

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Employment Committee Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2017

Members Present

Tom Hicks*
Kryslen Holt*
Jordan Moon*
Dan Martinez*
Nikki Jeffords*
Terell Welch*

Members Absent

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers, Admin. Assist.
*Teleconferenced

Guests Present

Call to Order and Introductions

Tom Hicks called the meeting to order at 11:02 am in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made a quorum was present.

Approval of January 18, 2017 and January 25, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Nikki Jeffords motioned to approve the minutes from the January 18, 2017 and January 25, 2017 minutes. Kryslen Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

E75 Timeline Review

Tom Hicks stated he forwarded a list of items that the committee completed successfully, and some items the committee could improve upon for the next E75 Diversity Builder Award Event. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee to include the event presenters in the planning meetings and ensure the presenters knew what was expected of them. Tom Hicks agreed and noted the presenters were invited to meetings, but had been unable to attend. Tom Hicks inquired whether the committee members had any items to add to Mr. Hicks' list of items that were successful, or items to improve upon. Nikki Jeffords stated she received feedback regarding the presenters not being charismatic enough. Tom Hicks noted the presenters were not fully prepared for the event, and had to improvise somewhat. Terell Welch suggested in the future, if the presenters were unable to attend committee

meetings, that the committee consider asking other individuals to be the presenters. Tom Hicks stated Marc Ashton, Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) suggested the committee assign a program manager that would be responsible for keeping the event schedule on time and monitor all aspects of the event. Terell Welch suggested that Tom Hicks be the emcee for future award events. Nikki Jeffords noted that Tom Hicks did have a great energy and enthusiasm for the event. Tom Hicks stated he was not a Braille reader, and he would have difficulty remembering all the biographies. Nikki Jeffords suggested an emcee read the biographies of the individuals and Tom Hicks could provide the energy. Ms. Jeffords noted that Jennison Asuncion's presentation was interesting, although it lacked energy and did not include sufficient discussion regarding Linked In accessibility. Kryslen Holt noted that many employers might not have heard blindness narratives, and would have learned from that presentation. Dan Martinez stated the program script was incomplete, and suggested the committee complete the script one week prior to the event, and forward to the emcees.

Tom Hicks stated one of the positive aspects of the event was that many blind and visually impaired individuals collaborated to hold the event. Mr. Hicks noted the committee needed to ensure that the individuals receiving their awards received them during the award event presentations. Nikki Jeffords stated she was pleased that the employers did stay to talk to the job ready candidates. Tom Hicks inquired whether any job ready candidates received job offers from the event. Terell Welch stated Jessica Loomer would potentially interview with Tucson Electric Power. Jordan Moon suggested that the job ready candidates be placed at tables in the same area, which would allow the employers to easily identify the job ready candidates. Terell Welch stated the job ready candidate videos could play, and then the presenter or emcee could indicate which table each job ready candidate was sitting at. Tom Hicks noted the job ready candidate videos were not somewhat difficult to hear over the noise of the lunch at the event. Kryslen Holt noted the FBC gym did not offer the best acoustics for listening to videos. Terell Welch suggested the job ready candidates provide brief presentations at the event. Nikki Jeffords noted that Ron Brooks' video was effective and easy to hear. Tom Hicks stated that Ron Brooks video was playing during the award portion of the event, and the audience was quiet. Jordan Moon inquired whether the job ready candidate videos would be included on social media sites. Tom Hicks noted Jillian Seamans, Public Information Officer (PIO) would be developing a story about the event. Tom Hicks inquired whether the committee should consider holding the event at a different venue. Mr. Hicks noted the FBC staff was very accommodating with the setup of the tables, chairs, and the audio visual. Dan Martinez stated the FBC accommodated the audience size currently, although the committee could consider alternative venues in the future.

Kryslen Holt suggested the committee plan a half day event and include the employee awards as well as sessions regarding accommodations for example. Ms. Holt noted the committee could provide training to the employers to make employers more comfortable hiring blind and visually impaired individuals. Nikki Jeffords stated that in her experience, employers were not receptive to accommodation training. Ms. Jeffords noted most employers wanted to hire qualified individuals, but were not interested in blindness accommodation training. Terell Welch stated that most employers would not have the time to attend a half day event of training. Tom Hicks suggested the committee invite more Human Resources professionals to the next award event. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee had to be able to offer the employers an incentive to attend an event. Tom Hicks inquired whether the committee could offer Continuing Education Units (CEU) s or diversity credits. Tom Hicks stated employers would not be required to attend the whole day. Dan Martinez stated that employers would need an incentive to attend the event.

Tom Hicks stated the goal was to get more employers to attend the event and to make the E75 Diversity Builder Award a coveted award. Terell Welch stated as an Employment Coordinator, he would build relationships with employers, but then he would not have any job ready candidates to refer to that employer. Terell Welch suggested the committee send out Save the Date invitations early, then send out formal invitations and follow up with phone calls. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee develop an E75 newsletter and include articles and success stories that would be sent to a mailing list of employers. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether the committee should invite more individuals to join the committee. Tom Hicks stated if the committee became too large, the committee would struggle to make quorum, which happened several times during the planning of the event. Tom Hicks noted the committee could invite individuals from different organizations to attend meetings and obtain feedback. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee build an employer distribution list, and send the E75 newsletter to those employers throughout the year. Dan Martinez suggested the committee hold a meeting to discuss the development of the E75 newsletter and the editorial process.

VRATE Discussion

This item was tabled.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Employment Committee would be on February 22, 2017 from 11:00-12:00 pm in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Agenda items are as follows:

- E75 Newsletter Discussion
- E75 Checklist/Timeline Review
- Employer Invite Discussion

Announcements

Nikki Jeffords stated the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) would hold the NFB Seminar on February 27, 2017.

Dan Martinez announced the Foundation for Fighting Blindness would hold their Vision Walk on February 25, 2017 at Steele Indian School Park.

Public Comment

A call was made to the public with no responses forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

Dan Martinez moved to adjourn the meeting; Nikki Jeffords seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting stood adjourned at 11:55 a.m.