

Board of SBVI  
Minutes  
March 13, 2020  
Ft. Pierre, SD

Members Present: Catherine Greseth, Jill Kundtz, Zay Norman, Alan Vandenburg, Connie Sullivan, Cole Uecker, Tana Buresch, Elaine Fritz, Gaye Mattke. Members Present by Phone: Koni Sims, Nichole Nelson. Members Absent: Tami Francis, Cheri Knispel, Burdette Clifford and Marcia Hultman. Others Present: Ronda Williams, Raymond Tracy, Becky Blume.

Catherine Greseth, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Cole Uecker made a motion to approve the agenda. Jill Kundtz seconded. Motion carried.

Catherine Greseth made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting with the name correction of the Mitchell Advisory Council for People with Disabilities. Connie Sullivan seconded. Motion carried.

There were no public comments.

Due to COVID-19 concerns, a conference call option was available for those who preferred that option for participating in the meeting.

### **Board Member Updates**

Elaine Fritz reported that her son, Matt, has applied for services through the SBVI vocational Rehabilitation program. He is on Family Support now. He will have his IEP in the spring. He is planning to go to the School for the Blind over the summer.

Tana Buresch notified the Board that upcoming Parent Connection events have been cancelled.

Cole Uecker - South Dakota Disability Rights is looking at the schedule and how COVID-19 will affect it. There will be staffing issues which may affect services.

Connie Sullivan – Shared that the Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) winter reading program has ended for students. BTBL is going to a new system, Books on Demand. This will allow patrons to receive 5 books on a cartridge. Patrons over age 85 will still be able to use the old system with one book on a cartridge. The National Library Service national convention has been cancelled.

Alan Vandenburg reported that a Harvard Law graduate who is deaf/blind has been referred to Ronda Williams to be considered as a presenter at a future Fall Conference. He has been working on improved transportation.

Jill Kundtz has a new supervisor at Monument Health. Jill had planned to attend a conference in Ohio but probably won't be attending now. She has raffle tickets for NFB.

Catherine Greseth has had health issues. She did a presentation for the Boys Scouts and they all earned their disability badge. Her daughter, Mary, will be getting a prosthetic to be placed over her eye.

Zay Norman has been busy calving.

Koni Sims spent five days at the American Council for the Blind leadership/legislative meetings in Washington, DC. Mark Schultz from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) was the speaker. She also met with John Thune and Mike Rounds while there. She is on transportation committees.

Nichole Nelson is planning for Youth Leadership Forum and transition week. There has been a change in the selection process for transition week and students are being interviewed as part of that process.

### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act State Plan Update**

There were two video conference public forums held to provide the opportunity for public comment on the state plan. The first

public forum was specifically for SBVI. Approximately 29 participants attended at various locations. The second video conference was held in conjunction with other core partners, including Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) and Division of Rehabilitation Services. There were approximately 45 participants, mostly staff members and two participants representing Career Learning Centers.

The State Plan was submitted on February 28. The SBVI portion of the State Plan is on the SBVI website. The link for the entire plan is

[https://dlr.sd.gov/workforce\\_services/wioa/documents/wioa\\_sd\\_unified\\_state\\_plan\\_2020\\_draft.pdf](https://dlr.sd.gov/workforce_services/wioa/documents/wioa_sd_unified_state_plan_2020_draft.pdf)

SBVI will wait for RSA's response for negotiating performance measures and recommended edits with the plan to be approved by the July 1, 2020 effective date. SBVI has been invited to participate in a DLR conference call regarding their negotiations with the federal agency. Bureau of Information and Telecommunications has hired a contractor to assist with programming the case management system to meet federal reporting requirements. The contractor is also working on a data share program between SBVI, DRS, and DLR to streamline services and assist with federal reporting. South Dakota has the highest measurable skills gain in the nation.

### **Board Activities and Committees**

The Public Relations (PR) committee developed outreach products in 2011. These materials are still relevant and are being distributed. The PR committee also nominates individuals for Governors Awards. The deadline for Governor Awards nominations is May 1<sup>st</sup>. Packets will be sent out by March 20<sup>th</sup>. A conference call with the PR committee will be scheduled to discuss nominations.

Disability Day at the Capitol was held on February 26. Connie Sullivan represented the Board of SBVI. Eric Rippentrop also attended on behalf of South Dakota Association for the Blind. Connie expressed that attendance was low. Only a few people stopped by and there were only about five disability groups with

booths. The organization of the Disability Day event is transitioning from Shelly Pfaff and the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities to Arlene Poncelet with the Developmental Council. It is a good opportunity for people with disabilities to advocate and educate.

Catherine reported that 12 communities are planning events for National Disability Employment Awareness Month. All budgets totaling approximately \$30,500 have been approved. SBVI Board members are encouraged to attend events in their areas. Costs for registration will be covered. Zay Norman made a motion for the Board of SBVI to contribute up to \$5,000 for NDEAM activities. Jill Kundtz seconded. Motion carried.

The Executive Committee consists of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Member at Large. They plan meeting agendas in conjunction with the SBVI Division Director. The Executive Committee can also meet for topics that need addressed in between regularly scheduled Board meetings.

The Strategic Planning and Policy committee assisted with the WIOA State Plan goals and strategies. Their recommendations were brought to the full board for their input and approval. This committee is also brought together to review policies and bring recommendations to the full Board.

### **Program Updates**

*Business Enterprise Program* – Ray Tracy notified the Board that old equipment is being moved out of the coffee shop in Pierre. New machines have been purchased for Huron and Aberdeen. He recently did a site visit at EROS. The visit went well, however, COVID-19 is causing issues as many employees will work from home. Interstate vending revenue is also down due to decrease in travel during the winter.

*Older Blind Independent Living* – Chelle Hart is retiring from her position as Rehabilitation Teacher. The position has been

announced. Sandy will arrange coverage from other staff in the interim.

*South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind* – April Schulte was promoted to the program specialist position. Her first day at the Center was January 24, 2020. She will be a leader with the vocational resources team, as well as responsible for planning Transition Week, assisting with Employment Skills Training (EST), job placement services, work with transition students, building employer relations with local business, and supervising professional interns. Stephen F. Austin University in Austin, TX is seeking unpaid internship sites for orientation and mobility students. SDRC has agreed to serve as a host site for interns and Dr. DJ Dean indicated there are two candidates who are considering the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind for their internships. SD. July 26, 2020, marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). A committee has been formed to develop events to recognize the day. A variety of events will be organized to educate the public. A Facebook page “ADA 30” was developed, to promote the events. Autumn Pitz was hired for the 2020 summer internship position, she’ll begin May 11 and work through the first part of August. She’ll help with employment skills training classes and skills of blindness projects. The Transition Week planning team is meeting monthly to make arrangements. So far, 20 referrals have been received for students who are interested. Priority will be given to students who have never attended or have only attended one year. The process changed this year; each student will be interviewed in March, and then the Transition Week planning team will decide by April 1 which students are chosen to attend. First Friday events are changing to walk-in assistive technology assistance with extended hours from 8:30 to 12:30. Attendance had decreased for the afternoon classes, so it was decided to discontinue the classes and expand the walk-in technology clinic.

*Vocational Rehabilitation* – Ronda Williams reported that Patrick Czerny announced that Josh Popelka will replace Ted Carrell and begin working at SDRC soon. Ted Carrell has filled out paperwork

to become a volunteer for SBVI. He intends to assist with the walk-in assistive technology sessions at SDRC. The year-end reports are available in hard copy and online. Alternative formats are available by request. The annual SBVI All Staff training will be held July 28-30 in Aberdeen. Various topics include: tours of the School for the Blind, O&M techniques, labor market trends with Melodee Lane from DLR, ethics, and a transition panel. The new superintendent at the School for the Blind is Dan Trefz. He has experience in Special Education but his background with blindness is unknown. April Schulte was promoted to Program Specialist at SDRC. Rob Jonas was hired as her replacement as a rehabilitation counselor at the Sioux Falls office. Kellie Hauglid was hired as counselor supervisor. SBVI staff have the opportunity to attend Business Engagement training on May 13 and 14. The training will help counselors be more comfortable approaching and speaking to employers. The annual case file review is scheduled for May 18 and 19. All counselors attend and review files. It is a good training for new counselors, improves consistency across the state, and maintains quality assurance between counselors. File Director stores all files electronically and will be used during the review. However, it is not accessible so paper files will be available for those who cannot access File Director.

### **Consumer Organization Sponsorship**

Stipends are available to first time attendees to an NFB or SDAB state convention. It is required that the individuals receiving stipends give a report of their experience at the convention to the Board. NFB convention will be held April 17 & 18 in Rapid City (postponed to October 23 & 24). The SDAB convention is scheduled for September 18 & 19 in Aberdeen. The stipend is \$350 per convention with up to \$175 per individual. Exceptions for other than first time attendees will be considered on a case by case basis. Catherine Greseth made a motion to continue with current application and amounts. Jill Kundtz seconded. Motion carried.

If organizations would like to have a public forum in conjunction with their convention, please let SBVI staff know. SBVI will cover costs for meeting space if a bill is submitted. NFB will have a public forum Friday evening, April 17 (postponed). Koni Sims will ask the SDAB Board if a public forum is of interest during the convention in September.

### **Board Vacancies**

Tami Francis, Jill Kundtz and Cole Uecker agreed to reappointment. Cole's position (representative of the Client Assistance Program) is exempt from term limits. The Department of Education nominated an individual to replace Connie Sullivan, who has served the maximum number of terms (representative of the State Education Agency). Two nominations have been received for the position vacated by James Konechne's resignation. The nomination forms were sent to Board members, counselors, and organizations.

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

SILC is seeking nominations for various vacancies. The next meeting is scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup>. It has been changed to a conference call with a revised agenda. Ronda has finalized a Memorandum of Understanding with the Centers for Independence Living (CIL) and will request approval at the meeting. CILs are adjusting how services are handled during this time.

### **Director's Comments**

2020 Legislative Session is over except for Veto Day is on March 30th. An ADA bill regarding contacting a business prior to filing a complaint died. There are already federal laws in place to address accessibility of businesses. Another bill regarding counting the number of deaf children was of interest but was followed more by Dept of Education. The Department's budget passed joint appropriations. State employees, schools, and providers will receive a 2% increase.

The Department of Human Services has been meeting to address COVID-19. Options for service delivery and safety of employees and clients will be a priority.

Dr. Alan Davis from South Dakota State University (SDSU) has asked whether Board members would be willing to complete a survey regarding the SDSU Vocational Rehabilitation Master's program. After Gaye read the survey questions, the consensus was that Board members don't have the experience to answer questions about the program. Board Members recommended that counselors and supervisors may have more insights for responding to the survey. The survey and cover letter are included with the minutes and Board will complete the survey if they are comfortable with answering the questions.

The next meeting will be June 5<sup>th</sup>. At this time, the meeting will plan to be in-person, but a DDN will also be set up as a back-up.

Zay Norman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Connie Sullivan seconded. Meeting adjourned.