

APPROVED MINUTES
Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Quarterly Board Meeting
June 25, 2024
11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Location: Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
397 Azalea Avenue
Richmond, VA 23227

Board Members in Attendance

Joseph Ashley, Bonnie Atwood, Robert Bartolotta, Mazen Basrawi, Paul D’Addario-Chair, Ken Jessup-Vice Chair, Michael Kasey

Guests in Attendance

Bryce Lee, The Optimal Service Group, Wells Fargo
Karen Logan, The Optimal Service Group, Wells Fargo
Tyler Payne, The Optimal Service Group, Wells Fargo

In Attendance to Present Grant Applications

Heidi Lawyer, Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) - Virtually
Elizabeth Spiers, DBVI, Virginia Association of the DeafBlind
Dave Fuller, DBVI, Virginia Association of the DeafBlind
Donna Cox, DBVI, Super Summer Camp
Yvonne Mastromano, Virginia Voice
Sandy Halverson, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia (NFBV), Silver Bells - Virtually
Tracy Soforenko, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia (NFBV), Silver Bells – Virtually
David Ward, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys – Virtually
E. Lamont Crawley

DBVI Staff to the Board

Matt Koch, Deputy Commissioner of Enterprises; Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner; Rick Mitchell, Commissioner

Call to Order & Welcome

Chair D’Addario called the meeting to order and welcomed the members in attendance. A quorum was met.

Business Items

Consent of Agenda

Mr. Kasey moved to approve the agenda as presented and seconded by Mr. Bartolotta. The motion was passed unanimously.

Consent of June 14, 2024, Minutes

Dr. Ashley moved to approve the June 14 Minutes as presented. Mr. Kasey seconded. The Minutes were approved without objection. Minutes were accepted for filing.

Public Comment

None

Endowment Grant Application Presentations/Q&A

The Chair reviewed the Board's Spending Policy for granting funds which is up to 4% of the corpus over a 3-year rolling average ending on February 28/29. The amount that can be funded this year totals \$235,011.80.

Seven of the nine applicants were invited to present their cause and answer questions from the Board.

Discussion/Vote Endowment Grant Applications

The seven applicants were granted funding by the Board as indicated below:

Ms. Atwood moved that the Board grant the following funds:

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) \$2500

VA Association of the Deafblind \$5,000

Department of the Blind and Vision Impaired - Super Summer Camp \$53,000

Virginia Voice, Inc. \$50,000

National Federation of the Blind of Virginia (NFB) \$103,000

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys \$10,500

E. Lamont Crawley \$10,000 with the provision he will become an official business entity within six months of receiving grant. ** See note below to add an additional \$500 for a total of \$10,500.

Total funds given: \$234,500

Mr. Jessup seconded.

**Mr. Basrawi moved to add Amendment to add \$500 to E. Lamont Crowley. Dr. Ashley seconded.

Amendment was accepted by Ms. Atwood.

Chair amended motion to indicate that the Board is not funding the two applications submitted by individuals, because the funding is not in purview of Endowment Fund purpose: Joan Noble and Durwood Bradshaw. Ms. Atwood agreed to this Amendment.

All were in favor.

Chair advised that Deputy Commissioner Gaines will send recipients a letter of award and to include in the letter that the interim report is due December 1, 2024 and final report due June 1, 2025. Any requester who receives funds and does not provide the required reports will not be eligible for a grant in the next round.

Optimal Services Group

Investment Report

The Optimal Service Group (OSG), Wells Fargo reviewed DBVI's investment portfolio to date which has been in a long-term asset allocation since December 2021. As of April 30, 2024, the Endowment Fund balance was \$5,991,452.00.

New Business

Elect 2024-2025 Board Officers

Board Members Bonnie Atwood's and Ken Jessup's terms are expiring June 29, 2024.

Dr. Ashley motioned to recognize these departing Board Members and to commend them for their tremendous service to the Board and to the blind and vision impaired of Virginia. Mr. Kasey seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Atwood nominated Paul D'Addario as Chairman. No other nominations were put forward. All were in favor.

Ms. Atwood nominated Dr. Ashley as Vice-Chair. No other nominations were put forward. All were in favor.

Mr. Basrawi nominated Mr. Bartolotta as Secretary. No other nominations were put forward. All were in favor.

Dates for 2024-2025 Board Meetings

September 24, 2024

December 17, 2024

March 25, 2025

June 24, 2025

Other Business

Commissioner Mitchell reported that recruitment for the Deputy Commissioner for Services is still on. Kathy Malone, Senior Manager, Bristol Regional Office, has agreed to be Acting Deputy Commissioner for Services until that position is filled.

Commissioner Mitchell reported on the announcement from the Governor's office. Jeff Goettman will step down from his position of Chief of Staff for the Administration. Current Secretary of Health and Human Resources, John Little, will become the next Chief of Staff to the Governor and Janet Vestal Kelly has been tapped as Secretary of Health and Human Resources effective July 8, 2024.

The Agency is trying a pilot program. It has hired a VR Counselor, Norfolk Regional Office. The employee is working remotely full time. Other states have tried working with remote VR Counselors, so DBVI is trying this as well since this position has been difficult to fill.

Orientation and Mobility Instructor is another position the Agency is having a challenge in filling.

Deputy Commissioner Koch reported on the Enterprise Division. Navy mattress delivery was delayed due to federal system integration issues. This affected all users of the shipment scheduling system VIM ASAP that transfers data to the WAWF system required for the military Quality Assurance Representatives (QARs) to receive and approve shipment details. VIB worked closely with the federal government help desks to find a temporary fix so that VIB can start shipping 1,750 mattresses to the Navy. The 5-truckload delivery will generate \$800,000 in NGF revenue against a cost basis of \$740,000 for a profit of \$60,000.

VIB continues to innovate to better serve our federal customers. Military customers have many payment channels and one of their preferred channels is called MILSTRIP. VIB established a way to accept MILSTRIP orders and added a popular product, Deck-in-a-Box, to the GSA Catalog which is a necessary step to gain exposure to military buyers. It is expected that this new payment channel will open new sales that had previously been going to Grainger.

Adjournment

Mr. Jessup moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Ashley seconded. All were in favor.

Next Board Meeting

September 24, 2024