

**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 13, 2004

Members Present: Donald Deignan, Deborah Barton, Richard Gaffney, Charles Brown, Raymond Dettore, Barbara Walsh, Elizabeth Graves and Ralph Iannitelli Quorum requirements were met.

Staff Present: Andre Mayer, Linda Hughes and Gary Wier

Guests Present: None

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the September 20, 2004 meeting had been previously distributed. Following a motion to accept the minutes as presented by Raymond Dettore and a second from Elizabeth Graves, the minutes were accepted and approved.

Business Enterprises Program Update:

Andre Mayer provided a survey of current activities in the Business Enterprises Program at SBVI. The Leighton Judicial Complex is currently under construction. The current facility at the Kent County Complex will be re-located to the new building. The facility will be located on the 1st floor of the Courthouse and will be in plain view of those using the building. The Garrahy Complex is also slated for renovation and architectural services are currently being procured. Several new vendors have been placed at locations and a new training program is projected for March. New evaluation forms have been developed and will be implemented by the BEP Supervisors over the coming months. These forms will help guide a process that will entail reviewing facility condition and needs along with vendor performance and training needs. The idea is to boost sales and provide greater vendor earnings and make facilities both beautiful and efficient money makers. Policy revisions have been made and have been approved. Promotions will now be based both on seniority and qualifications. Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) will be used to correct vendor performance issues. Profits are up with the average vendor income increasing annually. The program has also made some strides toward improving bulk-purchasing methods with new price quotes from Coke and other purveyors. Other notes include the closure of the Woonsocket Post Office facility due to a change in the building population and expansion plans at the McGrath/Stedman

Complex in Wakefield.

Social Services/IL Update:

Linda Hughes provided a summary of the activities that the social caseworkers have been involved with in both the Social Services Program and the Independent Living Program for Older Blind. Reports were distributed concerning statistics for the programs. These reflect that the total monthly caseload for November was 470, with 323 elderly and 155 children served. There were 25 new cases in November with 23 service plans written and 21 plans completed.

Vision Screening:

The Agency's relationship with Saving Sight of Rhode Island continues to remain strong. Screenings continue to be done with 3-5 year olds across the state. This program provides vision-screening services using an MTI photo-screening device. The device is used in conjunction with interpreting physicians determining ambliogenic factors, i.e., whether a child is nearsighted, farsighted, or has astigmatism. Providing medical treatment is crucial to eliminating visual impairments due to refractive errors. If the child does not receive glasses and medical treatment, the functional vision may irreparably decline. Without such intervention the child will lose function in the affected eye and risk a lifetime of visual impairment. Screenings are conducted in nursery schools, day care centers, Head

Start, private day care homes, Child Outreach programs, Early Intervention Programs, schools, and in other community settings with the most under-served communities are targeted first.

Screeners have been fully trained and certified by Prevent Blindness America in the use of the photo-screening device. Photos are read by Brown Medical School interns specializing in ophthalmology. An extensive database and tracking system is utilized to insure proper reporting and documentation of follow-up and results. If a problem is detected, the family is provided with a list of Rhode Island optometrists and ophthalmologists who have agreed to participate in the program and provide reports of examinations results.

Vision Services Update:

Donald Deignan reported that the Commission to Promote and Develop a Comprehensive System of Education for Visually Impaired Children will meet on January 10, 2005. The final report is expected to be issued by the Commission early next year.

Planning Committee for 75th SBVI Anniversary:

Gary Wier reported that planning has begun for an event to be held to commemorate the agency and the history of the community around the topic of services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired

in Rhode Island. The event will be held at the Radisson in Warwick on September 15, 2005. A full day seminar is planned and participants will include consumers, parents, community partners, professionals and advocates. As part of the event, Chairperson Donald Deignan will be producing a pamphlet that will document the Agency's 75-year period of service to the community.

ORS/SBVI Update:

Gary Wier reported that a VR Counselor had been hired to fill the position vacated as a result of the promotion of Monica Dzialo to the position of Workforce Development Supervisor. This is good news and leaves the agency with only one unfilled vacancy, a word processing typist position for the VR unit.

Statewide Independent Living Council(SILC) and State Rehabilitation Council(SRC):

Elizabeth Graves provided her reports previously to the Council on the above. She noted that the 704 report is ready to be signed. The SILC has begun a Clear Isle Campaign and interested members have been approaching businesses that may have obstructions in the way. It is an educational program that the SILC hopes will have a positive impact on the community.

The SRC has had its annual elections and William Anderson is the

Council Chairperson. David Sienko will serve as Vice-Chairperson.

Miscellaneous:

Following discussion of quorum requirements, Donald Deignan will be contacting Robert Connor to discuss his participation in GAC meetings and resolve his status prior to the next meeting. This will insure that the Council can meet its quorum and thereby conduct necessary business.

Next Meeting(s):

The following meeting dates were discussed and agreed upon for 2005:

Monday, March 21, 2005

Monday, June 13, 2005

Monday, September 26, 2005

Monday, December 5, 2005

Unless notified otherwise, all meetings will be held at 4:00PM at Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 40 Fountain Street, Third Floor Training Room C, Providence, Rhode Island.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm