

**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY  
IMPAIRED**

**SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

**40 FOUNTAIN STREET**

**THIRD FLOOR**

**PROVIDENCE, RI 02903**

**MINUTES:**

**December 12, 2008**

**Members Present: Donald Deignan – Chairperson GAC; Raymond Detorre – Board Member; Richard Gafney – President NFB of RI; Barbara Walsh – GAC member; Rick Costa – SILC member/representative; Raymond Dettore – Member GAC; Elizabeth Graves – SILC / SRC; Ralph Iannitelli – Council Member; A. Alfred Williams – Member NFB & GAC; Charles Brown - Member**

**Members Not Present:**

**Staff Present: Ronald Racine – Deputy Administrator SBVI; Laurie DiOrio – Assistant Administrator, Linda Hughes – Social Services Supervisor; Rebecca Cloutier – Sr. Wd. Processing Typist SBVI**

**Guests: None**

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**The quarterly December 12, 2008 GAC meeting started at 4:05 with the approval of September 8, 2008 Minutes. There was a motion and seconded. Minutes were approved.**

**Updates for the agency were given. The first to speak was Ron Racine to give the update for SBVI/ORS in general.**

## **SBVI / ORS UPDATE – RON RACINE**

**o ORS now has permission to fill 34 vacancies. In addition to the needs of the agency, consideration throughout state hiring as it relates to the funding source. Positions which 75% or more federally funded are being filled more quickly. Most ORS position are between 80% to 100% federally funded.**

**o Two SBVI positions have been posted. (Sr. Wd. Processing Typist, VR Supervisor)**

**o Thank you for your advocacy and support – Advocacy efforts have been critical in obtaining positions, and ORS appreciate the support of the GAC. SILC and the SRC have advocated for ORS.**

**o Moral is better with positions being filled**

**o Bill Camara who is in charge of day to day operations of DHS while**

**Gary Alexander is working on the Global Medicaid Waiver, has met regularly with ORS staff. Adelita Orefice (Head of OHHS) and Jamia MacDonald (Chief of Staff OHHS) have also met with ORS/SBVI staff. All have been supportive of the ORS mission.**

## **VR UPDATE – RON RACINE**

- o 1 worker out on leave**
- o Trying to fill supervisor position – if no lateral transfers, will start interview process – hopefully by next meeting, there will be a new supervisor by the next meeting – they will be invited**
- o Will defer to Linda Hughes & Laurie DiOrio for updates on BEP & SS**

## **IL/EI/SS UPDATES – PRESENTED BY LINDA HUGHES**

- o Mistake on calendars – just got the new ones in today – 2500 calendars ordered – 1800 people**
- o 65 infants and toddlers in EI program – 2 Teachers for the blind (contracted with Sherlock Center); 1 Mobility instructor; 1 case manager and a teacher doing transitions into the schools she also specializes in cortical visual impairment**
- o Billing person got bumped. Woman who came over is wonderful - \$129,000 brought in. Budgeted at \$225,000 per year. Program will pay for itself**
- o Ages 3 – 18: Overlap with VR – there are some things the Social Service unit may provide that can supplement what VR is providing.**

**One social worker has been assigned to collaborate with VR.**

- o IL program – down one social worker – Northern region of the State**
- o Put in for a request for this position which is Medicaid funded – may be paid from reimbursements**
- o Newsline – price has gone up quite a bit – still managing with the PUC taxes – Newsline has lost some federal funding and is doing some advocacy**
- o Federal government funding for Newsline from NFB was lost**
- o Vision services vendors not being paid in timely fashion – Accounts and Control has been slow in paying bills.**
- o Accounts & Controls generally take 4 – 6 weeks to pay bills – just not paying the bills. Over that amount of time now. Some agencies have resorted to a line of credit to meet payroll.**
- o Services are going well for SBVI Social Service. Clients – able to obtain services – no interruption of services**

## **BEP UPDATE – LAURIE DIORIO**

- o New vending facility in Bristol – Veteran's Home**
- o Hybrid facility – PX like offering magazines, Christmas items, greeting cards, newspapers, toys, lottery sales**
- o Items were bought from The Homestead Group (NRI ARC) {Homestead Gardens}**
- o Have given a list of things they would like to see – more of an odds and ends list i.e. pens, pencils**
- o Operating Monday – Friday 7:00 – 3:00 but will be expanding from**

**7:00 – 7:00 and opening on weekends as well**

- o Being run by staff on agency payroll – when self sustaining, it will go out to bid – Will be self sufficient in the Spring**
- o Employing 1 veteran – Looking for a legally blind veteran on sight. – Adele Grainger from VA Medical Center in Providence may be able to help.**
- o Have had a lot of interest in employment for the facility, but people have backed out.**
- o Bill Camara – In charge of field operations for DHS – former Associate Director of VA Medical Center – wants to do a grand opening of this facility with press releases**
- o Almost \$1.7 million gross last year with the whole program – made a little less than that this year.**
- o 4 vendors gross \$100, 000 to ¼ million (estimated) in sales**
- o 1 vendor at Shepard Building impacted by Dunkin Donuts facility placed across the street**
- o In the middle of 2 planned moves involving DMV and Forand Building – at a stand still now with the budget**
- o Closed DEM facility in February**
- o Trying to eliminate under-earning facilities – trying to eliminate facilities not making enough money**
- o Analysis is done: Sometimes can be population, retirements, old habits (of vendors), location**
- o There is money spent on new vendors (to train etc) when old vendors don't work out (rebuilding the business)**

## **SILC/SRC – ELIZABETH GRAVES**

- o Mentoring Program received National Recognition – Camille Panza was asked to be a consultant to develop priorities and discuss challenges for Independent Living – Program received recognition for maintaining membership – right now 5 or 6 new volunteers**
- o 704 Report was presented and voted on for approval by the Executive Committee – will be presented to the membership at the quarterly council meeting– Recognize Judy Kapucinski for work done with the Independent Living – this year 25 people were transitioned from Nursing Homes back into their homes.**
- o Position Papers – on Transportation, Nursing Home Transition, and RI Medical Waiver – was approved by the Executive Committee and will be put out for a council vote then it will be ready for distribution to be sent to Legislature. Letter advocates against Medicaid waiver.**
- o RISILC 2009 – a survey is being sent out to get a list of priorities. It is as follows**
  - o Cross Disability Coalition**
  - o Disability History Bill**
  - o RIPTA Advocacy**
  - o Trail work period without losing benefits**
  - o Global Medical Waiver**
  - o Workshop Ideas – are as follows**
    - o Cross Disability Symposium**
    - o Self Information – Action**
    - o Education Public on System & Service Changes**

- o Quarterly meeting will be held 12/19 in the Bristol office from 12:00 to 2:00**
- o Educational Presentation at this meeting by Tracey Poole on the K-9 Combat Veterans – which is the program that gives dogs to Veterans. Possibility of getting a Veteran and his animal to meeting.**
- o Disability Awareness Week is this week – There is a program in the schools for grades 4 – 8. Very soon it will be grades K – 3, and 9 – 12. There are some great ideas to educate the public. Link will be sent to Rebecca to send to the Committee.**

## **MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION**

- o Committee discussed Medicaid Waiver pros and cons and are waiting to see the final outcome.**
- o Submission of Rick Costa and Don Deignan's name will be sent to the Governor for reappointment**
- o Auto-Mark Problems – Poll Workers did not set up and test Auto-Mark machine on Election Day. Comment was that Poll Workers were waiting to see if anyone came to use it. Not adequately trained – did not realize their responsibility.**
- o Al Williams used the Auto-Mark as promised. He did not have a problem with it.**
- o Richard Gaffney stated IT IS A VIOLATION OF YOUR RIGHTS TO HAVE TO TURN IN YOUR BALLOT TO A WORKER. He was asked to submit his ballot to a poll worker. The Auto-Mark counts the ballots; there is no need to keep a count of the ballots used by this machine.**

- o Don Deignan had to wait 45 min for someone from Auto Mark come down and install the printer cartridge. This was supposed to be tested at the beginning of the day.**
- o Other sites had problems with first and second machines. Were waiting on third machines. Jamming is again an issue**
- o Training not going to where it needs to go**
- o Some High Schools – using High School Students for workers**
- o Handicapped parking not properly marked – parking lots not well lit at night.**
- o Elections & Problems is an agenda item for next meeting – Don will ask Jan Ruggerio to come for a meeting**
- o Meetings for next year are 3/9, 6/8, 9/14 and 12/14 – Motion made and seconded. Approved.**

**Meeting adjourned at 5:15.**