive comments about the new look and new menu items.

Many machines were purchased in the 1990's and are being replaced in the near future. Parts are no longer available for these machines when there are malfunctions.

*Independent Living for Older Blind:* Sandy Neyhart reported that Tricia Watson (Aberdeen) and Heather Shelatz (Rapid City) have been employed for approximately 6 months. Both are doing an excellent job. Ken and Patrick expressed positive comments about Heather.

The CCTV program expanded with the purchase of 24 new units. These new units have been distributed. The old units were placed in non-profit locations or were kept by those who have the units on lease or loan through utilizing their \$50.00 deposit to purchase the units.

The Computer Information Access project began in 2014. This project allows for one-on-one training on a personal device in the individual's home. Sixty-four people have received training.

*SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind:* Dawn Backer provided her report below to Gaye.

A survey using a questionnaire to address "Group Counseling" was conducted with former students and SBVI staff. A significant number of people suggested changing the name "Group" to "Peer Support." Several other ideas were suggested and implemented. A facilitator will keep the group focused on blindness issues using three rules: a judgement-free zone, a confidential zone, and everyone may speak, but no one is forced to participate. The students will have the option to opt out of counseling after the student has discussed this with their VR counselor and center counselor to determine the student's rationale and plan for use of time. A board member suggested including a disclaimer on the confidential zone of the counseling as we cannot guarantee what participants will repeat.

Two day long seminars were held at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind on January 12 and 19, teaching the basic skills of blindness. Four students attended. The skills taught were basic travel safety and orientation, cooking, meal preparation, use of writing guides, clocks and calendars, talking books, money identification, and low vision techniques.

Lori Kwasniewski received certification in Person Centered Transition Assessment through the Institute for Person Centered Practices. This certification will allow her to provide assessments for transition age students to facilitate a transition path. Lori is also participating in

Rehabilitation Services Administration sponsored coursework to obtain a Transition Services certification from Utah State University. This one-year online program is designed to help rehabilitation professionals understand the pre-employment transition requirements and evidence-based practices in secondary transition.

Two SD Vocational Resources staff passed the Certified Employment Support Professional exam. Since they received a passing score on the exam and attended a 2-day PCT training event, SDVR can now bill at 25% higher rate for placement services.

SDRC staff had an Ethics in-service training with Dr. Alan Davis on personal boundaries and working with vulnerable adults, as well as how to protect themselves from aggressive behaviors of others. Sioux Falls Fire and Rescue updated staff, and certified staff on CPR and the AED. Another in-service day was provided by Taylor Funke, Sioux Falls Helpline, on Mental Health First Aid.

Community training events help students learn the skills of blindness related to the leisure and recreation along with soft skills used when going out and participating in activities outside the home. Some of the events included participation in the White Cane March, held October 10, snow shoeing at the Outdoor Campus, the South Dakota Association of the Blind holiday party, touring the Washington Pavilion, shopping, descriptive movies with Netflix, as well as eating in restaurants to help overcome the fear of eating in public.

Bob Smith and Mary Carrell presented during the White Cane March about car and pedestrian safety. Prior to the event, Bob Smith assisted with creating a video demonstrating how drivers should approach an intersection with a pedestrian carrying a white cane. The video was produced by Sioux Falls City cable channel 16, CityLink. The video will be shown at the Department of Motor Vehicles, Sioux Falls location.

Cherie Gerry and Bob Smith presented to the ESS students at Sioux Falls Washington High School. Bob Smith also presented to the Sioux Falls Cosmopolitan Club about SBVI services.

Transition week will be held June 26-30.

*Vocational Rehabilitation:* Twyla Eggers reported that April Schulte began employment as a counselor in the Sioux Falls office on January 4. She is catching on to her new job responsibilities quickly and is eager to learn more about vocational rehabilitation and eye related impairments.

Twyla works very closely with Steve Kelsey, transition specialist with the School for the Blind. Steve has been traveling extensively in his position which has resulted in 14 referrals to SBVI counselors.

Case file reviews will be held in Pierre on April 5-7. Counselors will be reviewing approximately 100 cases. The case file review is a snap shot picture on our compliance requirements and case work. The reviews help to improve consistency between offices and compliance with federal regulations and state policies.

The Fall Conference will be held October 18-20 at the Deadwood Lodge. Once a theme is determined, a "Save the Date" will be sent out via email.

Steve Kelsey and Kelly Hauglid will be presenting on SBVI services and transition related services at the Special Education conference March 22 and 23.

#### Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC):

The SILC is involved with independent living centers across the state and has oversight on how services are delivered to people with disabilities. The SILC helps create the State Plan for Independent Living, which will be in effect 2017-2019. The SILC is also updating the by-laws. Subcommittees include outreach and public awareness, assistive technology, and transportation and housing. Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and Board of SBVI provide reports to the SILC.

SILC provided the Governor with a report including the progress made and the gaps that are still present in regard to assistive technology. The Governor's response to this report included an acknowledgement of the workgroups efforts, recognition of some of the gaps in assistive technology while pointing out significant progress compared to other states. Secretary Pearson has discussed developing a workgroup to address some of the issues the report mentioned. Gaye asked for a volunteer from the Assistive Technology Advisory Committee uses

assistive technology to be on the workgroup. Ken Rollman volunteered to represent the Board of SBVI on this workgroup.

### Board Vacancies:

The Board of SBVI needs a member to serve on the SILC to meet federal requirements. Catherine Greseth indicated that she would be interested. Gaye will nominate Catherine to represent the Board of SBVI on the SILC. Several members' terms expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Dr. O'Connor and Patrick Czerny agreed to be nominated for reappointment. Gaye has contacted Elaine Roberts for a nomination to represent the Parent Connection. Lyle Cook resigned and has nominated Roberta Ecoffey to replace him. Ken Rollman will have served the maximum terms. Gaye will work with Ken regarding his replacement with a representative of the National Federation of the Blind. Tim Neyhart intends to resign and will nominate Cole Uecker to be his replacement. Gaye will submit nominations when requested by the Governor's office.

### Director's Comments:

2016 Legislative session is underway. SBVI did not ask for an increase during the appropriations hearing. If there are general fund cuts, this also affects federal funds because of the general/federal match requirements.

Tim Neyhart commented about the elder abuse task force report which includes financial exploitation. If a family member is taking money, a person can sue the family member to get the money back. This applies to adults with disabilities. The Senate committee was unopposed, but Tim was unsure about the next step. This issue has a lot of support.

The National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota (NFB) has asked that a public forum be held in conjunction with the NFB state convention. This public forum will be held on April 29<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 to 6:00 (Mountain Time). Gaye will invite a representative from the Department of Labor and Regulation to attend to share information on core programs and services in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Gaye will work with Ken on transportation arrangements. Stipends for attendance will be available and Gaye will send the information to Ken. Since it will take place prior to the next meeting, if there are any stipend requests, Gaye will meet with the Executive Committee to discuss. If a Board member would like to attend, let Becky or Gaye know and they will assist with arrangements.

In the past, Board of SBVI has planned an annual Disability Summit on a reservation. Lyle has served as a guide in the planning process. Gaye will wait until Lyle's replacement has been appointed to the Board to plan an event in 2016.

Discussion was held on having a joint meeting with Board of Vocational Rehabilitation. Board members agreed with this suggestion. Gaye will let Colette know that we would be interested in a joint meeting and orientation in the fall.

Catherine made a motion that the next Board meeting be held on June 10<sup>th</sup> in Sioux Falls with a DDN option in Rapid City. Ken Rollman seconded. Motion carried.

Tim Neyhart made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lynda O'Connor seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.