

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 9, 2002

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Adams
Searcy Ewell
Lindi Johnson
Nola McKinney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Pierre Curry
Jim Hill

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

John Becton
Maria Morais

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Donna Hunt
Ramona Sangalli
Buddy Spivey

DHS Representative: Kurt Knickrehm

Attorney General's Office Representative: Tom Gay

DSB Staff Present: Jim Hudson, Katy Morris, Coral Virden, Carolyn Holbrook, Charlie Cain, Richard Behra, Linda Paxton, Donna Hartzell, Jim Pearson, Benny Bell, Gloria Mance, Lyndel Lybarger

CALL TO ORDER.

Chairman Lindi Johnson called the meeting to order and requested a moment of silence in memory of Board Member and Vice-Chairman Ernie Davis.

Two changes were proposed to the agenda, that the presentation by Eddie Miller of the Client Assistant Program (CAP) be postponed due to a death in Mr. Miller's family; and the announcement of the DSB Employee of the Year Award be moved to the June 8, 2002 Board Meeting to accommodate changes in the Performance Evaluation calendar. Sympathy was extended to Mr. Miller in his loss.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ... Mr. Searcy Ewell made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Mr. Jim Adams seconded the motion. Motion passed.

INTRODUCTIONS. Introductions were made by all parties in attendance.

APPROVAL OF THE 12/08/01 MINUTES. Motion was made by Mr. Ewell and seconded by Mr. Adams to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2001 Board Meeting. Motion passed.

DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT-DSB Director Jim Hudson expressed sympathy to the family of Ernie Davis. In December Mr. Davis discovered he had advanced stomach cancer. He died in late February.

Ticket To Work-DSB will begin rigorous training next week on Ticket-to-Work. It is a different type of service delivery system. Beginning next year, clients will be given a ticket to work' in terms of their service plans. The plans will continue to be negotiated with their counselors, and clients will be given the resources to implement the ticket.

Linda Paxton, DSB Field Services Administrator and Donna Hartzell, DSB Supervisor, attended the Older Blind Conference in Washington, D.C. The main issues discussed were funding and reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. A public hearing regarding Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act will be held in Dallas, Texas, May 9, 2002. In Arkansas, the older blind program is very viable. State funding committed to the Older Blind Program is almost double what DSB is funded by the federal government, and, in the future, earmarking that level of state funding for Older Blind could cause DSB to be unable to adequately match other programs, such as vocational rehabilitation.

Two bills being considered in Congress are HR2674 and HR2284. Information on the bills can be found on congressional web site: <<http://thomas.loc.gov>> . Insert the Bill Number or any key word such as mobility or rehabilitation teaching to access the text of the bill. Under each bill, Medicare would pay for rehabilitation teaching, orientation & mobility and other training services. However, HR2484 specifies that eligible services be physician directed, while HR 2674 vests responsibility for oversight in the state rehabilitation agencies, such as DSB. The congressional link for bill tracking will be added to the DSB website.

The American Council of the Blind Convention was held last Saturday, March 2, 2002 in Russellville, Arkansas. The topics were interesting and the meeting was a great success.

Workforce Development-DSB has been actively involved in the Strategic Planning Committee of the state Workforce Board.

Information System Access-The Children's Reporting and Information System (CHRIS) is now considered accessible to blind and visually impaired persons. The cost to DHS to retrofit this internal system was \$82,000. DSB staff advised DHS officials on methods to make the DHS system accessible. DSB staff continues to meet with Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System (AASIS) staff regarding the state's efforts

to retrofit the AASIS system to make it accessible. DHS Director, Kurt Knickrehm suggested that Randall Bradford, the Director of the Arkansas Department of Information Services, be invited to the June 8 Board Meeting to address the Board regarding the status of AASIS.

Tech Lab-The DSB Tech Lab located on the campus of the Arkansas School for the Blind will be relocated to enlarged quarters in the school after renovations have been completed.

Vending Facility Program-A DSB licensed blind vendor has opened a dairy bar in Springdale, Arkansas. A vending location is available at the Vocational Technical School in Springdale. Jim Pearson, Vending Facility Administrator is also looking at a Pizza-For-Less in North Little Rock.

Mary Douglas, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the Little Rock Office, has received her national certification as a Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). Mary is also certified as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Joint Performance Review Committee. DSB Director Jim Hudson spoke before the Joint Performance Review Committee of the legislature February 20 regarding DSB services provided within the Department of Human Services.

END OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

BOARD ORIENTATION SCHEDULE-Nola McKinney made a motion to schedule Board Orientation at Donaghey Plaza South Friday afternoon, June 7, 2002 or Saturday morning, June 8, 2002 at 8:30 a.m, depending on the availability of board members. Searcy Ewell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

2001 DSB CONSUMER SURVEY REPORT-Benny Bell, DSB Case Reviewer, presented the results of the annual consumer satisfaction survey, a copy of which was read into the record and is attached as a formal part of the minutes. 90% of VR consumers and 93% of LIFE consumers were satisfied with DSB services.

RECOGNITION OF PAST BOARD MEMBERS-Former Board Members Randy Burress, Ray Stewart, Les McDaniel and Gerald Carr were presented plaques recognizing them for their dedication in improving services to blind persons in Arkansas. Mr. Burress represented the Arkansas Council of the Blind (ACB) from 1999 to 2001. Mr. Stewart represented AER from 1998 to 2001 and served two terms as Vice Chairman. Mr. McDaniel represented National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas (NFB) from 1993 to 2001 and served four terms as Secretary. Mr. Carr represented the Lions of Arkansas from 1993 to 2001 and served three terms as Board Chairman.

ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT-

Report was submitted with Board Packets.

STATE BUDGET AND REHABILITATION PLAN-The state rehabilitation plan is in the development stage and public comments regarding assessment of needs are being solicited through June 2002. The annual budget for state fiscal year 2003 and the biennial budget for 2003-2005 are in the planning stages. Until now, DSB has had sufficient state funds to match both its VR and Older Blind Programs at a continuing level. However, due to reductions in state revenue and increases in federal funds, DSB must now divert additional state funds to the VR program to avoid turn back of under matched federal funds. This will reduce the frequency of Older Blind services unless the Governor and/or the General Assembly can replace the necessary state funds.

CONSUMER INPUT-The Arkansas Council of the Blind Convention was held March 1-2 in Russellville, Arkansas. The Council awards two-\$1000 Scholarships each year. A proposal was made for new legislation pertaining to the School for the Blind and education. The National ACB Convention will be held in Houston June 30-July 6.

The National Federation of the Blind Convention will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, July 3-9, 2002.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE PRIOR QUARTER. During the last quarter, 66 persons were closed successfully employed and 105 older persons who were blind. Of the 66 clients who went into employment in October, some of the types of employment were teachers, audit clerks, diesel mechanics, etc., with an average of \$238. 43 weekly. During the month of November, some of the closures were computer operators, nurse, medical clerk, etc., averaging \$181.95 weekly. During the month of December, some of the closures were, Piano Tuner, secretary, Technical Support Supervisor, etc., averaging \$278.37 weekly.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next DSB Board meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m., June 8, 2002 in the Donaghey Plaza South building, First Floor, Conference Room A.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nola McKinney
Secretary