

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 8, 2001

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Adams
John Becton
Ernest Davis
Searcy Ewell
Lindi Johnson
Nola McKinney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Pierre Curry
Buddy Spivey

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Maria Morais

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Jim Hill
Donna Hunt
Ramona Sangalli

DHS Representative: Artee Williams

Attorney General's Office Representative: Tom Gay

DSB Staff Present: Jim Hudson, Katy Morris, Coral Virden, Patricia Anderson, Chris McKenzie, Lyndel Lybarger, Benny Bell, Linda Paxton, Jim Pearson, Gloria Mance, Robert Maxwell, Richard Behra, Donna Hartzell

CALL TO ORDER.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Mrs. Lindi Johnson made a motion to accept the agenda. Mr. Searcy Ewell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

INTRODUCTIONS.

APPROVAL OF THE 09/08/01 MINUTES. Motion was made by Mr. Ernie Davis and

seconded by Mrs. Nola McKinney to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2001 Board Meeting. Motion passed.

WELCOME TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS. DSB Director Jim Hudson extended a welcome to board member Mr. Jim Adams of Little Rock, newly appointed by Governor Huckabee. Mr. Adams replaces AER representative Mr. Ray Stewart. Mrs. Maria Morais of Fayetteville, is also newly appointed by Governor Huckabee, but was unable to attend today's meeting for health reasons. Mrs. Morais replaces NFB Representative Mr. Les McDaniel. With these two appointments, DSB now has a complete board.

Mr. Davis made a motion that Mr. Gerald Carr, former Chairman of the DSB Board, serve as temporary Board Chairman until the election of new officers. Mr. Ewell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Currently DSB is operating under a Continuing Resolution, meaning it will receive the same amount of federal funding as the previous year, until Congress takes additional action.

DSB Field Supervisor Lyndel Lybarger and Rehabilitation Teacher Chris McKenzie, represented DSB at the Independent Living (IL) Conference in New Orleans, recently. Staff sensed an increased spirit of cooperation between IL and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Due to decreased state revenue collections, DSB has been required to reduce its planned general revenue expenditures by 6% (\$110,000). Reductions have been taken in salaries, extra help, travel and equipment. This current reduction is not anticipated to significantly impede client services. A certain level of productivity is expected from each caseload territory. If this expectation is not met, the position may be eliminated or there may be a territorial change. All counselors are expected to have a caseload of at least 60 clients.

Donna Hartzell, Larry Wayland, Jeff Ruple, and Feona Barnett comprise a DSB team, which has observed demonstrations by SAP, the software developer of the state information system (AASIS), regarding accessibility of the system by persons who are blind.

Another information system being reviewed is the Children's Reporting and Information System (CRIS), which appears to be progressing in its accessibility to persons who are blind. CRIS is used by various agencies including the Arkansas State Police. Accessibility of these and other systems under development is crucial to the present and future job prospects of persons who are blind and visually impaired.

Katy Morris, DSB Assistant Director, gave a brief overview of the state's Performance Based Budgeting system, which has been mandated for state agencies in the coming months. The budgeting method is very similar to that used in Rehabilitation across the nation for decades which gives funding preference to programs meeting predetermined performance standards.

In fiscal year 2001, DSB recorded the successful rehabilitation of 324 persons who are blind or severely visually impaired. This is the highest annual rehabilitation rate in DSB history. The Director expressed his appreciation to Field Services Administrator Linda Paxton and the entire staff.

Governor Huckabee proclaimed November as Blindness awareness month in response to requests from the Arkansas Council of the Blind. In support of greater awareness in the new Donaghey Plaza South Building, DSB sponsored a Blindness Awareness Day. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Tanya VanHouten and several other DSB staff demonstrated independent living techniques and appliances, showed a video and distributed related information to approximately 60 co-workers from other DHS agencies located in the complex.

DSB Field Administrator Linda Paxton has been invited to speak on the Arkansas Jumpstart Program at the regional employment conference in Dallas December 11-13.

DSB Director Jim Hudson has been appointed by Governor Huckabee to the State Workforce Investment Board. Mr. Hudson was assigned to the Strategic Planning Committee, which studies all agencies involved in employment statewide and makes suggestions on how to deliver better employment services in the state.

A discussion was held on the orientation of new DSB caseload staff, who attend training at Lions World Services for the Blind as well as the Louisiana Center for the Blind.

END OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

BREAK

ELECTIONS

Mrs. Johnson nominated Mr. Ewell as Chairman. Mr. Ewell nominated Mrs. Johnson as Chairman. The Board elected Mrs. Johnson Chairman by majority vote.

Mrs. McKinney made a motion to elect Mr. Davis Vice-Chairman by acclamation. Mr. Ewell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mr. Ewell made a motion to elect Mrs. McKinney Secretary by acclamation. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. Motion passed.

ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER REPORT (AIRC)

Ms. Peggy Vickers, Director of the Arkansas Independent Living Center (AIRC), spoke on networking with DSB. She thanked the division for financial support and pledged to be active with the DSB offices across the state. AIRC is introducing a workshop at the junior high and high school level, called "Creating Acceptance", designed to give students exposure to simulated experiences of persons with various disabilities.

CONSUMER SURVEY REPORT

Case Reviewer Benny Bell spoke on progress of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey mailed November 6, 2001. Of the 1,356 surveys sent, 456 or 36.4% of the surveys have been returned. Responses so far are mostly positive. Mr. Bell will submit a full report during the March 9, 2002 Board Meeting.

CONSUMER INPUT

Board Member Searcy Ewell expressed concern that Orientation and Mobility (O & M) skills should be taught to all blind and visually impaired consumers. O & M instruction is provided by DSB either through contractors qualified to provide the services or through qualified DSB staff members. Eligible DSB consumers should contact their counselor if they have O & M needs.

The State ACB Convention will be held March 1-2, 2002 at the Holiday Inn in Russellville. The National Convention will be held in Houston, Texas. The NFB Convention will be held July 3-9, 2002. Additional information will be available during the March 9, Board Meeting.

A request was made for NFB and ACB to check on free Directory Assistance for blind consumers. It was suggested that the Public Service Commission be contacted.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. March 9, 2002 in the new Donaghey Plaza South Building, First Floor, Conference Room A.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nola McKinney
Secretary

