

Draft

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

Legislative and Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2023

Attendance

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Donald Porterfield

Guests Present

Brian Dulude
Penny Perry
Brianna Farmer
Taylor Porter

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

Amy Porterfield, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of July 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Bob Kresmer motioned to approve the July 17, 2023 minutes. Ed House seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Legislative Updates

Amy Porterfield stated that she and Bob Kresmer met with DERS Leadership regarding the program's ability to offer services to individuals under 55 if Legislation approved of a budget increase for Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) services. She noted that DERS was open to that discussion. Amy Porterfield stated the National Federation of the Blind of Arizona (NFBA) would hold its State Conference and would pass resolutions that would be shared during the upcoming Legislative session and inquired whether the Arizona Council of the Blind (AzCB) made any recent resolutions. John McCann stated the AzCB had several standing resolutions that could be shared.

Policy Discussion

Amy Porterfield stated the committee members would periodically review the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Policy Manual and any changes that had been made. Ms. Porterfield stated that when the committee reviewed the current VR Policy Manual, they noticed that a lot of the language regarding specialized services had been removed such as descriptions of blindness services, and information about comprehensive services and economic need. Brian Dulude stated his understanding that the Policy Unit updated the Policy Manual periodically, and the most recent version was on the Department of Economic Security (DES) website. Amy Porterfield agreed and noted that she was unsure when the Policy Manual had been updated and when the language regarding specialized services had been removed. She noted that when the committee could review previous manuals, the committee could then have a discussion with Kristen Mackey and Brian Dulude regarding including that information into the manual.

Bob Kresmer stated that SBVID used to hold meetings on the development of Best Practices, which were then passed down to the counselors and inquired regarding that process. Ed House stated that SBVID would draft a Best Practice version and meet with consumer groups to request feedback before making changes to the Best Practices. Brian Dulude stated he would be open to that process, and would include the Policy Unit, which could provide updates on DES rules. Ted Chittenden inquired whether the consumer groups had any input regarding policy development. Brian Dulude stated his understanding that policies were created internally, often to create clarity regarding a certain policy for counselors. Amy Porterfield requested

the previous one or two VR Policy Manuals to identify when that information had been removed.

Amy Porterfield inquired whether SBVID had a different staff evaluation form for SBVID staff. Brian Dulude stated that all VR staff had been evaluated through the MAP platform but had recently moved to AZ Performs. He noted the overall structure of the evaluation had changed, and he could share copies of that evaluation with the committee. Amy Porterfield stated the committee wanted to ensure that specialized services were not lost in general VR language. Jonathan Pringle stated that when he worked for RSA, the Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind (RCB)s and the counselors that worked with Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHOH) clients had to take annual training and show proof of their proficiencies when working with those populations. Bob Kresmer stated SBVID also used to have mandatory training where consumer groups and organizations would present to new counselors and would offer a handbook with helpful information. Amy Porterfield agreed and inquired whether it would be difficult for SBVID staff to have different evaluations compared to general VR staff. Brian Dulude stated it could be difficult as the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) had purchased the use of AZ Performs, although he would be willing to explore that option. Bob Kresmer suggested the committee explore RSA's budget, and how a line item could be added to include OLB services for individuals under 55 so the council did not need to request funding for each Legislative session. Amy Porterfield agreed that the council would continue to have those discussions.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Legislative and Public Policy Committee TBD. Agenda items are as follows:

- Policy Discussion

Announcements

Ted Chittenden stated that he had turned over the Chair duties of the Independent Living (IL) Committee to John McCann. Ted Chittenden stated that so far, he had only received Committee reports from the Employment and the Assistive Technology (AT) Committee for the GCBVI Annual Report.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Bob Kresmer moved to adjourn the meeting. Jonathan Pringle seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 pm.