

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 13, 2004

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Adams
John Barnett
Sharon Berry
Searcy Ewell
Nola McKinney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Pierre Curry
Jim Hill
Buddy Spivey

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Lindi Johnson
Maria Morais

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Donna Hunt
Ramona Sangalli

DHS Representative: Artee Williams

Attorney General's Office Representative: None

Governor's Office Representative: None

DSB Staff Present: Jim Hudson, Katy Morris, Coral Virden, Kimberly Stanfield, Jim Pearson, Donna Hartzell, Kandy Cayce, Lyndel Lybarger, Kara Mahan, Wally Thomas, Chris McKenzie, Mary Cabaniss, Larry Wayland

CALL TO ORDER. Vice-Chairman Mr. Searcy Ewell called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Motion was made by Mr. John Barnett to approve the agenda with one amendment. Mr. Barnett moved that New Business be amended to include discussion of the letter recently distributed to the Board from the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) concerning DSB funding and budget issues. Mrs. Nola McKinney seconded the motion. **Motion passed with no objections and no abstentions.**

INTRODUCTIONS. All persons in attendance introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF 12/13/03 MINUTES. Motion was made by Mr. Barnett. Mr. Jim Adams seconded the motion. **Motion passed with no objections and no abstentions.**

DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Reauthorization - Reauthorizing the Rehabilitation Act and Work Investment Act is on hold in Washington.

State Revenue - DSB was asked by DHS to identify where it would take a 5% decrease in state general revenue in the event such was mandated between now and June 30 as a result of the new state law giving funding priority to Education. This decrease was identified by DSB to be taken in maintenance and other operating costs to shelter client services as much as possible. If general revenue is decreased markedly, DSB will be unable to meet its federally mandated "Maintenance of Effort" matching requirements for the Voc Rehab Program. This would force DSB to divert all general revenue above that required to match other federal grants to Voc Rehab to avoid turn back of federal funds in that program. Although the Older Blind program is in no present danger of losing federal grant funds, it would be greatly affected by a reduction of state general revenue because state funds represent a significant portion of total funding for Older Blind.

Workforce - DSB is still working with the workforce centers in the state on developing the required Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). Federal guidance is not clear, but the state agency and the centers are hoping the negotiated documents will receive federal approval. The new Director of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board is Sandra Winston, who has been affiliated with the Department of Human Services and several other entities of state government and private industry. We look forward to working closely again with Ms. Winston.

Mr. Artee Williams - Congratulations to Mr. Artee Williams, DHS Assistant Director, who has been named the new Director of the Employment Security Department. Mr. Williams has served as DSB's liaison with the DHS Director's Office for several years.

RSA National Commissioner Joanne Wilson – The Commissioner is the scheduled keynote speaker for the Arkansas Rehabilitation Association annual meeting in Hot Springs in May. Several DSB Staff will be in attendance to listen to her remarks and will have an opportunity to meet with her specifically regarding DSB.

Medicaid Waiver to fund a portion of the Older Blind Program - Kandy Cayce of DSB has been working to obtain a Medicaid Waiver to partially fund the Older Blind program as a supplement to other declining funds. She has completed the application process, is writing the associated manual, and awaiting the outcome of the DHS review and subsequent submission to Medicaid officials in Dallas for additional review.

DSB Staff Update -The vacant Rehabilitation Teacher spots in Fayetteville and Pine Bluff have been filled. Both counselors will work with the Older Blind.

Promulgation of DSB Program Policy. State law requires that when policies are planned or changed regarding the conduct of state programs, they have to be posted for public notice and comment and reviewed by a legislative committee. Kandy Cayce and Jim Pearson represent DSB in this process, and have accomplished a great deal in the last year to ensure that DSB is current in promulgating policies for each of the programs it administers.

HAVA - The Secretary of State, Charlie Daniels, requested that Arkansas be permitted an extension of time to implement the access provisions of HAVA (Help America Vote Act). As a member of the state HAVA committee, the DSB Director had a lengthy

discussion with the Secretary of State prior to the public announcement of the extension request. The Secretary of State feels justified in requesting the extension mainly because he does not think there has been enough research into voting by computer or touch screen, as well as the security. The DSB Director voiced his disagreement with the extension. Other states have moved along with HAVA and Arkansas will be a year or two late. Pulaski County does have accessible voting machines due to the efforts of its voting commission.

END OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

EX-OFFICIO ABSENTEEISM - Mr. Ewell noted that Chairman Lindi Johnson asked Ex-Officio board members, and the organizations that appoint them, to make a special effort to ensure that the ex-officio members attend DSB board meetings, adding that all DSB Board Members and Ex-Officio Board Members recently received a letter from Mrs. Johnson to that effect.

MANAGING A VENDING LOCATION IN ARKANSAS - Mr. Pierre Curry gave a report on the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Program in Arkansas. Due to employment difficulties for blind persons after World War II, U.S. Senators Jennings Randolph and Morris Sheppard passed an Act, which gave preference to qualified blind persons in the operation of all vending and concessions in federal buildings. Later, the state of Arkansas passed similar legislation governing all state buildings except certain institutions. For a time, there were also a significant number of Randolph-Sheppard vending stands in private factories in Arkansas. Now, there are two private, four federal and 22 state locations remaining. Seventeen are in the Little Rock area, with the remainder in Hot Springs, Fort Smith, Eudora, Malvern, Forrest City, Ozark, Clinton and Searcy. Another 16 unmanned highway rest stop locations are scattered along interstates 30 and 40.

To become a vendor, blind persons contact the VR program to get into training. Trainees study the vendor's manual, take quizzes and train under experienced blind vendors statewide to learn the day-to-day operation of a vending stand. Math and money management is very important. Each week a daily report is maintained which gives a listing of items bought for the day, and sales. A weekly report gives the profit amount for the week. Eleven percent of each vendor's net profit is set-aside by the central office as a fund for replacement of equipment needed by the vendors.

The vending program currently has two trainees. When they pass the final exam, they become eligible to operate vending locations, whenever locations become available. In this event, qualified vendors in the program will receive a bid sheet with information on the location that has become available. An interested vendor will "bid" or formally ask to be considered for award of the location. A conference call among the Committee of Blind Vendors will determine who is awarded the location, based upon the seniority of the qualified vendors who submit a bid. The Committee also meets quarterly to discuss vending issues and recommend changes to the vendors' manual.

The cost to DSB for starting a vending stand location can range from \$25,000 to \$175,000 depending upon the operating plan. Annual Vending sales are around 3 million

dollars a year for all locations. End of Vending Report.

It was suggested by Mr. Adams that the vending program might want to partner with one of the universities regarding an economic impact study of the vending program.

DHS EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION 2004 – Mr. Ewell noted that Mrs. Johnson has appointed Mr. Barnett, Mr. Adams and Mr. Ewell, to the DSB Personnel Committee for Employee Recognition, with Mr. Barnett serving as Committee Chairman. Mr. Barnett emphasized that persons nominating DSB staff should thoroughly complete each category entry on the form so that nominees will receive their just recognition. The Employee of the Year will be announced in June, and an award ceremony held at the DSB Annual Meeting next Fall. All Board Members are encouraged to attend the award ceremony.

DSB CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2004 – Mr. Ewell announced that Mrs. Johnson had appointed Mrs. McKinney, Mrs. Maria Morais and Mrs. Sharon Berry to the DSB Client Satisfaction Survey committee, with Mrs. McKinney and Mrs. Morais serving as co-chairs. Mrs. McKinney reported that, as requested by the Chairman, the committee had reviewed the previous survey and compiled recommendations for making the survey more efficient and productive. She asked that the committee report be postponed until the June Board Meeting to give Mrs. Morais the opportunity to participate in any related discussion.

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER REPORT No representative was present. No report was submitted.

ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT (AILC) Ms. Elizabeth Virden, Director, was present and read the report originally distributed in the board packet.

CONSUMER INPUT. Mr. Ewell called for discussion of the letter regarding the possibility of state funding reductions, mailed March 1, 2004 to DSB Board members from the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas (NFBA). Mr. Hudson noted that a lengthy conference call had occurred earlier in the week between DHS Director Mr. Kurt Knickrehm, DHS Assistant Director, Mr. Artee Williams, Chairman Johnson and himself regarding the concerns raised by NFBA. Mrs. McKinney suggested that the Board take direct action to contact the Governor's Office to present the NFB letter and discuss Board concerns. Extensive discussion followed centering around board preparation and understanding of the DSB budget prior to any contact with the Governor's Office. Mrs. McKinney moved that a board committee be formed, including board representatives from ACB, NFB, AER, ASB and Lions, to study the budgetary issues and present the NFB letter to the Governor's office. During further discussion, it was agreed that a committee of the above representatives would meet with DSB staff via conference call in the near future to explore questions individual board members might have regarding the budget process and possible budget cut areas for DSB. Mr. Ewell pointed out that this approach was in keeping with suggestions in the NFBA letter.

The Arkansas Council of the Blind State Convention will be held at the LaQuinta Inn, Interstate 30, in Little Rock, April 30 through May 1, 2004.

A Diabetes Walkathon will be held March 27, 2004 at Murray Park in Little Rock. It is a three-mile walk and donations for sponsors are welcome. The walk begins at 9:00 a.m.

The Battery- Madison Street Bowling Tournament will be held at the Professor West Bowling Alley in Little Rock. The tournament will raise funds for the Battery–Madison Street Alumni Association that will provide Scholarships for students at the Arkansas School for the Blind.

QUARTERLY SUCCESS REPORT – Perky’s Pizza has opened at 406 Louisiana in Little Rock. Free parking at meters is available on Saturdays. The menu consists of salads, fresh made pizzas, sandwiches, taco salads, drinks, cakes and pies.

The next Board Meeting will be held Saturday, June 12, 2004, at Donaghey Plaza South, First Floor, Conference Rooms A & B at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nola McKinney
Secretary