

Draft
Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Full Council Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2019

Members Present

Bob Kresmer
Amy Porterfield
Allan Curry
Ted Chittenden
George Martinez
Mike Gordon
Jim LaMay
Ed Gervasoni
Donald Porterfield
Janet Fisher
Annette Reichman

Members Absent

Bea Shapiro
Nathan Pullen

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

David Steinmetz
John McCann
Brandi Coffland
Doris Woltman
Milly Martinez

Call to Order and Introductions

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. in the RSA Video Conference Rooms located in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. Introductions were made, a quorum was present, and the procedural meeting rules were explained.

Approval of January 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Ted Chittenden moved to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2019 GCBVI Full Council meeting as written. Mike Gordon seconded the motion. Janet Fisher requested the minutes be corrected to reflect the correct date and location of the Arizona Braille Library Volunteer Luncheon. The amended minutes were approved by majority voice vote.

Bob Kresmer stated there were several guests attending the meeting and stated the GCBVI was created by Governor Executive Order. Mr. Kresmer stated the council was represented by members from the consumer groups Arizona Council of the Blind (AzCB), National Federation of the Blind of Arizona (NFBA), and the Blinded Veteran's Association (BVA). Bob Kresmer stated that guests would have an opportunity to speak during the call to the public at the end of the meeting, and the council would recognize any questions or comments from members of the public.

GCBVI Chairperson's Report

Bob Kresmer stated that he met with Christina Corieri, Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Ducey, to discuss the federal arbitration between the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Luke Air Force Base not recognizing the Randolph Sheppard Act. Bob Kresmer stated that he had not heard back from the Governor's Office regarding the Governor's position on the federal arbitration, although the consumer groups could continue to advocate. Bob Kresmer stated that he, Amy Porterfield and Jim LaMay met with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) co-Chairs, Sarah Kader and Melissa Santora to discuss funding for Independent Living Blind (ILB) individuals. He noted that he learned that SILC was a conduit of federal funds. Bob Kresmer stated that he and Amy Porterfield met with Kristen Mackey, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Administrator, to discuss concerns of the council, such as the council's recommendation that Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) staff receive regular training when working with the BVI population. Bob Kresmer stated he also expressed the council's request to be more involved in the hiring process of SBVID staff, and the council's concern regarding the Knowledge Services contract and how the contract would affect services to blind and visually impaired clients. Bob Kresmer stated that he and Ms. Porterfield also suggested that RSA reevaluate the SBVID structure, which provided services to blind and visually impaired individuals and deaf and hard of hearing individuals and to develop a survey that would obtain information from clients regarding those services. Bob Kresmer stated the council had received a membership application from Terri Hedgpeth, whom had been

interviewed by council members. He noted that Ms. Hedgpeth's application could be considered at the next council meeting.

RSA Administrator's Report

This item was tabled.

SBVID Program Manager Report

Ted Chittenden suggested that RSA and SBVID staff send a report to the council when staff were unable to attend meetings. Amy Porterfield suggested that Bob Kresmer make a formal request in writing to RSA and SBVID.

Jim LaMay stated the Executive Committee received the SBVID Program Manager job description and inquired whether the council had the opportunity to provide comments. Bob Kresmer stated that he suggested the job description include a description of the day-to-day operations of the position. Ms. Kresmer stated that he also suggested the position be upgraded to a Deputy Administrator position in order to obtain a higher caliber of individual. Jim LaMay stated that he was confused regarding the role of Knowledge Services and how the vendors would work under the contract. Bob Kresmer stated that the council had expressed concerns regarding Knowledge Services' role and how counselors would perform their duties under the contract. Mr. Kresmer noted that he would meet with RSA Contract staff to discuss the council's concerns. Mike Gordon stated the comprehensive service providers would also be interested in a meeting with RSA to discuss their concerns regarding the contract as well. Bob Kresmer agreed and noted the council had requested meetings with the providers once a year or quarterly to discuss concerns.

BEP Program Update

Allan Curry stated that he was providing a BEP report from a BEP's operator's perspective and was not providing the report for Nathan Pullen, BEP Manager. Mr. Curry stated he was a blind operator and oversaw the operations at Lewis Prison. Allan Curry stated that BEP recently acquired the snack bar at the Foothills Aquatic Center, which would be seasonal operations during the summer. Allan Curry stated that BEP had a new contract with Oro Valley, which was part of the Pima County vending route. Mr. Curry stated that operator, Victor Flores, would be retiring and his position would be posted soon. He noted that BEP would hire another repair technician, which would continue to save money for the program. Allan Curry stated that BEP continued to encourage individuals to consider

becoming operators in outlying areas such as Yuma and Lake Havasu. Allan Curry stated there were two ongoing appeals from BEP operators regarding Luke Air Force Base.

ASDB Report

Annette Reichman, Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) Superintendent, stated the agency developed a Strategic Plan that identified five priorities. Ms. Reichman stated that one of the priorities was for community relationship building and to create a climate of transparency within the agency and with the community. She added the agency was also interested in the Early Childhood Development and Achievement and providing a high quality of services to parents and children. Ms. Reichman stated the agency had also identified the priority of academic achievement and student engagement, which was a multi-tiered approach to address proficiencies in English, ASL, and college and career readiness. Annette Reichman stated the agency would also address staff and leadership roles and create an environment where the agency could attract and recruit staff. She noted the last priority was to review facility resources, which included the maintenance of the agency buildings. Ted Chittenden inquired whether ASDB would consider expanding Pre-schools in Tucson or would create access to the public Pre-schools. Annette Reichman stated the agency was considering the development of mobile Pre-school support. She noted that there were often clusters of children in certain areas, where teachers would provide instruction until those children moved on. Ms. Reichman stated that mobile Pre-school services could provide services to children in any area. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) Pre-school was under contract with ASDB. Annette Reichman stated that FBC received funds through an ASDB contract.

Jim LaMay inquired whether ASDB had determined whether to potentially close the residential dorms at ASDB. Annette Reichman stated that ASDB's Statute required the agency to provide dormitories for students. Ms. Reichman stated the agency had considered moving the dormitories to northern Arizona, to accommodate the students in that area. She added that the agency had completed Phase One of the Feasibility Study, which indicated that students should receive services in the least restrictive environment identified in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). She noted the least restrictive environment could indicate that a student should be in a classroom with like peers, which could be the dormitories in Tucson. Annette Reichman stated the agency received data from similar agencies in other states, which indicated that most agencies also had dormitories. Ms. Reichman stated ASDB would complete Phase Two of the Feasibility Study and would reach out to parents that chose not to send their

children to an ASDB campus. Bob Kresmer inquired whether ASDB was performing Phase Two in house. Annette Reichman stated ASDB was using a consultant to complete the Feasibility Study, which included significant research. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Feasibility Study included review of the allocation of funds for the co-operatives. Annette Reichman stated that ASDB received a budget of 55 million and that 30% was allocated to the co-operatives. Ms. Reichman noted that ASDB was responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the brick and mortar schools in Tucson and Phoenix, as well as the bus pickup and drop-off students. Annette Reichman stated the regional co-operatives were part of the local school district and the agency was not responsible for those costs. Annette Reichman stated that agency had also consider the cost of Assistive Technology (AT) and noted that AT continued to change quickly, and teachers were unable to keep up with those changes. She noted the north-regional co-operative, for example, spent more on AT for students. Bob Kresmer stated that he recently learned that the recertification process for Teachers for the Visually Impaired (TVI)s had changed and inquired whether Ms. Reichman had any updates. Annette Reichman stated she did not have an update, although she would report back to the council.

GCBVI Committee Reports

Assistive Technology

Bob Kresmer stated that Bea Shapiro was unable to attend the meeting, although she had indicated that the committee had not met since Sharonda Goode left the council. He added that the AT Committee would meet on March 27, 2019 and he was pleased to see the committee become reenergized.

Public Policy and Legislative Committee

Amy Porterfield stated the committee developed a Policy Workgroup to address the council's concern regarding SBVID staff training. Ms. Porterfield noted that SBVID staff did not currently receive training when working with the blind and visually impaired population. Amy Porterfield stated the workgroup developed an outline of the suggested areas of training, which included an overview of services, rehabilitation principles, ethics, a comparison of working with the BVI population compared to the general population, common myths, eye conditions, and legislation and advocacy. Amy Porterfield stated the workgroup also recommended that SBVID staff receive immersion training for a minimum of one week at the local blindness centers and attend the statewide and national blindness consumer conferences. Amy Porterfield stated that council members would present the

training outline to RSA at the next meeting. Ms. Porterfield stated the council also suggested that RSA distribute surveys to the providers so that all providers were able to offer feedback and remain apprised of any changes. Bob Kresmer stated the council was mandated to provide oversight of RSA services and inquired whether the council should oversee the training program for SBVID staff. Amy Porterfield stated the Policy Workgroup had developed a general training outline and could utilize local expertise in providing that training. Ted Chittenden stated that the training would be a large responsibility that would require council members' and community partners' time. Bob Kresmer stated that council or consumer group members would need to volunteer to participate in the training, although someone would need to coordinate and oversee all the training. Jim LaMay stated that council members had not reviewed the draft training outline and could provide better feedback after reviewing the proposed training. Bob Kresmer stated the draft would be presented to RSA and would then be presented to the council for review. Mr. LaMay inquired whether the Executive Committee would discuss the revision of the council Strategic Plan also. Bob Kresmer stated the next Executive Committee meeting would discuss a revision of the Strategic Plan.

Employment

David Steinmetz stated the Employment Committee held an Employment Panel at Ability 360 with approximately 15 employers for a round table discussion. Mr. Steinmetz stated a visually impaired employee with Rio Salado College spoke about his employment and comprehensive services training. He added that a representative from a law firm also spoke about the ADA and reasonable accommodations, and a HR representative from Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB) discussed AIB's onboarding process. David Steinmetz stated that Sue LeHew discussed and demonstrated the use of different AT equipment, and Terell Welch provided an overview of ARIZONA@WORK. He noted that employers were then allowed to ask questions, which included questions regarding transportation and accommodations. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the E75 Diversity Builder event as well. David Steinmetz stated he attended the E75 breakfast as an attendee and noted the breakfast was a larger event and recognized several employers. David Steinmetz stated that Sean Callagy was the keynote speaker at that event and spoke about empowerment and advocacy of blind and visually impaired individuals. David Steinmetz stated the Employment Committee planned to hold quarterly events for employers or job seekers, although the committee had not identified a date for the next event.

Public Information

Ted Chittenden stated the statistics for EyeKnow.AZ were:
January

Number of sessions (visits) 111
Number of individuals visiting website 95
Pages viewed per visit 3:61
Time spent visiting the database (minutes) 1.53
New visitors 83.2%
Returning users 16.8%

February

Number of sessions (visits) 107
Number of individuals visiting website 79
Pages viewed per visit 3.89
Time spent visiting the database (minutes) 3:49
New visitors 89%
Returning Users 11%

The GCBVI Facebook statistics were:

January

Page views: 3
Post Reach: 246
Post Engagements: 43

February

Page views: 6
Post reach: 149
Post engagements: 39
Likes: 22
Follows: 24

Ted Chittenden stated the committee continued recruitment efforts for additional committee members and would begin development of the GCBVI Annual Report soon. Mr. Chittenden requested that committee Chairs provide a committee report by June 30, 2019 so the committee could develop the annual report quickly. Bob Kresmer stated that RSA previously created and distributed a print Resource Directory of blindness resources and inquired whether the Public Information Committee was involved in

updating those resources. Ted Chittenden stated the committee was not involved in updated the print Resource Directory but did update the EyeKnow.AZ database. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the print Resource Directory was still distributed to clients. Ted Chittenden stated his understanding that the SBVID staff member that was responsible for updating the print Resource Directory had retired and he was unsure whether the directory had been updated. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Public Information Committee would potentially provide a printed copy of the resources. Ted Chittenden stated the AT Committee made a previous suggestion that users be able to print the EyeKnow.AZ database, and the Public Information Committee was able to add that option. Bob Kresmer stated he was unsure whether there would be a benefit to having a print version, although the Public Information Committee could have that discussion with the AT Committee. David Steinmetz stated the EyeKnow.AZ database did request that vendors provide updates to their organization's information, although the committee did not have the resources to reach out to every organization included in the database. Janet Fisher stated the committee sent out a request to all of the resources in the organization the previous year, and updated the information received from those individuals. Ms. Fisher stated the committee could potentially send out an email blast to all the emails in the database and request the organizations send any updated information. Bob Kresmer stated the council could aid the Public Information Committee if the committee required any additional help. Jim LaMay suggested that the Resource Directory also be available in print and alternate formats for individuals that did not have access to a computer. Bob Kresmer stated that he was unsure regarding the printing costs associated with printing the Resource Directory.

Committee on Deaf-Blind Issues

Ed Gervasoni stated the committee had not met since the last Full Council meeting, although the committee continued to receive updates from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS). Mr. Gervasoni stated the committee would discuss the different training opportunities and how the services could be provided to clients. Ed Gervasoni inquired whether the Support Service Providers (SSP) training curriculum had changed. Ed Gervasoni stated there had no changes to the SSP training curriculum had not changed. Mr. Gervasoni stated the committee continued to work with the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) in developing a statewide SSP certification. Ed Gervasoni stated the challenges in developing a SSP workforce because most SSPs were not employed full time. Bob Kresmer inquired whether an individual could make a living as an SSP. Ed Gervasoni stated an SSP employed by a school worked full time and could make a

living. Bob Kresmer inquired whether individuals continued to use SSPs once they had graduated from school. Ed Gervasoni stated that interveners provided services to non-directed individuals, and SSPs provided guidance to an individual such as information about the surroundings. Ed Gervasoni stated that some individuals might require an SSP in different situations, such as social events, which could be more fatiguing for an individual with combined vision and hearing loss (CVHL).

Independent Living

Jim LaMay stated the committee had compiled the requested data but had not received guidance from the lead committee regarding the next steps in completing the strategic plan tasks. Bob Kresmer inquired whether Mr. LaMay had any additional comments regarding the meeting with SILC representatives. Jim LaMay stated that during that meeting, he also learned that SILC was a conduit of funds, and that SILC appeared to be amenable to working with the council.

Education Committee

Bob Kresmer stated the Education Committee had a meeting scheduled for March 18, 2019 and continued to gather information regarding high stakes test scores, in which blind and visually impaired students continued to score low. Mr. Kresmer stated that he learned recently the BVI recertification process now required training on dyslexia and phonics. He noted that he had invited a representative from ASDB to attend the upcoming Education Committee to provide an update of those processes. Ted Chittenden stated that he was a Braille proofreader for ASDB, and the new Science Test for grades 4, 8, and 12 would be completely different.

Ex-Oficio Member and Blindness Community Organization Updates

Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Jim LaMay stated that ACBVI was in the process of updating the phone and Internet system. Jim LaMay stated ACBVI started implementation of the five-year Strategic Plan. Mr. LaMay stated ACBVI was training 20 new RSA counselors on disability awareness and technology.

Arizona Talking Book Library

Janet Fisher stated the Friends of the Library were planning for the Whine and Cheese fundraiser, which would be through mail donations. Janet Fisher stated she was interested in seeking information regarding how library

patrons could participate in the 2020 Census, which would be conducted online. Bob Kresmer stated he was unsure whether the website had been tested for accessibility. Mr. Kresmer inquired whether the library had prepared to move to a different location. Janet Fisher stated the Administration had changed with the new Secretary of State appointment. Ms. Fisher stated that library staff visited the proposed new library site and whether the library could continue to record audio books at the new site. Janet Fisher stated the new site was near two train tracks and would require the site build a structure within the building in order to be able to record audio books. Bob Kresmer inquired whether there had been progress towards making refreshable Braille equipment available to library patrons. Janet Fisher stated the library continued to review new technologies, although the refreshable Braille equipment was offered through the Perkins pilot program. Ted Chittenden inquired whether Janet Fisher was aware of the National Library Service (NLS) survey that was distributed to library users. Janet Fisher stated the survey was sent to 10,000 library users countrywide, although she had not received a copy of the survey. Ms. Fisher noted the NLS continued to promote library services for three months at a time and had remained active in those efforts.

Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Jim LaMay stated the agency continued to implement the Strategic Plan and to integrate all services to individuals with CVHL. Jim LaMay stated staff members attended a Texas symposium on deaf-blindness and were able to network with other professionals. Mr. LaMay stated that 25 Occupational Therapy students had toured ACBVI and were able to observe instruction to individuals.

SAAVI Services for the Blind

Mike Gordon stated that SAAVI was in the process of redesigning the organization's website and social media sites. Mr. Gordon stated that SAAVI was the recipient of a bequest that was nonrestrictive but required that the funds be used towards AT equipment. Mike Gordon stated that SAAVI was able to upgrade equipment and software licenses. He noted the organizations was also in the process of skill development for staff and would develop plans for each staff member. Mike Gordon stated the SAAVI location in Tucson continue to experience challenges due to the construction of Grant Road, which was impacting the organization's services. Mr. Gordon noted that portions of the buildings could be acquired through city re-zoning and SAAVI was in the process of negotiating the acquisition, and potentially moving to another location. Mike Gordon stated that SAAVI was emphasizing the physical activity for staff and consumers and had success in

the new Health and Wellness program. Mike Gordon stated that SAAVI would hold a Family Retreat on April 6, 2019 with approximately 40-50 individuals for any families or children that were interested in participating.

Arizona Council of the Blind (AzCB)

John McCann stated the AzCB was preparing for a conference on May 3, 2019 at ACBVI. Mr. McCann stated the AzCB also had a new chapter in Verde Valley.

National Federation of the Blind of Arizona (NFBA)

Donald Porterfield stated the NFB National Convention would be in Las Vegas and he anticipated that individuals from Arizona would have national scholarships to attend the convention. Donald Porterfield stated the Education Committee was planning an IEP seminar to teach individuals to advocate for their IEP. Mr. Porterfield stated the NFBA State Convention was scheduled for Labor Day weekend in Phoenix.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the GCBVI Full Council will be on March 15, 2019 from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. in the Video Conference Room, at 515 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ.

- SBVID Staff Training Curriculum Discussion
- Provider Survey Discussion

Jim LaMay inquired whether the council could review the SBVID Staff Training Curriculum and discuss at the next meeting. Mr. LaMay also inquired whether the council could discuss the surveys distributed to providers regarding the contracts under Knowledge Services.

Bob Kresmer inquired whether council members would object to changing the Full Council meeting time back to 12:30-3:30. The council members did not express any objections to a change in the meeting time.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Call to the Public

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Amy Porterfield moved to adjourn the meeting. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 pm

As of December 31, 2018:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 877
The total number of Veterans in VR Program was 36
The total number of individuals in the OOS was 64
The total number of individuals in Priority Two was 35
The total number of individuals in Priority Three was 29
The number of VR applications was 64
The average number of days from application to eligibility was 49
The median number of days application to eligibility was 41
The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 84.8%
The number of new plans written was 57
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 99
The median number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 83
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 78.2%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$54.81
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$10.50
The number of clients placed was 11
The number of clients closed successfully was 19

As of December 31, 2018, the Deaf Blind Population statistics:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 38
The total number of Veterans in VR program was 1
The total number of individuals in the OOS was 0
The total number of individuals in Priority Two was 0
The total number of individuals in Priority Three was 0
The number of VR applications was 0
The number of new plans written was 0
The IPE Implementation Compliance within 90 days was 100%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was n/a
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was n/a
The number of clients placed was 0
The number of clients closed successfully was 0