

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 12, 2004

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Adams
John Barnett
Searcy Ewell
Lindi Johnson
Nola McKinney
Maria Morais

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Pierre Curry
Ramona Sangalli

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Sharon Berry

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Jim Hill
Donna Hunt
Buddy Spivey

DHS Representative: Kurt Knickrehm, Janie Huddleston

Attorney General's Office Representative: Tom Gay

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, Mary Cabaniss, Dorothy Brooks

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Mrs. Lindi Johnson called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Motion was made by Mr. John Barnett to approve the agenda. Mr. Searcy Ewell seconded the motion.

INTRODUCTIONS. All persons in attendance introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF 03/13/04 MINUTES. Motion to approve was made by Mrs. Maria Morais with one correction. The minutes should reflect that the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas (NFBA), rather than the DSB Board, would present the NFBA letter to the Governor's office. Mr. Barnett seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. *Motion passed.*

DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT -

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT - During her keynote address to the Arkansas Rehabilitation Association May 19, RSA Commissioner JoAnne Wilson indicated that it would probably be after the first of the year before the Workforce Investment Act and the Rehabilitation Act would be re-authorized. House Bill 1261, WIA, contains certain proposals that have caused rehabilitation agencies across the country some concern, including diminishing the authority level of the RSA Commissioner and restricting the formal representation of blind agencies on local Workforce Boards. Regarding federal funding, no cuts are proposed in Rehab Programs at this time. Everyone should be watching and commenting on what you would like to see in the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act and Workforce Investment Act.

Ms. Janie Huddleston, former Director of DHS Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education, has replaced Mr. Artee Williams as a Deputy Director of DHS with administrative responsibility for several DHS Divisions including DSB. Mr. Williams recently transferred to the Department of Employment Security as its new Director. DHS Director Kurt Knickrehm introduced Ms. Huddleston, who expressed her interest in learning about DSB and helping advance its mission in improving the lives of persons who are blind and visually impaired.

Interagency agreements. Most of the interagency agreements between DSB and institutions of higher education have been completed. The agreements between the workforce centers and DSB are still pending.

Fayetteville vacancy. The Rehabilitation Counselor in Fayetteville has resigned, and a replacement is being recruited.

Federal Review. Mr. Doug Lawton, RSA Representative, conducted an annual review May 17-21, 2004 and will provide a draft report for DSB input in the near future. If any deficiencies are noted, DSB is expected to develop a corrective action plan in conjunction with the federal partner.

JUMPSTART 2004 – The summer transition program operated in conjunction with Arkansas School for the Blind and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock will begin Sunday, June 13, 2004 through July 2, 2004. Twenty to Twenty-two youth will be working part time in the mornings, learning independent living skills in the afternoon and attending recreational activities at night.

MEDICAID WAIVER – DSB is still waiting on approval from Dallas.

BIENNIAL BUDGET – DSB intends to request an additional \$150,000 this year to help fund three rehabilitation teacher positions. These positions will work with older persons who are blind and those in need of independent living skills training.

END OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

APPROVAL OF BOARD TRAVEL EXPENSES – In accordance with state law, boards must vote yearly to authorize reimbursement to their members for board meeting travel expenses. Therefore, Mrs. Nola McKinney made the motion that DSB board members be reimbursed per state travel regulations for their costs incurred in attending board meetings. Mrs. Morais seconded the motion. *Motion passed.*

Governor's Office Representative. Mrs. McKinney inquired as to why no representative from the Governor's Office attended the quarterly DSB Board Meetings. Mr. Knickrehm replied that, as DHS Director, he was appointed by the Governor and represents the Governor's office at the quarterly meetings, along with Ms. Huddleston, and can bring concerns voiced by the board to the Governor's attention

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR COMMITTEE REPORT – Board Personnel Committee Chairman Mr. John Barnett announced the individual and overall winners of the DSB Employee of the Year for 2004. The winner in the DSB Clerical Category is Mrs. Carolyn Holbrook, the Rehabilitation Assistant II in the finance section. In the Direct Services Category, the winner is Mrs. Mary Sloan, a certified Rehabilitation Teacher in the Little Rock Field Office. In the Administrative Support Category, the winner is Mrs. Kandy Cayce, the Rehab Program and Planning Director in the Little Rock Field Office. The overall DSB Employee of the year is Mary Sloan. All three individuals will be awarded plaques for distinguished service at the DSB Statewide Meeting September 23, 2004.

CLIENT SURVEY COMMITTEE REPORT – The committee met to review past surveys and recommend future format. Committee members, Mrs. Morais, Mrs. McKinney and Mrs. Johnson, made recommendations regarding survey methodology and specific questions. Mrs. McKinney motioned that the board adopt the committee survey design and methodology and that the board Client Survey Committee conduct the survey for a couple of years. Mrs. Morais seconded the motion. *Motion passed.*

BUDGET CONCERNS COMMITTEE - Mrs. Morais reported that the DSB Board Budget Concerns Committee held a conference call April 8, 2004 to address issues raised in the letter sent to the board March 1 by the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas (NFBA). [The letter is attached as a formal part of these minutes]. As requested by NFBA, the Committee examined in detail the reasoning behind recent

reductions in general revenue in the Older Blind program. At the conclusion of the conference call, committee members agreed that the questions raised by NFBA had been answered and such would be reported to the full board.

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER REPORT (DRC) - Mr. Eddie Miller stated that the Disability Rights Center continues to advocate statewide for people with disabilities. Most recently DRC has created a group that travels the state to survey workforce centers looking at program accessibility and architectural accessibility. Mr. Miller asked that DSB Counselors be vigilant in informing DSB consumers of how to contact the Disability Rights Center in the event the consumers are not satisfied with DSB services.

ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT (AILC) - No representative was present. A report is contained in the board packet.

CONSUMER INPUT - Mr. Searcy Ewell reported that the Battery- Madison Street Alumni Association will be hosting a Tea on June 27, 2004, at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. The proceeds will provide scholarships to graduates from the Arkansas School for the Blind. He also noted that the Friends of the Radio Reading Services for the Blind are seeking members for board positions. Interested individuals may call 666-2469.

The National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas annual state convention will be held Friday, September 10 through Sunday September 12, 2004, at the Holiday Inn, Presidential Conference Center in downtown Little Rock.

Mrs. McKinney announced that she is a candidate for the Presidency of the American Council of the Blind Auxiliary on Aging and Vision Loss. She will also present five different awards on the first night of the ACB National convention.

The annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind will be held in Atlanta, Georgia June 29 – July 5, 2004.

The American Council of the Blind (ACB) National Convention will be held in Birmingham, Alabama, July 3-10, 2004.

QUARTERLY SUCCESS REPORT – Ms. Denna Lambert, a former DSB client and graduate of Hall High School and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, has recently been hired as a Contract Officer with NASA, working with Space Camps and other contract obligations.

DSB Sponsorship to Annual National Consumer Meetings. Mr. Barnett made a motion that Mrs. McKinney, representing ACB, and Mrs. Morais, representing NFB, be authorized to attend their respective national consumer meetings at agency expense within state regulations, not to exceed \$1,200 each. Mr. Jim Adams seconded the motion. *Motion passed.* Mrs. McKinney agreed to represent DSB at the ACB annual meeting. Mrs. Morais indicated she would be unavailable to attend NFB this year.

Schedule of Next Meeting. Mr. Barnett made a motion that the next DSB Board Meeting be held Saturday, September 11, 2004, at the Holiday Inn, Presidential Conference Center in downtown Little Rock, Interstate 30, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m, in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas annual state Convention. Mr. Ewell seconded the motion. *Motion passed.*

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nola McKinney
Secretary