

**Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment
(GCBVI)
Legislative and Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes**

May 9, 2023

Attendance

Members Present

Amy Porterfield, Chair
Bob Kresmer
Ed House
John McCann
Ted Chittenden
Donald Porterfield

Members Absent

Guests Present

Marisela

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

Amy Porterfield, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of March 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Bob Kresmer motioned to approve the March 3, 2023 minutes. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Legislative Updates

Amy Porterfield stated that SB 1402, which would have allowed a student with any disability to attend the Arizona State Schools of the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) had been

removed on the Senate floor. Amy Porterfield stated that HB 2456 was the funding bill for ASDB and was typically heard every 10 years but had moved to 8 years as a Sunset audit of ASDB. Ms. Porterfield stated there was an amendment to that bill that would require an audit every 2 years. Amy Porterfield stated that caused a large uprising and rallies from the deaf community, which caused the bill to change to an audit every 4 years. She noted the bill had passed through the House and was at the Governor's Office. Ted Chittenden inquired regarding the initial change from an audit every 8 years to every 2 years. Amy Porterfield stated that the program was too important, and it required more government oversight. Amy Porterfield stated that ASDB had 3 audit findings: the condition of the main building was a safety hazard, the school was overcharging the public schools by taking the entire voucher, and they were not offering post-Transition service 1-year out of school. Amy Porterfield noted the issue with ASDB highlighted the need for the community to work together and for the community to be able to discuss their concerns. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Superintendent position had been renewed. Amy Porterfield stated she was unsure regarding the Superintendent position.

Amy Porterfield stated the Braille certification bill that called for an update to the language and an expansion of the certifications that would be accepted had not progressed. Ms. Porterfield stated the bill that requested an increase in funding for the Independent Living Blind (ILB) program had been sponsored in the House but had not moved in Committee. Amy Porterfield stated she met with the Department of Economic Security (DES) Liaison to discuss the possibility of serving ILB individuals under 55 years and he requested the council come back in August when there would likely be a budget for more programs. Amy Porterfield stated Bob Kresmer had recently requested additional information from Kristen Mackey regarding the Federal match amount and how to better utilize those funds. She noted that Ms. Mackey would be compiling that information and would share it with the committee.

Policy Discussion

Amy Porterfield stated she heard that a teacher had been denied employment at DES because she did not have a driver's license, and noted the committee needed to clarify that language. Ed House inquired whether the committee had received the most recent regulations and policies from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Bob Kresmer stated he had contacted Brian Dulude and would follow up on that request. Amy Porterfield stated she also heard that some Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) were told they could not offer iPhones to clients because they could be purchased in a store and were not Assistive Technology (AT) devices. She noted the committee should clarify policy language and that staff might need to be trained on how to apply policies. Jonathan Pringle noted that he had reviewed the most recent VR Policy

Manual changes, which had been modified to be more general. Amy Porterfield stated the council should be allowed to provide public comment on any policy change and had not been notified of the most recent changes. Amy Porterfield suggested the committee review the most recent VR Policy Manual and discuss any items the committee would like to address. She added the GCBVI might also need to educate the community on how to interpret and use the policies. Ted Chittenden stated that if the Federal government defaulted, he would inquire at the next Full Council meeting regarding the effect that would have on State funds.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Legislative and Public Policy Committee was scheduled for June 12. Agenda items are as follows:

- Legislative Updates
- Policy Discussion

Announcements

Ted Chittenden announced that Jeff Bishop would be moving back to Arizona and indicated interest in applying for council membership.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Bob Kresmer moved to adjourn the meeting. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm.