

Statutory Council on Blindness Meeting
Monday, September 12, 2011
Teleconference: 12:10 – 3:35 p.m.

Present: Bill Gallik, Vice Chair; John Hartman; Bruce Parkinson, Roberto Torrez, and Ed Weiss

Staff: Linda Huffer and Mary Gorman

Absent: Eleanor Loomans, Kelli Hughes, and Charmaine Rasmussen

Acting Chair Bill Gallik called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. In Chair Looman's absence, he asked for approval of the council meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Bruce Parkinson, seconded by John Hartman, to approve the June 29, 2011 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Bruce Parkinson, seconded by Roberto Torrez, to approve the Executive Committee minutes of August 26, 2011. Motion carried.

White Cane Safety – October 15 (Attachment A)

Bruce Parkinson elaborated on his article that described ways to educate the public. The event was planned ahead to encourage community involvement. A program could be executed the week before or after White Cane Safety Day, October 15. He has set up a public demonstration with the help of police at several different crosswalks including the downtown area. He suggested having city government create a proclamation that could be read aloud and televised on a local access TV channel. The Wisconsin Council is seeking airtime with Wisconsin Public Radio. Ed requested the Governor's proclamation be sent to all council members.

Recruitment

Linda Huffer explained that three council openings are anticipated and two applicants may be available from the spring of 2011 recruitment activity. Charmaine Rasmussen has submitted a resignation with an email to Mary Gorman and Chair Eleanor Loomans. Joan Wucherer had resigned at the end of her term June 30. One member had not attended several meetings.

The Nominating Committee, meeting September 26, 2011, will discuss applicant status and bring results to the full Council in December.

Adult Summer School – Dan Wenzel

There were three O&M instructors at summer school this year. Mandy Jordan, Administrative Assistant, was responsible for coordinating details. The dorm setting was refurbished with tile floor replacing carpeting. A large budget cut of \$500,000 was split between the Wisconsin Center and The School for the Deaf and Blind in Delevan. Even though the cut did not impact the Adult Summer School program this year, it may in 2012.

Bill asked about the greatest distance traveled by a summer school participant and Roberto asked about evaluations. Dan will get back with this information. Overall, Dan said he was impressed with how people traveled distances to Janesville and enjoyed hosting adults who are enthusiastic about learning. He also liked hosting the program when it was scheduled on other college campuses. Dan said working in conjunction with the OBVI in past years has been an excellent partnership. Most summer school clients become OBVI clients.

Linda asked why no one from OBVI had participated. Rehabilitation Specialist Kristin Fontaine had been invited to give a presentation but had not attended. Linda asked that she be included on future communications with OBVI staff as she could request a substitute where there are schedule conflicts. Dan will copy Linda on future communications.

Bruce had offered to give a presentation on the use of dog guides at the Adult Summer School. Dan apologized that he had not followed up with him. Ed asked if college preparatory classes were offered to adults. Dan would like to offer college and work prep programs. He also wants to offer a school improvement program. It's important to have a full complement of youth and adult programs to demonstrate the budget needed. Roberto asked about feedback from summer school attendees. The information is not yet available but will be sent when segregated.

When asked about the limitations of one week of training, Dan said it would be better to have more than one week of programming and even three weeks may be insufficient. However, with the current budget, he cannot imagine offering more than one week of Adult Summer School. If the funding became available, Dan did not think hosting the program away from the

Janesville campus would necessarily improve the program as the Wisconsin Center has the buildings and equipment needed.

Roberto asked whether there were participants interested in learning braille. Dan explained that some adults are interested, but, generally, braille is not considered the most important subject. All students are encouraged to take every class and can repeat a class if class sizes are reasonable. Rather than offer a menu driven program, the objective is to expose all students to as many classes as possible. Wisconsin Center employee and former council member Dave Hyde gave a presentation and answered questions on blindness. When asked whether time should be spent on expanding the Adult Summer School Program, Dan explained that adult services in general should be expanded which may mean expanding the programming in both the Department of Health Services and the Department of Public Instruction. Dan would also like to see the High School to Work Transition Program strengthened.

OBVI Report – Linda Huffer

Over the period of October 2009 to September 30, 2010, OBVI provided services to 1,360 consumers categorized by age ranges:

18-22 years = 6 clients

23-64 years = 560 clients

Over 65 = 989 clients

The average client age was 75, with 963 females and about 400 males. Major vision impairments were: 747 with Macular Degeneration, 113 with Glaucoma, 121 with Diabetic Retinopathy, and 20 clients with cataracts.

Ed asked why there were more females. Linda explained that longevity is a factor. Roberto asked about the types of services provided. Linda said that most of the service involves teaching daily living skills to individuals in their place of residence. There are some group trainings as well. There are a few in the 18-23 year category. A few referrals come from DVR.

All of the OBVI ARRA funds have been spent. The OBVI received approval to hire an OBVI Rehabilitation Specialist to fill a Rhinelander vacancy. The former Rehabilitation Specialist in Rhinelander had moved to Milwaukee and the Milwaukee RS had moved to an open position in the Waukesha office due to a retirement.

Legislative Proposal

Two legislators are interested in pushing this forward. Sen. Pam Galloway (R-29) and Rep. Jeffrey Mursau (R-36). It was proposed to have co-signatures on the form for the study committee. Both Eleanor and Linda are following up on who needs to sign the form and whether there are new rules, and if so, what those rules might be.

Linda Huffer had met with Vision Services Wisconsin which is comprised of members of several provider organizations. The idea of a consortium was well received. Organizations can support each other when taking issues to the legislature. She asked whether the Council on Blindness wanted to be involved in a consortium that would comprise other organizations such as Vision Forward Association (VFA, Formerly Badger Association,, Wisconsin Council of the Blind (WCB&VI), Hadley School for the Blind (Hadley), Vision Services Wisconsin (VSWis), Audio Braille Literacy Enhancement (ABLE), Wisconsin Center for the Blind (WCB), National Federation of the Blind-Wisconsin (NFB), and the American Council of the Blind-Wisconsin (ACB).

A motion was made by Ed Weiss; seconded by John Hartman to approve the Statutory Council on Blindness becoming a member of a consortium. Motion carried.

Roberto proposed producing an organization group mailing list to help the council and other organizations communicate with one another about upcoming meetings or events. Linda asked Bruce to bring up the proposal for a study of services with the ACB. Dave Hyde had presented the proposal to the NFB Board meeting with positive feedback. Vision Services Wisconsin president Rhonda Staats will take the lead to coordinate with all organizations.

Council on Blindness Future Goals

Ed thought the Statutory Council could work with the consortium on issues. John thought that a list of common issues from the consortium could be developed and marketed. Roberto said that since the consortium would be primarily 501c3 organizations, he would propose identifying goals specific to the statutory council. Bill agreed.

Roberto proposed developing an awareness campaign for accessibility to identify where consumers who are blind might gain improvement, such as

restaurant menus or sighted guide in grocery and hardware stores. He said the campaign would be in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and not political. John thought the issues of accessibility could entail other languages as well. He suggested working with a technology product and developing a consumer resource list. Roberto noted that many lists exists as each organization develops one.

Instructional Materials Access Bill – Gary Goyke, Legislative Liaison

Gary explained the intent of the current legislative effort is to have publishers accommodate the American with Disabilities Act (ADA law). During the Wisconsin Council Legislative Day, September 14, members will meet with legislative staff to discuss creating a stronger law. Students with disabilities need curriculum materials in an appropriate format and in a timely manner that allows them to meet the course goals. The amendments to s.106.52 create a consequence for not meeting the law that requires publishers to provide materials within 7 days of the student's request. (Attachment B)

Subcommittees – no reports given at this time.

Other Councils – reports were requested in writing.

Officer elections were postponed until the December meeting when new members will be sworn into member status.

Next meeting date is December 6, 2011. No site was confirmed. Bruce suggested meeting at the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, 754 Williamson Street, Madison. He expected the site would have ample parking.

A motion was made by Bill Gallik, seconded by Bruce Parkinson, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Gorman

White Cane Safety Day Reports – October 15, 2011

Bruce Parkinson

September - presentation at Felician Village, a retirement community in Manitowoc. Our main topic was to display assistive devices, but we wore our "Take Back The Crosswalks" shirts and did discuss white cane safety. There were about 25 folks in attendance.

Late September, information table for the ADRC for their annual "Fall Prevention Program." We wore our shirts and made contact with many of the 100 plus attendees and 40 vendors. We wore our shirts for this event, also.

October 3, attended the Two Rivers City Council meeting where a "White Cane Safety Day Proclamation" was read and presented. The event was televised live on the community access channel and I had an opportunity to address the council in regard to white cane and dog guide safety in the city. The tape of the meeting was replayed several times before the next meeting two weeks later.

October 15, was interviewed over phone for morning news segments on WOMT radio. WOMT is the most widely listened to local radio station in the area.

October 20, information table at the Two Rivers Senior Center Health Fair. The event was from 7:00 a.m. to noon. We made contact with numerous folks, both attendees and vendors. I gave out several of Angie Zalig's business cards (OBVI Rehabilitation Specialist for the Blind). There were 300 attendees and about 47 vendors. I have been wearing my "Take Back the Crosswalks" shirt as often as possible as I have been out and about. I (or we) have worn our "Crosswalks" shirt to all events.

Bill Gallik

Following is the text from a flyer the Superior Commission on Disabilities is placing in the Superior Daily Telegram. A Proclamation signed by Mayor Hagen is expected to accompany the ad in the Friday, October 14, issue.

In Memory of James A. Mattern

age 57, of 1123 Faxon St., Superior,
died Saturday, June 1, 2002, at St. Luke's Hospital and Regional Trauma Center. Mr. Mattern died from injuries incurred as the result of being hit by a motor vehicle while crossing Hammond Avenue. He was blind and employed a white cane to assist him in walking about and to advise motorists and fellow pedestrians of his blindness. Unfortunately, awareness was lacking that sad day.

Saturday, October 15, 2011

White Cane

Awareness Day

Mayor Bruce Hagen is proclaiming October 15th White Cane Safety Day in Superior. In keeping with this observance, Governor Scott Walker has signed a proclamation so identifying this day as White Cane Awareness Day in Wisconsin. White Cane Awareness Day is observed to increase awareness of the White Cane as a symbol of independence for blind citizens. It is also observed to make the community at large aware that any person using such a cane is not able to see and additional, appropriate consideration should be taken when encountering such persons.

In keeping with this observance, the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities asks that all members of our community take care to be aware of those using white canes and dog guides.

Accessible Instructional Materials

*AN ACT **to amend** 106.52 (1) (e) 1.; and **to create** 106.52 (3) (a) 6. and 106.57 of

the statutes; **relating to:** accessible instructional materials for students with disabilities enrolled in the University of Wisconsin System or the Technical College System. ... This bill permits an institution or college campus within the UW System or a technical college within the TCS (institution of higher education), on behalf of a student who is blind or visually impaired, or who has a specific learning disability or other disability affecting the activity of reading, and who needs reasonable accommodations to read (student with a disability), to request a publisher to provide instructional material in electronic format by submitting to the publisher a request for that material that complies with the bill and a request for permission to convert or to arrange for the conversion of that material into Braille, large print texts, audio recordings, digital texts, digital talking books, or any other medium or format for the presentation of instructional materials, other than standard print, that a student with a disability needs to make those materials accessible to the student (alternative format). Within 15 working days after receipt of the request the publisher must provide the instructional material to the institution of higher education at no additional cost.

SECTION 2. 106.52 (3) (a) 6. of the statutes is created to read:
106.52 **(3)** (a) 6. Refuse to provide instructional material in electronic format in violation of s. 106.57 (2) (a).

SECTION 3. 106.57 of the statutes is created to read:
106.57 Postsecondary education; accessible instructional material for students with disabilities.