

**Statutory Council on Blindness Meeting**  
**September 16-17, 2010**  
**Sheraton Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin**

The meeting was called to order by chair person Eleanor Loomans on Thursday, September 16 at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Eleanor Loomans, Chair; Bruce Parkinson, Vice Chair; Dave Hyde, Secretary Pro Tem; Roberto Torrez, Member at Large; Bill Gallik; John Hartman; Kelli Hughes; Charmaine Piquette; Edward Weiss and Joan Wucherer.

Staff present: Linda Huffer and Mary Gorman

The oath of office was administered by DHS legal counsel Paul Harris to new members: John Hartman, Kelli Hughes, and Charmaine Piquette.

**Overview of Council Activity:** The chair reviewed activities of the council during the 2009-2010 fiscal year. She discussed the structure of the council, its sub-committees and the legislation that was introduced affecting blind and visually impaired persons. This included placing a blind veteran on the Veteran's council, a provision requiring that the income of a newly married spouse not be counted in determining if a client is medically needy. She also explained the Accessible Materials Access Act.

**Approve Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Roberto Torrez; seconded by Ed Weiss to approve minutes of the June 22, 2010 conference call meeting. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Roberto Torrez, seconded by Bruce Parkinson to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2010 Executive Committee meeting. Motion carried.

**Teleconference Evaluation:** Members discussed the effectiveness of the June 22<sup>nd</sup> conference call. This was the first time the Council had attempted to hold a regular meeting in this manner. It was noted that although the meeting went fairly well, there were technical issues, particularly echoes on the line that could not be fixed during the meeting. This made it difficult to hear all participants. It was, however, agreed that the Council would hold one conference call meeting again during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

**White Cane Safety Day:** Each year, the Statutory Council and the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired asks the Governor's office to proclaim October 15 as White Cane Safety Day. Members then contact local governmental entities to get local recognition. Bruce Parkinson will be presenting a proclamation to the city council in Two Rivers, as will Dave Hyde in Janesville. Dave said that the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI) will be holding celebratory activities at the

school as well. Some members will be doing local radio appearances talking about the cane, the obligation of motorists and what the cane means.

**Office for the Blind & Visually Impaired Report (OBVI):** Interim Director Linda Huffer discussed future council meetings. She explained that the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired (OBVI) anticipates additional budget reductions, in addition to those from the last fiscal year. She suggested the Council consider cost cutting measures in order to enable members to attend meetings of related groups and organizations. This was taken under advisement and postponed until the next day's meeting. The meeting recessed at 6:15 p.m.

The Council re-convened at 8:15 p.m. and welcomed Gary Goyke, from the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired. He began by reviewing the history of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, and that of the Statutory Council. He pointed out that the focus of both is to assist blind and visually impaired people. He reviewed the stated positions of the Gubernatorial and Senatorial candidates on several issues including transportation. He said that the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the contract that operates the Wisconsin Library for the Blind and Newline might be in danger. After questions, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

### **Meeting continued - September 17, 2010**

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Bruce Parkinson at 8:15 a.m. At 8:30 a.m. Eleanor Loomans, Chair; presided over the meeting.

Present: All members present  
Staff Members: Linda Huffer and Mary Gorman

**Legislative Priorities:** Members continued to discuss priorities for the 2011-2012 legislative session.

A motion was made by Ed Weiss; seconded by John Hartman that the chair appoint a committee to work diligently on a separate rehabilitation agency for blind and visually impaired adults. Motion carried.

Ed Weiss was appointed to chair the committee with members John Hartman, Kelli Hughes, and Bill Gallik. Dave Hyde will serve on the committee as ex-officio. Linda Huffer noted that the Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is also discussing a single state agency status.

It was noted that there does not appear to be support for a move to amend the service animal statute at this time

A motion was made by Roberto Torrez; seconded by Charmaine Piquette that the council drop the effort to establish a legal definition of service animals from the council's legislative agenda. Motion carried.

The council agreed that it would continue to support the Educational Materials Access Bill.

A motion was made by Ed Weiss; seconded by Bill Gallik that the council continue to advocate for the expansion of the Adult Summer Education Program. Motion carried.

Members were encouraged to talk with candidates prior to the November election. Discussion took place on advocacy and how to inform consumers of their rights under the law. It was suggested that this would be a good role for consumer organizations. Dave said he would broach the National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin to see if they would be willing to write such a document.

Mary Gorman reviewed a candidates' forum that took place in Green Bay where gubernatorial and senatorial candidates attended. Topics discussed included health care, employment, and developmental disabilities. She will send websites shared by another attendee.

**Adult Summer Education Program:** Dan Wenzel, Director of the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI) joined the meeting by conference call. He discussed the Adult Summer Program that was held at WCBVI in August. He noted that one advantage of holding the program on the Janesville campus was the ease of using the technology and the staff that were already there. He noted that a major disadvantage was that the Center was unable to involve the OBVI as much as he would have liked. Thirty individuals were slated to participate; one individual was unable to attend. Eleanor reported that she attended both as a student and as a council representative. Students were divided into class groups. Dan Wenzel will send the members information on how many of those attending were first-time participants. The council members thanked Dan Wenzel for his participation.

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation:** Joseph D'Costa, DVR Bureau Director, joined the meeting by conference call. He had submitted a written report to the members prior to the meeting (Attachment A). He reported that the state continues to be under an Order of Selection. Ed Weiss asked about the accessibility of standard forms at the DVR. Mr. D'Costa said that forms could be made accessible upon request of individual clients.

A motion was made by Ed Weiss; seconded by Charmaine Piquette that the chair write a letter to DVR requesting that DVR counselors inform clients that documents can be provided in the format of the client's choice. Motion carried.

**Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired:** Linda Huffer reported that the 2011-2013 budget is still in process. She expects that there will be a fiscal reduction again this fiscal year. The office will still receive the Independent Living for the Older Blind (ILOB) money, and are still receiving America Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds (ARRA). This has translated into service for 1,400 clients. The Rehabilitation Specialist in Superior is returning in October, and one specialist is on maternity leave. She reported that two of their employees have completed their Orientation and Mobility internships and will be taking their certification exam this fall.

Linda noted that per the request of the Council, she proposed an additional \$250,000 in the OBVI budget for the Adult Summer School Program. Unfortunately, it was not included in the DHS budget request 2011-2013.

### **No Public Comment**

The chair then re-opened discussion on cost saving measures. After some debate, the chair stated that December would be a one-day meeting.

### **Committee Reports**

**Transportation:** Joan Wucherer said transportation in her area is available for medical reasons but many communities have no transportation for other purposes.

**Employment:** Though the committee has not met recently, members are still interested in conducting trainings for employers and working with students in transition from high school to adulthood. They want to work with Human Resource professionals.

**Public Relations:** The committee has not met recently.

### **Selecting Committee and Council Liaisons**

**Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities:** John Hartman will consider attending contingent upon his employer's approval. If he cannot, Charmaine Piquette offered to attend.

**Assistive Technology Council:** Roberto Torrez with Eleanor Loomans as back up.

**Vision Services Wisconsin:** Ed Weiss

**Physical Disabilities Council:** Eleanor Loomans

**Rehabilitation Advisory Council:** Kelli Hughes or Charmaine Piquette

**Election of Officers:** The Vice-chair opened nominations for chair. Eleanor Loomans was nominated and elected by unanimous ballot. The chair opened nominations for Vice-Chair. Bill Gallik was nominated and elected by unanimous ballot. Nominations

were opened for Secretary. Kelli Hughes was nominated and elected by unanimous ballot. Nominations were opened for member at large on the Executive Committee. Charmaine Piquette was nominated and declined. Roberto Torrez was nominated and elected by unanimous ballot.

**Future Meeting Dates:**

Friday, December 3, 1 W. Wilson Street, Room B370, Madison

Snow date: Friday, December 10

Wednesday-Thursday, March 16-17, Madison (site to be reserved)

June meeting by conference call

A motion was made by Ed Weiss; seconded by John Hartman that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried. The Council adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Hyde  
Secretary Pro Tem

**DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DVR) REPORT TO THE  
STATUTORY COUNCIL ON BLINDNESS  
September 1, 2010**

This report will provide the Council on Blindness a summary of service delivery to Wisconsin's Blind and Visually Impaired consumers who received vocational rehabilitation services during Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2010 that spans from October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. This report covers FFY 2010 through August 31, 2010. Data levels should be higher because this report accounts for 11 of the 12 months of FFY2010. Note that ARRA funds allowed the Wisconsin DVR to serve an additional 105 Blind and Visually Impaired consumers.

**BLIND CONSUMERS:** There were 118 applicants for VR services and 76 initial Individual Plans for Employment were completed. We saw 30 individuals rehabilitated upon achieving competitive employment during FfY2010.

On August 31, 2010 there were 281 active cases with Individual Plans for Employment. The majority of these cases were receiving training. There were 26 cases on the DVR Order of Selection waitlist. DVR VR case expenditures on all blind rehabilitations this FFY2010, up to August 31, 2010, amounted to \$1,005,852. Within one year these rehabilitated consumers will earn \$701,064. The expenditures for this FFY2010 were unusually high because of one high cost case that exceeded \$300,000.

**VISUALLY IMPAIRED CONSUMERS:** There were 222 applicants for VR services and 176 initial Individual Plans for Employment were completed. A total of 46 individuals were rehabilitated upon achieving competitive employment.

On August 31, 2010, there were 415 active cases with Individual Plans for Employment. The majority of these cases were receiving training. There were 80 visually impaired consumers on the DVR Order of Selection waitlist. DVR case expenditures on all rehabilitated visually impaired consumers during FFY2010 was \$793,427 as of August 31, 2010. Within one year these consumers will earn wages of \$1,310,140.

**DEAF-BLIND CONSUMERS:** There were 11 deaf-blind applicants for VR services. During FFY2010, 9 initial Individual Plans for Employment were completed and 5 individuals were rehabilitated upon achieving competitive employment.

On of August 31, 2010, there were 27 active cases with Individual Plans for Employment. Most of these cases were receiving training.

DVR VR case expenditures for rehabilitated Deaf-Blind consumers during FFY 2010 amounted to \$89,189. Within one year these consumers will earn \$143,312.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph D'Costa, Director  
Bureau of Management Services