

**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:

JUNE 11, 2007

Members Present: Donald Deignan – Chairperson GAC; Raymond Detorre – Board Member; Charles Brown –Member GAC; Richard Gafney – President NFB of RI; Barbara Walsh – GAC member; Alan Williams – Member NFB & GAC; John Pimental - Consumer; Rick Costa – SILC member/representative; Raymond Dettore – Member GAC

Staff Present: Ronald Racine – Deputy Administrator SBVI; Linda Hughes - Director Early Intervention Services, Social Services & Independent Living Services for the Blind; Laurie DiOrio – BEP supervisor/Asst. Admin SBVI; Raymond Carroll – ORS Administrator; Susan Silva – VR Supervisor; Rebecca Cloutier – Clerical Support

Members Not Present: Ralph Iannitelli; Robert Kinder

Guests: Joseph Doney – Rehabilitation Services in Washington, D.C.

Approval of Minutes:

The June 11, 2007 meeting started at 4:05. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 12th meeting. Motion was approved with the amendments that follow:

- Al Williams – on minutes twice as present and not present; he was present**
- Rep. Naughton’s name spelled incorrectly once.**
- No mention of time meeting adjourned**
 - o Meeting adjourned at 5:34**

With these amendments, the minutes for the last meeting were approved.

FEDERAL REVIEWS

Joe Doney of the Rehabilitation Services in Washington spoke first.

He spoke about the following points:

- U.S. Department of Education is a partner with Rehabilitation Services in RI.**
- They are here as a yearly monitor**
- Work as a partner with the agencies**
- Aid in setting up processes for other departments to run effectively**
- The processes that is now in place is relatively new**

- In depth service review look for following goals
 - o Compliance findings
 - o Recommendations for improving how the agency worked
 - o Should be a yearly monitoring process – is now a 3 year process
- Work with agency prior to monitoring to help agency improve services
- Analyze data talk to stake holders – What's wrong; helps to assess what's wrong
- Talk to stake workers
- Get as much input as possible
- No rules/regulations have changed
- Redesign of review – closure of regional sites
 - o All information is delivered in a specific manor
 - o Helps to improve performance
 - o This is the 1st year of implementation
 - o No feedback as of yet
- Collecting a lot of job information
- Creating a mechanism to develop arching goals for the agency
- Loosing assets and people along with sites
- Skilled people hired and lost: Consolidation
- Closing of offices largely inconsistent
- Rules being interpreted differently throughout
- Question of core values
- Working on making reviews a solid partnership
- There are five units
 - o Vocational Rehabilitation

o Data

o Independent Living

o Technical Support

o Fiscal

- **Potential for units to visit in “Off” years for support and review**
- **Reports due internally in July – delivery to the states by August 15th.**
- **There are a total of 23 agencies to visit**
- **As reviews were done – rules being translated differently**
- **Core values of program – were set aside in some offices**
- **Teams are working hard – look forward to partnerships with offices**

GAO reported two years ago stated – not enough insight – series of items report needs to be transparent and easy to read.

By the end of the Calendar year there should be a new website available with information from different areas (Templates and Forms, etc.). Rhode Island is a model in the service industry.

INDEPENDENT LIVING: LINDA HUGHES

The annual Independent Living Program Evaluation came back with the following statistics

- **Provides services for 720 individuals**
- **Of those 98% indicated that they are more confident in their abilities**

with services and aids provided

- **The program is consistently strong and going well**
- **120 clients said that they would be in nursing homes otherwise (without the IL support)**
- **Cutbacks on hearing aids since April – this will be rectified in July with the new budget**
- **IL feels that if you can't see well you need to hear well (especially in older people)**

NEWSLINE

Linda Hughes also presented the following information on the NEWSLINE program

- **Subscribers have soared to 320 people registered**
- **Many don't use service due to forgetting their Pin**
- **To relieve this problem IL is contemplating sending out a magnet with an area for pin numbers.**
- **PIN number is last 4 digits of telephone number**
- **This task will be completed by the end of summer**
- **Cost of NEWSLINE has gone from \$22,000 to \$27,000 – National Funding has been depleted**

- **Cost will be raised along with cost of living expenses – will not be raised enormously in the future.**

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VISION SCREENING

Linda Hughes presented the following facts for Vision Screenings

- **Saving Sight just finished screening 12,000 children**
- **SBVI contributes \$85,000 a year for screenings**
- **This purchase order has been surpassed**
- **Saving Sight continues to send names**
- **Medicaid allows \$30 per child**
- **An agreement has been set up with Medicaid**
- **For the vision screenings, Medicaid allows us \$250 per screening until July 1st.**
- **So far, \$109,000 has been obtained in Medicaid reimbursement for this program**

EARLY INTERVENTION / CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The following information was provided by Linda Hughes.

- **93 children ages birth through 3 years old**
- **Case management by Eileen Cermack (contracted by DataLogic)**
- **Leila Guittari - Orientation and Mobility instructions – funded on a fee for service basis**

- **Dr. Greg Waldorf - functional evaluations – funded on a fee for service basis**
- **Enid Ford – itinerant teacher works with birth through age 3 – contracted through the Sherlock Center**
- **Janet Salek – Transitional evaluations at age 30 months – through the Sherlock Center**
- **Last meeting it was reported there was a problem with transitional services – still a serious problem**
- **No itinerant teachers in the school**
- **Once evaluations are complete, school is supposed to provide services per the evaluation**
- **School for the Deaf and Sherlock Center could provide services, but this does not happen**
- **Katrene Traut –Savino has resigned**
- **Discussions held with Christine Marcello (children’s social worker) would like children’s services extended**
- **This topic will need to be discussed**

WINTER / SUMMER CAMP

Linda Hughes discussed the following points

- **Winter Camp in February went well – Camp Hoffman**
- **Preparation for next year – making reservations for Six Flags Indoor Water Park the week of school Vacation**

- **Will not be able to sponsor this event as an agency due to travel restrictions**
- **Linda Hughes will coordinate the activity on a volunteer basis**
- **Summer Camp (7/30-8/3) at Camp Cononicus**
- **Field trip to Spring Lake**
- **Mashantucket Pequot Museum will be a day trip**
- **Children will be making Wampum bracelets, Corn Husk dolls, and dig through piles from the past – find items and try to imagine what they were used for.**
- **Indian lunch will not be provided this year due to financial constraints**
- **We will be having hot dogs**
- **Insight will be doing a Carroll Kids program - ADL and educational skills for clients**
- **We are funding \$350 per child ages (6-14)**
- **There is a field trip to Water Country for children who are clients and anyone who wants to go with them**
- **New Counselor with Guide Dog will be joining the Camp to be a counselor**
- **Counselors are professional people who give their own time**
- **1:2 ratio counselor to camper**

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

Laurie DiOrio gave the following report on the BEP program

- **Site returned to State control in Superior Court**
- **They are very happy with the vendor**
- **Lines of communication open and extensive**
- **Harris Avenue was closed**
- **New facility in Cranston has been opened as vending machine only**
- **Site being run by the same vendor who runs the stand in the Pastore Complex**
- **McGrath needs to go to bid - Wakefield**
- **Need to make sure that if a stand requires a vendor – a capable vendor can be found**
- **BEP has 2 sites with registers with scanners – not being used right now in the ideal capacity. Scanning requires additional equipment**
- **There will be a third purchased**
- **Not everyone is able or willing to utilize the scanners**
- **The upgrade at 40 Fountain Street is not going forward**
- **The financial woes of the agency have been coming down from the top of the agency**
- **Continue to work of referral process of vendors**
- **Looking at a new process – comprehensive review and communication between VR and BEP**
- **Past problem has been lack of communication**
- **Relationship with J & W offers classes that we would need**
- **Decision was individuals interested in BEP could receive training through SBVC at J & W through the normal process**
- **Need to make accommodations for various disabilities**

- **Staff were auditing one of the classes – too high level**
- **Requiring vendors to operate at a higher level should be done**
- **Vendors need to comply with Federal Regulations – Need to be able to manage finances**
- **BEP will continue to provide services to Randall Shepard - would not be left to anyone else**
- **Recognizing courses at J & W as “Training” for BEP**
- **Vendors should be able to get significant training in the community**
- **This will rival the real world (i.e. competition) the clients would be competitive**
- **BEP would provide specific training**
- **Has been a death in BEP program – Mike James – Newport Naval Facility**
- **BEP had to step in and take control of this – this site is closing**
- **Would it be possible to hire students as interns or running facility**
- **Navy has had increase in security – not an easy decision to close site**
- **Some vendors may have better ability**
- **Pick out a few vendors who are successful and have them do an apprenticeship with someone who is less successful**
- **SBVI clients losing sight to become the vendor for BEP?**
- **Employee of SBVI became BEP vendor operator**
- **Airport Corporation put bidding out on state run website**
- **Requires new recruits – High school graduates, College students**
- **Guaranteed Fair Minimum. Look at income at the end of the year.**
- **SSI & SSDI recipients unknown to BEP**

- o Increase vending machines through out State of RI
- o Physical ability to run site
- NE region structured and organized (North Eastern Region)
- Need vendors to step into sites

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR)

Susan Silva discussed the following points about the VR program

- VR always encourages people to look at the BEP program
- The number of hours that a vendor has to work is an issue
- o BEP is more involved and not easy
- 39 closures this year so far
- o 29 closures last year
- Some of the types of jobs – Assistant Construction Superintendent, Receptionist, Nurse Assistant, Sales Clerk, Teacher Aide, Customer Service Representative, Psychiatrist, Software Engineer, etc.
- Some types of jobs that clients are looking for – Mortician, Teacher, Administrative Assistant, Human Services Worker, Clerical – Program Assistant, Counselor – Adult Education.
- This supervisor spoke with Insight to plan meetings and encouraging them to provide vocational services
- o Clients thought that this was either too fast or too slow
- o No one thought it was just right
- Insight would do training in this order – Typing, JAWS, then Insight

would work with GoodWill for placement and cross training

- There will be a meeting for strategic planning
- Outside clients from either GoodWill or Insight may be considered
- Job descriptions should be sent out to other businesses
- There are other occupations that may be suggested we try to open
- Can VR fund marketing survey to determine needs?
- Research sponsoring of business (Market Analysis) – In house council to see what business could be started other than food services
- Non profit buildings – are they better to have a facility in
- Post resumes or names of jobs on websites so clients and interested parties can research clients that are looking for jobs
- Ron offered to send out a list of names for jobs that clients are looking for

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC)

This report was given by Elizabeth Graves who was not in attendance. This report was circulated prior to this meeting with the following points

- The state planning committee completed the final draft of the State Plan for Independent Living for 2008 – 2010
- Committee worked for many months in collaboration with the Centers for Independent Living and the Office of Rehabilitation

Services

- **Don Phelps, chairman of SILC will attend NCIL Conference in Washington in July – Represents RI Statewide ILC**
- **RI ILC will be held on September 21st.**
- **The mentoring program has been meeting regularly to introduce and train volunteers and council members to the IL philosophy.**
- **Rick Costa has taken over the position of Secretary of the Council in May**
- **Elizabeth Graves is filling the position of 1st Vice Chair**
- **OLMSTEAD Resolution passed – State is now in the process of forming OLMSTEAD committee**
- **Position papers will be update and new ones developed in collaboration with the CILS**
- **SILC sent \$2,500 monetary support to this year's Youth leadership forum**
- **2 public forums to incorporate suggestions into plans**

MISCELLANEOUS

Raymond Carroll, Administrator of the brought forward the following points under the miscellaneous

- **He stated that he is quite pleased with the supervisors in the VR unit and the EI unit**
- **There will be new initiatives for SBVI**

- **Looking for a productive week with the Federal Review Team**
- **RI is like a model for other states (creative)**

At last meeting, Don Deignan was tasked to address correspondence to Rep. Naughton regarding Rhode Island Vision Education and Services program because the coordinator is leaving the position. Don raised questions about the program – due to the fact they are responsible for supervision of the Teachers for this program.

As to date, Don has not received a reply to his correspondence from the Representative's office as to whether or not she will convene the special house commission. He will be continuing to follow up on this matter.

Again, at the last meeting, there was a discussion with the problems with voting machines. Don Deignan was asked by the Secretary of State's office to have someone from Rep. Mollis' office to attend the next GAC meeting and discuss this problem with them. To date, Mr. Deignan has not been able to make this contact and he will do that before the next meeting.

There is a Task Force looking into this. Richard Gafney stated that according to Automark, this problem should be fixed. The Secretary of State is supposed to establish a Task Force to look into this. Mr. Deignan stated that he will have someone here for the next GAC meeting. He also stated that he will try to make contact with a

representative for the Secretary of State.

Ray Detorre stated that he spoke with Jan Ruggerio from the Board of Elections and he asked her to contact Don Deignan. She is interest in attending a meeting to explain the problems. The marking machine is better for voting rather than the machine due to the fact that people can alter your vote.

There is no training for the people who run the polls on the forms, or people are not trained properly on how to use them. A training video for poll workers is being developed.

The RI Lottery changing terminals are useable for some and not useable for others. Ray Harwood, vendor at URI is working with the lottery commission is able to use it. It is a Touch – Pad System. There is however, a vendor that cannot use it, due to the fact he is has lost his sight totally.

With the closure of the Miscellaneous topics, Chairman Deignan sited the next meeting on September 10, 2007. With this discussion, Chairman Deignan would entertain a motion for adjournment. The motion was seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.