

**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:

September 24, 2012

Members Present: Donald Deignan – Chairperson GAC; Richard Gafney – President NFB of RI; Barbara Walsh – GAC member; Charles Brown – Board Member; A. Alfred Williams – Member NFB & GAC; Elizabeth Graves – SILC / SRC

Members Not Present: Ralph Iannitelli; John Pimental - Consumer; Rick Costa – SILC member/representative; Raymond Dettore – Member GAC; Raymond Dettore – Board Member

Staff Present: Ronald Racine – Deputy Administrator SBVI; Laurie DiOrio – Assistant Administrator

Guests: Kathleen Williams

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DON DEIGNAN

Meeting was called to order at 4:02PM. There was a motion for the minutes of the last meeting to be approved as scripted. Motion was made by Richard Gafney and seconded by Al Williams.

Business Enterprise Program – Laurie DiOrio

- BEP has been trying to work with Department of Administration to recognize RI General Law to locate or at least consider a vending facility space**
- Capital Projects committee needs to give BEP Program an option to put a vending facility in a site**
- In conversations with new DHS legal representative John Langlois he has a relationship with someone at administration in order to get the BEP Program involved in Properties Commission**
- Steve Brunero was in a Properties Commission meeting and made a connection with a Charles Newton, Minority Business Enterprise Administrator – Laurie will be meeting with him on 10/2/12 – there is a similar interest, but not on the same level – beneficial to have someone in that building**
- Biggest goal is to create a process that transcends attrition – when people come and go from administration to administration the process stays the same**
- Don stated “as a reminder we discussed this issue in March – the committee stated that they would like me to write a letter.” He asked**

AG Kilmartin who his designee was to the State Properties Committee

– Richard Wooley

- **BEP is in a statewide contract with the USPS – this allows BEP to put vending machines in all the facility**
- **Take that money and place it into a BEP account – would be looking for a vendor to do vending machines only**
- **Paul DePape retired in June – discussion with City Hall officials led BEP to make this a vending only facility – site has been bid out to the vendors – one of the vendors will run it along with their own facility**
- **Looking in to starting up a training program to teach vendors to run and fix the simple problems with the vending machines**
- **Accepting an offer from the Navy Base to put another vending facility**
- **Base wants it branded, but there are no requirements**
- **Laurie may put out for bid the new vending facility at NUWC – vendors bid on sites and depending on their situation with BEP (all records are in, seniority in the BEP program)**
- **Being a BEP vendor is a large undertaking with training and licensing etc.**
- **Vending facility may partner with Subway or Dunkin Donuts – the vendor becomes the silent middle-man – vendors get 30% of profits**
- **Follow through becomes an issue sometimes for vendors – if there is a problem that arises the vendor is responsible for the problem but may or may not resolve it**
- **Personal relationships make the difference in quantity of consumers**

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (ORS) – RONALD RACINE

- **Hiring is very slow – top priority is Social Services Supervisor**
- **Backfills are easier to fill, than creating new positions**
- **Hired a job developer for SBVI – Jason Brunero – is working with counselors to develop client's resumes and job placement**
- **Some vendors aren't comfortable with working with blind individuals, so this helps fill a critical need.**
- **Jason carries a smaller caseload so he can focus on finding jobs for SBVI's clients**
- **Melanie Sbardella is presenting the VR program at the NFB Convention**
- **Topic is helping people overcome barriers to employment.**
- **Medicaid / CNOM billing has been going well**
- **New budget discussions are underway**
- **Charles Brown states that there will be some changes in the budget but he does not see it as bad as it has been in the past**
- **Federal Government is looking at funds – Federal Funding Issues may arise**

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS – COMMITTEE

- **Don Deignan states that term lengths have been extensive – there should be new individuals involved**
- **Don stated that Ron looked into terms – There are some that have expired – these need to be filled**
- **$\frac{3}{4}$ of the Committee has had terms expire but as there is no one to**

replace them, they can serve until necessary

- **Maybe clients would be good candidates for the Counsel – those individuals could attend a meeting to determine potential interest.**

- **Individually the committee members need to make their own judgment when they want to leave from the committee**

- **Melanie stated that there are a few people she had in mind for the committee**

- **Kathleen Williams stated to Don that she would like to be part of this committee – wants to learn more information before she starts attending meetings – Don stated that she can call Ron, Laurie or any committee member**

- **Al is willing to fill the position but if there are individuals that can replace him he is willing to step aside and attend as a guest**

- **From a Public Relations point of view the fact that Al and Kathleen are related doesn't trouble Don but because there may be a parent and a grandparent of the same individual may cause a problem**

- **Barbara and Ralph are willing to be reassigned to the committee**

- **Richard and Charlie do not want to be reassigned to the committee**

- **Richard will ask around, but he would tell the individual that he/she needs to attend meetings**

- **Don: It's a 2 hour commitment every quarter – but if he/she will not be attending meetings, it won't fully benefit the counsel**

- **Barbara: asked about the various companies that work with SBVI – since there are many – should we be targeting others?**

- **If companies are willing to send individuals from their organization there would be a wealth of information to be gotten – cross**

representation would benefit all

- **Barbara mentioned John Pimentel from Insight and Jim Spicola – Don suggested they attend the December meeting**
- **Don's concern would be if we go below a quorum**
- **Liz Graves – suggested that she would be willing to become a member since she is attending the meetings**
- **There were no objections to this suggestion**
- **The following people could attend the meeting as the Committee**
 - o **Rick Costa (1), Barbara Walsh (2), Elizabeth Graves (3), Don Deignan (4), Ralph Iannitelli (5), Ray Detorre (6) and Al Williams (Kathy Williams) (7) this would present a quorum for the Committee – Richard and Charlie would like to retire from the board**
- **Charlie will stay until the end of the year**
- **Someone from TechAccess (Gloria Stuart) may be a good candidate to appoint to the meeting**
- **TVI (Teachers of the Visually Impaired) would be beneficial, but they go to RIVESP**
- **Ron: Ideally between 5-6 individuals should come to a meeting to observe and possibly replace a board member in the future**

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNSEL – ELIZABETH GRAVES

- **SILC meeting had to be cancelled due to not having an interpreter – meeting was rescheduled to 10/10**
- **New Officers were presented, renewal of memberships and new memberships will be presented**

- **State Plan and Monitoring Committee will be meeting 10/26**
- **Information will be compiled and a report will be presented for the Quarterly Meeting in September**
- **Needs Assessment Survey has been going well – there are surveys coming back and companies asking for surveys to complete and return**
- **Don: Expressed gratitude and appreciation for Richard and Charlie for their time, efforts and services – if both Richard and Charlie would come back in June, we will have a celebration of their years.**