

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2020

Members Present

Bob Kresmer, Chair
Amy Porterfield
Ted Chittenden
Jim LaMay
Allan Curry
Bea Shapiro
Ed Gervasoni
Nathan Pullen

Members Absent

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Call to Order and Introductions

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of July 25, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Ted Chittenden moved to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2019 Executive Committee meeting. Ed Gervasoni seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Annual Report Discussion

Bob Kresmer stated the Public Information Committee would begin developing the GCBVI Annual Report, and inquired when the committee would like to receive the reports from the Committee Chairs. Ted Chittenden stated he would like to receive the committee reports by the GCBVI Full Council meeting, which was scheduled for July 17th. Ted Chittenden stated that he would also welcome any client success stories from SAAVI and ACBVI. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding an appropriate success story. Ted Chittenden stated a success story could be about any individual that had completed the VR program and had become employed or

was in college pursuing his or her goals. Ted Chittenden stated he would make an announcement at the upcoming GCBVI Full Council meeting and Lindsey Powers would send out reminder to Committee Chairs as well. Jim LaMay inquired who he should send success stories to. Ted Chittenden stated that any success stories could be sent to Lindsey Powers, who would distribute to the Public Information Committee members. Bob Kresmer stated he knew of an individual who had been certified as a Nursing Assistant and was currently seeking employment. He noted that if she was able to obtain employment, he would let the Public Information Committee know.

Bob Kresmer stated during the Executive Committee meeting in July, the committee discussed the Strategic Plan and the need to modify and streamline the plan. Mr. Kresmer inquired whether any committee members would be willing to volunteer to revisit the Strategic Plan and streamline the plan. Amy Porterfield stated the council developed a great Strategic Plan, although the accountability measures seemed to have complicated the plan. Jim LaMay agreed and noted that another problem was that the Strategic Plan included final outcome goals, and suggested the plan include outcomes that could be accomplished in 2-3 years. Bob Kresmer stated that if any committee member was willing to streamline the Strategic Plan, to contact him.

Bob Kresmer stated that he had been working with the Assistive Technology (AT) Committee to develop a survey that would be distributed to Teachers of Blind and Visually Impaired (TBVI) students regarding a workshop to teach teachers about different AT. Bea Shapiro stated the AT Committee was waiting to receive the Survey Monkey link to be sent to the TBVIs and she was looking forward to the training opportunity. Nathan Pullen stated the Employment Committee had initially planned to hold quarterly E75 Diversity events throughout the year, although the committee was unable to hold an event in the spring due to COVID 19. He noted the committee would potentially be able to hold an event during the summer. Bob Kresmer inquired whether any committee members had heard any updates regarding the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE). Amy Porterfield stated that she heard the VRATE Board was discussing potentially cancelling the event. Amy Porterfield stated the current state budget did not include an increase in funding for the ILB program, and the Public Policy and Legislative Committee would continue to monitor the situation. Ms. Porterfield noted that many things would occur in the future and there were a lot of unknowns currently. Amy Porterfield stated her understanding that Legislature had not made any major decisions regarding the current budget. Bob Kresmer stated he had put in a request to Kristen Mackey to compare the current VR and OIB budget to the previous budget, and was informed

that the RSA Data Unit individual that handled those requests had resigned, and those reports would be delayed. Ed Gervasoni stated that Brian Dulude had attended the previous Deaf-Blind Issues Committee meeting, which was the first time anyone in that position had attended a committee meeting. Ed Gervasoni stated that deaf-blind individuals were not leaving their homes as much due to the pandemic and were becoming more isolated in their homes. Mr. Gervasoni stated the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) had been discussing how to accommodate those individuals during this time. Amy Porterfield inquired whether the ACDHH had been reaching out to those individuals to check on them. Ed Gervasoni stated the agency had been in contact with individuals receiving Support Service Provider (SSP) services as well as the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD) and the Valley Center for the Deaf (VCD). Jim LaMay noted that ACBVI remained in contact with clients also.

COVID 19 Meeting Restrictions

Bob Kresmer inquired whether Jim LaMay, Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI) and Amy Porterfield, SAAVI Services for the Blind were still able to provide services during the COVID 19 pandemic. Jim LaMay stated ACBVI had completed the initial assessments for new clients, although the clients would still need to complete the remaining assessments in person when possible. Mr. LaMay stated two individuals received Assistive Technology (AT) training, but would need to receive the remaining services in person. Amy Porterfield stated SAAVI was offering all services virtually including Independent Living (IL) training. Jim LaMay inquired whether SAAVI was able to offer Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training virtually. Amy Porterfield stated that current students were able to continue independent lessons in their environments. Amy Porterfield stated O&M instructors were able to provide training to students in new environments while adhering to social distancing practices. Amy Porterfield stated that students were able to use problem solving skills, and were still able to make progress. Jim LaMay stated that many clients were reluctant to use public transportation and were waiting to receive services. Bob Kresmer inquired whether SAAVI was offering the IL classes over the phone. Amy Porterfield stated SAAVI was offering the classes via ZOOM. Ed Gervasoni inquired whether SAAVI planned to offer programs during the summer. Amy Porterfield stated SAAVI had discussed either offering summer programs virtually or through a hybrid method. Bob Kresmer stated he continued to hear from individuals interested in training and he referred them to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). He noted that he had not received notice regarding an Introduction to Blindness Workshop in May. Jim LaMay and Amy Porterfield stated they had not heard about a workshop in May.

Bob Kresmer inquired regarding Jim LaMay's succession plan for when Mr. LaMay would retire from ACBVI. Jim LaMay stated that his position was posted on the ACBVI website and would be posted nationally as well. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding an appropriate individual to take Jim LaMay's vacant position on the GCBVI. Jim LaMay noted that he filled an Ex-Oficio representation on the council and the council would need to assign an individual to fill that position. Ted Chittenden suggested the council consider contacting the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) and inquire whether Marc Ashton or another individual would be willing to serve on the council. Mr. Chittenden noted that FBC offered services to adults and children, and would be a great addition to the council. Bob Kresmer stated that FBC had been asked to participate on the council in the past and encouraged council members to consider any agencies that could serve on the council. Ted Chittenden stated the council could also consider contacting the Blinded Veteran's organization in Tucson. Amy Porterfield stated she would think about potential agencies and let the council know.

ILB Waitlist Discussion

Bob Kresmer stated that Karla Rivas-Parker, Independent Living Blind (ILB) Program Manager would be resigning from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Mr. Kresmer stated he had contacted Brian Dulude, Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) Program Manager to inquire who would be assuming Ms. Rivas-Parker's duties in the interim. Bob Kresmer noted that individuals continued to contact the ILB unit to request services. Bea Shapiro suggested the council encourage RSA to fill Karla Rivas-Parker's position quickly. Bob Kresmer agreed and noted that he would inquire whether RSA intended to change the ILB program moving forward.

New Membership Discussion

Bob Kresmer stated that Donald Porterfield and Allan Curry still needed to submit their applications for reappointment to the council. Mr. Kresmer stated the council also needed a parent of a blind or visually impaired child and another National Federation of the Blind (NFB) representative. Amy Porterfield stated she would reach out to the NFB regarding representation on the council. Ted Chittenden inquired regarding when his and George Martinez's appointments would end. Lindsey Powers stated Ted Chittenden and George Martinez's appointments would end December 31, 2020.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting date of the Executive Committee would be determined.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Ted Chittenden motioned to adjourn the meeting. Amy Porterfield seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm.