

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)

DeafBlind Committee Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2023

Attendance

Members Present

Andrew Cohen, Co-Chair
Jonathan Pringle, Co-Chair
Megan Mogan
Mary Hartle
Sue Kay Kneifel
Virginia Thompson
Larry Rhodes
PV Jantz

Members Absent

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Cindy Walsh
Jose Vasquez
April Welch, ASL Interpreter
Lee Bradley, ASL Interpreter

Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

Jonathan Pringle, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of November 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Larry Rhodes motioned to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2022 DeafBlind Committee meeting. Megan Mogan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment

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

Chair Report

Jonathan Pringle stated the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in New York was at the new full capacity of 30 students, which was the maximum amount allowed post-COVID. Mr. Pringle noted the Arizona DB Specialist for HKNC was doing great in her new position. Andrew Cohen stated that some services had slowed during the holidays, although he was glad to see that DB retreats and events were starting up again.

Committee Activities Discussion

Jonathan Pringle stated that he would be meeting with Brian Dulude, Program Manager for Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID), Carmen Green with the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH), and the new Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), Max Ryser to discuss potentially holding a Town Hall meeting. Mary Hartle inquired whether Jonathan Pringle was the regional representative for HKNC. Jonathan Pringle stated he was the regional representative, which included Arizona, Colorado, Utah, North and South Dakota. Andrew Cohen inquired whether the committee should invite Max Ryser to attend committee meetings as a SILC representative. Jonathan Pringle stated that he could inquire whether Mr. Ryser or another SILC representative could attend meetings. Mary Hartle suggested the committee include a DB individual or an individual with combined vision and hearing loss (CVHL) to attend the meeting. Jonathan Pringle stated the meeting would be an initial planning meeting to get the three agencies together to discuss a potential Town Hall meeting, although he could extend an invite to Ms. Hartle also if she would like to attend.

Andrew Cohen inquired whether Larry Rhodes would be retiring soon, and if the committee should invite another representative to replace Mr. Rhodes. Larry Rhodes stated the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD) was actively recruiting an individual to fill his position, although he was not retiring for about another year. Andrew Cohen inquired whether PV Jantz and a representative from ACDHH should be invited to participate on the committee as full members. Jonathan Pringle stated that representatives

from ACDHH typically attended meetings, such as Julie Stylinski, before she resigned. He noted that he could inquire whether Carmen Green would be able to be a representative from ACDHH for future meetings. Larry Rhodes motioned that a representative from ACDHH be a member on the committee. Jonathan Pringle seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Andrew Cohen inquired whether PV Jantz would like to be a full member on the committee also. PV Jantz stated that he would be pleased to support the committee as needed. Jonathan Pringle motioned that PV Jantz be a committee member as a representative from SBVID. Larry Rhodes seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously. Mary Hartle motioned that Brian Dulude be invited to attend future meetings also as a member. Jonathan Pringle stated that Brian Dulude was not at the meeting to accept the invite, although he would inquire whether Dr. Dulude would like to be a member during his meeting. Mary Hartle agreed and withdrew her motion until a later meeting.

Andrew Cohen inquired regarding which agency Cindy Walsh and Larry Rhodes represented. Larry Rhodes stated that he represented Catholic Community Services (CCS), which included COPD and Valley Center for the Deaf (VCD). Andrew Cohen inquired whether Cindy Walsh should continue to attend meetings, or whether the committee had sufficient representation from Larry Rhodes. Larry Rhodes stated that Cindy Walsh had historically attended meetings as an invited guest, and that he would like her to continue to attend meetings. Cindy Walsh stated that she used to be the Director of the VCD, and would attend meetings to provide reports. She noted that she had stepped out of that role, and was now in more of a Liaison role. Ms. Walsh stated that Jose Vasquez was in the new position as the Associate Director overseeing COPD and VCD, and would supervise the Support Service Provider (SSP) program, which is why she invited him to attend. She added that Larry Rhodes was the internal content expert for DB services, and she would like him to continue attending meetings until he retired. Mary Hartle inquired whether Krystal Wright was overseeing the SSP program for COPD and VCD. Cindy Walsh stated that Krystal Wright was overseeing SSP services for Arizona.

Andrew Cohen stated the committee had still needed to prioritize the activity to focus next. Mr. Cohen stated the committee had previously suggested: ACDHH outreach, SSP certifications, and development of a letter to SILC regarding funding for DB services. Jonathan Pringle stated that he would be

meeting with SILC and suggested the committee focus on ACDHH outreach or SSP certifications. Larry Rhodes stated his understanding that there were national efforts for development of a SSP certification, and suggested the committee hold off until there were more developments regarding those efforts. Virginia Thompson stated that she was interested in developing a letter to SILC, and noted her concern regarding services for individuals under 55. Andrew Cohen agreed that the committee could develop a letter to SILC to express the committees' concerns regarding the lack of services for individuals under 55. Mr. Cohen noted that Mr. Pringle could also discuss the committees' concerns with SILC during his meeting with the three agencies. Ms. Thompson agreed and inquired whether the committee would like to focus on Independent Living (IL) services first or ACDHH outreach. Mary Hartle stated that individuals could attend the Town Hall meeting and discuss their experiences and difficulties receiving IL services through SILC. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that she would like Carmen Green to be present at the meeting to discuss potential ACDHH outreach. Ms. Kneifel noted that ACDHH was not a direct services agency, and she would want to make sure there was sufficient staff to provide outreach services. Andrew Cohen agreed that the committee could discuss potential outreach efforts with ACDHH at a later meeting. The committee members expressed their agreement. Andrew Cohen stated the committee could wait to hear from Jonathan Pringle after his meeting, and could then identify which activity to focus on first. Mary Hartle stated her understanding that Jonathan Pringle would be meeting with Brian Dulude, Carmen Green, and Max Ryser about a potential Town Hall meeting, and the committee was discussing which activity to focus on first. Andrew Cohen agreed, and stated the committee would wait to hear back from Jonathan Pringle regarding a potential Town Hall meeting. Mr. Cohen stated that during that meeting, Mr. Pringle could get a pulse from SILC regarding IL services to individuals under 55 and ACDHH regarding outreach efforts.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the DeafBlind Committee was scheduled for March 8, 2023. Agenda items are as follows:

- Committee Activities Updates
- SILC Advocacy Update
- ACDHH Outreach Update

Announcements

Larry Rhodes stated VCD and COPD continued to provide SSP services and to recruit, train, and try to retain staff. Mr. Rhodes noted that SSPs did recently receive an increase in hourly wages, which would hopefully help with retention of SSPs. Larry Rhodes stated that ACDHH had recently changed the way that individuals requested SSP services, and had streamlined that process.

Megan Mogan stated the Arizona DeafBlind Project would be holding an Usher Family Get-Together event on January 28th for children, families, and adults with Ushers, and anyone was welcome to attend.

Virginia Thompson stated the Arizona Center for Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI) would be holding an event with Northern Arizona Adaptive Sports, where individuals would be skiing at Snow Bowl on March 2nd and 3rd.

Adjournment

Virginia Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mary Hartle seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.