

**Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)  
Legislative and Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes**

January 6, 2020

**Members Present**

Amy Porterfield, Chair  
Bob Kresmer  
Ted Chittenden  
Ed House  
George Martinez  
Donald Porterfield

**Members Absent**

Allan Curry  
Brian Dulude

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

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**Call to Order and Introductions**

Amy Porterfield, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

**Approval of December 3, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Bob Kresmer moved to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2019 Legislative and Public Policy Committee meeting. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The committee approved the minutes by unanimous voice vote.

**ILB Funding Increase Discussion**

Amy Porterfield stated she developed a draft Independent Living Blind (ILB) Funding Increase Fact Sheet that was distributed to committee members for review. Ms. Porterfield stated she would include the funding equitability amounts once she received that information. Ed House inquired whether the Fact Sheet would include the funds that the ILB program had lost over the past years as well as the funds the ILB program had previously. Amy Porterfield stated the committee would need to obtain the exact amounts and whether the ILB program received any increases since 2009. Bob Kresmer stated there was a \$500,000 increase in 2008, which was swept the following year. Ed House stated that would show the ILB had those funds,

but had been lost, and noted that he was unsure whether the program had lost additional funding over the years. Amy Porterfield stated her understanding that the current ILB budget was the same as in 2009. Ed House stated that the laws had changed, which required the General Title VII funding go to ILB. Amy Porterfield stated that Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) used funds from other areas for ILB services and noted that Bob Kresmer had requested that information from RSA. Ms. Porterfield stated the committee could also obtain the additional funding obtained through advocacy groups compared to funding obtained through the Department of Economic Security (DES). Amy Porterfield stated she was unaware of any additional funding obtained through advocacy efforts after 2009. Ed House stated his recollection that advocacy groups obtained additional funding prior to 2009. Amy Porterfield stated the Fact Sheet would show the impact of the increase in funding for other programs, but the ILB program had not received additional funding. Ed House stated when he worked for RSA, he submitted an ILB budget funding request, which was not included in the DES budget request. Amy Porterfield inquired whether the committee should include the additional funding obtained prior to 2009. Bob Kresmer stated the additional \$500,000 obtained in 2009 would be sufficient.

Ed House inquired whether the Fact Sheet should include services for individuals 55 and younger in addition to 65 and older. Amy Porterfield stated she could include individuals of all ages. Ed House stated there would be an increase in services for 55 and older compared to individuals 55 and younger. Amy Porterfield stated the senior population was 40% of the total, which could be included. Ed House inquired whether there was an issue of the level of services provided to ILB individuals. Mr. House stated the goal of ILB was to provide services to individuals so that they could live independently and to not have to go to assisted living facilities. Ed House stated that he had obtained the assisted living budget information from the Division of Aging and Adult Services in previous years. Amy Porterfield inquired whether the Fact Sheet should include the number of hours to make an individual independent. Ted Chittenden stated that number would vary by the person. Ed House suggested the committee members discuss that information verbally rather than in the Fact Sheet.

George Martinez inquired whether the committee had the information that would indicate the budget amounts from 2009-2010 and noted the aging population was growing and required additional services. Amy Porterfield stated she knew the percentage of the aging population in Arizona and could include in the Fact Sheet. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the plan for distributing the Fact Sheet. Amy Porterfield stated the Fact Sheet could be shared with the advocacy groups as well as Cristina Corieri, Senior Policy

Advisor to the Governor, to learn whether the Governor's Office would support the ILB budget increase. Ed House inquired whether the GCBVI could continue to advocate for the budget increase if the Governor's Office opposed the budget request. Amy Porterfield stated the GCBVI could advocate for the ILB budget increase if the Governor supported the request or remained neutral. She noted that if the Governor opposed the budget increase request, the advocacy groups would take over. Amy Porterfield stated the National Federation of the Blind of Arizona (NFBA) would hold their Legislative Seminar at the Capitol soon and could share that information with the Legislature. Ed House inquired whether the ILB budget increase request was for the budget year starting in July of the following year. Amy Porterfield stated the budget request would be for the budget year starting in July. Bob Kresmer stated that Brian Dulude, Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) Program Manager, had indicated that he was in favor of the ILB budget increase and would assist the committee in obtaining the necessary information. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the Policy Advisor to the Governor that would communicate with the Division of Aging and Adult Services. Amy Porterfield stated that Cristina Corieri would be the Governor's Policy Advisor for anything related to DES. Donald Porterfield inquired whether RSA management had indicated whether they would support the ILB budget increase. Amy Porterfield stated that RSA management was not opposed to the budget increase request, although management would not likely advocate for the increase at the DERS level. Amy Porterfield stated that Bob Kresmer should meet with the DES Interim Director as well. Ms. Porterfield stated her goal was to obtain the necessary information and complete the Fact Sheet by the end of the week to begin distributing.

George Martinez inquired whether the committee had learned whether the ILB program could obtain some of the Statewide Independent Living Center (SILC) funds. Amy Porterfield stated the council had been working to ensure that Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) funds did not go to SILC, which was accomplished. She noted that RSA retained the OIB funds. Bob Kresmer stated the GCBVI met with SILC representatives, whom indicated that they would not oppose the council's efforts to obtain additional funding for ILB services. Ed House stated his understanding that the only Independent Living (IL) funds that RSA received was for ILB. Amy Porterfield confirmed that was true. Bob Kresmer stated there was no formal funding for ILB. Ed House inquired whether RSA received funds from Social Security reimbursement funds. Amy Porterfield stated those funds had been cut, and RSA utilized a small amount from other sources. Ed House inquired whether the Fact Sheet emphasized that other programs for elderly did not include specialized services for blind and visually impaired

individuals. Amy Porterfield confirmed that the Fact Sheet did emphasize that.

### **Policy and Legislation Discussion**

Bob Kresmer requested the committee discuss certifications for instructors in the education system. Ted Chittenden stated the council had also previously discussed slow delivery of equipment to blind and visually impaired individuals. Amy Porterfield agreed, and noted that DES had identified a solution to that issue, but it was not successful. Amy Porterfield stated the council would also discuss the new client intake process with Brian Dulude, although he was aware of the issue.

### **Agenda and Date for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Legislative and Public Policy Committee was scheduled for February 3, 2020 from 1:00-2:30. Agenda items are as follows:

- ILB Funding Increase Discussion
- Policy/Legislative Discussion

### **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

### **Public Comment**

A call to the public was made with no response's forthcoming.

### **Adjournment of Meeting**

Bob Kresmer moved to adjourn the meeting. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 pm.