

Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Tuesday, April 8, 2008
APPROVED MINUTES

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

Members Present: Ms. Liza Bruce, , Mr. Joe DePhillips, Mr. Ashleigh Moody, Ms. Althea Pittman, Mr. Desmond Savill, and Mrs. Judy Spears

Members Absent: Mrs. Evelyn Cabrera-Heatwole

Staff Present: Mr. Joe Bowman, commissioner, Mr. Rick Bohrer, industry manager; Mr. Jim Taylor, chief deputy commissioner; Mr. Bob Burton, deputy commissioner for services; Mrs. Eva Ampey, special assistant; Mrs. Maryann Belcher, human resource director; and Mrs. Kathy Proffitt, board recorder

Staff Absent: Mrs. Squig Moore, assistant attorney general, Mr. Robert C. Berrang, deputy commissioner for enterprises

Guests: Mr. Shawn Haney and Mr. Fred Wunderlich

Adoption of Agenda: It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote to adopt the agenda as amended to move the Bank of America presentation first on the agenda.

Action on Minutes of Previous Meeting: It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote to approve the January 8, 2008 minutes as amended.

Public Comments: None

Presentation on Investments & Endowment Fund Account: Ms. Bruce welcomed Mr. Shawn Haney and Mr. Fred Wunderlich of Bank of America's Private Investment Section. Mr. Haney provided an overall review of the market index and distributed a copy of the current investment portfolio. Mr. Wunderlich provided an overview of the board's investments, performance, and market conditions for the period ending March 31, 2008 and beyond. He opened the floor for questions. Discussion followed. He noted that the account had been renamed the **BOA Private Wealth Management**, however, nothing else had changed. Mr. Wunderlich offered that BOA Private Wealth Management advisers may make

some suggestion for changes to the Board's investment policy in the coming months for the Board's consideration.

Commissioner's Report: Mr. Bowman welcomed the members to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He commended the Bank of America representatives for the excellent job they have done managing the Board's investment portfolio.

He noted that the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is still stalled in Congress and probably will not be reauthorized this year. The president's proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 is level funding for vocational rehabilitation and older blind grant programs. Mr. Bowman thanked the board members for writing a letter to the appropriate House committees opposing House Joint Resolution 80 which would have consolidated the disability agencies.

Mr. Bowman highlighted state budget impacts on the department. He noted that the renovation of the administration building at the center is included in the budget and it appears that funding for the renovation of the VIB-Richmond plant is included in the budget. He reported that state agencies have been instructed to prepare a one and a half percent (1½%) budget reduction plan for 2009-10. He shared with the board a few of the cost savings measures that have already been implemented -- out-of-state travel prohibited, no discretionary purchasing, and all hiring subject to approval by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources. He noted that state agencies were instructed to make minimal budget requests for the upcoming two-year budget cycle. The department did make a request to transfer reimbursement for special education teachers employed in local school systems (\$509,000) to the Department of Education but this request was not included in the Governor's proposed budget. Due to the tight state budget situation, the department was not able to forward requests for additional orientation and mobility instructors, establishing job placement specialists, and purchase of a new automated library system for the Library and Resource Center. These issues will require attention in future years. Mr. Bowman commended the Board for their consistent support of the agency program and highlighted two previous projects the board had provided funding for; rental space for the VIB Charlottesville plant during its major renovation project and compact shelving purchased for the Library and Resource Center.

Mr. Bowman reported that Virginia will be implementing a new system in which DBVI will partner with the Department of Education and George Mason University to provide braille and large print textbooks to blind and vision impaired

students. The department will concentrate solely on the large print textbook production and GMU will provide the braille.

Mr. Bowman concluded his report noting that this was his last Board meeting as Commissioner of the department due to his retirement on July 1, 2008. He thanked the board for their support to the department and to him personally during his tenure as commissioner. Mr. DePhillips applauded Mr. Bowman for an excellent job as commissioner and his contributions to the board.

Virginia Industries for the Blind Report: Mr. Rick Bohrer provided the VIB report on behalf of Bob Berrang. He updated the board on personnel issues. He reported that Don Rymer, facilities manager for VIB, announced his retirement effective July 1st. VIB staff are currently recruiting for a fiscal manager. Gary Peltier has been performing those duties. Cyndi Haskins who is a fully trained purchasing clerk is leaving on April 18th to accept a promotion with the University of Virginia.

VIB currently employs 145 individuals of which 96 are legally blind. Additionally, four service contract and store blind trainees are currently on-board. The 3,800 square foot Ft. Belvoir store is in the final stages of renovation. VIB management expect blind staff to increase once the new store opens in May or June and the store at the Defense Supply Center-Richmond opens later this year.

Fort Belvoir is home to one Army major command headquarters; eight elements of the U.S. Army Reserve and the Army National Guard; and 26 DoD agencies. Also located there are a Marine Corps detachment, a U.S. Air Force activity, and an agency from the Department of the Treasury. As additional Department of Defense offices move there in the next 18 to 24 months, VIB expects to close the Crystal City Jefferson Plaza and Presidential Tower stores. The employees will be transferred to either the Pentagon store or Ft. Belvoir.

VIB staff have been told by the Ft. Lee Master Planner, that a planned base renovation will likely result in the VIB Store being relocated in 2012 in 2011. Discussions have begun about alternate sites.

When the last opening is filled on the service contract with MANCON at the Norfolk Navy ServMart, VIB will have 14 employees there, all of which will be legally blind.

Mr. Bohrer noted that sales through the first nine months of the fiscal year were slightly under 17 million and right on target to the state fiscal year forecast. Navy mattress sales remain under the previous three years but VIB has enjoyed a strong third quarter. New Navy orders recently shipped and after they finish up with the last delivery order in late April / early May, two more "delivery orders" are expected for this fall. Since the fleet has been completely retrofitted with the new innerspring design, new orders are now to replace worn units as needed.

VIB staff received a request from VDOT to provide the lead time required to ship large quantities of the newly developed safety vest which sells for \$7 each. Projections are that by the end of fall, their vest inventory will be depleted and they asked for lead times for producing 10,000, 20,000 or 30,000 quantities. Although this is not an order it is an indication of potential requirements. VIB staff will make efforts to gain their support in ramping up to a quantity that will permit continuous production vs. intermittent shipments. This new product promises to provide much needed blind labor at our Charlottesville plant, where maintaining the existing force has been very difficult due to reduced orders for Navy mattresses and Federal mop heads. The safety vest is most attractive as it can be 100% blind made.

The Spring VIB Advisory Board meeting was held March 20th at the Base Supply store at Fort Lee. The store manager, Helen Millner hosted the meeting and provided a tour that was well received by all.

Mr. Bohrer reported that the Richmond manufacturing facility is approximately four months away from being relocated for the renovation scheduled in August. The working drawing process has begun and the Project Manager, Dick Fisher, Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse, Office of A&E has been advised that we need adequate notice to secure and prepare a new site. The move is approximately 90 days from the completion of the working drawings. VIB staff have been working with DGS, Division of Real Estate Services and have visited one-half dozen facilities since October. VIB staff prefer to remain in the same area and to be convenient to public transportation. The favorite so far was the facility just off of Westwood Avenue near Richmond Technical Center.

Sales and employment levels are stable at VIB Richmond and when the current vacancy is filled, VIB will be at the March 2007 employment level.

Counterpoint VAR will be hosting a Webinar on April 17 to provide training on the new Counterpoint SQL program. The SQL version is windows based and will provide much more flexibility and improved results in the many store functions where it is used such as ordering replenishment stock and inventory control.

Division for Services Report: Mr. Burton stated that current budget problems have complicated DBVI staff efforts to fill vacant positions over the past few months. He noted that in January, he completed interviews for the program director for deafblind services vacant position. A selection had been made but due to current budget situation, the agency is withholding a formal offer of employment at this time.

Mr. Burton provided an update on the regional offices. The department is fully staffed in the Bristol, Staunton, and Richmond regional offices. He noted that a rehabilitation teacher will be retiring from the Richmond office in May. The Roanoke manager is currently recruiting for a rehabilitation teacher, and the Norfolk office, we are recruiting for an O&M specialist. The O&M position had been offered to an individual in January, however, the individual declined. A new counselor was hired in Norfolk in January who is blind. He has a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. In the Fairfax office, a new counselor began employment on March 31st. The individual has been in the rehabilitation field for a number of years and has good experience. The rehabilitation engineer, Korey Singleton, has resigned and will be leaving later this month. He will be taking a position with George Mason University. The agency has been recruiting for the position and currently has three candidates. Mr. Burton noted that the rehabilitation center currently has a number of vacant positions. One position had been offered to an individual however, he decided to stay at his current position. Interviews two orientation & mobility specialist positions have been completed. The top three candidates have been invited to return for second interviews. The Staunton regional office will be leaving the campus of the School for the Blind at Staunton at the end of May and moving to space that has become available at the Fishersville VEC office. The Roanoke office is currently looking for new space. Mr. Burton stated that the Division of Real Estate Services is attempting to negotiate a contract for office space in an old mall that could accommodate DBVI and as well as several other state agencies in the area.

Mr. Burton stated that the agency began to pilot its new its integrated case management system called AWARE in the Roanoke office and the rehabilitation center on January 7. The pilot program will run until the end of May. The reports

he has received from the Roanoke office have been positive. Once the results of the pilot have been analyzed, the department will move toward implementation of the system statewide effective October 1, 2008. The new system is very user-friendly and allows staff to compile a lot of information into one database which was previously maintained in several databases.

Endowment Fund Receipts and Expenditures: Mrs. Ampey reported for the quarter ending March 31, the Department accepted on behalf of the Board, endowment donations totaling \$ 5,831.86. Endowment fund expenditures for the quarter ended March 31, 2008 totaled \$ 214,186.33.

Dorm Renovation Project: Mrs. Ampey reported the projected completion date for the dormitory renovation is July 21, 2008 and the workers have substantially completed the exterior of the building. Windows have been installed throughout the building and hardi-plank siding has been affixed to the exterior of the building. A new walk way cover now exists on the front of the building and decorative rocks are being placed around the serpentine walkway within the courtyard.

Dry wall work and taping continues on the interior of the building. Plumbing work and running of electrical wiring is occurring within the individual rooms.

We are working with the Department of Rehabilitative Services purchasing unit to purchase the furnishings for the dormitory. This includes furniture, window coverings, and appliances. The VIB will provide the mattresses and box springs for the beds and Virginia Correctional Enterprises will most likely be the source of all other furniture items. VRCBVI staff will assist in making the final decisions on furniture purchases based upon what's available on State contract.

The clients continue to reside at the Extended Stay Deluxe Hotel and receive transportation to and from the facility to the rehab center. They have fared well during the dormitory renovation and adjusted for the most part to the hotel and transportation arrangements. The VRCBVI staff seems excited for the time that the clients begin residing in the new dormitory.

Proposed Budget July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009: Mrs. Ampey reviewed the proposed endowment fund budget as follows:

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| Estimated Interest Income (as of Feb. 28, 2007) | \$ 168,873 |
| Proposed Expenses | |
| Washington Ear | \$ 15,000 |
| Dreamcatchers | 5,000 |

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|--|---------------|
| Paid Drivers for Rehabilitation Teachers (Includes a 4% increase) | 85,000 |
| Summer Camp | 50,000 |
| CapTel Services | <u>10,000</u> |

TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET **\$165,000**
Over/(Under) Estimated Interest Income \$ 3,000

Election of Officers for 2008-2009: Mrs. Bruce opened the floor for nominations for the positions of secretary, vice chair and chair.

MOTION: Mr. DePhillips nominated Ms. Cabrera-Heatwole for the position of secretary. Hearing no other nomination, closed the floor to nominations. It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote that Ms. Cabrera-Heatwole serve as secretary for the upcoming term.

MOTION: Mrs. Spears nominated Ms. Pittman for the position of vice chair. Hearing no other nomination, closed the floor to nominations. It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote that Ms. Pittman serve as vice chair for the upcoming term.

MOTION: Ms. Pittman nominated Ms. Bruce for the position of chair. Hearing no other nomination, closed the floor to nominations. It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote that Ms. Bruce serve as chair for the upcoming term.

Adjournment: There being no further business, it was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting at 2:55 p.m. The next meeting will be held on July 8, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. at the DBVI headquarters building.

Date Approved: _____

Ms. Liza Bruce
Chair

Mrs. Evelyn Cabrera-Heatwole
Secretary