

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Independent Living Committee Meeting Minutes
August 17, 2021

Members Present

Ted Chittenden
Steve Tepper
Brian Dulude
Katie Gomez
John McCann

Members Absent

Frank Vance

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Eve Sanchez

Call to Order and Introductions

Ted Chittenden called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

Approval of May 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

John McCann motioned to approve the May 19, 2021 meeting minutes. Steve Tepper seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Legislative Update

Ted Chittenden stated at the last meeting, the committee discussed the Independent Living Blind (ILB) program could potentially receive an increase in \$500,000 in funding. Mr. Chittenden stated the committee also learned that the funding for individuals under 55 had been deconstructed with the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and any additional funding would therefore go towards seniors in the ILB program. Ted Chittenden stated that Executive Committee members received the update that the additional funding was not included in the Governor's budget and inquired whether the current Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) budget had been cut. Brian Dulude stated his

understanding that the VR budget would maintain the same level of funding. Ted Chittenden stated that Amy Porterfield would work with the Governor's Office to determine whether additional funding could be added to the ILB program for individuals 55 and under that were interested in IL training but were not seeking employment. Ted Chittenden stated that currently those individuals were receiving services through the Centers for Independent Living (CIL)s, which did not all have staff experienced in working with blind and visually impaired individuals.

Annual Report Discussion

Ted Chittenden stated that he developed a draft IL Committee report for the GCBVI Annual Report and inquired whether the committee had any feedback. Brian Dulude stated the report was well written and thorough. Ted Chittenden stated he would edit certain portions of the report and committee members were welcome to request any changes as well. Ted Chittenden stated that as a member of the Public Information Committee, he would be developing the Annual Report with the assistance of Ms. Powers. John McCann agreed that the report was well written.

Strategic Plan Goals Discussion

Ted Chittenden stated that he included strategic plan goals in the draft IL Committee for the Annual Report and inquired whether committee members had any additional suggestions. Brian Dulude stated his understanding that the committee had discussed developing a workgroup to examine effective teaching models for virtual teaching. Ted Chittenden agreed that would be a good strategic plan goal for a workgroup to discuss virtual teaching.

Brian Dulude stated that he invited Eve Sanchez to attend the committee meeting as she had recently been hired as the new Program Manager of the ILB program. Mr. Dulude stated Ms. Sanchez had been an Instructor in the ILB program and would represent the program well. Ted Chittenden inquired whether Eve Sanchez could introduce herself and indicate the direction of the ILB program. Eve Sanchez stated she had been a Certified Rehabilitation Teacher for the Blind and had been working in the ILB program since 2017 as an instructor. She noted that she hoped to grow and improve the program to meet the needs of the clients quickly while providing them with the services they deserve. Ms. Sanchez agreed that virtual services were important, and some vendors and staff continued to struggle with virtual instruction.

Ted Chittenden inquired whether John McCann would be willing to Chair the workgroup that would examine virtual instruction. John McCann stated that

he was unsure whether he would be able to Chair the workgroup, although he would be willing to participate on the workgroup. Ted Chittenden inquired whether Brian Dulude would be willing to Chair the workgroup. Brian Dulude stated he would be able to Chair the workgroup, which would review Best Practices in rehabilitation teaching as it related to virtual instruction. Brian Dulude noted that it was a big topic, and he would be able to provide a report at the next committee meeting on what was working and what was not working. John McCann stated that most rehabilitation teaching was hands on instruction, which was difficult via virtual methods. Brian Dulude agreed and noted that rehabilitation teaching would likely use a hybrid model. Eve Sanchez and Steve Tepper stated that they would like to participate on the workgroup as well.

Potential New Committee Goals Discussion

This item was tabled.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the IL Committee was scheduled for October 12, 2021. Agenda items are as follows:

- Annual Report Discussion
- Legislative Update
- Workgroup Updates

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

John McCann motioned to adjourn the meeting. Katie Gomez seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 am.