

Board of SBVI Meeting  
Minutes

March 15, 2024

DDN with locations in Pierre, Sioux Falls, and Rapid City

**Members Present:** Gaye Mattke, Ryan Groeneweg, Chelle Hart, Jeff Nelson, Carla Miller, Cole Uecker, Kellie Hauglid, Kendra Ringstmeyer, Nichole Nelson, Pam Fisher, Richard Crawford, Kelly Deckert, Burdette Clifford

**Members Absent:** Elaine Fritz, George Seamon

**Others Present:** Sandy Neyhart, Becky Blume, Ronda Williams, Raymond Tracy, April Schulte, Bailey Terry

Ryan Groeneweg, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Carla Miller made a motion to approve the agenda. Chelle Hart seconded. Motion carried.

Carla Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2023, meeting. Richard Crawford seconded. Motion carried.

**Public Comments:** None

**Board Member Updates:**

*Ryan Groeneweg:* USD Center for Disabilities just concluded the Special Education Conference with nearly 600 participants in Sioux Falls. Next year's conference will be in Rapid City on March 18-19<sup>th</sup> at the Monument.

*Kellie Hauglid:* She is a federal Vocational Rehabilitation counselor management for her caseload is done entirely remotely. She does a lot of vocational evaluations and has learned a lot in her time doing this. A lot of computer training is required, and many injured workers do not have computer skills. She is also an insurance agent in training at her mother's insurance agency.

*Jeff Nelson:* Operates restaurant at EROS data center and Sioux Falls vending at federal facilities. Jeff had a recent food inspection

and received his 9<sup>th</sup> consecutive 100% review. He has been asked to provide some training for others in South Dakota since he scores so well on those inspections.

*Chelle Hart:* South Dakota Association of the Blind is raising money for a convention that they are hoping to hold at Joy Ranch in September 2024.

*Richard Crawford:* National Federation of the Blind (NFB) will be having its State Convention in Rapid City on April 26-27<sup>th</sup> at the Rushmore Inn. Board members are invited to attend. He has been spending one day a week at the Toy Lending Library – Braille alphabet cards and braille labels go with every package that goes out.

*Kendra Ringstmeyer:* She joined by phone but lost service and was unable to rejoin.

*Kelly Deckert:* He is about halfway through his master's program at SDSU in Marriage and Family Counseling. Has been working with SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to find and maintain part-time employment while in school. A support group for blindness and visual impairment was started in Brookings. They meet monthly at the Bethel Baptist Church and ride service can be provided. Contact Kelly if you or someone you know would like to join the group. The group will be starting a Facebook page soon. He emailed a flyer.

*Carla Miller:* A federal requirement has resulted in additional services to families with transition-age youth. Carla's staff has been doing a lot of training and have a pilot program in the Sioux Falls school district with this training. The Sioux Falls school district pilot went well, and they are expanding the training to Madison school district, which will be hosted by Dakota State University. Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> SD Parent Connection is hosting a "Parent University" for a one-day training format instead of the 5-week training program.

*Nichole Nelson:* State testing at School for the Blind started this week. They are gearing up for Summer School and 5 students will be graduating in May. She is working on her master's program in School Counseling and her internship at the high school has led to some increased awareness of the School for the Blind.

*Burdette Clifford:* The Tribal VR program transitioned from Sinte Gleska to REDCO and now are transitioning to Community Service. He is looking to explore more for blind and visually impaired clients as they don't receive a lot of referrals in that area.

*Cole Uecker:* Petitions have appeared in many counties around the state that would require removal of electronic polling options, which would remove many accessibility options for polling. Disability Rights SD is educating counties on the impact this would have. Lawrence county recently decided against allowing the petition.

*Pamela Fischer:* She is preparing for NFB State Convention in April.

**Residency Policy Revision:** The policy is being revised due to a contact from Minnesota regarding a client attending the Rehab Center. Generally, it is fee for service, but the client is in close proximity to Sioux Falls and could be available for services. Gaye and Ronda had discussions with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and they clarified what is allowed for language about residency requirements in the policy. The client must be present and available for services, but states cannot require that applicants be residents of the state. Examples include students coming to SD universities from other states, clients from other states who would benefit from training at Rehabilitation Center, Tribal members who live in Nebraska but are available to participate in services within South Dakota. Individuals must be able to legally work in the United States. Cole Uecker made a

motion to approve Program Guide DRS/DSBVI 2024-01. Kellie Hauglid seconded. Motion carried.

### **Board Activities/Committees:**

*Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol* – Richard Crawford represented the Board of SBVI. Richard stated that many high school students stopped by the booth for candy, but he was disappointed in the number of legislators. He felt it was a good experience overall. Next year the event will be held on February 25, 2025.

*Governor's Awards* – Ryan Groeneweg and George Seamon are the Board of SBVI representatives on the committee. Nominations are being disseminated at this time and are due to be submitted by May 5<sup>th</sup>. Board members are welcome to submit nominations. George and Ryan will review the nominations. Gaye explained that the Board usually contributes up to \$5,000 to the Governor's Awards. Chelle Hart made a motion to contribute up to \$5,000 for the Governor's Awards. Nichole Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

*Disability Employment Awareness Month* – Carla Miller is the Board of SBVI representative on this committee. The various locations and events were discussed. All were approved for funding. Several locations are sharing speakers. Gaye explained that the Board generally contributes to the National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities. Carla Miller made a motion to contribute up to \$5,000 for NDEAM activities. Kellie Hauglid seconded. Motion carried.

*Board Sponsorships and Stipends* – Gaye informed the Board of stipends that can be received for attendance at SDAB or NFB of SD conferences for individuals with vision loss/blindness. Chelle Hart made a motion to continue the stipends. Burdette Clifford seconded. Motion carried.

Board Member costs can be covered if you are interested in representing the Board at consumer organization conventions and events.

NFB is planning a public forum during their convention in conjunction with SBVI. SBVI can cover certain costs related to the meeting, reach out to Ronda Williams if you have questions about how to have those costs covered.

### **SBVI Program Updates**

*Independent Living* – Sandy Neyhart notified the Board that there are a few Peer Support Groups active in South Dakota at this time. Prior to Covid, there were 10-12 groups across South Dakota. She offers support to the peer support facilitators by sending information that she receives from various low vision newsletters. Sandy recently attended a Program Manager's Meeting in Albuquerque, NM, where she received some target numbers from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for Independent Living Older Blind programs to be reaching. South Dakota is achieving the numbers in most areas.

*Vocational Rehabilitation* – Ronda Williams stated that there is one Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position vacancy in Rapid City. She anticipates the position will be filled in April. She explained the performance measure numbers, what we are at and the suggested levels. SBVI will meet and negotiate with RSA. She is also preparing for the Case File Review. The process has been virtual since Covid but will be held in person on April 23-25 at the Rehabilitation Center. This allows for more discussion and training. Gaye, Sandy, and Ronda will be attending the NFB convention.

*SD Rehabilitation Center (SDRC)* – April Schulte stated that SDRC is fully staffed. An intern will be finishing next week, and a summer intern has been hired. Transition Week is June 9-13.

Interviews for transition week students are being held right now with Kiersten Sombke from the SD School for the Blind. Several transition-age students will be attending the Center for training this summer. SDRC has been hosting tours: Augustana's Deaf-Blind class, 211 – Helpline Center, and Allie Leif, DHS Executive Assistant participated in tours. Community Training Events included Burger Battle, Falls Park, and Philips Avenue Diner. Employment Skills Instructor attended the Special Education conference and made connections at the event. The SDRC Program Specialist presented to the Lions Club Board. Dr. Twitero from Brookings, SD visited the Low Vision Clinic at SDRC as he is interested in expanding his practice to include low vision services. Assistive Technology Instructor has been working with the office of Consumer Protection at the Attorney General's office to make sure PDF documents on their website are accessible for screen readers. DakotaLink has hired a new staff-member whose office is located at the Rehab Center. Alex (new hire) and Brett will be meeting with April to review how SBVI services work, and what the partnership between our groups will look like.

*Business Enterprise Program (BEP)* – Raymond Tracy stated that the Memorandum of Understanding between BEP and EROS is currently being reviewed by EROS. Pierre vending has installed 16 card readers in 11 different locations. Interstate performance was \$80,000 in commissions for vendors in 2023. All rest areas are currently open. At the advice of the legal department, Request for Proposals for Management Services went out. Anderson Nill, who is the current provider for this service, was the only proposal received. Contract is in progress. In compliance with the Corporate Transparency Act, businesses must register with the federal government and list the business owners. New businesses have 90 days to register. Businesses that were in existence prior to this year have until the end of the year to register. If you fail to register, there is a \$500 per day fine.

## **Director's Comments:**

Membership/Nomination Update: One appointment pending at the Governor's Office level. Gaye received a re-appointment notice for Cole Uecker last week.

2024 Legislative Session: Department of Human Services had bills that they were following, including House Bill (HB) 1202 regarding termination of services by a provider through the CHOICES waiver program. There was a bill that allows for optometrists to perform certain procedures that were only performed by Ophthalmologists that did pass (HB 1099).

2025 Budget: Salary policy was approved for a 4% increase in salary for State employees, effective July 1, 2024. Per Diem rates will also be changing in July.

SBVI All Staff Training will be held in Fort Pierre at the AmericInn. Topics include Counseling techniques with Jill Janecke, Deaf-Blind information with Amy Scepaniak from USD Center for Disabilities and Orientation & Mobility with several O&M Specialists including Ardell Fiedler, Amy Scepaniak, and Chad Ray.

Save the Date for Fall Conference was shared this week. The planning committee is working to get contracts in place with presenters. Once registration is open, topics and agenda will be available. If Board Members are interested in attending, expenses can be covered.

Marilyn Hanson retired after 35 plus years. Allie Leif was hired to replace Marilyn as Administrative Assistant. The front desk secretary position is currently vacant.

Gaye Mattke announced she will be retiring in June of this year. The next meeting will be held Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup> via DDN sites in Pierre, Sioux Falls, and Rapid City.

Cole Uecker made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned.