

Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired
Meeting Minutes
June 26, 2015
Pierre, SD

Members Present: Gaye Mattke, Eric Rippentrop, Bruce Micheel, Lynda O'Connor-Ohayon, Karla Bucknall, Connie Sullivan, Teresa Nold, Patrick Czerny, Julie Briggs, Tim Neyhart, Linda Biffert.
Members Absent: Lyle Cook, Marilyn Steffen, Steve Kelsey
Others Present: Sandy Neyhart, Nancy Hoyme, Twyla Eggers, Becky Blume, Julie Paluch, Ann Munce, Cole Uecker.

Eric Rippentrop, Chair, called the meeting to order. Introductions were made. Tim Neyhart introduced Cole Uecker as the new Client Assistant Program director. Cole is a native of Pierre, with a military background. He received his law degree at USD and will be taking the state boards in July. Welcome, Cole.

Linda Biffert made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 27, 2015, meeting. Lynda O'Connor-Ohayon seconded. Motion carried.

Linda Biffert made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Julie Briggs seconded. Motion carried.

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Gaye Mattke reported that she did not submit any comments for the proposed rules. She was monitored other agency and organizations comments and did not see an urgency to comment on the rules as proposed. SBVI is working with fiscal to figure out how to track pre-employment transition services to account for the requirement that 15% of the vocational rehabilitation allotment be spent on these activities. SBVI will be working with the Division of Rehabilitation Services and Department of Labor and Regulation

(DLR) to prepare the unified State Plan that is due in March, 2016.

The national organization for South Dakota Advocacy Services (SDAS) wrote comments to the proposed regulations asking for clarification of VR programs' responsibility regarding clients who are seeking advanced degrees. SDAS is investigating ways to work with Community Support Providers (CSPs) to assure that people in their services are aware of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and SDAS is interested in reaching out to this population and students with disabilities. Bernie Grimme has taken the lead on Supported Employment by offering grants for CSPs to support job developers, job coaches and training and certifications. A survey has been created on Survey Monkey (online survey system) to discover who is in the system earning subminimum wage.

Public Meetings

SBVI hosted a Disability Summit at Sinte Gleska University in Mission on April 28th. Thirty-four people attended, as well as, twenty-seven service providers. The participation was unique with a variety of backgrounds. Several individuals contacted SBVI regarding services. Sandy Neyhart worked with Burdette Clifford in arranging the meeting. Tim Neyhart and Connie Sullivan expressed that the event was successful.

A DDN public meeting with sites in Pierre, Aberdeen, and Sioux Falls was held on April 30th. Julie Briggs attended in Sioux Falls and Connie Sullivan attended in Pierre. Attendance was down compared to previous years with a total of 18 people including staff in attendance. Topics included technology training and devices, Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act and transportation.

A third meeting was held in conjunction with the NFB of SD convention on May 1st in Rapid City, with 21 people in attendance and WIOA was the main discussion at this meeting.

Public meeting notes will be sent to all Board members.

Amy Chappelle mentioned to Gaye that SD Association of the Blind (SDAB) may be interested in hosting a public meeting in conjunction with their state convention. SDAB convention is scheduled for September 25 & 26 in Pierre. The Board agreed to schedule a public meeting in conjunction with SDAB convention if requested and schedules allowed.

Tim Neyhart stated that SD Advocacy Services will share notes from their public meetings.

Board Activities with Consumer Organizations

At the last meeting, the Board voted to pay up to \$500 to SD Association of the Blind and National Federation of the Blind of SD for hosting public meetings through promoting the meetings, providing transportation and hosting the sites. SDAB provided an invoice in the amount of \$239.00 for transportation and refreshments at the Sioux Falls site. There was no charge for promotion as SDAB members made phone calls and notice was provided only at the local monthly meeting in Sioux Falls. Notice was not published in the *As I See It* newsletter this year. NFB submitted an invoice for the full \$500 amount. They included notice in announcements of their annual convention, made arrangements for the meeting room and transportation for those in attendance.

The Board did not consistently get a breakout of activities related to hosting the meetings in the past, but we may need to look at how we do this next year.

In the past, the Board voted to give stipends up to \$150 to first time attendees at a state convention. A report was required after the convention summarizing who benefitted from the stipends and a summary of the experience. Linda Biffert asked if stipends could be used for others attending the conventions, not just first time attendees. Ken Rollman stated that he would ask for reports but never received them from the participants. Discussion was held on how to handle the reporting situation. Several comments were made on how to get input including exit interviews, drafting a questionnaire, and/or evaluations for all attendees. The report doesn't have to come from the attendee, but could come from someone in the organization.

Linda Biffert requested that we continue to have stipends available. Both Linda and Ken felt \$175 was an adequate amount. It was also suggested to change the wording to read "offered to anyone, with preference to first time attendees." It was also suggested that if an organization doesn't submit a report, they will not receive a stipend the next year. Gaye will redraft the guide regarding stipends to include the \$175 amount and share with leadership of the organizations.

Board members were reminded that if they choose to attend either the SDAB or NFB state convention, costs will be covered by the Board of SBVI budget. Contact Becky or Gaye if you plan to attend on behalf of the Board of SBVI.

The SDAB Board submitted a Resolution on audio description to Gaye last fall. Gaye presented it at the December 6th meeting and the Board suggested she respond with a letter based on research presented and discussion at the Board meeting. At the meeting on March 27th, the Board discussed the response letter that had been drafted. The response letter outlined SBVI's findings after researching several public entities and other concerns related to the resolution. The board approved the letter

which was mailed at the end of March. Gaye received a letter in response stating that SDAB Board was disappointed that the Board/Agency had made any decision without meeting with SDAB Board. They also stated that the minutes from the December 6th Board meeting were one-sided and SDAB does not feel like a valued stakeholder. Some Board members expressed concern about the negative tone of the response from SDAB.

Assistive Technology Update

The Assistive Technology Access Project (ATAP) allows for up to 5 hours of one-on-one training on devices and programs or applications. Repairs on equipment are not covered by ATAP. Due to input that one-on-one training is preferred over group training, group training will be discontinued and resources will go to individual training. Follow-up phone call surveys are conducted for the individuals who receive the 5 hour training. The results show that several people need more than the 5 hours of training. Sandy and Patrick will go through the survey results and assess who will receive additional training. Individuals who receive devices through the Telecommunication Adaptive Devices (TAD) Program should receive training on the devices through that program.

A meeting was held on June 25th with the Deaf Services program manager, Gaye Mattke, Eric Weiss, Sandy Neyhart, Patrick Czerny, and Nancy Hoyme to discuss issues related to assistive technology programs. Sandy reviews all of the Telecommunication Adaptive Device (TAD) applications that come in from individuals with vision loss to determine eligibility for devices through the program. Rehab Teachers are learning how to fill out application and assessment forms. There are currently 16 TAD applications, with 4 pending. The 4 pending are due to no assessment. Rehab Teachers and DakotaLink staff complete the assessment and Sandy follows up with phone calls. Financial information also has to be submitted.

Comment was made about TAD providing the equipment, but some people cannot afford the monthly phone service charge. The applicant needs to understand what their commitments are and the costs they incur for service plans. iPads can be used at locations with free Wi-Fi. Teltex will send devices with apps already loaded. They also come with an Otterbox case and 3 year warranty. Teltex can also track usage to determine whether it is being used for telecommunication. If necessary, the device can be wiped to prevent inappropriate use. If an individual chooses to return a device, the device will be passed on to another eligible individual. In the case of an iPhone, it would need to go to someone with the same cellular service carrier. Comment was made that a data plan should be available for deaf individuals as some locations (for example hotels) don't have good Wi-Fi connections.

Most TAD requests are still large button phones. Any devices under \$250 do not need financial information and are covered 100% by the TAD program. An issue that has arisen is when the Rehab Teacher or distributor recommends devices and the individual does not have an interest or the aptitude to use it.

National Deaf/Blind Equipment Distribution Program is a grant from the FCC and South Dakota receives approximately \$68,000 per year. It has its own guidelines and is available for those with dual sensory loss (hearing and vision). For a list of devices offered by the NDEDP, go to www.icanconnect.org. The question was asked if state does not use all of the funds, will the amount be reduced the next year. The answer is no. Definition of deaf blind is based on the Helen Keller National Center description. Most applicants have existing information that proves hearing and vision loss so a doctor visit is not needed.

CCTV program continues to be used and accessed. There is currently a waiting list of 12 people. Sixteen units were recently ordered and delivered. No units will be retired. There are 217 units in the program. The CCTV program provides units for individuals to use in their homes and follows Older Blind eligibility criteria. Individuals who need assistance in their employment are referred to the vocational rehabilitation program. Rehab Teachers check in with individuals in the CCTV program annually to see if the machine is still meeting their needs. Approximately 2/3 of units are on loan at no cost to individuals using the units and 1/3 of units are leased. The lease is \$30/month. If finances change, the lease option can be changed to loan option at any time. The memorial account is still receiving donations. It had been suggested that SBVI look at hand-held magnifiers and other devices for this program, but Gaye informed the Board that SBVI will continue with CCTV units due to the ongoing demand. Handheld devices are more prone to loss and breakage and would be difficult to maintain in the program.

One-on-one training at the Rehab Center will continue through Skype, FaceTime, walk-in, or call-in. Question was asked where people who receive the training are getting the equipment. Equipment is obtained in a variety of ways. Most people purchased or received as a gift. Expansion of the 5 hour limit for training will be determined on a case by case basis. There are also resources online through Fedora (cost involved) and American Foundation for the Blind (free). ATAC compiled a list of resources available and it is located on the SBVI web site under resources at: <http://dhs.sd.gov/sbvi/rlinks.aspx>. The Assistive Technology Advisory Committee will review the list and update if necessary.

Tim Neyhart suggested the agency consider AT ideas for transition age students to help meet the 15% requirement with

WIOA. SBVI will explore options related to assistive technology for transition age students.

Ken Rollman is a tester for Microsoft. He has been having good luck with Windows 10. NVDA and Window Eyes are free screen readers. ATAP takes advantage of free products.

Division Updates

Independent Living Older Blind –

Sandy reported that Mary Milne will be retiring on August 8th. The position has been announced and Board members received the job announcement via email.

Independent Living Older Blind will remain under the Rehabilitation Services Administration with WIOA and there were minimal changes to the IL Older Blind program. Most changes are already being addressed, but IL-OB will need to track specific service identified in reauthorization. Centers for Independent Living will be under the Administration of Community Living. Sandy will continue to be a liaison and member of the SILC. Core IL services assist individuals in nursing home care to return home again. IL-OB will assist if the individual has vision loss. Tim asked if IL-OB was involved with Money Follows the Person. Money Follows the Person is a concept for people with disabilities, where a certain amount of money is available to help people move out of the nursing home and back into the community. For example, \$1500 to move back into home will save approximately \$6000 in Medicare costs in one month.

SBVI will have a booth at the SD State Fair. The booth will be located in the Senior Citizens Building.

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) met on June 24th at Independent Living Choices (ILC) in Sioux Falls. Presentations were given from Independent Living Choices, Division of Rehabilitation Services regarding ramps and updates

to the Assisted Daily Living Services program. Sandy provided information on the public meetings, assistive technology, and changes under the WIOA. The 4 workgroups also gave a report. The next meeting is scheduled for September 24th in Pierre in conjunction with the SDAB meeting.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) –

Nancy reported that this is a busy time for BEP. Department of Health (DOH) asked BEP to participate in a grant regarding healthy vending. In addition to funding, a dietician will be available and DOH can help in displaying required information on the machines. This will be in Pierre only at this time.

Amy Chappelle retired after 38 years in business. Although she originally had requested retirement in March, her official last day was June 1st. A retirement open house was held on June 24th.

Richard Jangula has taken over the coffee shop at the Kneip Building and vending in State buildings in Pierre.

BEP is assisting with training an individual who is interested in the program and is currently in training at the Rehab Center. Ismael Collazo has a culinary arts background and hopes to open the cafeteria at EROS on July 20th. The cafeteria has been closed since late March so EROS is anxious to have it opened again.

Vocational Rehabilitation –

Twyla Eggers informed the Board of revisions that need to be made to a Program Guide regarding Individualized Plans for Employment. Plans need to be signed within 90 days of eligibility; however, sometimes people aren't ready to develop a plan due to health, transition, etc. In these cases, the person will agree to an extension and it will be documented. Counselors are being proactive and doing this already. A copy of the Program Guide will be mailed with the minutes and will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

This year, Vocational Rehabilitation had the third highest number of applications since 2008, and an increase of 16 applications from last year.

Karen Gerety retired on June 19th. Steve Kelsey accepted the transition specialist position and will begin on July 23rd. Steve's counselor position in Aberdeen will be announced in the near future as promotional. It was opened as promotional because Mike Webb took a demotion to be a Rehab Teacher, but he is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and very qualified for the job. He is also visually impaired.

Rehabilitation Center for the Blind –

Gaye read Dawn Backer's report. Krista Pick resigned her position and accepted a job with the VA. Her position will be announced soon.

Bob Smith, O&M Specialist, retired after 32 years in state government. With the national shortage of O&M's, it will be difficult to find someone who is certified for the position. Gaye shared that there will be a good candidate for the position. The intern who is in her 3rd summer at the Rehab Center intends to get her Masters in O&M.

Transition Week was June 14-18, seven students attended, six boys and one girl. Joe Strechay, Program Manager of CareerConnect with American Foundation for the Blind spoke with the kids the first evening and second day. He talked about having confidence in yourself, presenting yourself in the best light, finding connections that will get you jobs, setting goals, reaching those goals, and continuing to make new ones after you achieved the prior goals. Joe is blind himself and a good role model for the students due to his experiences. Transition week concluded with a breakfast and student presentation about themselves, using what they learned with person centered thinking tools.

The outreach classes on Saturdays have been discontinued due to lack of participants. First Friday trainings will be held the first Friday of the month. July's training on iPad/iPhone voice over will be held on July 10th due to the holiday on July 3rd. JoMarie still offers one-on-one trainings through Skype, FaceTime, walk-in, and phone calls.

SDRC and the USD School of Medicine, Center for Disabilities will be collaborating again this summer with the RISE (Research Initiatives for Student Enhancement) program with the Kennedy Krieger Institute. The goal of the program is to promote public health careers with special emphasis on health equity. As a mentor organization, SDRC will provide the work opportunity, and the Center for Disabilities will pay the intern through a grant. Aspen Ducheneaux from Eagle Butte, SD will be the intern for eight weeks from June 1- thru July 30. She will provide assistance to the staff in the areas of skills of blindness and employment skills training. She will also research the severity of diabetes with people who are blind and visually impaired and the impact treatments have in reducing the effects of diabetic retinopathy, and the impact on public health services.

July 13th is the ADA event in Sioux Falls. It will be conference format this year with CEU's provided. It will be an exciting day of learning with an ice cream social to follow. The event will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn. A copy of the agenda will be included with minutes. Any Board members interested in attending are encouraged to do so. Gaye and Gloria Pearson will be attending.

Board Priorities

Governor's Award – Lyle Cook and Teresa Nold represent SBVI on this committee. The nomination deadline has past. The committee makes their selection for the various awards, and the

Governor presents the awards to the recipients. The date for the event is set according to the Governor's schedule so varies each year. Teresa stated that the number of nominations was down this year, but the candidates were all very deserving.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) - NDEAM is held in October. Many communities have an event sometime during the month. The schedule of events is not completed yet, but Board members will be notified of events in their areas.

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) – YLF was held June 7-11 in Aberdeen with 40 + students in attendance. Several participants were blind. There are a lot of tears in the beginning because they don't want to be there, and there are lots of tears in the end because they don't want to leave. YLF makes a huge impact in the students' lives. Julie Paluch who has interpreted for many years at YLF stated that it is very worthwhile. It is life changing, not only for the students but for the staff as well. Julie Briggs was there with her son for 1 day. She also attended the luncheon. There were 90 applicants this year, but only forty could be selected.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Event Sponsorship – The Board agreed to help sponsor the ADA event in Sioux Falls. DRS and SBVI will be sharing a booth at the event. It is highly unlikely any other requests will come in, but if so, Gaye will work with the Executive Committee to determine if the Board will assist financially.

Election of Officers

The Executive Committee is also the nominating committee. Eric Rippentrop and Lynda O'Connor-Ohayon are willing to serve another year as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Marilyn Steffen was the at large member and her term has expired. At

the request of nominating committee, Gaye contacted Bruce Micheel to determine whether he would be willing to serve as the at large member of the executive committee. Bruce agreed that he is willing to do so. Linda Biffert made a motion to cast unanimous nomination for all three positions as stated above. Julie Briggs seconded. Motion carried.

Gaye informed the Board that board members whose terms have expired continue to serve at the pleasure of the Governor until someone is appointed to their position. Marilyn, Linda, and Karla have served the maximum number of terms. Lyle Cook has also served the maximum number of terms, but until a replacement is selected he will continue to serve. Lyle had suggested that the Acting Director of the Pine Ridge Vocational Rehab be his replacement, however, the Acting Director was not selected for the Director position. Steve Kelsey has asked that another counselor serve in the capacity of Board member. Bill Molseed retired from Department of Labor and Regulation. Gaye read the thank you card from Bill. Members, in attendance, whose terms expire at the end of June, received a coaster set and acknowledgement for their service. Linda thanked the Board for all the good work for consumers. SBVI is a small agency but has good people so jobs get done. Karla stated that her patients have benefited by what she has learned being on the Board.

Director's Comments

Gaye stated that SBVI has 4 upcoming vacancies. It will be an interesting time, but coverage will be handled. Job announcements, when available, will be emailed to Board members.

DRS and SBVI will hold Person Center Thinking (PCT) trainings again this summer. SBVI has been using PCT tools in the delivery of services.

In conjunction with the 25th Anniversary of the ADA, DHS hired Meeting the Challenge to complete an assessment of all facilities that house DHS offices for ADA compliance and accessibility. A survey for staff and a survey for public input on accessibility of locations and services were conducted. DHS is compiling a “Tool Kit” for all agencies in state government.

Gaye and Eric received an invitation from Arlene Poncelet and Valerie Beeck of the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) to a joint discussion with several Boards, Councils, and organizations in preparation of DDC’s 5 year state plan. The meeting will be held on July 15th from 11:30 to 3:30 at Oacoma. Eric and Julie Briggs will check schedules and let Gaye know if they are able to attend. Tim Neyhart will also be attending but representing several other agencies. Gaye is not available to attend.

Julie Briggs made a motion to schedule the next Board meeting for September 18th. Ken seconded. Motion carried. The meeting will be held in Pierre.

Bruce Micheel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ken Rollman seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.