

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Full Council Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2021

Members Present

Bob Kresmer
Ted Chittenden
Bea Shapiro
Brian Dulude
Mike Gordon
Steve Tepper
John McCann
Andrew Cohen
Jonathan Pringle

Members Absent

Michael Bailey
Terri Hedgpeth
Amy Porterfield
Donald Porterfield
Nathan Pullen
Janet Fisher
Annette Reichman

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Mike Feeney
Jordan Moon
Erin Pawlus
Lisa Yencarelli
Candis Gingras
Bradley Leprintess

Call to Order and Introductions

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:38 p.m. Introductions were made, a quorum was present, and the procedural meeting rules were explained.

Approval of August 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Ted Chittenden moved to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2021 GCBVI Full Council meeting as written. John McCann seconded the motion. Bob Kresmer noted that Andrew Cohen had previously requested the term DeafBlind be corrected in the minutes. The amended meeting minutes were approved by majority voice vote.

GCBVI Chairperson's Report

Bob Kresmer stated that he had been participating in several committees and workgroups, which had been active and would be providing updates during the meeting. Mr. Kresmer stated the council would hold Officer elections at the January meeting, and if anyone was interested in being considered for a position, they should contact him. Bob Kresmer inquired whether any council members could provide an update regarding the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE). Bea Shapiro stated the VRATE Board was shorthanded, and they were unable to plan the event for the original date in November. Bob Kresmer encouraged council members to consider participating on the VRATE Board or to provide assistance. John McCann stated his understanding that the VRATE Board was seeking individuals with specific experience in web administration. Steve Tepper stated he was on the VRATE Board, which had just agreed to postpone the event until April and would remain a virtual event. Mr. Tepper noted the VRATE Board had also hired Andrew Cohen to provide the website management for the event.

Council Membership Discussion

Bob Kresmer inquired whether any council members' terms would be ending and what they should do to reapply for appointment. Lindsey Powers stated John McCann, Bob Kresmer, Allan Curry and Michael Bailey's terms would be ending. Ms. Powers stated that individuals could reapply for appointment through the direct link to the Office of Boards and Commissions or through an application that she would send. Bob Kresmer stated that he had extended invitations to Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) staff to be more active with the council and encouraged any council members to contact their FBC contacts as well.

GCBVI Annual Report Discussion

Ted Chittenden stated he developed reports for the Independent Living (IL) and Public Information Committee. Mr. Chittenden stated he also received reports for the AT and Employment Committees and the SBVID report,

although he had not received the Education Committee report or the Chair report. Bob Kresmer stated he sent the Education Committee and Chair report to Mr. Steinmetz. Ted Chittenden stated he could inquire with David Steinmetz regarding those reports. He added that the DeafBlind and Public Policy and Legislative Committee reports were descriptions of the committees. Ted Chittenden inquired whether the council would approve of the Public Information Committee to submit the report once it was complete. John McCann motioned the Public Information Committee submit the GCBVI Annual Report once complete. Bea Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

RSA Administrator's Report

Brian Dulude stated that Kristen Mackey was busy working towards the new case management system, and he would be able to provide a SBVID update for the council. Mr. Dulude noted the proposed rules that govern the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), including Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) had been distributed for public comment. Brian Dulude stated he had reviewed the PDF document, which was difficult to navigate with screen readers and did not specify which sections had been crossed out and amended. Ted Chittenden stated he downloaded the Microsoft Edge browser, which was set up to read PDF documents and did let the user know which sections had been removed or edited. Mr. Chittenden stated he could provide instructions for using the Microsoft Edge browser to read PDF documents to council members.

SBVID Program Manager Report

Brian Dulude provided the SBVID report for the end of September 2020 compared to the end of September 2021:

The total number of individuals in VR for 2020 was 767

The total number of individuals in VR for 2021 and was 889

The number of individuals on the Order of Selection was 0

The total number of applicants for the VR Program for 2020 was 34

The total number of applicants for the VR Program for 2021 was 46

The average number of days from application to eligibility for 2020 was 61

The average number of days from application to eligibility for 2021 was 48

The eligibility compliance for 2020 was 83%

The eligibility compliance for 2021 was 82%

The number of new plans written for 2021 was 126

The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation for 2020 was 132

The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation for 2021 was 79
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days for 2020 was 71%
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days for 2021 was 82%
The average hourly wage for successful employment outcomes for 2021 was \$25.00
The number of clients placed in 2020 was 15
The number of clients placed in 2021 was 15
The number of clients closed successfully in 2020 was 4
The number of clients closed successfully in 2021 was 16

Brian Dulude provided the report for DeafBlind services for the end of September 2020 compared to the end of September 2021:

The total number of individuals in VR for 2020 was 41
The total number of individuals in VR for 2021 and was 45
The total number of applicants for the VR Program for 2021 was 1
The average number of days from application to eligibility for 2020 was 28
The average number of days from application to eligibility for 2021 was 54
The eligibility compliance for 2020 was 100%
The eligibility compliance for 2021 was 100%
The number of new plans written for 2020 was 7
The number of new plans written for 2021 was 11
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation for 2020 was 100
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation for 2021 was 132
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days for 2020 was NA
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days for 2021 was NA
The number of clients placed in 2020 was 1
The number of clients placed in 2021 was 1
The number of clients closed successfully in 2020 was 2
The number of clients closed successfully in 2021 was 0

Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the efforts to increase timeliness of VR services. Brian Dulude stated there had been staff turnover recently, although SBVID had been able to hire new staff. Brian Dulude noted he encouraged new staff to attend the monthly Orientation to Blindness Workshops and to learn about the comprehensive programs. Bob Kresmer stated the blindness community lost the counselor Nola Baker-Jones, who had passed away and would be missed. Bob Kresmer inquired whether SBVID had started preparing for the Summer Youth Transition program. Brian Dulude stated SBVID met with the vendors that would be participating in the Summer Youth Transition Program and would be planning the virtual

roadshow at the end of January. Bob Kresmer stated that in previous years, one staff member was responsible for registering students to participate in the program and inquired regarding the efforts to ensure that teachers and parents received the information about the program. Brian Dulude stated that Sue Kay Kneifel and the Supervisors met with the vendors regularly and would distribute the information about the program. Bob Kresmer inquired when RSA would know if the agency had successfully expended all funds or would be required to return funds. Brian Dulude stated his understanding that RSA had met the spending requirements, although RSA was still using the previous year's funds. Bob Kresmer inquired whether some of those funds could be used to fill open positions. Brian Dulude stated he did not believe that funding stream would be used for staff positions, although counselors, Rehabilitation Teachers and Rehabilitation Technicians had received a 5% pay increase earlier in the year. Brian Dulude stated the open position in northern Arizona had been filled internally by Zane Lambrose.

Brian Dulude stated the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program had Lanelle Crist, Amanda Byllesby, Vasant Garcia, Bea Shapiro, and Anna Miller as teachers who were providing services statewide. Brian Dulude stated the program received about 20 referrals a month, and there were approximately 200 individuals on the wait list. He noted that many of those individuals required several services, and approximately 16 services were assigned per month. Ted Chittenden inquired whether vendors were providing the Orientation and Mobility (O&M) and Assistive Technology (AT) services. Brian Dulude stated that individuals were receiving O&M and AT services through vendors.

BEP Program Update

Brian Dulude stated the Marana Military Base contract was under negotiations and would be open to Business Enterprise Program (BEP) operators in January. Brian Dulude stated a new micro-mart would open in ATP in Coolidge and facility announcements were out in Yuma, Lake Havasu, Flagstaff, Winslow, and Yavapai. Mr. Dulude noted BEP would also be filling the BEP Trainer position as well. Brian Dulude stated that prison vending had opened for Administrative staff as well as visitors. Brian Dulude stated the rest area food truck permits had been revoked by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) as of November 12th. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Orientation to Blindness Workshops would include discussion of the BEP program. Brian Dulude stated that would be a great addition to the workshops.

ASDB Report

Lisa Yencarelli stated that as of November 1, 2021, the overall enrollment agency wide was 2,143, which was an increase of 27 students from the October 1, 2021 enrollment of 2,116. Ms. Yencarelli stated the enrollment statistics were:

Tucson Campus: Total Visual Impairment students 41, Multiple Disability/Multiple Disability SSI 24, DeafBlind 4
Phoenix Day School for the Deaf: Total Visual Impairment 23
Distance learning Program: Total Visual Impairment 37
Region 1: Total Visual Impairment 100, Multiple Disability/Multiple Disability SSI 60, DeafBlind 3
Region 2: Total Visual Impairment 141, Multiple Disability/Multiple Disability SSI 60, DeafBlind 2
Region 3: Total Visual Impairment 108, Multiple Disability/Multiple Disability SSI 66, DeafBlind 6
ELP 0-3 North: Total 64 Multiple Disability 9, DeafBlind 7
ELP 0-3 Central: Total Visual Impairment 13, Multiple Disability 1, DeafBlind 7
ELP 0-3 South: Total Visual Impairment 43, Multiple Disability 16, DeafBlind 2
ELP 0-3 Southwest: Total Visual Impairment 5
ELP 0-3 Foundation for Blind Children: Total Visual Impairment 117, Multiple Disability 38, DeafBlind 8

Bob Kresmer inquired whether any of the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) had to close due to COVID. Lisa Yencarelli stated that each district was following their own plans, although staff or students were able to attend virtually due to COVID. Bob Kresmer inquired whether there were efforts to encourage students ages 5 and up to obtain the vaccine. Lisa Yencarelli stated she was unsure, although all staff had been encouraged to obtain the vaccine and to wear masks and social distance. Mr. Kresmer inquired whether ASDB was considering enforcing mandates that staff obtain vaccinations. Lisa Yencarelli stated she was unsure, although she could inquire with Superintendent Annette Reichman.

GCBVI Committee Reports

Legislative and Public Policy Committee

Bob Kresmer stated the committee had started communications with the Governor's Office regarding a potential increase in funding for the Independent Living Blind (ILB) program.

AT Committee

Bea Shapiro stated the AT Committee had been working with Dr. Grandela to provide a presentation at VRATE that would be open to VR counselors and other professionals. Bea Shapiro stated the committee was also working to ensure that individuals attending the event could receive CEUs. Ms. Shapiro stated the presentation would be great and she hoped to be able to provide the presentation in April. Bea Shapiro stated the AT Committee also recorded the first couple of podcasts, *AT in the Desert*, which would be played on Sun Sounds. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the podcasts would be available through other methods. Bea Shapiro stated the podcasts were currently only available through Sun Sounds.

Ex-Oficio Member and Blindness Community Organization Updates

Arizona Talking Book Library

Erin Pawlus stated the library had started to bring volunteers back into the recording studio slowly and allowed sufficient time between recording sessions for safety. Ms. Pawlus stated that volunteers were continuing the recording of any unfinished books as well as magazines. Erin Pawlus stated the library was participating in various pilot programs, such as the Marrakesh Treaty, which allowed the library access to materials from other countries. Erin Pawlus stated the library currently had 919 books in Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish, and Vietnamese, Greek and Polish. Erin Pawlus stated the library was also participating in a Braille e-reader pilot program and looked forward to offering that device to library users. Bob Kresmer inquired how library users were made aware that they could obtain library materials in other languages. Erin Pawlus stated that library patrons could reach out to the library to request library materials in other languages. She noted that Christine Tuttle, Outreach Librarian, also discussed that option during her outreach to other agencies. Bob Kresmer inquired whether there were any open positions at the library. Erin Pawlus stated the library would begin recruitment for a Reader's Advisory Librarian position.

Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Steve Tepper stated that ACBVI continued to move towards reopening and would reopen the social recreation program in January. Mr. Tepper stated the center held a vaccination clinic for COVID and flu vaccines as well as blood pressure checks. Bob Kresmer inquired whether ACBVI had made any policy changes regarding COVID. Steve Tepper stated that all staff that interacted with clients or came into the office were required to obtain vaccines as well as wear masks. Bob Kresmer inquired whether any teachers

were meeting with customers in person. Steve Tepper stated that some teachers would meet with customers in person as needed.

SAAVI Services for the Blind

Jordan Moon stated SAAVI allowed vaccinated staff and students to come into the center, or if they could provide an antibody test. Mr. Moon stated SAAVI continued to work with students virtually if they had not received the vaccine. Jordan Moon stated that SAAVI would be moving into new buildings in Phoenix and Tucson, which should be completed in January. Jordan Moon stated the Children and Youth Program in Tucson had a new Coordinator, and the Phoenix program continued, although the program would be recruiting a full time Coordinator. Jordan Moon stated that anyone could follow SAAVI on Facebook or could subscribe to the quarterly newsletters to obtain updates. Ted Chittenden inquired whether the Phoenix location would continue to offer youth services. Jordan Moon stated that SAAVI could shift staff as needed and that students would continue to receive services. Bob Kresmer inquired whether there were any open positions with SAAVI. Jordan Moon stated there was an open O&M Instructor, cane travel instructor, and Phoenix receptionist position.

Helen Keller National Center

Jonathan Pringle stated the HKNC had re-opened in New York, and 1 student was from Arizona and 3 more were scheduled to attend in January. Jonathan Pringle noted HKNC would also be hiring for an Administrative Assistant for Region 9 and anyone interested was welcome to apply. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the length of the HKNC program. Mr. Pringle stated the program was 6-9 months and would include an assessment and a development of goals and timeline. Bob Kresmer inquired whether VR could send an individual to visit the HKNC campus. Jonathan Pringle stated that anyone interested in visiting HKNC could contact their regional representative, which was a residential program and would include a tour and meals.

Arizona Council of the Blind

John McCann stated the AzCB would hold their November meeting and would begin preliminary planning for the 2022 Annual Convention. Mr. McCann stated the convention would be potentially held May 19th and 20th and would likely be a virtual event.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the GCBVI Full Council will be on February 18, 2022 from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Call to the Public

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Ted Chittenden moved to adjourn the meeting. Bea Shapiro seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:20.

As of June 30, 2021, the statistics are:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 880
The total number of Veterans in VR Program was 27
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 153
The average number of days from application to eligibility was 47.1
The median number of days application to eligibility was 26
The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 85.8%
The number of new plans written was 662
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 127.3
The median number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 84
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 70.9%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$100.00
The lowest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$11.54
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$22.84
The number of clients placed was 60
The number of clients closed successfully was 39

As of June 30, 2021, the Deaf Blind Population statistics:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 46
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 8
The average number of days from application to eligibility was 44.8
The median number of days from application to eligibility was 53
The eligibility determination compliance with 60 days was 87.5%
The number of new plans written was 26
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 97.6
The median number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 88
The IPE Implementation Compliance within 90 days was 85.7%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$17.00
The lowest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$17.00
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$17.00
The number of clients placed was 3
The number of clients closed successfully was 1