

Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Quarterly Board Meeting
Richmond, Virginia
Tuesday, August 6, 2009
Draft Minutes

Ms. Pittman called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. She asked board members, staff and guests to introduce themselves.

Members Present: Ms. Althea Pittman, Ms. Alice Malbone, Mr. Joe DePhillips, Mr. Marc Johnson

Member Absent: Ms. Liza Bruce, Mr. Robert Dendy, Mr. Ashleigh Moody

Staff Present: Mr. Ray Hopkins, commissioner; Mr. Bob Berrang, deputy commissioner/general manager, Virginia Industries for the Blind; Mr. Bob Burton, deputy commissioner for services; Mrs. Eva Ampey, special assistant; and Mrs. Kathy Proffitt, board recorder

Staff Absent: None

Guests Present: Mrs. Joanne Robinson, human resources

Adoption of Agenda: It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote to adopt the agenda as distributed.

Action on Minutes of Previous Meeting: It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes and the July 14, 2009 minutes.

Public Comments: None

Commissioner's Report: Commissioner Hopkins provided a budget update. He stated that DBVI ended the state fiscal year 2009 on June 30 and had survived the year without any real financial crisis. The concern remains that DBVI may face further budget reductions in 2010. Regarding the Economic Stimulus Funds, he stated that funding had been made available to states through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). However, the Commonwealth had not dispersed funds yet as coding for tracking expenditures had not been established. It is anticipated that agencies will receive the funds by July 1, 2010. The vocational rehabilitation program will received 1.5 million dollars in two parts and funds are to be expended over the next two years. Funding for the independent living program is

\$866,000. DBVI will serve clientele first, then improve the ability of service providers that actually serve blind and vision impaired individuals. State agencies received a memo from the Governor's office encouraging staff to reduce expenditures by enhancing video conferencing, cutting travel costs and examine ways to save on energy.

Order of Selection, categories 2 and 3 opened on June 1, 2009. Funds from the stimulus package will be used to serve those individuals who are currently on the waiting list and those who would have been placed on the waiting list if Categories 2 and 3 were closed. Category 1 expenses will be paid using basic grant funds.

Division for Services Report: Mr. Burton noted that the Roanoke office had moved to a new location on July 27. The space is smaller than the previous office and is located adjacent to the Roanoke area One Stop Center and the Department of Social Services. The office is in an old shopping mall (Crossroad's Mall) at the intersection of Airport and Hirshberger Roads. Mr. Burton updated members relating to personnel issues in the regional offices. The Bristol manager has hired a wage employee to fill in for a recently retired orientation and mobility specialist. This will allow us to continue to provide an acceptable level of service while keeping personnel cost to a minimum. The Roanoke office currently has a vacant rehabilitation teacher position and the education coordinator will be retiring at the end of August with 32 years of service. We are waiting to see the final results of the budget situation before recruiting to fill this position. In the Staunton office, the manager has completed the first round of interviews for a vacant VR counselor position. The second interviews are being scheduled. In the Fairfax office the manager has hired a new rehabilitation teacher who will begin on August 17th, however, that office still has vacant rehabilitation teacher, orientation & mobility specialist and an education coordinator positions. In the Richmond regional office we still have vacant rehabilitation teacher and an office services specialist positions. The manager in the Norfolk office hired a new vocational rehabilitation counselor in May. This individual is visually impaired and comes to us from Arizona. However, that office still has a vacant rehabilitation teacher position. The rehabilitation center director has hired a new vocational evaluator/counselor and also a new personal and home management instructor. The center director has received and screened applicants for the assistant director for instruction position. Personnel at the headquarters building had planned interviews for the vacant policy analyst position, but in the process had all four applicants withdraw. Staff is currently starting over with the recruitment process. The deafblind program director position is still vacant.

Virginia Industries for the Blind Report: Mr. Berrang reported that fiscal year 2009 ended with sales slightly over \$24,000,000, an increase of 1.8% over 2008.

State agency sales were down due to the current budget problems but were off set by increases in the AbilityOne store sales and navy mattress shipments. VIB staff opened the eleventh AbilityOne store at the Defense Supply Center Richmond on August 3. The installation Commander, Rear Admiral Vincent Griffith, issued a memorandum to all tenants making the VIB on site AbilityOne store mandatory for the purchase of supplies using the government purchase card. The opening concluded after nine years of continuing effort proving that tenacity and patience frequently end with success.

Mr. Berrang noted that the National Industries for the Blind is identifying a number of potential service opportunities for warehouse jobs and Army Contracting positions. The contracting positions require skill sets normally found in college graduates but a degree is not required. NIB is currently conducting a trial training program in the required work functions and the army is cooperating making modifications where required for adaptations. Two candidates are soon to complete the training. One has only two percent vision and is doing well hopefully opening the door for totally blind candidates. The VIB Richmond plant has successfully moved to the leased Sherwood location where operations will continue while the plant is being renovated. The move was well planned and transparent to our customers.

Mr. Berrang requested the board appoint four members to the VIB's Advisory Board as follows:

Eric Denby - the Director of Procurement for the University of Virginia and has been a solid contributor during his first three year term. Mr. Denby has indicated a desire to be reappointed for his second year term.

Greg Leffler - the father of a blind son who has other disabilities and is active in supporting programs for blind students as well as serving in the community in a number of activities such as conducting driver education seminars for adults and teenagers in the Albemarle public schools. Mr. Leffler was highly recommended by Peter Del Priore who recently retired from the DBVI's Staunton regional office.

Tom Vandever - the Executive Director of the Independence Resource Center (IRC) in Charlottesville. The center is one of the Centers for Independent Living (CILS) in Virginia, and primarily serves people with disabilities in Charlottesville, Albemarle, Nelson, Louisa, Greene, and Fluvanna. The center also provides services to individuals in Buckingham, Madison, Prince William, Lunenburg, and Brunswick. Mr. Vandever was also recommended by Peter Del Priore.

John Yancey - a native Virginian. He worked for Sperry Marine, now part of Northrop Grumman, for 23 years as a software engineer developing marine-related systems; for the last nine years he has been a part of Medical Automation Systems where he serves as the Vice-President of Engineering. Mr. Yancey has been a long-time supporter on the Braille Circulating Library, a Christian organization in Richmond which provides materials to visually impaired readers.

Motion: Mr. DePhillips made a motion to reappoint the above-mentioned members to the Virginia Industries for the Blind Board. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, it was passed by unanimous vote.

DBVI and VRCBVI Capital Project Update: Mrs. Ampey provided an update on the renovation of the Virginia Industries for the Blind plant. She noted that VIB manufacturing plant located in Richmond moved into a temporary location at 1601 Sherwood Avenue in Richmond 23220 on June 15, 2009. Their stay is expected to be until the renovation of the old building located on High Street is completed in early 2011.

The High Street location is scheduled for a complete renovation which should begin possibly in mid-August 2009. Twelve construction firms submitted bids for the project. The construction contract has been awarded to Haley Builders, Inc. out of Ashland, VA. The winning bid amount was \$2,395,000. The expected construction cost from the project budget developed in August of 2007 was \$3,217,000.

Renovation of the Virginia Rehabilitative Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired - Agency staff met with Moseley Architect on June 15, 2009 to complete the review of the Program document and make changes and/ or corrections. Target dates were established for the completion and submission of the Schematic Design documents by Moseley to Dick Fisher and then to BCOM. The date set for Mr. Fisher to receive the designs is July 24, 2009. Moseley will also provide a fee proposal for the craft shop that the agency plans to relocate to the Recreation Building. The site survey and location of underground utilities has been completed. The Timmons Group has also visited the property to complete the inventory of the existing landscape. DBVI provided Moseley with copies of the existing architectural drawings of the facility.

Energy Performance Contract - DBVI published a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the financing of the Energy Performance Contract utilizing Trane, Inc. The Treasurer of VA rescinded its RFP for financing that would include all State agencies and advised the agency to pursue third party financing in the interim. Subsequent to the agency publishing its RFP, the Treasurer has resubmitted a RFP

for financing statewide projects and has advised the agency to compare proposals received through our third party financing with whatever rates and conditions the Treasurer's RFP includes and make decisions based upon whichever proposal is more favorable.

Roof Replacement - The plan for the replacement of the VRCBVI AA building, cafeteria and recreation building roof and the walkway covering that connects three of the buildings at the VRCBVI was sent back to BCOM for review. There were issues cited by BCOM regarding the placement of the new roof over the existing roof and the architect has revised the plan and resubmitted. The expectation is that the roofing project may be delayed.

Mr. DePhillips asked board members about the possibility of providing endowment funds to the Washington Ear and Dreamcatchers. The board has currently approved these expenditures in previous years. Mrs. Ampey reported that total donations for the quarter ending June 30, was \$5,960 and expenditures for the same period of time was \$240,838.

Motion: Mr. DePhillips made a motion to approve funding for the Washington Ear (\$15,000) and Dreamcatchers (\$5,000). Ms. Alice Malbone seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, it was passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Malbone requested a few minutes to discuss an issue with the board members. She wanted to express her pleasure of attending the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired. She stated that less than 12 weeks ago she expressed going to the center was low priority to her. Now that she has received her GED, Ms. Malbone has decided to go to college. Her plans are to attend Christian College. Ms. Malbone stated that the orientation and mobility staff at the center were wonderful and the whole experience made a difference in her life. She is now confident around different environments. Ms. Malbone was very appreciative of all the assistance the staff at the center provided to her.

Adjournment: There being there being no further business, it was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on October 13, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. at the DBVI headquarters building.

Date Approved: _____

Ms. Althea Pittman
Vice Chair

Joseph A. DePhillips
Secretary