

Draft

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

DeafBlind Committee Meeting Minutes

July 12, 2023

Attendance

Members Present

Andrew Cohen, Co-Chair
Jonathan Pringle, Co-Chair
Sue Kay Kneifel
Virginia Thompson
Larry Rhodes

Members Absent

Megan Mogan

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Katie Seinko
Carmen Green
Penny Perry
Sandra Solomon, ASL Interpreter
Jennifer Key, ASL Interpreter

Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

Jonathan Pringle, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

Approval of March 8, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Larry Rhodes motioned to approve the minutes of the March 8, 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 had not met with Brian Dulude, Program Manager for Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID). He noted that SBVID had hired a new Assistant Program Manager, whom he had met with, although they had not discussed the issues raised during the Committee meetings. Andrew Cohen stated the DB Retreat of Arizona would start in two weeks, and several individuals would be attending as the DB community was expanding. He noted there would also be an event on the last Saturday of July for anyone interested in attending.

Committee Activities Discussion

Jonathan Pringle inquired whether any committee members had been successful in reaching out to individuals that would be interested in participating on the Committee. Andrew Cohen stated the Committee would likely have more success recruiting new members if the members identified specific activities or goals. Jonathan Pringle stated the Committee had previously discussed holding a Town Hall meeting, where DB individuals could attend. Mr. Pringle noted that during COVID, many agency offices had been closed, and now staff were able to meet individuals in the community, although he heard that many individuals experienced challenges in scheduling meetings. Sue Kay Kneifel suggested inviting Leadership from the GCBVI to offer guidance on the activities the Committee could focus on that would be aligned with the Council's overall goals. Ms. Kneifel stated the GCBVI members might also be able to offer some updates on any current Legislation that affected the DB community. Katie Sienko inquired regarding the types of activities the Committee had discussed. Jonathan Pringle stated the Committee had discussed Support Service Provider (SSP) certifications and services and would receive updates from different agencies or organizations such as SBVID, the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD), the Valley Center for the Deaf (VCD), and the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH). Sue Kay Kneifel suggested the Committee members engage representatives from Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC)

regarding resources for individuals from birth to death. Ms. Kneifel noted that some individuals would get dropped as they aged, and there needed to be a continuity of services for individuals. Andrew Cohen agreed and inquired whether PV Jantz would be able to assist in identifying some of the services for families. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the ACDHH was more of an information and referral agency rather than a provider of direct services. She noted the Committee would benefit, however, from knowing all of the agencies that provided services to DB individuals such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), that might not be part of discussions. Carmen Green agreed that many agencies provided services for DB individuals and the Committee would benefit from knowing which agencies and organizations provided services. Jonathan Pringle noted that 40-60% of individuals were not included in any census because they were put in a category of having multiple disabilities and were not provided with adequate services.

Sue Kay Kneifel stated another unrecognized group was senior citizens and there was a Federal concern with providing them with equitable access to services. Jonathan Pringle agreed, and noted the Committee could invite individuals from different agencies and organizations to future meetings to discuss their services. Virginia Thompson suggested the Committee also reach out to the Native American VR program to gather information regarding their needs and services.

Katie Sienko stated she had heard several individuals' express frustrations with not being able to procure interpreters for doctor's appointments, and inquired how the Committee could advocate for individuals. Andrew Cohen stated he had heard there were not enough tactile interpreters either, and noted they were not paid commensurate pay for their services. Virginia Thompson noted that many doctor's offices offered Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) services. Carmen Green agreed that more interpreting was offered virtually post-COVID, although individuals in the community could reach out to the ACDHH regarding issues with obtaining interpreters for doctor's appointments. Jonathan Pringle stated that raising awareness was important, although the change had to come from the consumers and community members, while the Committee could support the community. Andrew Cohen agreed that the shortage of interpreters was an issue that the Committee could address. He noted that Committee members could also invite representatives from other agencies and organizations to attend future meetings.

SSP Certifications

Larry Rhodes stated there was a National Community of Practice regarding SSP certifications, although he did not have any updates.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the DeafBlind Committee was scheduled for October 13, 2023. Agenda items are as follows:

- Committee Activities Updates

Announcements

Sue Kay Kneifel stated there would be a Diversifying Political Engagement at Ability 360 on July 26th, and she would share that information with the Committee. Larry Rhodes stated that he would be retiring at the end of the month and would be providing contractual services for COPD/VCD on taking intakes for DB individuals.

Adjournment

Jonathan Pringle moved to adjourn the meeting. Larry Rhodes seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.