

**Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)**  
**Employment Committee Meeting Minutes**  
November 20, 2017

**Members Present**

Nikki Jeffords\*  
Terell Welch\*  
Larry Wanger\*  
Tanner Gers\*  
Bea Shapiro\*  
Jim Strohacker\*

**Members Absent**

Kevin Foster  
Jordan Moon

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers, Admin. Assist.  
\*Teleconferenced

**Guests Absent**

Debra Pryor\*, Untapped  
Arizona

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**Call to Order and Introductions**

Nikki Jeffords called the meeting to order at 10:08 am in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made a quorum was present.

**Approval of the October 31, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

Terell Welch motioned to approve the minutes from the October 31, 2017 meeting. Bea Shapiro seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Strategies for Inviting Employers**

This item was tabled.

**E75 Marketing Discussion**

Nikki Jeffords stated that she received positive feedback regarding the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) Business Breakfast sponsored by Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB). Ms. Jeffords stated the event would likely add momentum for the E75 event and inquired whether the committee members wanted to continue to hold the event in January or postpone the event date. Terell Welch stated the committee should continue to hold the event in January, as advertised on the Save the Date invitations. Jim Strohacker agreed that the committee should continue to hold the event in

January. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee could utilize the employer contact information captured on the Sign-In Sheet at the BLN Breakfast. Terell Welch suggested the committee consider ways to partner with the BLN in order to network with the businesses and encourage the businesses to attend the E75 event. Tanner Gers suggested the committee invite businesses in the BLN to attend a networking event prior to the E75 event to encourage those businesses to attend the E75 event. Nikki Jeffords noted that employers were invited to attend a Happy Hour event during the evening of the BLN Breakfast, although only one employer attended. Jim Strohacker agreed that the committee should continue efforts to partner with BLN employers, although he felt that another networking event would divert the E75 event efforts. Nikki Jeffords stated the Employment Committee was respectful of the employers' time and did not want to invite employers to too many events. Ms. Jeffords stated the committee could, however, engage employers by holding quarterly events.

Nikki Jeffords stated Debra Pryor, Untapped Arizona, was part of the Arizona BLN and could be invited to attend the E75 Diversity Award Event and potentially speak briefly at the event. Debra Pryor agreed that the committee should be respectful of employers' time, and noted that committee members would be welcome to attend BLN meetings and talk to the employers. Debra Pryor stated that Untapped Arizona recently surveyed 822 businesses in Arizona regarding recruiting and hiring individuals with disabilities. Ms. Pryor stated Untapped Arizona had also recently developed a new website and had become the Arizona affiliate for the BLN. Terell Welch inquired whether the E75 event could be involved in the AZ BLN. Debra Pryor stated the BLN was comprised of corporations, individuals, educational institutes, and was an open membership. Debra Pryor stated she would discuss an E75 partnership at the next BLN Board meeting. Nikki Jeffords stated that Kirk Adams' presentation at the BLN Breakfast included information regarding ensuring that employment settings were accessible and promoting a culture of inclusiveness. Nikki Jeffords stated Kirk Adams referenced an assessment tool that employers could use to ensure the accessibility in the workplace. Debra Pryor stated the Disability Equality Index, (DEI) report reviewed the accomplishments of businesses as well as the areas for improvement. Nikki Jeffords stated committee members would be pleased to be able to present briefly at an Untapped Arizona meeting regarding the E75 event. Debra Pryor stated she would welcome committee members to present and would be pleased to present to the GCBVI as well. Terell Welch inquired how E75 could be involved in the BLN. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether Employment Committee members should join the BLN individually. Debra Pryor stated she would discuss membership pricing with the BLN Board and noted the BLN had identified key partners the organization had partnered with in the past or would like to partner with.

Nikki Jeffords noted that Employment Committee members represented various businesses and agencies and would welcome a partnership with the BLN. Debra Pryor stated the BLN was interested in addressing misconceptions when hiring individuals with disabilities in an effort to dispel any myths.

Tanner Gers inquired whether the Save the Date invitations would be used to market the event. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee could use the contact list from the BLN Breakfast as well as the contacts that each committee member had. Terell Welch inquired whether each committee member would agree to bring three employers to the E75 events. Nikki Jeffords agreed that each committee member should attempt to bring three employers to the event.

Terell Welch motioned that each committee member agree to bring three employers to the E75 events. Nikki Jeffords seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

### **E75 Program Development Discussion**

Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee ensure that the event planner would still be able to assist with planning the E75 event. Lindsey Powers agreed to contact the event planner and discuss the event planning items. Terell Welch inquired whether the committee intended to continue using the Phoenix Rescue Mission or another company as the caterer for the E75 event. Jim Strohacker stated he was researching different caterers such as Arriba Mexican Grill, Carabas, and Olive Garden as potential caterers for the event. Jim Strohacker inquired regarding the approximate number of individuals that would attend the event and the budget for the food. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee planned for 100 individuals and the food budget for the event was about \$1250. Terell Welch noted the Phoenix Rescue Mission staff delivered and served the food, supplied and served drinks throughout the event, cleared the plates and cleaned up at the end of the event. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee used Phoenix Rescue Mission for the previous two events. Terell Welch stated that attendees pre-ordered their meal choices and that the service was seamless. Jim Strohacker stated he would contact some restaurants and provide the information to the committee for a decision. Nikki Jeffords stated she would contact Ability 360 and confirm that the committee had reserved the use of the conference room on the day of the event.

Nikki Jeffords stated the Executive Director of Tucson Electric Power and Marc Ashton, Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) would be invited to speak at the event as well as potentially Kevin Foster. Terell Welch stated that the speakers should be cognizant that the audience was the employers and to

ensure their presentations were relatable to the event. Mr. Welch noted that Kevin Foster could discuss how he was able to rise above his challenges. Jim Strohacker noted that Kevin Foster would be able to deliver a professional speech at the event. Nikki Jeffords stated that Marc Ashton could close his speech by challenging other employers to be recognized as the Most Admired Leader, as Mr. Ashton was. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether the committee intended to recognize three or five employers with awards. Nikki Jeffords suggested the home health care agency featured in the Department of Economic Security (DES) video and Charles Schwab be recognized with an award. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether Humana should be recognized with an award as well. Terrell Welch suggested that Bank of America be recognized. Nikki Jeffords noted that a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) client was unable to retain employment with Bank of America due to inaccessible technology. Nikki Jeffords stated that Jillian Seamans, Public Information Officer, could develop a Press Release regarding the employers that would be attending the E75 event.

Nikki Jeffords stated that many employers were not familiar with accessible technology and inquired whether the committee should include information at the E75 event regarding accessibility. Bea Shapiro stated that accessibility was important, and noted that the company and the IT department needed to cooperate on providing accessible technology. Nikki Jeffords agreed that the whole company needed to have buy-in when hiring blind and visually impaired individuals. Ms. Jeffords inquired regarding the best method for conveying that information to businesses. Bea Shapiro stated that many companies were intimidated with accessibility and were more receptive to information when they requested it. Nikki Jeffords suggested the committee develop talking points for the presenters at the E75 event and include the need for company buy-in when hiring blind and visually impaired individuals. Terrell Welch inquired whether Bea Shapiro would be willing to develop talking points regarding accessibility. Bea Shapiro stated she was still new to the Employment Committee, although she would be willing to assist in developing talking points regarding accessibility.

Debra Pryor suggested the committee include success stories in the E75 event program. Nikki Jeffords stated that Tucson Electric Power would discuss their successes in hiring blind and visually impaired individuals, Kevin Foster could speak about being employed with Motorola, and Marc Ashton could speak as the CEO of FBC.

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

The next meeting of the Employment Committee would be on December 4, 2017 from 10:00-11:00 am in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Agenda items are as follows:

- Strategies to Invite Employers
- E75 Marketing Discussion
- E75 Program Development Discussion

### **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

### **Public Comment**

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

### **Adjournment of Meeting**

Bea Shapiro motioned to adjourn the meeting. Tanner Gers seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.