

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2005

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Sharon Berry  
Lori Hunter  
James Johnson  
Lindi Johnson  
Nola McKinney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Harold Brewer  
Jim Hill  
Ramona Sangalli (represented by  
Bob Connell)  
Buddy Spivey

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Searcy Ewell

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Beth Bourgeois (resigned due to hire 2/05)

DHS Representative: None

Attorney General's Office Representative: None

Governor's Office Representative: None

DSB Staff Present: Jim Hudson, Coral Virden, Jim Pearson, Donna Birdwell, Lyndel Lybarger, Kara Aaron, Mary Cabaniss, Carolyn Holbrook, Kandy Cayce, Feona Barnett, Ginny McWilliams, Chris McKenzie, Jimmy Jones

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** Chairman Johnson proposed one amendment to the agenda, that old business be amended to include the proposals of the DSB Employee of the Year committee. Mrs. Sharon Berry made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Mrs. Nola McKinney seconded the motion. *Motion passed.*

**WELCOME TO BOARD MEMBERS.** The board chairman welcomed new board member, Mr. James Johnson, Arkansas Lions representative. Mr. Johnson replaces board member Mr. John Barnett. Ms. Lori Hunter, National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas representative, replaces board member Maria Morais. Mr. Harold Brewer, Arkansas Association of Blind Business Enterprise Managers representative, replaces Ex-officio board member, Mr. Pierre Curry.

**INTRODUCTIONS.** All persons in attendance introduced themselves.

**APPROVAL OF 06/11/05 MINUTES.** Board Chairman proposed two amendments to the minutes. Mr. Harold Brewer will replace Mr. Pierre Curry as representative of the Arkansas Association of Blind Business Enterprise Managers. It was noted that Mr. Curry held a near perfect record for attendance to the DSB board meetings, missing only two times during the tenure of his post. The absences were due to means beyond his control; foul weather and a travel obstacle when the meeting was held in Fayetteville. As everyone applauded him for his remarkable achievement, the board expressed that Mr. Pierre Curry's loyal presence will be sincerely missed. Motion was made by Mrs. Nola McKinney to approve the minutes. Mrs. Sharon Berry seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. *Motion passed.*

**DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT -** DSB Director noted that Mr. Jim Morris, husband of DSB Assistant Director, Katy Morris had been released from the hospital and they are now home. DSB Board Member Mr. Searcy Ewell has been released from the hospital and he is now home.

**REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION** Nationally, we are set up with the Rehabilitation Services Administration in Washington as part of the Department of Education (OSER). We have had ten regional offices through this structure in Washington and we have had a Division of Services for the Blind in Washington's rehabilitation services administration office. The regional office provided technical assistance relative to the Rehab Act and conducted a 107 (Program) Review of DSB. We have not received the final report. Washington plans to provide monitoring and technical assistance after the closure of the regional offices. All regional offices will close at the end of September 2005. Our region consists of Arkansas, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma.

The commissioner of rehabilitation has previously been appointed by President Bush. There is a proposal to Congress that the rehabilitation commissioner will not be appointed by the President but be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Education.

A major concern on the national level is the possible elimination of specialized services that are currently around the country and the continuance of those services.

A second major concern on the national level is the separate agencies of the blind throughout the country of which there are 26. There is a move to have blind and disabled people going to the workforce centers, of which ten are in Arkansas. The workforce centers have the tendency to work with individuals who are less costly and require less training.

**REORGANIZATION** Reorganization in the state is a concern between the Departments of Health and Human Services. The Division of Services for the Blind is the only agency in reorganization that has a policy making board.

**HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF EFFORT** DSB Director extended a thank you to the DSB staff for their promptness in working with the referrals from Hurricane Katrina, and additional referrals are expected. It has been reported that seventy percent of the vending locations were completely destroyed in the New Orleans area. DSB has one staff member working almost full time at one of the relief centers.

**DSB EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR COMMITTEE** Chairman Johnson appointed the Employee of the Year Committee consisting of the Chairman, Mrs. Nola McKinney, Mr. James Johnson, Mrs. Sharon Berry and Ms. Donna Birdwell. The committee will review the DSB Employee of the year process, forms, criteria and modifications and submit their proposal to the Board at the December 10, 2005 board meeting. DSB will provide a Bio of each employee that will consist of one to two paragraphs including the length of service. A complete report will be submitted at the March 11, 2006 Board meeting.

**BOARD TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT** In accordance with state law, boards must vote yearly to authorize reimbursements to their members for board meeting travel expenses. DSB Board members will be reimbursed per state travel regulations for their costs incurred in attending board meetings.

**DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER REPORT (DRC)** - No representative was present. No report was submitted.

**ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT (AILC)** – No representative was present. A report was submitted with the board packet.

**CONSUMER INPUT** –On behalf of the Division of Services for the Blind Board, Ex-Officio Board Member, Mr. Harold Brewer, will present a Certificate of Appreciation to former Ex-Officio Board Member, Mr. Pierre Curry; at the Division of Services for the Blind Vending Facility Program Managers quarterly meeting, Saturday, November 5, 2005.

The Board Chairman expressed her appreciation to the National Federation of the Blind for including the DSB board meeting in their state convention for the third year.

Ms. Chris McKenzie, the state president of the National Federation of the Blind, introduced the representative for the National Federation of the Blind from New Jersey, Mr. Joe Ruffalo.

Mrs. Nola McKinney expressed her appreciation to the board for her representation of the board at the American Council of the Blind (ACB) convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. Mrs. McKinney noted that as chairman of the awards committee for the American Council of the Blind, she had the honor of presenting a distinguished service award to the widow and daughter of the Financial Director, Jim Olsen. The distinguished service award has now been changed to the Jim Olsen Award. An award was also given for the movie, "Ray". The delegates were introduced to a blind comedian, and other topics of interest were banking information, new talking cellular phones that included directory assistance, blind women and breast cancer, research from the University of Mississippi on sleep studies, exercise and fitness, and a panel discussion on rehabilitation.

As President of the Auxiliary on Aging and Vision Loss (AAVL) Mrs. McKinney attended a meeting on scams and identity thefts of blind persons. A new scholarship fund is being set up by ACB in the name of Gayle Krause, who died recently. Mrs. Krause is the wife of the past president, Paul Edwards. Ninety vendors participated in the convention this year. The next National ACB Convention will be held in Dallas, Texas.

Mr. Harold Brewer, ex-Officio Board Member, expressed his appreciation to the board for being appointed to the board and he looks forward to serving the blind on the board.

#### **QUARTERLY SUCCESS REPORT**

A consumer in the Living Independence for Elders (LIFE) Program who lived in a small town and sold Easter cakes and made pies for pie shops; now has a lunch and break room in a small factory.

**Schedule of Next Meeting** - December 10, 2005, at the Department of Health and Human Services, Donaghey Plaza South, 700 Main Street, First Floor, Conference Room A, in Little Rock at 10:00 a. m.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nola McKinney  
Secretary

