

## **Minutes**

### **Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired**

Library and Resource Center

395 Azalea Avenue, Richmond VA 23227

April 3, 2018 at 12:00 PM

Phone Number 866-842-5779; Conference Code 1891386257#

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#### **Board Attendees**

Mr. Ken Jessup, Chair; Ms. Lynn Lesko; Mr. Mazen Basrawi; Ms. Deborah Helms; Mr. Leo Kim (via phone).

#### **Members Absent**

None.

#### **Members of the Public**

None.

#### **DBVI Staff to the Board**

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

#### **Call to Order & Introductions** *(Action Item)*

Chairman Ken Jessup called the meeting to order and members.

#### **Consent Agenda**

##### **Adoption of Agenda** *(Action Item)*

Ms. Lynn Lesko moved to adopt agenda; Mr. Mazen Basrawi seconded and motion passed unanimously.

##### **Minutes** *(Action Item)*

Ms. Lynn Lesko moved to approve the December 2017 meeting minutes; Mr. Mazen Basrawi seconded and motion passed unanimously. Ms. Lynn Lesko moved to approve the September 2017 meeting minutes; Ms. Deborah Helms seconded and motion passed unanimously.

#### **Public Comment**

None.

#### **Program Spotlight:** Virginia Voice tour and presentation *(working lunch)*

Mr. Jim Wark and Ms. Jennifer Cunningham spoke about the services provided by Virginia Voice and the live audio description service.

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#### **Action Items**

Nominations and Appointments to the Virginia Industries for the Blind State Advisory Board  
Deputy Commissioner Koch spoke in regards to the nominees to the Virginia Industries for the Blind State Advisory Board. He reviewed the 12 nominations and their credentials to serve on this Advisory Board. Mr. Mazen Basrawi questioned how the advisory board was made up between those with a disability and those in businesses. Mr. Koch explained the requirements stated in the Code of Virginia and the process of finding the nominees. Ms. Debra Helms made a motion to accept all nominees for appointment to the Virginia Industries for the Blind State Advisory Board; Ms. Lynn Lesko seconded and motion passed unanimously.

#### **DBVI Funding Requests**

Commissioner Hopkins reminded the Board of the funding request from the last meeting in regards to use endowment funds for Low Vision services totaling \$50,000. These funds are not a new authorization, but for an additional use of existing funds. Ms. Lynn Lesko made a motion to approve the \$50,000 endowment funds for low vision services; Ms. Deborah Helms seconded; motion passed. Mr. Mazen Basrawi abstained.

#### **Adoption of FY19 meeting dates**

Proposed dates are September 25, 2018; December 11, 2018; March 26, 2019 and June 25, 2019. Ms. Lynn Lesko moved to approve the proposed FY19 meeting dates; Ms. Deborah Helms seconded and motion passed unanimously. The Board suggested adding a portion for board members to visit the Robotics Academy at the upcoming June meeting.

#### **Reports**

##### **Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Ray Hopkins**

DBVI, along with the other state agencies in the Commonwealth, transitioned email platforms on March 26<sup>th</sup>, moving from Outlook to Gmail and G-Suites. DBVI staff were able to participate in “Lunch and Learn” opportunities to learn shortcuts and easier ways to use this new platform. The Commissioner commended a number of staff who have been instrumental in this transition. DBVI will be seeking a meeting with VITA to work out accessibility standards.

President Trump early last month nominated Mr. Mark Schultz from Nebraska, as the Commissioner of RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration), but it is unsure when the Senate will hold his appointment hearing. Funding for federal grants have been approved, but

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the awarding of the funds are forthcoming. These grants will be at level funding, minus the sequester. At a state level, the proposed budget does not have any major changes.

The Commissioner summarized a number of bills that DBVI participated in or watched this past legislative session.

#### Enterprise Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Matt Koch*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

Deputy Commissioner Koch will ensure the new board members are added to his weekly report that he sends to the Commissioner for both VIB and the Business Enterprise Program.

#### Services Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Richard Mitchell*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

The Library and Resource Center (LRC) Director retired as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, a month short of her celebrating 40 years with the Agency. Interviews are scheduled for mid-April. The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) are gearing up for the LIFE and LEAP programs. Also, VRCBVI is putting a greater focus on employment and work experience. AS a result, VRCBVI is strengthening their relationship with Career Work, the new brand for the One-Stop Centers throughout the Commonwealth. Staff from the One-Stops are coming to VRCBVI once a month for work-readiness topics, as well as students visiting their sites on an individual basis.

Dr. Mitchell was proud to announce that the Combined State Plan that is required through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), was submitted on March 30<sup>th</sup>, before the April 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline.

#### Administration Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Wallica Gaines*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

A decision is forthcoming in regards to the Staunton Regional Office. The current lease is ending and staff are reviewing how to proceed. Construction is continuing on the Stone House including demolition, asbestos removal and internal wiring. As of now, funding is still in the

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pool for approval in the state budget in regards to renovating the Headquarters Building. Demolition would not start for around 10-12 months after July 1, 2018.

#### Endowment Fund Report– *Charlotte McGee, US Trust*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

Deputy Commissioner Gaines reviewed the accounts from US Trust and Bank of America. US Trust has advised us that they will no longer manage public funds. They will continue to manage the endowment fund until another entity is found to manage this fund. Ms. Gaines has communicated with the Treasurer of Virginia and discussed what options are available. At this time a consultant, that works with the Treasurer, has been made available to help identify an institution that will be willing to manage the endowment fund. One suggestion that was presented is the Board combine these funds with other organizations to make it more attractive to investment banks. This is strictly informational at this time, but there will be a change forthcoming.

#### Old Business

None.

#### Future Action Items & New Business

None.

#### Adjournment

Ms. Lynn Lesko moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Mazen Basrawi seconded.

Next Meeting(s): June 26, 2018 and September 25, 2018