

SBVI Board Minutes
March 22, 2019
AmericInn, Ft. Pierre, SD

Members Present: Catherine Greseth, Marcia Hultman, Connie Sullivan, Koni Sims, Alan Vandenburg, Tami Francis, Cole Uecker, Jill Kundtz, James Konechne, Zay Norman, Cheri Knispel, Patrick Czerny, Burdette Clifford, Gaye Mattke

Members Absent: Elaine Fritz, Tana Buresch

Others Present: Shawnie Rechtenbaugh, Siera Johnson, Sandy Neyhart, Ronda Williams, Raymond Tracy, Becky Blume

Catherine Greseth, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Shawnie Rechtenbaugh, Interim Secretary of the Department of Human Services introduced herself. Board members introduced themselves and explained their representation on the Board. Gaye congratulated Cole Uecker on passing the State Bar exam and expressed happy birthday to Patrick and Catherine.

Connie Sullivan made a motion to approve the agenda. Koni Sims seconded. Motion passed.

Koni Sims made a motion approve the minutes from the December meeting. Patrick Czerny seconded. Motion passed.

Public Comments/Board Member Updates

Patrick Czerny recently attended the Special Education conference. Page Hudson, Assistive Technology Technician,

has been promoted to the Technology Grant Manager position.

Cole Uecker also attended the SPED conference. He will be attending the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation meeting next week. Partners in Policymaking graduation will be held soon.

Tami Francis changed her business from wholesale to retail. She made 750 jackets last year. She makes custom jackets and also donates to Keep KELO Land Warm by making custom coats for those in need.

Cheri Knispel has National Federation of the Blind (NFB) raffle tickets available. The NFB state convention will be April 26 & 27.

Siera Johnson, the new counselor in the Pierre office was introduced. She recently participated in training at the Rehab Center in Sioux Falls and expressed that the training was helpful, and she is looking forward to settling into her position.

Jill Kundtz thanked everyone for the prayers during her bout with cancer. Rapid City Regional is expanding their spiritual care program for which Jill is thankful and looking forward to staff being added.

Zay Norman is busy with calving. He has another business venture and is hoping to hire individuals with disabilities.

Koni Sims has been busy with South Dakota Association of the Blind activities including presentations to home school

students. She will be educating the transportation company in Mitchell about blindness related issues in the near future.

Alan Vandenburg has been traveling to Pierre to cover the counselor vacancy and is very glad Siera has been hired.

Burdette Clifford works with Rosebud VR and they are getting outreach to the schools and communities.

Connie Sullivan informed the Board that the Braille and Talking Book program turned 50 years old in January.

Catherine Greseth has been extremely busy with speaking engagements. She will be assisting with the Black Hills Film Festival where they are showing three movies that feature people with disabilities.

James Konechne spoke to the Boy Scouts, read at his child's school, and plans to attend the state NFB convention.

Gaye Mattke informed the Board that legislative session had minimal impact on SBVI and finished early due to the blizzard warnings.

Shawnie Rechtenbaugh commented that with the end of the legislative session normal DHS duties can resume. The big news for DHS related bills was the increase in appropriations for nursing homes. The Governor requested a 5% increase, but the legislators increased the appropriation to a 10% increase. The Community Support Providers will receive a 6% increase. DHS will also oversee

innovation grants for nursing facilities in which the model of care needs to change. A bill passed to change the language in state law from hearing impaired to hard of hearing.

March 22nd is VR Counselor Appreciation Day so thank you to our counselors!

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan Update

The Memorandum of Understanding with Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) was recently amended to address improving the exchange of information for federal reporting and case management for mutual cases.

SBVI contracted with Bob Jahner to assist with the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). A joint meeting with core partners will be held in June 2019. Bob Jahner will attend the core partner meeting and the June SBVI Board meeting. A joint meeting with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation will be held in September to work on the Unified State Plan. A public forum via DDN will be held in November or December. The draft plan will be available in January 2020. Another public forum will be scheduled after the draft plan is available. Bob presented a timeline of for activities related to the CSNA. The CSNA goals will need to be defined and then disseminated. He will gather the information this summer. He plans to analyze the results and develop findings this fall. He will then develop the conclusions and assist with forming the State Plan goals, priorities, and strategies. The current goals are good, but we need to report how SBVI is doing and what we need to do to satisfy these goals. The

Strategic Planning & Policy Committee will be involved during this process.

Board Activities/Committees

In the past, the Public Relations (PR) committee has nominated individuals for Governor's Awards. It was suggested to nominate an employer this year. Bill McEntaffer would be a good contact with Department of Labor and Regulation for identifying employer to recognize for employment of citizens with disabilities. The PR committee will meet soon to discuss possible nominations.

Koni Sims represented SDAB at Disability Day at the Capitol during legislative session. Tribal VR participated this year. She expressed that the event was a good opportunity for networking.

The National Federation of the Blind state convention will be held in April. Stipends are available. NFB requested a public forum be held in conjunction with convention. Ronda Williams, Sandy Neyhart, and Dawn Backer will be representing SBVI. Board members are asked to facilitate public forums. James plans on being there and offered to facilitate.

Doug Puetz spoke to Sandy last week and wanted to thank the Board again for the stipend he received to attending the SDAB convention last fall.

Governor's Awards nomination information will be mailed on April 26, with a due date of June 21. The forms are also available online any time during the year. Koni and Tami are the Board representatives on the larger group that will

be meeting and making recommendations to the Governor for award recipients. With a new Governor, the current format for Governor's Awards ceremony may change.

Catherine is the Board representative on the larger National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) committee. She explained that they recently approved the budget for NDEAM events in several communities. Gaye shared that it is anticipated that the budget will be higher this year due to the number of events and associated costs.

Jill Kundtz made a motion for the Board of SBVI to commit up to \$6,000.00 for NDEAM events. Koni Sims seconded. Motion carried.

Zay Norman made a motion for the Board to contribute up to \$3,000.00 for the Governor's Awards. Cheri Knispel seconded. Motion carried.

SBVI Program Updates

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) – Ray shared that the Business Enterprise Program vendors felt the impact of the government shutdown at sites with federal employees. However, the employees are supportive of the cafeterias and vending. A new agreement between the BEP and the EROS Data Center has been finalized for food service and vending for the next three years. A vendor applicant has been participating in training at the Rehab. Center since February. The bid letting for the interstate vending is in process. Some proposals were the same amount, so those companies need to rebid. Cashless options for payment will be included next time the bid process takes place.

Ray has been looking into a micro-market for the Kneip building in Pierre. Micro Markets are a rapidly growing retail sector, closely tied to the vending machine industry that utilizes automated self-checkout technology to operate in locations that need an unattended payment experience. James commented that the one at his employment is not very accessible to the blind. Accessibility will be addressed prior to implementing the micro-market concept.

Independent Living Older Blind - Sandy has been working with the Mississippi State University Technical Assistance Center to develop better performance measures for the services delivered in the Older Blind Independent Living Program. She is currently tracking the amount of drive time vs. time spent with clients. The Rehab Teachers are doing targeted outreach with professionals. SBVI is working with the Division of Long-Term Services & Supports to get information out to older individuals so they are aware of service to assist them to continue to live independently. The CCTV lease/loan program continues to do well. Two DaVinci machines with speech were recently added to the program. There are currently 2 people on the waiting list. SBVI is planning an all-staff training in July and will cover topics useful to both counselors and teachers.

Question was asked if SBVI has seen an increase in numbers due to the nursing homes closing and people wanting to remain in their homes. Sandy responded that this has not impacted the number of referrals to the SBVI Older Blind Program.

Vocational Rehabilitation –SBVI, in conjunction with the Division of Rehabilitation Services are providing training activities to implement Customized Employment. This model is for individuals who cannot find employment or stay employed. There is a discovery process in which the counselor and/or employment specialist find out as much as possible about the client. Griffin-Hammis provided training to employment specialists and select DRS and SBVI counselors. SBVI Counselor, Ramona Kauk, is on a team and an SBVI client was selected for a pilot project.

SBVI will be using FileDirector for electronic filing. Ronda expressed that this will help her with supervisory responsibilities as she will be able to see all aspects of case files and signatures will be done electronically as opposed to mailing documents for signature. One problem currently is that FileDirector is not JAWS accessible. Management staff are working on that issue. Fall Conference dates are October 15-17 and a draft of the save the date flyer will be included with the minutes.

South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC): SDRC updated the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind Standard Operating Procedures program guide to include a client attendance and tardiness policy. The attendance agreement is a written document for counselors to use with clients when there is a problem with attendance. Students who have more than 50 percent rate of absences within a 30-day period will meet with the SDRC counselor to discuss the importance of attendance, and the field vocational rehabilitation counselor will be notified. If attendance doesn't improve, an attendance agreement will be developed between the client, counselor, and SDRC. If

absences persist, training will discontinue until the attendance issues are resolved and another opening is available. Current low vision optometrist, Dr. Paul Greenfield, does not intend to renew his contract to provide low vision evaluations at SDRC. Dawn Backer met with a Sioux Falls optometrist to discuss her interest in providing low vision examinations at SDRC. She will decide whether she can provide this service after discussing with other partners in her practice. In the event a low vision optometrist isn't found, Dr. Greenfield will continue to provide low vision examinations at his office, but he will no longer designate 2 days per month for exams at SDRC. Former Board member and Chair, Eric Rippentrop, is an intern at SDRC. He is assisting in both Skills of Blindness classes and Employment Skills Training. This summer, a student from Northern State University who is interested in orientation and mobility will intern. Transition Week is scheduled for June 16-20, 2019. Twenty-seven names have been submitted, and staff are in the process of confirming attendees and sending out application packets.

Board Vacancies/Terms/Recruitments

Cheri Knispel, Tana Buresch, and James Konechne are eligible for reappointment and agreed to serve another term on the Board. Patrick Czerny has served the maximum number of terms. Gaye has submitted Nicole Nelson's name as a replacement. Nicole works as the Transition Liaison Specialist at the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

A question was asked regarding tracking attendance at meetings of Board members. The attendance policy is in

the by-laws and there has been only one instance that a member agreed to be replaced based on attendance.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Update

The SILC met on December 12th via DDN. The Native American Advocacy Program (NAAP) is no longer a center for independent living. NAAP's federal funding was relinquished and other centers had the opportunity to apply for that funding. Independent Living Choices applied and received funding to cover the 9 reservation areas in the state. They have hired 3 program specialists to cover the southwest and north central parts of the state.

Director's Comments

The Department was without a Department Secretary for a short period of time. Shawnie Rechtenbaugh was named Interim Secretary. Her previous title was Deputy Secretary of Public Safety. Shawnie covered the 2019 legislative session. There were no SBVI related bills. SBVI did not ask for budget expansion since the current budget is adequate to meet personal services and operating costs.

The next meeting will be held June 21st in Pierre. Arrangements will be announced at a later time.

Cole Uecker made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Patrick Czerny seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Becky Blume, Sr. Secretary.