

APPROVED MINUTES
Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Quarterly Board Meeting
September 23, 2025
11:00 am – 2:00 pm

ALL VIRTUAL via Zoom

Board Chair, in consultation with the Commissioner, DBVI, made decision to hold All Virtual meeting as Board was expected to not have quorum.

Board Members in Attendance

Joseph Ashley-Vice Chair, Paul D'Addario-Chair, Michael Kasey, Tina Egge

Board Members Not in Attendance

Tracy Bowdish, Kathryn Campbell

Public in Attendance

None

DBVI Staff Attendance

Rebecca Askew, Senior Policy Analyst; Wallica Gaines, Deputy Commissioner, Administration; Melissa Jackson, Financial and Risk Management Director; Matt Koch, Deputy Commissioner of Enterprises; Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant to Commissioner; Rick Mitchell, Commissioner; Wanda Swaringen, Executive Assistant; Ashley West, Executive Assistant to Deputy Commissioners

Guests in Attendance

Bryce Lee, Optimal Services Group
Karen Logan, Optimal Services Group
Olu Rosanwo, Optimal Services Group

Call to Order & Welcome

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

Business Items

Adoption of Agenda

The Chair proposed an amendment to the agenda to elect a Board Secretary and to review the Board's Meeting Participation by Electronic Means Policy. Dr. Ashley moved to adopt the agenda as amended. Mr. Kasey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board's Meeting Participation by Electronic Means Policy is required to be reviewed every two years. The Attorney General's Office confirmed compliance with the law. The Board did not recommend any changes. Dr. Ashley motioned to approve the policy as is with a continued two-year review schedule. Ms. Egge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of June 24, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Ms. Egge moved to adopt the June 24, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Dr. Ashley seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with a majority vote.

Public Comment

None

Optimal Services Group

The Optimal Services Group reported on the Board's portfolio with Wells Fargo.

Portfolio status: ~\$7.2M at end of July (includes \$750k restricted funds).

Net of contributions/distributions, portfolio growth reflects ~\$444k in gains.

Year-to-date return: ~6.3% (slightly under 8% benchmark, due to lower international weighting).

Through August: ~8% return.

Board discussion: Clarified that restricted \$750k must be tracked separately from general endowment for spending policy.

Wells Fargo/Optimal presented three options to track the restricted \$750k separately.

The Board consensus was Option 1 opening a new main account for clarity, transparency, accountability, and separation of restricted vs. unrestricted funds. Concerns were raised about whether future restricted donations would each require their own account. Wells Fargo noted that with few restricted funds (under ~5), separate accounts make sense; with many (20–30), boards usually switch to sub accounting.

Board members stressed the importance of tracking restricted donations individually to avoid misuse. Some smaller restricted funds exist (e.g., \$100k for youth services), but these have not been actively used. The Board agreed it would be useful to know the amounts and restrictions on all such funds. Melissa Jackson reported that QuickBooks lists ~12 restricted items, but further work with DARS is needed to confirm which are true donor restrictions vs. preferences.

Dr. Ashley moved to adopt Option 1. Mr. Kasey seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved Option 1 (open a new account for the \$750,000 restricted funds).

***Staff will continue working with DARS to clarify the status of the ~12 restricted items and report back at the December meeting.*

Agency Reports

Enterprise Division

Deputy Commissioner Koch reported.

Virginia Enterprises for the Blind (VEB)

Randolph-Sheppard Program: Awaiting overdue FOIA response from Air Force regarding food services at Fort Lee; considering joining a multi-state arbitration case that could generate ~\$2.5M in sales and ~\$500K in vendor earnings if successful.

Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB)

Opened a new Regional Operations Center in Norfolk (10,000 sq. ft. office/warehouse). Navy ship store team is already operating; \$2M in product sales in 10 months.

Federal customer service team to transition from remote to onsite; awaiting federal decisions on three service contract bids.

ERP system "Odoo" selected; implementation to begin September 30 with an 18-month timeline. Achieved six straight months of 100% on-time deliveries. Staffing metrics: 78% of direct labor employees are blind (above required 75%).

Challenges: higher mattress rework rates (equipment breakdowns, elevator outage, increased demand). Staff working overtime to meet Navy/Corrections contracts.

New business: contract with Hill AFB (three remote CMS jobs), new Navy warehouse proposal, Navy mattress redesign in partnership with Virginia Tech spin-offs.

Administration Division

Deputy Commissioner Gaines reported.

Legislative & budget proposals submitted to the Secretary's Office (details confidential until released).

Facilities Projects:

\$13.5M VIB Charlottesville plant renovation & roof replacement (design nearly complete).

\$18M Library Resource Center (LRC) renovation (design phase).

\$1.2M infrastructure project (sidewalks/roadways).

Outdoor classroom and smaller projects: instructional kitchen renovation, new building automation system.

New Office of Strategic Initiatives Director Jankail Allen begins Thursday.

Services Division

Commissioner Mitchell reported in Deputy Commissioner Malone's absence.

All field staff positions filled.

New regional manager for Richmond office: Felicia Williams.

Vacancy: Pre-employment Transition Specialist.

Recruiting for RT/IL Director.

Successful summer and senior programming.

October events: Celebrating Ability programs across regions; consumer group meetings.

Commissioner invited as keynote speaker at Liberty University's Disability Employment Awareness event (Oct. 7).

Federal context: uncertainty around continuing resolutions and Older Blind Grant funding. Agency has sufficient carryover funds to sustain services through at least spring.

Old Business

Attendance Policy

Key points: Chair determines excused/unexcused absences.

Two consecutive unexcused absences → Chair informs Board; Board may vote to recommend removal to Governor.

Review every 2 years.

Ms. Egge moved to adopt the Attendance Policy. Dr. Ashley seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Endowment Fund Donations via VA State Tax Returns

Option now available; outreach via newsletters and updated agency/Board websites with links to donate.

Must receive at least \$10K annually for 3 consecutive years to remain on the tax form.

Grants Process Review

The Board discussed revising the grant application and report format. Ideas included: setting funding request ranges, clearer guidance to avoid unrealistic requests. ***The Chair requested members be prepared to come to the December Board Meeting with revision suggestions.* Revisions to be considered and finalized at the December meeting to allow time for implementation.

It was reported that all grant payments have been distributed to the grant recipients who were announced at the June 24, 2025 Board meeting.

New Business

VR Program Director to present results of statewide needs assessment at a future meeting, highlighting service gaps that could inform Board priorities.

Board Secretary Election

Due to a vacancy, an election was held.

Ms. Egge moved to nominate Michael Casey. Dr. Ashley seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Adjourn

Dr. Ashley moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kasey seconded the motion. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned hearing no objection.

Next meeting is December 16, 2025.