

**Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)**  
**Full Council Meeting Minutes**  
July 19, 2019

**Members Present**

Bob Kresmer  
Amy Porterfield  
Ted Chittenden  
George Martinez  
Mike Gordon  
Jim LaMay  
Annette Reichman  
Bea Shapiro  
Nathan Pullen  
Allan Curry  
Donald Porterfield

**Members Absent**

Ed Gervasoni  
Janet Fisher

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

**Guests Present**

Kristen Mackey  
Sue Kay Kneifel  
David Steinmetz  
Terri Hedgpeth  
Michael Bailey  
Milly Martinez  
Ed House

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**Call to Order and Introductions**

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:38 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 May 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

George Martinez moved to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2019 GCBVI Full Council meeting as written. Terri Hedgpeth seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by majority voice vote.

### **GCBVI Chairperson's Report**

Bob Kresmer stated that at the previous Full Council meeting, members learned about issues regarding the Independent Living Blind (ILB) Program and he had developed a workgroup to discuss methods to reduce the waiting list. Bob Kresmer stated a workgroup would meet in August to discuss the training of Services to the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) staff and supervisors. Mr. Kresmer noted that a workgroup would also meet to address the Youth Summer Transition Program and identify ways to assist Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to streamline processes. Bob Kresmer stated the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) held Town Hall meetings, in which he participated, and the council would hear about those meetings from Ms. Reichman.

### **New Member Vote**

Bob Kresmer stated that Executive Committee members interviewed prospective GCBVI council members David Steinmetz and Michael Bailey and recommended their applications be moved forward to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions.

Bea Shapiro motioned that David Steinmetz's application be moved forward for appointment. Nathan Pullen seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. David Steinmetz thanked the council for the opportunity and expressed his interest in supporting the council and to meet the needs of the community.

George Martinez motioned that Michael Bailey's application be moved forward for appointment. Bea Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. Michael Bailey thanked the council and stated that he looked forward to completing council action items.

Bob Kresmer reminded attendees that guests were permitted to speak at the end of the meeting during the Call to the Public. He noted that if a guest would like to participate in the conversation, that individual should identify him/herself and the Chair could recognize that individual. Bob Kresmer stated the council would contact the new council members regarding New Member Training.

## **RSA Administrator's Report**

Kristen Mackey, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Administrator, stated that RSA had reviewed the rules package, which would likely be available for action in May or June of 2020. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA was also in the process of completing the Statewide Needs Assessment, which was required as part of the development of the State Plan, which was due in March of 2020. She noted the intent was to gather the needs statewide to develop strategies that would be included in the State Plan for the next four years.

Kristen Mackey stated that RSA released 236 individuals from the Order of Selection (OOS) Waiting List, which brought the number to zero as of July 1, 2019. Kristen Mackey stated that one of RSA's Strategic Plan goals was to close 1772 individuals with employment, and as of May, RSA was 87% of that goal. Ms. Mackey stated the other Strategic Plan goal was to increase the number of dual enrolled Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) clients in competitive integrated employment. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA was able to place 42 individuals into competitive integrated employment. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA would continue to measure the number of individuals closed with an employment outcome, as well as the Division goal of increasing the number of dual enrolled VR/DDD clients. She noted that the Administration level goal was to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) directly from staff members.

Kristen Mackey stated the Region 3 Program Manager position was posted and RSA would begin interviews the following week. Kristen Mackey stated that Jami Lemmer had been hired as a new RSA Policy Manager. Ms. Mackey stated that Brandi Coffland had been hired as a Special Project Coordinator and would assist with the management of audit management and align the strategies with the workforce partners. Kristen Mackey stated RSA also hired Mathew Navarez as the new Ombudsman and Nicole Smith as the new Ombudsman Assistant.

Kristen Mackey stated the RSA Commissioner position was an appointed position, in which Mark Schultz had been re-nominated to fill that position. Ms. Mackey stated that individuals were encouraged to contact their Senators to express the need for leadership at the Federal RSA level. She noted that Mr. Shultz was the former director for the Nebraska General VR and would be a great candidate for the position. Kristen Mackey stated that she had been asked to participate to meet with Federal RSA representatives to discuss how to measure the success of VR and to how to use the WIOA data. Ms. Mackey stated that the group members would meet to discuss the

definition of Pre-ETS and to identify areas for flexibility. She noted that transportation and accommodations such as American Sign Language (ASL) were not part of the allowable services, which presented a challenge to the required allocated 15% of Pre-ETS services. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA continued to struggle with the prior approval for expenses over \$5000 and noted that Business Enterprise Program (BEP) equipment would often go over that amount. Kristen Mackey stated there was proposed Legislation for the reorganization of the Administration for Community Living, in which the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), the Governor's Council on Spinal and Head Injury (GCHSI), and the Developmental Disabilities Council would be impacted. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA was monitored in March of 2018 and had not received the report from that visit. She noted that RSA provided the 30-month response regarding the Sunset Audit, which addressed the client case costs and client outcomes.

Amy Porterfield inquired whether the council would be involved in the hiring of the Regional Program Manager position. Kristen Mackey stated that Bob Kresmer would be participating on the hiring panel for that position. Amy Porterfield stated the job announcement listed a narrow recruitment period and inquired regarding RSA's efforts to recruit candidates. Kristen Mackey stated the closing date on the initial job posting was inaccurate and the position was open until filled. Amy Porterfield stated if the position remained open, how would RSA be able to gauge whether the agency found the best candidate. Kristen Mackey stated the hiring panel would assess the skills and experience of the candidates interviewed and decide whether to continue searching for an individual to fill that position. Amy Porterfield inquired regarding the number of blind and visually impaired students that participated in the Youth Transition Program. Kristen Mackey stated she did not have the exact number, although RSA was reviewing the Pre-ETS pilot program with an effort to allow more students to participate. Bea Shapiro stated that not all of the ARIZONA@WORK locations have the appropriate Assistive Technology (AT) equipment for individuals and inquired regarding the process to supply AT. Kristen Mackey stated that some locations, such as Flagstaff, contacted RSA to request AT equipment. She noted that Sue LeHew, AT Coordinator, was working with the One Stop Centers to identify the AT needed. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA wanted to ensure that the comprehensive sites have the necessary tools, although the sites should provide staff that could use the AT and direct individuals to those technologies. Terri Hedgpeth expressed her concern regarding the salary range posted for the Regional Program Manager position and the downgrade of the position. Kristen Mackey stated the position had not been downgraded and was the same classification and designation. Ms. Mackey stated the salary range posted was the minimum to the mid-point of that salary range and noted there was flexibility according to experience and

education. Kristen Mackey added that the position would still report to her and have the same level of involvement and authority. Terri Hedgpeth inquired regarding the upper level of the salary range. Kristen Mackey stated that she could provide the salary range with the council. Kristen Mackey stated the Grade level and the salary range of the position had not changed. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the number of individuals that had applied from out of state. Kristen Mackey stated that approximately 2 individuals applied from out of state that met the requirements and 5 internal applicants had applied although she was unsure whether they met the requirements.

### **SBVID Program Manager Report**

Sue Kay Kneifel reviewed the SBVID metrics (**See Attachment A**) and stated there were 890 clients with vision loss in the VR program and noted there were 11 referrals. Ms. Kneifel stated the average hourly wage was \$11.63, there were 2 closures with employment and the average case cost was \$41,913.72. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the Tucson Supervisor position had been reposted, and Mathew Clay's position would be posted soon as well. She stated that she anticipated interviewing for the Tucson Supervisor position the first week of August. Sue Kay Kneifel noted that she would like to utilize more Pre-ETS funding for the Summer Experience for the next year. Bea Shapiro inquired whether the Tucson Supervisor position had been announced. Sue Kay Kneifel stated her understanding that the position had been announced. Amy Porterfield inquired regarding the status of the Orientation to Blindness Workshops and whether more clients would participate in those trainings. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that SBVID had temporarily put a hold on the workshops in Tucson until more staff had been hired. She noted her understanding that the workshops were occurring one-on-one with Karen Conant. Bob Kresmer stated there would be further discussions regarding the Orientation to Blindness Workshops when the Regional Program Manager position was filled. David Steinmetz inquired regarding the definition of closure with employment. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that traditionally, closure with employment was a successful closure, although individuals could close out of the program unsuccessfully. Ted Chittenden inquired regarding the client case cost, and whether that number was in the acceptable range. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the acceptable range would reflect the services the individual required. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the average case cost included all the services, education, and technology the client would have received. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the case cost reflected the services obtained during that time period, which was June 30 to current. She noted that the case costs might have reflected an individual that received services previously and needed minimal services. Jim LaMay inquired whether the RSA referral rates had increased or

decreased. Kristen Mackey stated that nationally, the VR referral rates had decreased due to the economic trends, which correlated with a good economy. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that she had been working with the Rehabilitation Technicians to streamline the process so that all referrals would be sent to one contact and track the number of referrals. Bob Kresmer stated that he would like to invite Karla Rivas-Parker to attend future GCBVI council meetings to report on Independent Living (IL) and Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) services. Terri Hedgpeth recommended the Regional Program Manager position announcement include Depends on Experience (DOE) to encourage more individuals to apply for the position. Kristen Mackey stated the Department of Economic Security (DES) and the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) controlled the job posting announcements, although she would express the council's concerns with HR.

### **BEP Program Update**

Nathan Pullen stated that 2 new BEP trainees were licensed, which would make the total number 27. Nathan Pullen stated that 6 facility announcements would be announced as well. Mr. Pullen stated that BEP would review the training program and identify whether any changes should be made. He noted that 5-6 individuals would begin the next training in September or October. Nathan Pullen stated the Arizona Participating Operators Committee (APOC) would be on July 22, 2019 at the Ability 360 Conference Center and all council members were invited to attend. Nathan Pullen stated BEP completed the development of the annual budget, which would be approximately 5.98 million. He noted that BEP was able to reduce spending in part through the internal maintenance program and had recently hired an additional technician to repair equipment. Bob Kresmer inquired whether BEP was still considering a possible private enterprise. Nathan Pullen stated BEP had expanded to a micro market in the Knight facility in north Phoenix. He noted the facility was not profitable on its own, therefore BEP approached Knight inquiring whether there could be additional opportunities. Nathan Pullen stated that BEP had recently taken over the Knight training center, which was a more profitable site. Bob Kresmer inquired whether there was an update regarding the potential privatization of the rest stops. Nathan Pullen stated he had not received an update and noted that Terry Smith would attend the upcoming APOC meeting and could potentially provide an update. Terri Hedgpeth inquired regarding the location where the BEP operators received their training. Nathan Pullen stated BEP operators received online training through Hadley, in classroom training in the BEP office, and a rotation of on the job training in cafeterias and vending routes.

## **ASDB Report**

Annette Reichman stated ASDB held a Town Hall meeting in May, where ASDB reviewed the 5 Strategic Plan priorities of communication and relationship building, early learning achievement and education, academic achievement and student engagement, staff and leader professional growth, and resources. Annette Reichman stated that ASDB had been working on agency wide initiatives and would develop a Strategic Plan. Ms. Reichman stated that 50 individuals would meet to review the strategic priorities and how to identify whether the progress was successful. Annette Reichman stated that she extended an invitation to the ASDB Board members to participate in that discussion. She noted the ASDB Board was interested in equity, although the Board had not identified the true meaning of equity. Annette Reichman stated ASDB had reviewed the regional co-operatives and identified that the agency could perform better. She noted that she wanted to focus on quality, and to ensure that services and technology were available to students statewide. She noted the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) determined the services the student would need, and ASDB could then customize the services that could be offered. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the progress towards offering distance and virtual services to blind and visually impaired students. Annette Reichman stated ASDB was interested in offering virtual instruction and began a pilot with the Eastern Highland Regional Co-Operative, which would provide specialized education to 9 deaf students. Ms. Reichman stated ASDB would expand that program to 30 students in the Fall. She noted the Early Learning program was also utilizing virtual technology for tele-intervention for families and the children. Annette Reichman stated ASDB was also offering ASL classes to parents in the classroom and through virtual technology. Bob Kresmer stated that virtual education for blind and visually impaired students was difficult and inquired whether ASDB would begin a pilot program for those students as well. Annette Reichman stated that ASDB had started a pilot program for blind and visually impaired students, although some training would have to occur in person, such as Orientation and Mobility. Bob Kresmer stated that ASDB received additional funding for the Early Childhood Program and inquired regarding the progress of that program. Annette Reichman stated that ASDB received 2.1 million, in which \$400,000 was intended for the purchase of vehicles. Ms. Reichman stated that ASDB intended to hire 21 new teachers and had hired 17 new teachers. She noted that ASDB created an agreement with Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) to hire 3 more teachers. Annette Reichman stated that ASDB would hold a training in August and would match new teachers with mentors. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding ASDB's recruiting methods to fill vacant teacher positions. Annette Reichman stated ASDB aggressively recruited new teachers when seeking to fill the 21 new teacher positions and would need to develop a

recruitment plan to fill the vacant positions. Terri Hedgpeth inquired whether students were taught tactile interpreting for deaf-blind students. Annette Reichman stated ASDB had interveners at the Phoenix, Tucson and co-operatives that could provide tactile interpreting or intervening. She noted that ASDB recently received funding for the Deaf-Blind Project as well. Terri Hedgpeth inquired regarding the difference between an intervener and a tactile interpreter. Annette Reichman stated a tactile interpreter provided interpreting. She stated that an intervener could guide the individual to the lunchroom and provide environmental information about the lunchroom and would provide more interaction with the individual. Terri Hedgpeth inquired whether the student was learning tactile interpreting. Annette Reichman stated students learned ASL and tactile interpreting.

## **GCBVI Committee Reports**

### ***Public Information***

Ted Chittenden stated the statistics for EyeKnow.AZ were:

May

Number of sessions (visits) 79  
Number of individuals visiting website 70  
Pages viewed per visit 4.58  
Time spent visiting the database (minutes) 1.55  
New visitors 88.9%  
Returning users 11.3%

June

Number of sessions (visits) 111  
Number of individuals visiting website 93  
Pages viewed per visit 3.59  
Time spent visiting the database (minutes) 1.47  
New visitors 88.9%  
Returning Users 11.1%

The GCBVI Facebook statistics were:

May

Page views: 16  
Page Previews: 1  
Post Reach: 31

Post Engagements: 29

June

Page views: 1

Post reach: 16

Post engagements: 5

Likes: 24

Follows: 26

Ted Chittenden stated the EyeKnow.AZ proximity search had been disabled temporarily. Ted Chittenden stated that the Secretary of State IT staff informed the committee that the first 40,000 proximity searches in the EyeKnow.AZ database were free, and that any searches after that would require payment. Mr. Chittenden stated that IT staff could be alerted if the proximity search exceeded 40,000 a month, and for that feature to be disabled. Ted Chittenden noted that the database would require a form of payment to be on file if the proximity search exceeded the maximum number. Mr. Chittenden inquired whether the council would prefer that the maintenance of the EyeKnow.AZ database continue to fall under the Secretary of State office.

Amy Porterfield motioned that the council allow the Secretary of State office to monitor the proximity search and to disable the feature if the searches exceeded 40,000 a month. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Ted Chittenden stated the Public Information Committee was interested in recruiting additional committee members. He noted that Dan Martinez would be resigning from the committee in December, and the committee would need additional members to complete activities. Ted Chittenden stated that he had received all Committee reports for the Annual Report except for the Legislative and Public Policy and Employment Committees as well as the Chair Report. Bob Kresmer stated that he would send a Chair Report to Ted Chittenden. Amy Porterfield and Nathan Pullen agreed to send their Committee reports to Ted Chittenden.

### ***Public Policy and Legislative Committee***

Amy Porterfield stated the Public Policy and Legislative Committee had not met during the summer, although the committee and workgroups would begin meeting soon.

## ***Assistive Technology***

Bea Shapiro stated the AT Committee was in the process of developing the presentation for the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) with the Employment Committee on worksite evaluations. Bea Shapiro stated the committee would teach employers and consumers the importance of worksite evaluations. Bea Shapiro stated that Karla Rivas-Parker and Kristen Mackey attended the AT Committee meeting and indicated that the AT warehouse equipment was for VR, ILB, individuals over 55 and individuals under 54. She noted that most of the equipment was for ILB clients. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the million dollars in equipment was held in three categories. Bea Shapiro confirmed the equipment was held in those categories. Terri Hedgpeth stated the AT Committee had requested a list of the equipment and she suggested that older equipment and software be removed from the warehouse. Kristen Mackey stated the dollar amount of the equipment was not a concern. Ms. Mackey asked the council to consider that some individuals could have use of older equipment and noted that if equipment was surplus, the equipment could not be used by anyone. Bob Kresmer suggested the AT Committee review the list of equipment and make any recommendations regarding the equipment. Bea Shapiro stated that she worked closely with Karla Rivas-Parker and noted that individuals that were not interested in employment could use the older equipment.

## ***Employment***

Nathan Pullen stated the Employment Committee was planning for the next event, which would be a webinar on July 31, 2019 for employers and job seekers. Mr. Pullen stated that the webinar would include a panel discussion with Kirk Adams, American Council of the Blind (ACB) and noted that the webinar had been posted through various social media pages.

## ***Committee on Deaf-Blind Issues***

Bob Kresmer stated that Ed Gervasoni was unable to attend the meeting, although Mr. Gervasoni had mentioned the recent issue regarding Support Service Provides (SSP), and their ability to provide interpretation to consumers. Mr. Kresmer inquired whether Ms. Kneifel had an update regarding that issue. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) licensing staff was working with the Attorney General's (AG) Office to review the rules and identify whether there could be an exception for SSPs. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that she was unsure whether the AG had reached a final decision, although she anticipated

receiving an update at the upcoming Committee on Deaf-Blind Issues meeting.

### ***Education Committee***

Bob Kresmer stated the Education Committee had not met during the summer, although the committee would meet in August.

### **Ex-Oficio Member and Blindness Community Organization Updates**

#### ***Arizona Talking Book Library***

Bob Kresmer stated that Janet Fisher was unable to attend the meeting, although he received notice that the NLS had recently changed their name to the National Library Services for the Blind and Print Disabled. Mr. Kresmer stated the NLS would also offer free refreshable Braille e-readers by Spring 2020 for a test pilot prior to distribution.

#### **National Federation of the Blind of Arizona (NFBA)**

Donald Porterfield stated the NFB National Convention was held in Las Vegas, in which just over 3200 individuals attended, and 248 were from Arizona. Donald Porterfield stated the National Conference would be held in Houston the following year. Mr. Porterfield stated the NFB State Convention would be held August 29-September 1, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency in Phoenix and would be held in Tucson the following year. Donald Porterfield stated the NFBA would reenergize the At-Large Chapter, which did not have a designated location, although members had expressed an interest in participating. Donald Porterfield stated the NFBA held the Braille Enrichment Literature and Learning (BELL) Program, in Tucson and Phoenix, for Kindergarten to middle school students. He noted that students learned to read Braille to assist in school and life at an early age.

#### **SAAVI Services for the Blind**

Amy Porterfield stated that SAAVI helped facilitate the BELL Academy with the NFBA in Tucson with 18 students and 15 students were participating in the Ready Set Go program. Amy Porterfield stated SAAVI continued to work with Louisiana Tech with Dr. Bell on Strategic Plan development. Ms. Porterfield noted that SAAVI was refunded from the City of Tucson for the REAL Program, a children's program, and would continue the program in Phoenix. Amy Porterfield stated SAAVI was able to take families to the National NFB Conference and coordinated and facilitated the Parents of Blind Children Youth Track, where over 100 youth participated.

## **Arizona Industries for the Blind**

David Steinmetz stated that AIB continued to focus on warehouse distribution and one of the two warehouse positions had been filled. Mr. Steinmetz stated AIB was focusing on outreach and advocacy efforts at state and Federal levels.

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

The next meeting of the GCBVI Full Council will be on September 20, 2019 from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm. in the Video Conference Room, at 515 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ.

## **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

## **Call to the Public**

John McCann stated that he would submit his application to the council soon. Mr. McCann stated that he was no longer on the ACB Board, although he remained the President of the AzCB Arizona affiliate.

## **Adjournment of Meeting**

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

As of June 30, 2019:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 997  
The total number of Veterans in VR Program was 37  
The total number of individuals in the OOS was 21  
The total number of individuals in Priority Two was 1  
The total number of individuals in Priority Three was 20  
The number of VR applications was 167  
The average number of days from application to eligibility was 45.6  
The median number of days application to eligibility was 41  
The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 87.2%  
The number of new plans written was 193  
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 82.5  
The median number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 69  
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 83.1%  
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$55.29  
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$10.00  
The number of clients placed was 40  
The number of clients closed successfully was 43

As of June 30, 2019, the Deaf Blind Population statistics:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 43  
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 83.3%  
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$20.20  
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$17.89  
The number of clients placed was 2  
The number of clients closed successfully was 3