

Draft Minutes
Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired
395 Azalea Avenue, Richmond VA 23227
September 28, 2021 at 11:00 AM

Board Attendees

Bonnie Atwood; Mazen Basrawi, *Chair*; Paul D’Addario; Dr. Leo Kim; Barbara McCarthy.

Members Absent

Deborah Helms; Ken Jessup.

Members of the Public

Virginia Voice: Kenneth Wene & Mattie FitzGerald; Optimal Services Group: Joe Montgomery, James Johnson, Bryce Lee & Dan Burke.

DBVI Staff to the Board

Pam Cato, Director of Workforce Services; Jessica Collette, Staff Assistant, DBVI; Wallica Gaines, Deputy Commissioner for Administration, DBVI; Raymond Hopkins, Commissioner, DBVI; Matt Koch, Deputy Commissioner for Enterprises, DBVI; Dr. Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Services, DBVI; Caren Phipps, Director of Services for Children and Youth.

Call to Order & Welcome

Chairman Basrawi called the meeting to order and welcomed the members in attendance.

Business Items

Introductions

Chairman Basrawi commenced the roll call.

Consent of Agenda

Barbara McCarthy moved to approve the agenda; motion passed unanimously.

Consent of Minutes

In the minutes, change “in June 29th” instead of “on” and an extra “the” in the third paragraph. Paul D’Addario moved to approve the Minutes from the June 2021 meeting; motion passed unanimously.

Leo Kim moved to approve the Minutes from the June 2021 Special Meeting; motion passed unanimously.

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Program Spotlight: Investment Policy Presentation from the Optimal Services Group

Optimal Services Group team

Mr. Bryce Lee and Dan Burke shared information with the Board around the Optimal Services Group and how they will manage the endowment portfolio. Leo Kim moved to adopt the investment policy and target allocation presented; motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Kenneth Wene shared that the Virginia Voice CEO tendered his resignation as of last Friday and he is serving as the new Acting CEO.

Agency Reports

Caren Phipps presented information regarding the Teachers for the Visually Impaired (TVI) shortage and the impact to DBVI.

Pam Cato and Dr. Mitchell presented information regarding the current Vocational Rehabilitation policy for support of college students.

Commissioner Hopkins presented an update regarding the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

New Business

Bonnie Atwood, Barbara McCarthy and Commissioner Hopkins provided information to the Board around the planning that is taking place for the 100th anniversary celebration event. The idea at this time is to hold a Summit with DBVI employees and other leaders from the Commonwealth. The dates would be Monday, December 13th – Tuesday, December 14th.

Leo Kim shared that due to changes of professional responsibilities he will resign once a replacement is found, if timely.

Adjournment

Barbara McCarthy moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:22 pm; motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: December 14, 2021

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Reports

Agency Report – *Commissioner Ray Hopkins*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

The Commissioner mentioned the American Rescue Plan funding and the \$4B that came to Virginia. DBVI did receive around \$11.5M for the renovation of the VIB Charlottesville, \$600,000 for an outdoor classroom/ pavilion on the Azalea campus and \$400,000 for upgrading HVAC systems in agency owned buildings to add ultraviolet lights to combat viruses. Also, this week DBVI submitted four decision packages to the Secretary's Office. If he approves, they will be entered into an electronic system for the Governor's approval to be added to his budget recommendation. These items have been asked in the past.

Wallica shared an update around the grants the Board funded. Currently waiting for documents from the organizations and each are in different stages of dispersing funds. Wallica will follow up on this process and where each recipient is in the process.

The Commissioner addressed DBVI's response to the Executive Directive #18 and the testing requirement that has been occurring.