

**Minutes**  
**Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired**  
Library and Resource Center  
395 Azalea Avenue, Richmond VA 23227  
December 17, 2019 at 12:00 PM

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**Board Attendees**

Bonnie Atwood; Mazen Basrawi; Paul D'Addario; Deborah Helms; Ken Jessup, *Chair*; Dr. Leo Kim; Barbara McCarthy.

**Members Absent**

None.

**Members of the Public**

None.

**DBVI Staff to the Board**

Jessica Collette, Staff Assistant, DBVI; Wallica Gaines, Deputy Commissioner for Administration, DBVI; Raymond Hopkins, Commissioner; Matt Koch, Deputy Commissioner for Enterprises, DBVI; Dr. Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Services, DBVI.

**Call to Order & Welcome**

Chairman Ken Jessup called the regular meeting to order and welcomed the members in attendance.

**Introductions**

Chairman Ken Jessup asked for members to introduce themselves.

**Working Lunch & Program Spotlight: Rehabilitation Teaching / Independent Living Services**

*Judy Jackson*

Ms. Judy Jackson spoke about the services provided under her purview as Director of Instruction. Discussion took place about Rehabilitation Teaching and Independent Living, Orientation and Mobility, and Deafblind services provided through DBVI.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Business Items**

**Consent of Agenda**

Debra Helms moved to approve agenda; motion passed unanimously.

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**Consent of Minutes**

Mazen Basrawi moved to approve minutes from September 2019; motion passed unanimously.

**Unfinished Business**

*Donation Requests Update - Finance Committee*

Barbara spoke regarding the form development for funding requests from the Board. A form was created to help with the requests being more predictable and not just receive them ad hoc. Discussion took place about the purpose of this form and how it will be used. March 1<sup>st</sup> is the suggested date for the applications to be submitted. Discussion took place how the process would work as well as which group should be focused on, organizations and/or individuals. Barbara moved to adopt a policy for applications from organizations for grants be submitted by using the posted application on or before March 1<sup>st</sup> to allow the Board to evaluate all applications simultaneously. The Commissioner posed multiple logistical questions about this process. Barbara spoke that the applications coming to the Agency would be helpful. Chairman stated that sending a letter to the organizations with whom have previously requested funds with a copy of the application would be beneficial. The Finance Committee will draft this cover letter to be sent to these organizations.

**Future Action Items & New Business**

None.

**Adjournment**

Leo Kim moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:00pm; motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting:      March 24, 2019

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September 24, 2019 at 12:00 PM

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**Reports**

**Agency Report – Commissioner Ray Hopkins**

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

The Commissioner informed the Board about a phone call with the Department of Planning and Budget in regards to the Governor's budget and information related to DBVI. The Governor released his budget to the money committees and in the proposed budget DBVI has fared very well. The Governor is addressing several needs and the following items are included: for the RT/IL program \$397,000 each year of the next biennium; the VR program just over \$3M annually is included to address the waitlist and ensure federal match. In addition, there is \$312,000 for administrative services that are procured from DARS; inclusion of \$1.2M of infrastructure changes on the Azalea campus, money for renovation of the LRC and one additional capital project. Discussion took place about how the Board should support this portion of the Governor's budget regarding the Agency.

The Commissioner spoke about federal funding and the Continuing Resolution that has been approved. This will be beneficial to VIB specifically as it does not stop federal partners ordering supplies.

Mazen moved that the Board make a resolution in favor of the Governor's 21-22 biennial budget for DBVI as it restores the level of funding required for services to the blind and vision impaired in Virginia. Leo seconded and discussion took place. Barbara suggests the wording to say the Board supports the Governor's 2021-2022 biennial budget for DBVI. The resolution passed, with one abstention. Chairman Jessup and the Commissioner's Office will draft a letter to submit to the Senate Finance Committee, Appropriations Committee and the Governor's Assistant.

**Services Division Report – Deputy Commissioner Rick Mitchell**

Dr. Rick Mitchell, the Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives, Cindy Roberts, and the Coordinator of Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID), Tish Harris, attended the Hire Education Conference. During the conference, DBVI staff conducted two presentations. The first was entitled, "Successful Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion", which began with slides containing research to dispel myths about hiring individuals with disabilities. Cindy Roberts presented business services and resources available from DBVI's Business Relations. Matt Dale from Marvin Window's and Dr. Bob Whicker from Apple presented information on how diversity and inclusion is embraced at their companies, and Milford Stern

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of VA Department of Labor and Industry spoke to the Marvin Windows initiative and his successful relationship with DBVI. The second presentation included a panel of Interagency Partners, which highlighted CPID activities in 4 workforce areas. Panelists addressed how partnerships with VR moved the needle forward for all users of the workforce system, and highlighted several unique initiatives that came from CPID such as the IT Credential Fair, Hands on Career Exploration, and Co-enrollments. This presentation was heavily attended, with multiple follow up questions.

Also, there are a number of retirements coming up in multiple regional offices and at the Library and Resource Center. A number of recruitments will be taking place to fill these positions.

Financial Report – *Deputy Commissioner Wallica Gaines*

Since the last quarterly meeting, there have been three deposits made into the endowment funds. The following amounts are the interest earned: September - \$11,074; October - \$10,601; November - \$9,180. As of November 29, 2019, there is a balance of \$6,178,981.75.

Enterprise Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Matt Koch*

At this time VIB is reviewing its federal website to ensure user friendliness as it has the highest ability to bring money in online. Discussions are taking place about whether to take the website in house and VIB maintain the site or use a sister AbilityOne agency.

As the federal budget process moves along in Washington, VIB's sales are growing. The resale operations captured by VIB's 10 Base Supply Center (BSC) retail stores and Customer Service orders show that sales are up over last year and ahead of budget for this year. As the federal funds flow down to the commands in the coming weeks, sales should continue to accelerate. This is critical to the overall financial health of VIB. Couple that performance with the increase in profitability being delivered by the production facilities and the financial picture is looking more positive than it has in a while.

Matt shared that he just received information regarding the switchboard operation in Salem, VA. The VA has determined that switching operators on December 31<sup>st</sup> since a new vendor has not been chosen. There will be a three-month "bridge" contract until a vendor can be awarded.