

Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired
Draft Minutes
September 9, 2022
DDN sites in Sioux Falls, Pierre, and Rapid City

Present: Nichole Nelson, Jill Kundtz, Kendra Ringstmeyer, Kellie Hauglid, Gaye Mattke, Richard Crawford, Jeff Nelson, Elaine Fritz, Chelle Hart, Burdette Clifford, Ryan Groeneweg.

Members Absent: Cole Uecker, Tana Buresch, Cheri Knispel, Kate Kosior

Other Present: Sandy Neyhart, Becky Blume, Ronda Williams, April Schulte, Ray Tracy

Jill Kundtz, Chair, called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

Richard Crawford made a motion to approve the minutes from the June meeting. Chelle Hart seconded. Motion carried.

Jill asked for any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was approved.

Membership Updates: Gaye Mattke informed the Board that she hadn't heard anything from the Governor's office on the appointments of new members to the Board. She received an email notification that they were in the process of working on appointments. Ryan and Nichole are eligible for reappointment. Pam Fischer, Kelly Deckert, and Karla Miller have been nominated to replace members whose terms have expired. Kellie Hauglid is no longer an employee of the Division of SBVI, so she is now a voting member.

Board Member Updates:

Richard Crawford has done PSAs on blindness for Sioux Falls and Brookings area radio stations. In July, Izzy from Brookings attended the National Federation of the Blind national conference in New Orleans. Richard has been speaking to several groups and clubs regarding blindness. He agreed to present at the AER convention in Aberdeen.

Jeff Nelson is incorporating a micro market at EROS due to low employee numbers. The micro market will allow fresher foods and more variety than a vending. It will be on the honor system, but security cameras will be in place.

Elaine Fritz is applying to LifeScape for her son, Matt, to become part of their program. Matt likes going on outings. She has been having a difficult time with Social Security as she can't schedule an appointment time. She had a full Parks crew this summer and has been busy with Master Gardener activities.

Chelle Hart notified the Board that four members of SDAB attended the National Convention in Omaha. The SDAB State Convention is scheduled for October 28 and 29 at the Sioux Falls Country Inn and Suites. "Imagine" is the theme. SDAB also has a program to assist with purchasing devices for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Kellie Hauglid's last day with SBVI was August 18. She will be taking over her mother's insurance business soon. She is also contracting with the federal government as a Rehab Counselor.

Gaye Mattke has been working on a variety of projects. She will be in Pierre next week for DHS orientation.

Ryan Groeneweg is recovering from cataract surgery. The Center for Disabilities has several upcoming trainings. Kendra Gottsblien was awarded the prestigious International Diversity award.

Nichole Nelson reported that the students began school on September 7. There are 20 students on campus. The transition position has not been filled. She begun taking classes at NSU this semester to get her degree in school counseling.

Burdette Clifford has been busy. His vocational rehabilitation program received a five-year grant which will allow for more employees.

Jill Kundtz will be featured in the Black Hills Women magazine in an article about women leaders with disabilities. She is planning a trip to Cleveland to celebrate one of her former co-worker's achievements. Monument Health has seen an increase in Covid cases.

Kendra Ringstmeyer informed the Board that the Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) appreciates the sharing of the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) activities and events. Several

staff will be attending Fall Conference in October. Job Service will be closed for a couple of days in December for the 2nd Workforce Conference. She will be attending a national meeting in Chicago. DLR has a partnership with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide education to inmates through technical schools. Inmates can receive a certificate and have a better chance at employment when released. DLR also engaged youth to make sure they knew what was available for employment in South Dakota. Some of this was done virtually, but there were tours of businesses and secondary education settings. Department of Education is key to finding a future workforce. DLR also received a four-year grant to help businesses start apprenticeship programs. Each apprenticeship will be associated with a specific business. The wages will be paid by the employer, but if on-the-job training is necessary, DLR could help with this. Kendra was pleased to announce that her assistant director, Amber Rost, started on September 9.

SBVI Program Updates:

South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) - Orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist, Chad Ray, has started his O&M program with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Autumn Pitz is in the last semester of her Vision Specialist certification. She has started her practicum and has been attending skills of blindness classes to receive the direct hours needed. She also has a caseload of between 25-30 in Employment Skills. June was very busy because transition students were attending SDRC and a total of 12 clients were participating in training. Transition week was June 12-16,

and seven students attended. The students reported some of their favorite activities included business tours and night activities. They also toured Southeast Technical College and learned the importance of connecting with the disability coordinator. The Department of Labor presented on the programs available through their department. Molly Christenson with Empowered Coaching concluded the event with an interactive presentation about setting realistic goals and having the self-confidence to go after those goals. Ten students attended the Center in July. A production company did a video of SDRC, which will be used for the website. April met with three Montana Vocational Rehabilitation staff to visit about training offered at SDRC. Montana staff are interested in attending training at SDRC to increase their skills and knowledge with working with people with low vision/blindness. Four USD medical students participated in three days of cultural immersion at SDRC in August. The cultural immersion program provides experiences to students so they can learn about disabilities, different cultures, and organizations they are unfamiliar with. This annual event helps expose a new group of doctors to the services provided by SDRC. The medical students and clients/staff did the sculpture walk and lunch downtown while blindfolded to be given an opportunity to use the skills learned. Feedback provided from medical students was very positive. Low Vision referrals are down slightly. April has been meeting with the Rehabilitation Teachers and Counselors to discuss referral for low vision exams and created a brochure for them to hand out to clients to explain low vision exams. Some clients don't understand the difference between a regular eye exam and a low

vision exam. SDRC had a Wyoming student attend the Center. The student has returned home, but the communications instructor is still working virtually with him to learn braille.

Vocational Rehabilitation – Ronda Williams has been interviewing for the vacant supervisor position that has been open since August 19. She hopes to fill the position in early October. Ronda is currently supervising the counselors. SBVI held its All-Staff Training in Sioux Falls in July. Diabetes was a topic. Dr. Alan Davis also presented. It was a good bonding experience for the staff. The Department of Human Services (DHS) is implementing a strategic plan, so there are both Department goals and Division goals. One of the goals is to strengthen professional expertise. Staff are required to track each training they attend. DHS101 Training will be held in Pierre on September 14 and 15. This is an orientation for newer staff to learn about all areas of DHS. Independent Living Choices hired another O&M Specialist for the southeast region of the state. Timothy Core moved to Sioux Falls and reached out to SBVI. The Fall Conference will be held October 11-13 in Sioux Falls. Today's Vision, Tomorrow's Reality, is the theme for the conference. Registration is currently open.

Independent Living (IL) Older Blind – Sandy Neyhart informed the Board that the IL program is fully staffed. Stephanie Grover is finishing up her probationary period. Referrals for IL services across the state have been increasing. The IL staff attended the All-Staff training in July. It is a great training and networking opportunity for all employees. For several years, Sandy has attended

program managers online meetings and webinars conducted by Mississippi State University which is the National Research and Training Center for Blindness and Low Vision. Through these meetings she learned about the opportunity for programs to become distributors for the iBill Currency Reader program through the Federal Bureau and Engraving and Printing (BEP). After developing inhouse procedures and signing a Memorandum of Agreement; SBVI is now participating in this program and can distribute these small devices that make paper currency accessible. SBVI developed a reporting process to share information monthly with the Federal BEP. An update from the last Board meeting - the CCTV Lease/Loan program purchased ten new units. Procedures allow for SBVI to remove 10-year-old machines which resulted in eight units being removed from the program. We ask CCTV users who have these older units if they are interested in keeping their machines or upgrading to new ones. Six CCTV users chose to keep their machines with only one machine being available for purchase for \$50. This process revealed one machine was no longer working correctly and could not be repaired. Sandy has also been involved with the committee that is organizing the 2022 Fall Conference which is scheduled for October.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP)- EROS reopened in early August. Jeff Nelson is putting in a micro market at that location. The Aberdeen vendor resigned. BEP is working to keep that site open and will announce that position soon. Huron is operating as normal. There have been a few issues with machines. Pierre site recently

updated the Bureau of Administration's agreement to continue vending machines in state offices. BEP is piloting use of a credit card reader on a machine in the Matthews Training Center in Pierre. Vendors are hesitant to incorporate the use of credit cards due to the fees. BEP will pay the fees for the first six months. Interstate vending contracts began in June. All locations are now Coke products. June was a strong month for interstate vending, but July slowed considerably.

Richard Crawford asked about a requirement for staff to read motivational books regarding blind people who have accomplished big things and overcome their disabilities. This could possibly be included as training. Hands-on training is also important.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC): Ryan Groeneweg will be attending the Special Ed Conference, where the author of Grandpa's White Cane will be speaking. He inquired about O&M training for couples or sighted guide training. Resources will be shared with him.

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) met in July. The SILC is also waiting for appointments of members. The next meeting will be held on September 22. Upcoming events for SILC participation include Fall Conference, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) events, and Governor's Awards. Dr. Eric Kurtz with the Center for Disability recently submitted the Center's 5-year strategic plan, which was approved and received a perfect score. Dr. Kurtz shared data with the SILC. The Consumer Services and Public Awareness committees met and reported. Ronda serves on the

Consumer Services committee. She reported to the SPIL committee on the unserved/unmet needs in South Dakota so the SPIL committee could determine goals and strategies. The Public Awareness committee selected Champion of IL, which will be awarded at the next meeting. Ryan and Ronda are both unavailable to attend the September 22 meeting.

Board Activities:

Governor's Awards - Gaye received notification of the winners this week, and they are as follows:

Outstanding Individual with a Disability – Helen Hartmann of Sioux Falls

Outstanding Employee with a Disability – Kayley Shade of Sioux Falls

Outstanding Small Private Employer – JoDean's Steakhouse & Lounge of Yankton

Outstanding Large Private Employer – Family Fare Supermarket of Rapid City

Outstanding Public Employer – Midco Aquatic Center of Sioux Falls

Outstanding Transition Services Award – Bev Petersen of Sioux Falls

Distinguished Service Award – John Hamilton of Sioux Falls

The awards ceremony will be held in the Capitol Rotunda on October 26, 2022, with a reception to follow. Please let Becky know if you plan to attend, as travel expenses will be reimbursed.

NDEAM events – Events will be held in various communities around the state. You are encouraged to

attend events in your area. (Please see attached for a list of NDEAM events.)

The theme for 2022 NDEAM is Disability: Part of the Equity Equation. The total request for NDEAM activities was \$20,230. The Board of SBVI voted to contribute \$5000 to NDEAM and \$5000 to Governor's Awards.

Board Committees: The Strategic Planning and Policy Committee only has one member, Cole Uecker, and Ronda Williams as the staff liaison. Kellie Hauglid and Richard Crawford volunteered to be on the committee.

White Cane Day: White Cane Day is October 15. Gaye submitted a proclamation to the Governor and a press release to the DHS Communications Officer to promote this day.

Currency Readers: SBVI received 30 currency readers for distribution. They have notified the School for the Blind, Braille and Talking Book Library, and presidents of SDAB and NFB of the availability of readers.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA): DRS and SBVI contracted with Russ Thelin of Known Way Consulting to assist with the CSNA. Russ has been gathering information in a variety of ways. He has been reviewing data reports from SBVI. He has surveyed or interviewed staff, community service providers, and businesses. He has also reviewed data from US Census Bureau results, American Community Survey, Cornell University Disability Statistics, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Social Security Administration. Discussion points included the increase in unsuccessful closures,

which could be caused by turnover in counselors or people not wanting services; guidance and counseling, which Ronda will check into further; and Cornell University's data on the number of Asian Americans who are blind or visually impaired. A copy of his presentation is included with the minutes of the meeting. The next step is finalizing a report by the end of the month. The Strategic Planning and Policy committee will meet to discuss the report and develop goals and strategies to discuss with the full Board.

Director's Comments:

DHS101 training will be held on September 14 and 15. This is an orientation for new employees. Internal budget hearings were held. Gaye met with the Bureau of Finance and Management, and there are no major changes to the budget.

Gaye and Ronda have been conducting supervisor interviews. The SDRC Manager position will be announced soon.

SBVI Staff will begin working on the Annual Report in October. Board members will receive a draft prior to the December meeting. Discussion and finalization will be on the agenda for the December meeting as the report is due to RSA Commissioner and Governor by December 31.

The legislative session begins on January 10, 2023. The last day is March 9, with veto day on March 27.

The IL program had a financial need requirement that savings be considered to meet financial need

requirements. SBVI provides up to \$250 worth of devices for those who meet financial need. SBVI administrative staff met with fiscal to discuss the potential impact of removing savings from the financial need equation. Based on an analysis it appears that the impact will be minimal to the case service budget so now the program does not take into consideration the consumer's savings to meet financial need for purchase of devices.

Jeff Nelson made a motion that the next meeting be held on December 2, 2022 via DDN. Chelle Hart seconded. Motion carried. The next meeting will be held on December 2, 2022, using the DDN format with sites in Pierre, Sioux Falls, and Rapid City.

Jill Kundtz adjourned the meeting.