

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

DeafBlind Committee Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2023

Attendance

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Mary Hartle

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Cindy Walsh
Jose Vasquez
Meghan Wimberly
April Welch, ASL Interpreter
Jennifer Key, 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 January 11, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Larry Rhodes motioned to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2023 DeafBlind Committee meeting. Andrew Cohen seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment

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

Chair Report

Jonathan Pringle stated that he met 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 later in the year. Jonathan Pringle noted that he would discuss the event with Brian Dulude at the upcoming Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE). Virginia Thompson stated that she would like to be part of that discussion and would contact Mr. Pringle and Dr. Dulude prior to VRATE. Mr. Pringle inquired whether any committee members knew of any individuals that would like to participate on the committee. Virginia Thompson stated that she would share something in writing to interested individuals. Jonathan Pringle stated he would typically share previous committee meeting minutes or refer an individual to the GCBVI website. Lindsey Powers stated she also had some information about the council that could be shared with individuals. Megan Mogan stated that she would like to see a family member of a DB individual or a youth, ages 18-25, that could share work or school experiences.

Committee Activities Discussion

Virginia Thompson stated the Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI) was currently serving 38 individuals in the I Can Connect program, and 10 were waiting to become active again. She noted that 9 individuals were participating in comprehensive services and the agency was currently hiring for several positions. Ms. Thompson stated ACBVI would be taking individuals to indoor rock climbing in May. Virginia Thompson stated some individuals would be attending the upcoming VRATE event, and she was requesting ASL interpreters to attend the event as well.

Carmen Green stated the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) had not filled the DeafBlind Specialist position and was accessing whether the position would be filled. She noted that ACDHH continued with the SSP service contract through Catholic Community Services (CCS) and was in the process of requesting an

increase in Support Service Provider (SSP) hours. Ms. Green noted that ACDHH would be holding a Senior Help Expo on March 25th at Ability 360 and 1 DB consumer had registered to attend.

Larry Rhodes stated CCS was still trying to recruit SSP to provide SSP services to individuals. Cindy Walsh stated CCS had recently requested and was awarded a grant for case management, which would be approximately 10-20 hours a week in Phoenix and Tucson. She noted that Larry Rhodes would be assisting with the development of the program. Larry Rhodes noted that his role was changing, and he was providing technical training and support 20% in Phoenix and Tucson. Andrew Cohen stated that was great news and inquired whether there was any consideration to having an email address where everyone could receive updates. Jose Vasquez stated that could be discussed and whether it could be maintained. Carmen Green inquired whether Ms. Walsh had to show sustainability when applying for the grant, and how it would continue. Cindy Walsh stated she indicated her hope that services could be expanded through the State for DB services beyond SSPs.

Megan Mogan stated the AZ DeafBlind Project was wrapping up 3 cohorts of intervener trainings. Ms. Mogan noted the agency continued to offer trainings every other month on different topics, such as pro-tactile communication. Megan Mogan stated the AZ DeafBlind Project provided virtual drop-ins via Zoom monthly as well as in-person technical assistance. Megan Mogan noted that outreach was going well and would be expanding to medical professionals in the state such as ophthalmologists, audiologists, and doctors.

Sue Kay Kneifel stated there were a couple of bills currently within Legislation that the committee should be aware of. Ms. Kneifel stated ACDHH did not support SB 1042 which would open the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) to students with all disabilities. She noted that ASDB was not prepared to serve students with all disabilities and did not have teachers with the appropriate certifications. Sue Kay Kneifel stated HB 2456 was the Sunrise bill for ASDB, and if passed, ASDB would close permanently. Sue Kay Kneifel agreed that there were not enough funds to support students with all disabilities, but if all students were to be served at ASDB, the funds would be even less.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the DeafBlind Committee was scheduled for July 12, 2023. Agenda items are as follows:

- Committee Activities Updates
- SSP Certifications

Announcements

Megan Mogan stated there were 3 open positions on the ASDB Governing Board if anyone knew of someone interested. Ms. Mogan noted that she also sat on the AER Board, and individuals could apply for CEUs for attending VRATE.

Andrew Cohen stated that PV Jantz had recently started his new position at ACDHH, and congratulated Mr. Jantz.

Adjournment

Larry Rhodes moved to adjourn the meeting. Megan Mogan seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:02 pm.