

Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Quarterly Board Meeting
Richmond, Virginia
July 13, 2010
APPROVED MINUTES

Call to Order: Chairperson Liza Bruce called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m. She asked Board members, staff and guests to introduce themselves.

Members Present: Liza Bruce, Robert Dendy, Marc Johnson, and Althea Pittman

Members Absent: Alice Malbone

Staff Present: Ray Hopkins, Commissioner; Bob Burton, Deputy Commissioner for Services; Eva Ampey, Special Assistant to the Commissioner; Rick Bohrer, Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) – Richmond Plant Manager; and Joan Carneal, Recorder

Guests Present: Rachel Williams, Legal Counsel for DBVI, Office of the Attorney General

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

Action on Minutes of Previous Meeting: It was moved by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Pittman, and passed by unanimous vote that the April 13, 2010, minutes be approved as amended.

Public Comment: None

Commissioner's Report: Commissioner Hopkins announced that Governor McDonnell reappointed him as DBVI Commissioner and expressed his appreciation to the Board for their support during his reappointment.

- June 30, 2010 ended the State Fiscal Year. Through utilization of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds, and very tight control of these funds, DBVI has kept all Order of Selection categories open without a waiting list.
- The Older Blind Grant Technology Project for seniors is providing desktop computer systems, adaptive software, and training through the

- use of stimulus funds to those individuals who have used systems in the past, but cannot continue because of vision loss.
- DBVI is currently recruiting for a Deputy Commissioner for Enterprises due to the July 1, 2010 retirement of Bob Berrang. This position will be filled as soon as possible since it is a critical position to the VIB.
 - Kathy Proffitt, the Senior Administrative Assistant for the Executive staff and staff support to the Board, is retiring due to medical reasons.
 - Ishneila Moore, former Legal Counsel for DBVI, is transitioning to another position, and Rachel Williams has accepted her responsibilities. She will also be the new contact for Board members for legal questions and advice.

Virginia Industries for the Blind Report

Mr. Bohrer reported that VIB is entering the new fiscal year in a sound business position with good prospects for increased employment.

- VIB currently has 147 employees, of which 96 are legally blind. He expects staffing of blind employees to increase to a minimum of 98 in August with employment of one individual in services and another in manufacturing. Other opportunities should raise the number to over 100 before October. There are two immediate openings in the store division and two in manufacturing at VIB Charlottesville.
- VIB Richmond is ramping up in expectation of a Contract Management Services agreement with the Army to conduct contract closeout. Up to five professional positions will work at the temporary site where VIB Richmond is currently housed. The National Industries for the Blind has signed the agreement as the Prime Contractor and VIB will be first in line for an off-site contract. Mr. Bohrer is optimistic that it will be operational by September.
- Planning with the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) Project office has begun for the build-out of a new base supply store in the Mark Center building in Alexandria. Construction on the store is expected to begin in May or June 2011 to support a requested opening date of September 15, 2011.
- Also two separate online catalog ordering method projects are progressing. One will service eVA users (Virginia government's web-based procurement system) and the second is for our stores Federal government customer base (e-commerce). DBVI expects to

- see up to two full-time positions for legally blind individuals required to maintain, update, and service these online catalogs.
- In a process that has taken about one year to complete, the VIB Charlottesville Plant consulted with the Virginia Philpot Manufacturing Extension Partnership to implement an ISO9001:2008 Quality System Standard and seek national recognition through national registration. National registration is accomplished by using a third party registrar who audits VIB for compliance to the ISO Standard and issues initial certification. This process is detailed and considers all parts of the Charlottesville plant operations. On June 23, 2010 the stage-two audit was completed and recommended for registration. Registration certification is expected by the end of July 2010.
 - This standard measures the effectiveness of the management team in managing the quality of the product from receipt of orders to shipment of product to include feedback about levels of customer satisfaction. This registration will help us keep and grow in jobs for people who are blind or visually impaired.
 - Preliminary reports for Fiscal Year ending 6/30/10 (before a variety of adjustments, like adjustments regarding inventory and accounts payable changes which more "fairly" state our results) indicate a 13 % higher return than last year on sales of \$29,429,501. Last year, after adjustments, we had sales of \$24,162,312. Sales were up 21.8% in FY 2010 due to robust mattress sales (notably navy mattresses), as well as increased store sales.
 - The renovation of the VIB Richmond manufacturing facility is progressing, although some design changes have delayed completion. The addition of a generator represents the major change. The anticipated completion date is the first of February.

Commissioner Hopkins further commented that the ISO9001:2008 Quality System Standard Certification is something we are very proud of because it says that our quality processes at the Charlottesville Plant are on par with any manufacturing enterprises in the world by international standards.

He mentioned that Governor McDonnell is planning to visit the Charlottesville Plant, but a date has not been confirmed. He will share details with Board members as available.

Ms. Bruce inquired whether the extension date for the completion of renovations was going to cause a problem with the current lease. Rick Bohrer stated that an extension had been included in the original lease.

Division for Services Report: Bob Burton reported that:

- The Bristol and Norfolk regional offices have not had any changes since the last meeting.
- The Roanoke regional office has one regional manager position vacant and the deadline for recruiting was extended due to the lack of qualified applicants; one Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor vacancy; and three Rehabilitation Teacher positions. These vacancies are due to retirements. One individual was hired as a Rehabilitation Teacher effective July 12th with 30 years of experience, has a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Teaching, and a Masters Degree in Orientation & Mobility. Dr. Mitchell, Bristol Regional Manager, will serve as the Roanoke Interim Regional Manager.
- The Staunton regional office hired a VR counselor who transferred from the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center and has experience in working with individuals who are blind and vision impaired. She is proficient in American Sign Language and is a Certified VR Counselor.
- The Fairfax regional office has a new VR counselor who has 15 years of experience and has been working for the past four years with the Ohio Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired. He also worked for DRS prior to moving to Ohio, and he will be starting August 2.
- The Richmond regional office has a new rehabilitation teacher who began on June 10th. She is a former DBVI consumer and is totally blind.
- The VRCBVI made an offer to a VR evaluator/counselor who declined the offer, and we will be recruiting again for that position. We also have three O&M specialist positions vacant, and we are actively recruiting for those positions. Mr. Burton is considering hiring a wage employee to fill in for one of the O&M specialist positions on a temporary basis.
- The Standards and Indicators is one of the ways that the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) keeps a track on how the agency is functioning and producing. The agency received an

official notification that it had passed the Standards and Indicators for FFY 2009.

- Last November a team from RSA came to the agency to perform an onsite monitoring visit of the VR program. A draft report is expected sometime in early August. The head of the team indicated that there would not be any surprises in the draft, and it should be the same as the exit interview.

Endowment Fund Receipts & Expenditures: Eva Ampey reported for the quarter ending June 30, 2010, the department accepted contributions in the amount of \$3,098 and one donation made in memory of Richard Knuckalls from Anita Crane in the amount of \$100 on behalf of the Board endowment funds. Expenditures totaled \$20,747. VRCBVI endowment fund expenditures for the quarter ending June 30, 2010, totaled \$532. The Bank of America investment account value as of June 30, 2010, is \$5,033,162, this reflects an increase in the account value since July 1, 2009, of \$122,630.

Eva Ampey reported on capital projects:

- VIB's renovation has extended the completion schedule to February 1, 2010. The extension is due to delays relating to electrical work revisions and the installation of the building generator.
- Trane Inc., the agency energy savings contractor, is installing controls for the Energy Management Tracer System and is currently working in the Library and Resource Center building. The estimated time of completion should be within the next month or so.
- The recreation building and dining hall will have roof replacements first. We cannot put bids on roof replacement for the activities and administrative building until the recreation building has been completed. The pre-bid conference for contractors is scheduled for July 22, 2010, for the recreation and dining hall roof replacements.
- The administration and activities building project will not begin until after the craft room has been relocated to its new location in the recreation building.

Ms. Ampey stated there have been two funding requests submitted for consideration of the Board to approve using endowment funds.

- She read a letter to Liza Bruce from Rick Bohrer requesting funding in the amount of \$3,500 for the sole purpose of subsidizing

relocation expenses for an agency's legally blind consumer from Chesapeake, Virginia to work at VIB Richmond. The consumer is not qualified for VR financial assistance and is unable to accept the position in Richmond without financial support. The endowment funds balance has a restricted fund balance of \$6,528 that is earmarked for VIB.

Ms. Bruce asked if there was a motion for the Board to approve funding in the amount of \$3,500 for VIB to support the moving expenses for this consumer. It was moved by Mr. Dendy, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and passed by unanimous vote.

- Ms. Ampey read portions of a letter from the Metropolitan Washington Ear (MWE) explaining that they are a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to providing **free** media services for the blind, visually impaired, and other print disabled people. MWE has been providing these services for 35 years. Ms. Bruce requested that Ms. Ampey forward a copy of the request to Board members. Board members were asked to review the request and contact Ms. Ampey before July 23 with input on what specific information may be needed to make a determination for this sponsorship. Ms. Ampey will contact the MWE to determine the locations in the Commonwealth covered by this service and the specific financial funding being requested. This request was tabled until the October meeting.

Mr. Johnson provided the Board with the financial committee report. Mr. Johnson is working with Eva Ampey to gather initial information and to report on the state of the endowment fund, how it is structured, and to answer other issues that members have questioned. One of the three responsibilities given to the Board in the *Code of Virginia* and the Board's bylaws is to administer this fund. The endowment fund itself is made up of 17 separate accounts now totaling about \$5 million. Of those 17 accounts, the vast majority are unrestricted funds which makes up 70% of the balance, the John Dunn fund which makes up 25% of the balance, and the Library which makes up 4% of the balance. The remaining 14 accounts amount to less than 1% of the total account (Northern Virginia, Rehab Teaching Arlington, Norfolk regional office, Richmond regional office, Roanoke regional office, VIB, Newline, Yackso-Sampson Camp, Low Vision

Services, Betty Bullion, Low Vision Purchases, Fraternal Order of Police – Eyeglasses, Mustock, and Volunteer Services).

The unrestricted funds are bound by our general guidelines of legalizing this fund to support programming and support for individuals who are blind or visually impaired in the Commonwealth. The John Dunn fund was set up by the will of Nellie P. Dunn who gave this funding over to the Board as the John Dunn Fund for the Blind. These funds can be used for: a) job-related training or equipment for blind persons so as to permit the use of the funds for retraining or upgrading the skills of a blind person who may already have a job but may also require additional training or equipment; b) distributions to blind persons who have, or wish to start, a home business; or c) distributions to or for the benefit of blind children to provide them with training and equipment. The Board needs to decide what the overall strategy is going to be in determining how to disburse the endowment funds and what their priorities are in meeting the needs of the blind individuals in the Commonwealth. The endowment disbursement is determined by the Bank of America's projections of what the income will be from interest and that is the amount used to set the budget. The finance committee will meet and make recommendations to the Board during the October meeting.

There was discussion on ways the Board could help fund specific projects for the agency. Commissioner Hopkins discussed the lack of a deaf blind program director, indicating the agency was reluctant to hire without sufficient long-term funds. The finance committee will consider these projects and include them in their recommendations to the Board.

Other Business: Commissioner Hopkins reported that he has not received any information on new appointments to the Board but is hoping to hear something in the near future.

Rachel Williams expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to attend the Board Meeting. She previously worked as a contract attorney specializing in non-profit organizations. She encouraged Board members to contact her with any legal issues or questions. Ms. Ampey will forward Ms. Williams' contact information to Board members.

Mr. Johnson reported that his wife is a teacher in Greene County and that one of her visually impaired students had been awarded a full national

scholarship to attend college. He stated that this was a great testament to the work of the professionals at DBVI.

Adjournment: There being no further business, it was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting at 2:35 p.m. The next meeting will be held on October 12, 2010, at 1:00 p.m. at the DBVI headquarters building.

Date Approved: _____

Ms. Liza Bruce
Chair

Mr. Robert Dendy
Secretary