

Statutory Council on Blindness Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2014
10:30 AM – 5:30 PM
Clarion Suites
2110 Rimrock Road
Madison, WI 53713
(608) 284-1234

- 10:30 AM Call the Meeting to Order
- Meeting called to order by Chairperson Roberto Torrez at 10:37 AM
 - SCOB members present: Roberto Torrez, Janet Dickey, Lee Young, Jo Grove, Doug Tikkanen (via Skype), Bill Gallik (via phone)
 - OBVI staff present: Tom Langham, Ana Detert
 - Guests present: Dave Hyde (left at lunch), Justin Salisbury (from NFB, arrived after lunch), Enid Glenn (from DVR, arrived after lunch)
 - Absent: John Hartman, Eleanor Loomans
- 10:35 AM Approve Council Meeting Minutes of December 19, 2013
- Chairperson Torrez moves to approve minutes from 12/19/13; Jo Grove and Lee Young second. Motion passed.
- Approve Executive Committee Minutes of February 28, 2013
- Chairperson Torrez moved to approve minutes from 2/28/13; Janet Dickey and Lee Young second. Motion passed.
- 10:45 AM Recruitment Plan – Doug Tikkenan
- Doug put together public memo for review.
 - Give to DVR counsellors, post on the web, get to individuals who are working with blind organizations.
 - It was suggested that a QR code could be added to the announcement for smart phone users to scan and have the document automatically downloaded to their devices to be read to them.
 - Dave Hyde says QR codes work very well.
 - Send a copy of the document to Ana so that she can put it through EIA process.
 - Tom will start approval process Friday, 3/21.
 - Will share updates with nominating committee.
 - What is the time frame for response?
 - Lee Young makes motion to have to have the application materials due by April 30 with June meeting later in the month. Jo Grove seconds. Motion passed.
- 10:55 AM Public Comments
- No public comments at this time.
- 11:00 AM Update Research Study Report – Josephine Grove
- Working title: An Examination of Services Provided to Blind and Visually Impaired Adults in the State of Wisconsin.

- Very deep in the writing process. Deadline on 3/18 to turn in Chapter 1. 37 pages of content with 10 pages of references. Thinks that Chapter 1 is too long and is interesting in seeing how the dissertation adviser will edit it.
- Chapter 1 is foundation for the study.
 - Introduction is historical background; when blindness first began to be studied in the 16th century. Global section to talk about blindness around the world.
 - Next section is research purpose, why you're doing it.
 - Includes research problem.
 - Explain why the study is worth doing. Why is it significant in employment and higher education?
 - Nature of the study: what kind of study you're going to do. This is a qualitative study, not based so much on statistics but on the living experience of the individuals.
 - Using the Delphi approach.
 - Assumptions: what are you assuming is taking place, and what do you assume might happen if changes are or are not made?
 - Theoretical Framework: find the theories that support what you're doing.
 - Learning theory and cognitive theory that are being included. Also added in a grief theory. Disability theory, blindness theory, cultural theory, ethnic theory, gender theory. It is the use of all these theories that is the foundation for the study.
 - Bill will pass along a presentation he did on the 5 stages of grief.
 - Limitations and delimitation – limitations are factors that are under control that might limit the study outcomes. Delimitations are things that are out of the researcher's control.
 - Summary of the chapter.
- May be sent back three or four times before it can go to the next approval stage. Need three approvals before she can even start the study. Likely that it could be July 1 before she can start the study.
- Currently working on Chapters 2 and 3, which make up the proposal that is sent to the reviewers for approval to do the study.
- After study is done, Chapters 4 and 5 can be written.
 - Chapter 4 will compile the data and write out the findings.
 - Chapter 5 summarizes everything and makes recommendations for what can be done and recommendations for future studies.

11:10 AM OBVI Report – Thomas Langham

- Tom is officially director of OBVI and has realized that it is a very different job than he expected. Position is much more political.
- Two RSAs are retiring and the positions are being moved. Stevens Point and Appleton both have backlog. Trying to also increase the number of FTEs.
- Working to keep individuals in their homes.
- Training individuals on how to use technology and finding the right technology for them so that money isn't wasted.
- All staff are working full time in their territories, also trying to expand territories.
- Also have June and September programs for newly blind individuals to be trained on different O&M skills.
- Working more with the Bureau, including ODHH, ADRCs, and Demographer to update data on B&VI individuals in the state.
 - Jo will compare numbers with Demographer in July.

- Nothing back on funding with SCOB. Tom had requested a line item in budget for SCOB so that they can have some funding.

11:25 AM Establishing Set Dates for SCOB Quarterly Meetings

- Teleconferences in June and December and person-to-person in March and September.
- Set up a formula to anticipate when the meetings are so that SCOB can plan around them and we can invite guests or have more public for comments.
- Doug suggests to always set the dates for the upcoming year in the December meeting.
- Tuesdays don't work. Monday's work for Roberto. Monday seems to be the general consensus. Second week of the month.
- Tentatively: June 9, 2014; September 8, 2014; December 8, 2014; March 9, 2015; June 8, 2015

11:35 AM Presentation of Dave Hyde from WCB&VI Regarding the Adult Summer Program and an Update from the Center

- Dave Hyde serves as professional coordinator for the Adult Summer Program (ASP) at the WI Center for the Blind in Janesville. Served on SCOB from 2003-2010, was chair for approximately 5 years.
- ASP was at one time a 6 week program, now a 1 week program. Nobody at WI Center thinks that is adequate.
 - Program is an unfunded mandate. They have to provide the services but have to find funding themselves.
 - Would like to expand the program to 2 two-week programs. Probably won't have the numbers for the next biennium budget, but would like to work on it.
 - Management has giving him the go-ahead to expand the program, provided he can find funding.
 - Currently talking with colleges around the state to see if they can find funds to help.
 - Possibly working with UW Whitewater that may have grant funds if they do the class on campus.
 - Would like to put together a group of people to work out the legwork to get the expansion rolling. Would like to have somebody from colleges, somebody from SCOB, somebody from DVR, etc. to put together a proposal to present sometime in 2015.
 - Wants to show why it's necessary and get some people interesting in it. Would like to get a budget line in the 2017 biennium.
 - It is not moving as fast as he would like to. Would like to have a group by the middle of May. Was hoping to have a proposal together by June 1, but that is not going to happen.
 - Jo Grove would like to consult, but she thinks somebody like Roberto Torrez would be a good member of the committee.
- In 2012 and 2013 the program was limited to college and career-bound people. A lot of people were left out. This year it is college, career, and to learn life skills.
 - Can take up to 20 people. Going to be doing O&M classes, technology, braille, daily living skills, class about what blindness is and how you deal with it, careers, job readiness, interviewing techniques.
 - Program will be August 3-8 at the school in Janesville.

- We need a dedicated blind rehab center within the state. All surrounding states have centers, but Wisconsin does not.
 - Our services are different because we have two places in the state that offer programs during the day (Vision Forward, and WCB&VI). Neither have residential components, so in order to have their services you have to live in the area. Other states have residential centers where people can take classes and live there for an extended period – designed to be a fully immersed environment so that when you get out you have a full set of living skills and lots of practice.
- In outreach – doing family gatherings throughout the state. Doing about 14 around the state this year. Talking about how to work with IAP process, work with schools, how to get the services you want for your children.
- Continuing to do assessments for children who are blind and VI.
- May in Green Bay – having annual Families Conference, combined with Pre-school Conference.
 - Free to attend for up to 40 or 50 families and going to focus on stem science technology and math. How to do chemistry, biology, astronomy, etc. with children. Parents getting together to share about their experiences and doing some networking.
- New teacher has been hired at the school. Running the Little Peanuts program for little kids to encourage them to move and learn skills.
- Expanding the 5th year senior program and extra-curriculars.
- The NFB in WI has several programs running.
 - Doing something with museums for children.
 - Starting a Saturday program in cooperation with WCB&VI to do classes for children in O&M, living skills, etc.
- NFB state convention is in April.
- NFB national convention is in Orlando. Dr. Mark Mauer (President Since 1986) is not running again. Has suggested who he would like to take his spot. His suggestion is a person from Wisconsin.

12:10 PM Other Councils – Reports:

- Governor's Council on People with Disabilities – Lee Young
 - John Hartman went to the last meeting and Lee does not have any information.
- Assistive Technology Council - Roberto Torrez
 - Nothing to report
- Rehabilitation Advisory Council (RAC)
 - No current SCOB members are part of this Council
- Physical Disabilities Council (PDC) – Eleanor Loomans
 - Eleanor was unable to attend SCOB meeting to report
- Wisconsin Council of the Blind & VI (WCB&VI) – Jo Grove
 - Legislative Day starts at 9:30 AM and goes until 4:00 PM. Morning session is speakers to a large group. After lunch people will travel to deliver packets to representatives and speak to them about Blind and VI issues.
- Vision Forward Association
 - No current SCOB members are part of this association
- American Council of the Blind (ACB)
 - No current SCOB members are part of this Council
- National Federation of the Blind WI (NFBWI) – Lee Young
 - Nothing to report

12:30 PM Lunch

1:00 PM Sub-committees Report and Schedule of Their Next Meeting

- Transportation – Bill Gallik
 - Nothing to report.
- Employment – Roberto Torrez
 - Continuing work after SCOB meetings. Roberto feels it is going in the right direction.
 - Report on the meeting with DVR's Senior Leadership Team of March 10, 2014
- Public Relations & Information Access – Eleanor Loomans
 - Eleanor was unable to report due to her absence.

1:40 PM DVR Report - Enid Glenn, Director - Bureau of Management Services, DWD/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR liaison to the SCOB)

- Put responses together to questions/recommendations posed by SCOB at DVR meetings (numbers refer to related document that Enid distributed at the meeting):
 1. DVR often treats clients only as consumers. DVR can also be an advocate for people. What about making partnerships for employment?

The connection with SCOB is a recent one. The SenseAbility team is comprised of people who work most closely with blind and VI persons and they welcome the connection with the Council. Exchange of visitors from the team to SCOB meetings perhaps once a year to sit in and share like SCOB does at team meetings.

What role do the blind staff at DVR serve? – two counsellors are blind and some have specialized training for working with the blind.

SCOB members had the impression that SenseAbility team could not really influence legislation.

There is a staff conference in November that will focus on training staff. Enid will recommend to look specifically into the treatment of blind people and doing some training in working with them. Jo suggests that the Council should present a workshop at the conference.

Idea of possibly making a connection between SCOB and the Wisconsin Rehab Council. They work closely with DVR.

2. Assignment to an Order of Selection (OOS) category is based on a number of functional limitations (see document from Enid for category descriptions).

The problem is that some people don't understand the question. The rehab specialist should know to prod more if the individual's answer is vague.

If somebody feels they have been placed in the wrong category, they can ask for a re-review or appeal the decision.

DVR anticipates being able to serve people in category 2 so there is no waiting list for them by the end of this year. Picking up about two weeks off the wait time each month.

3. DVR would welcome suggested criteria for screening for providers. DVR does not, however, provide specialty training to service providers.

DVR has standards for providers that include vetting and screening potential vendors. This would be where the Council would be helpful in suggesting criteria for the screening process.

Would the Council be able to suggest vendors? – DVR accepts vendors all the time. Council would actually want to suggest to the vendor that they apply to DVR to be a vendor, rather than suggesting to DVR that a vendor be added to the list. DVR also has business services consultants to work with businesses to help employ disabled people.

NFB finds that WI has a problem with client choice. Often clients have to fight for a long time to actually get to work with the vendor of their choice. They are often required to justify over and over why one vendor is better than another, and theoretically, they should not have to do that.

4. DVR completely agrees. Policy requires that DVR communicates with clients using their preferred mode of communication.

Roberto suggests that this policy is more strictly enforced. Personally he prefers electronic format but continues to get printed materials in the mail instead.

5. BEP website has apparently been hacked recently, but in the past it had not been kept up to date. Plan is for each operator to have a website for them to use in their own marketing efforts.

SCOB wants to emphasize consistency and uniformity.

BEP not being brought up with counsellors to consumers as an option. The reason for this is that there are no sites. DVR should work on the development of more sites and are working on consistency and uniformity and increasing the viability of the program. Also working on ways to help promote the program and increase the marketing. We don't know if there is a timeframe on it. Would like to have the director of the BEP program come to the next Council meeting to discuss the program and progress being done to improve it.

6. DVR meets monthly with RSVW to talk about BEP, including problems, good things, suggestions, etc. Lee said that they have brought up issues that have not been addressed. There seems to be a lot of tension, but they don't know where it is coming from.

7. The current process includes DVR staff and an operator counting the ballots, but SCOB's suggestion is feasible.

2:00 PM Justin Salisbury, VP of NFB WI

- NFB is oldest and largest organization of blind people in the US. Formed in 1940 as part of the Social Security Act.
- Focused historically on federal legislation but has recently turned to statewide legislation.
- Structured discovery training programs:
 - Some states might consider structured discovery training as a different type of service provided.
 - Where did the term come from?
 - Invented in Iowa, came from CA School for the Blind. Upon the recommendation of NFB president, center in Iowa was run such that they led a person to learn skills on their own.
 - A lot of blind people with O&M instructors will be told that certain things just can't be done or aren't too safe.
 - People often only learn one skill at a time.
 - Structured discovery training has a degree of confidence building and positive outlook towards the blind. Some graduates of the original founded another center in 1986, and it has expanded from there.
 - Really looks forward to working in WI with DVR counsellors to create a system that is purely based on client choice and utilizes a structured discovery training basis.
 - One thing that can be done is the agency to issue a statement reaffirming commitment to client choice.
 - Set up something that SDT can be seen as a separate kind of training rather than just lumping it in with living skills.
 - Set up a separate agency for VR with blind people specifically.
- Sheltered Workshop Employment:
 - Fair Labor Standards Act – said people that had disabilities wouldn't be successful if they were held to the same standards as able-bodied people because they aren't as productive, so companies don't have to pay them minimum wage.
 - Today there are still people making only pennies an hour.
 - A lot of companies have sheltered workshops that have a bunch of people working for sub-minimum wages and getting paid a bunch of money by the government because they hire a bunch of disabled people.
 - Sheltered workshops actually have the ability to make a person harder to rehabilitate because they teach unproductive skills.
 - We can't just say we don't support it; we have to make sure that clients aren't sent there to work. Passing HR831 would eradicate sheltered workshops.
 - Gwen Moore is the only WI politician who has signed on in support of HR831.
 - Economics literature outlines that paying at least minimum wage is actually economical.

- If productivity measures were given to top administrators, the incentive to be productive would increase, which would increase income for the company.
 - We could completely defund sheltered workshops with state funding.
 - SCOB could issue a statement.
 - We can also work to pass Senate Companion Bill.
 - Get people who are willing to write letters saying that sheltered workshops are not ethical and do not work.
 - NFB is currently working against goodwill for having 64 sheltered workshops around the country.
 - Especially poor ethically because very rich CEO is himself blind.
 - Companies that contract with Beyond Vision in Wisconsin (formerly WISCRAFT, which runs a large sheltered workshop):
 - Harley-Davidson
 - Briggs and Stratton
 - Oshkosh Truck Corp.
 - P&H - Division of Joy-Global
 - Pentair
 - GE
 - GenMet
 - Phoenix Products
 - Accessory 3
 - State of Wisconsin Department of the Treasury
 - University of Wisconsin
 - Morris Material Handling
 - Central Aquatics
 - InPro
 - Ladish
 - Rexnord
 - General Services Administration
 - Defense Logistics Agency
 - Department of Defense
 - United Stationers
 - SP Richards
 - Associated Industries for the Blind
- Braille in the State Capitol:
 - State Capitol does not have braille signage that complies with the ADA.
 - State Capitol and Executive Residence Board is apparently working on that, but NFB can't find information on the next meeting to participate.
 - Fred Risser says he guarantees that it will be done.
- Blind Person's Right to Parent Act:
 - Parental rights can be terminated simply because somebody is blind. This needs to be taken out of the legislature. Act says that blindness can't be used as a reason to take away parental rights. Working on scheduling a meeting with Rep. Pope on the issue.
- TEACH Act – Technology Education Accessibility in College and Higher Education Act:
 - There are no guidelines in making things (software, educational tools, etc.) accessible for students.
 - Sponsored by Tom Petri and Gwen Moore.
 - Looking for help to get that bill passed.

- 2:15 PM Break
- 2:30 PM Final planning of the Legislative day of March 20th - Issues, Visits, etc.
- 3:30 PM Other
- 3:45 PM Next meeting: Schedule June 2014 date
- 4:00 PM Meeting Adjourned.
 - Meeting adjourned at 5:19 PM