

Statutory Council on Blindness Meeting  
March 16-17, 2011  
Inn on the Park Hotel, Madison

PRESENT: Eleanor Loomans, Chair; Bill Gallik; John Hartman; Charmaine Rasmussen; Roberto Torrez; Edward Weiss; and David Hyde  
Assistants: Cathy Frosch-Hellenbrand, Linda Pusateri, Pat Visocky, Amber Mullet, Fuzia, Chloe, and Scott

STAFF: Linda Huffer, Mary Gorman

ABSENT: Kelli Hughes, Bruce Parkinson, and Joan Wucherer

Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Chair opened the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

The minutes of December 3, 2010 are not available.

Bill Gallik moved; Ed Weiss seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the SCOB Executive Committee meeting of 1/21/2011. Motion passed.

Ed Weiss moved; Roberto Torrez seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the full council meeting by teleconference on 2/16/11. Motion passed.

Proposal to amend the SCOB By-laws: Discussion began on the proposal sent to council members a month ago. Roberto stated that the proposal to add 1-2 members as ex-officios was already incorporated under Article IV Membership (4.8). He saw no need to amend the statute under Article II, which describes and defines the council's legislative authority. The proposal to amend was not approved.

Bill stated his visit with Rep. Petrowsky went well in the morning. Charmaine had visited legislators in the morning, including Senators Darling-R, Gothman-R, and Rep. Jim Ott-D. She found several interested in assisting. When asked what were the potential costs of the proposal, she was uncertain as to how to respond.

Charmaine said that the legislative study committee, after conducting research, should propose the ideas on how to provide services. Linda reminded the council to find a lead sponsor for the resolution.

Dave stated that what currently exists for services is not working well and the council and service providers will want to be involved in helping to find the solution. The question of how to fund and evaluate are problems for the study group. He sees the study as a drop in the bucket compared to what it costs the state without services. The council is interested enough but will need a Republican to sponsor the resolution to the study committee.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. in order for the council members to visit legislators.

The Council on Blindness Meeting reconvened at 5:00 p.m. Bruce Parkinson joined the meeting.

Council members shared their experiences with visits to legislators:

- John visited several legislators. All were receptive and supportive. He stated the council was advised to obtain approval of the legislative council in order to move ahead with the proposal.
- Bill met with Rep. Petrosky-R. who promised to commit.
- Rep. Kerkman-R was very interested in the proposal. Charmaine will follow up with him next week.
- Roberto stated that Sen. Pam Galloway would be a good choice in leadership.
- Co-chair of the Legislative Council Rep. Joan Ballweg's LA, Dee walked Eleanor through the process. Another one of Rep. Ballweg's assistants is skilled at writing proposals.
- Roberto stated that Rep. Chad Weininger-R stated that if another legislator would sponsor they could work as a team. Roberto was reminded that Terry Anderson, Director of the Legislative Council that selects issues to study, is the important contact for moving the proposal into a legislative study committee.

Dave stated there are two tasks. One is to reach the legislative council and the second is to find sponsors to initiate the legislative study proposal to the Legislative Council.

### **Regional Library Services**

Ed visited Rep. Paul Farrow-R who was interested in the Regional Library Services. The question was asked how many people are being affected and how many people would be using these services.

### **Rehabilitation Services**

Dave stated all 200,000 individuals who blind or visually impaired could potentially use rehabilitation services. He reminded members that learning skills is one aspect of rehabilitation. Equally important is the need to change attitudes about blindness. It's hard to convey the importance of how important it is to change thinking. Moving the consumer from discouragement to believing in the possibilities of becoming more independent is the foundation for effective training and learning new skills.

This is only one initiative and it may be worthwhile to think of other ideas that would help in the community where the work would not be limited to a legislative response. Perhaps there is a different approach such as the legislative study done with the Educational Materials Access Bill (Braille Bill). Roberto would like to see another initiative begin in two years.

### **Transportation Services**

Ed made a point to also discuss library and transportation services during his legislative visits.

### **Budget Cuts**

Dave confirmed that summer school, an unfunded mandate, was three weeks long in 2003 and is currently only one week long. It will be difficult for the Wisconsin Center to provide an adult education program with \$200,000 budget cuts taken each year.

### **Service Animals**

Bruce noted that the statute defining Service Animal, defines only dogs as service animals. However, an exception is also listed that recognizes mini-horses as service animals.

Dave commented on how the group improved each year on the process during legislative days. He complimented the council on "yeoman's service" in meeting with legislators and their assistants. Ed thanked the sighted guides for their assistance through the maze of hallways.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

**Thursday, March 17, 2011** – SCOB Meeting continued

PRESENT: Eleanor Loomans, Chair; Bill Gallik; John Hartman; Bruce Parkinson; Charmaine Rasmussen; Roberto Torrez; Edward Weiss; and David Hyde

STAFF: Linda Huffer, Mary Gorman

ABSENT: Kelli Hughes and Joan Wucherer

Chair Loomans opened the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Council members shared their experiences with visits to legislators:

- Bruce saw Sen. Dave Hansen-D , Sen. Fred Risser-D and stated he would support the proposal.
- Bill stated Pam Galloway offered to spearhead. Rep. Nick Milroy-D would talk with Rep. Tom Larson-R to garner support.
- Bruce stated that Sen. Liebham-R inquired as to where the Center facility would be located in Wisconsin.
- John saw Rep. Mark Honadel-R and Jody Jensen Dept. Dir of DOA. She stated she would go back to make sure research happens. Spencer Cogs-D, Rep. Tyler August-R, Rep. Peggy Krusick-D stated they would help put the study committee together.
- Roberto met with Rep. LeMahieu-R, JFC, who was supportive of the proposal. Rep. LeMahieu repeated that the best approach is through the Legislative Council. The representative inquired about the program's length and what would be effective.
- Dave Hyde saw Rep. Knilians-R who is interested.
- Dave stated that Rep. Robin Voss' assistant emphasized the need to make contact with Terry Anderson of the Legislative Council.

**Legislative Study Council**

Roberto met with Rep. Ott who explained the Legislative Council and the Joint Legislative Council Committee. The Legislative Council is one of five nonpartisan legislative service agencies of the Wisconsin legislature. The staff is headed by Director Terry C. Anderson who reports to the Joint Legislative Council (study committees) and the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization. Proposals are received by the Legislative Council and then sent to the Joint Legislative Council Committee. The Committee makes recommendations to the Legislative Council. Over one half of the Legislative Council should support the proposal.

Eleanor met with Representative Joan Ballweg, a co-chair of the Joint Legislative Council.

Legislative Council Agency Director Terry Anderson  
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lc/>

Joint Legislative Council Co-chairs Sen. Lazich and Rep. Ballweg  
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lc/committees/jointcouncil/index.htm>

### **Newsline**

There was a discussion as to how to save dollars with Newsline. A suggestion was made to remove the toll fee number.

### **DVR Report, October 1 – February 28 – Kim Pomeroy**

Kim Pomeroy discussed the DVR report previously distributed.

Kim has the exact breakdown of employment by service industry and professional jobs, according to the Department of Labor coding. She will forward these stats to Mary Gorman for distribution to the council.

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) was not in the report. The Randolph Sheppard Agency (RSA) is required to report annually at the end of the federal fiscal year. Twenty-nine operators, realized a \$1.7 million gross profit, \$1.2 million net, with average earnings of \$43,371. All vendors were provided training in 2010. With new challenges daily, it is important to establish a work plan in order to make business profitable and sustainable. The DVR received one grievance that was denied. A new licensee was awarded to a vendor who proved to be a good self-advocate working with main stakeholders. The vendors will work with the committee to build a budget for next fiscal year. Policies, procedures, and a work plan need to be developed, as well as the evaluation of a set aside pilot before July 1, 2011. The following goals were established between the vendors and the Nominee Agency:

1. Reporting requirements
2. Capital Asset Replacement
3. Allowable expenses for reporting proceeds
4. Pilot set aside to review
5. Maintain relations with Minnesota
6. Amended and reorganized training program on agenda for 2013.

Dave Hyde asked if anyone was leaving the BEP program.

The DVR sent a letter to Secretary Duncan for relief for the BEP program asking clarifying questions. The legislative procedure is to gather public input on public policy rule changes. The DVR provided a flowchart on how it occurs. The Governor proposed that this can be done by fiat through the legislative process and the DVR plans to go to consumer organizations for feedback. Kim Pomeroy will hear the Governor's topics at the Rehab Council. No meeting is scheduled at this time.

Dave asked Kim to send a follow up letter if they are public documents or let him know if they are not available. Kim shared a heart warming story about a consumer who is blind who applied for DVR services in 2005. Dave asked that Kim have the student contact him at the Wisconsin Center to share her successes.

### **Follow-up**

1. The council members were requested to provide thank you notes to the legislators they saw and once again request their support.
2. What are the next measureable steps?
3. Bruce suggested that the Council contact Terry Anderson and refer to the person at DOA on the Legislative Council.
4. Roberto stated that council members meet with Terry Anderson and have Sen. Pam Galloway lead in this initiative and name the Representatives who wish to support the proposal.
5. Dave stated that council members need to go about this carefully. Bill needs to contact two legislators and Sen. Pam Galloway. Make an appointment by electronic mail and cc: the Representatives.
6. Chair should meet with Legislative Council.
7. Bill would like email procedure as to how to follow up.
8. Eleanor will send an example of a thank-you letter.

## **New Business**

Dave noted that the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Statewide Convention will be held in Milwaukee, April 8-10, 2011. In addition to a seminar teaching middle school children who are blind to cook, there will be mini-tech seminars in the afternoon. Attorney Scott La Barre, President of the NFB of Colorado, will be speaking. He handles most of the civil rights cases and is involved in the La Valle College student scholarships and the awards to teachers for excellence.

Bruce is on the Legislative Committee for the Wisconsin Council of the Blind. Eleanor will communicate with Gary Goyke so that the proposal can be placed on the Wisconsin Council's meeting agenda for discussion.

Dave will send a resolution regarding the proposal to NFB.

Ed mentioned the rescheduled Wisconsin Council's Legislative Day at the capitol, Tuesday, May 24. Gary Goyke invited the SCOB to reserve a table and OBVI will be billed for the outreach table registration.

## **OBVI Report – Linda Huffer**

Linda cannot address the OBVI budget at this time. Department of Health Services Secretary Dennis Smith is currently reviewing all programs and revenues and will let administrators know what to expect. One aspect of the budget bill is to eliminate position vacancies that have been open for over one year. Linda stated that she has enjoyed working with the Statutory Council on Blindness in her role as the OBVI interim director.

**Recruitment:** Joan Wucherer has submitted her written resignation to Linda Huffer, effective June 30, 2011. There will be three terms ending June 30, 2011: Bill Gallik, John Hartman, and Joan Wucherer. John's term on the council was for one year so he will need to re-submit his application as will Bill Gallik. John requested Chair Loomans write a letter to his employer indicating the value of his work on the council. Eleanor has also received an inquiry from someone who is interested in applying.

Dave stated that a full recruitment for three vacancies is needed since there are no guarantees for reappointment. The SCOB Nominating Committee members are Eleanor, Ed, and Roberto. Eleanor will follow up with Kelli on her continued interest to serve on the Council. Since the September minutes were approved at the December 2010 meeting, they can be posted on the SCOB website. December minutes are needed out quickly.

Bill Gallik and Roberto Torrez participated by teleconference during the December 2010 meeting. The election of officers is scheduled for the September 2011 meeting. There was a proposal to meet for one day, but with new members, it may be better to have a longer meeting. Eleanor will check with Linda Huffer on what arrangements need to be made for September.

Ed moved to thank Eleanor for her work, and Linda and Mary for staff support with the coordination of sighted guides, including contacting local Lions Club members.

Next Meeting of the Statutory Council on Blindness will be a Teleconference on Monday, June 6, 2011, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Ed Weiss moved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Loomans  
Charmaine Rasmussen  
Mary Gorman