

Idaho Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2013

Board Members present: Britt Raubenheimer, Chair; Mike Gibson; Al Schneider; and Sue Payne

ICBVI Staff present: Angela Jones; Raelene Thomas; Trina Ayres; Bruce Christopherson; Nancy Wise; Greg Metsker; and Melanie Schonhardt

Guests present: Jan Gawith; Don Nepple; Tony Bridges; Travis Beck; and Amber Beck

The mission statement was read by Raelene Thomas

MOTION to approve the minutes from March 21, 2013. Made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Gibson – all in favor.

MOTION to amend the agenda to allow Trina Ayres to give the BEP Report instead of Gina Washburn. Made by Commissioner Schneider, seconded by Commissioner Payne – all in favor.

Administrator’s Report – Angela Jones:

We are still deciding how to deal with the cuts from the sequestration. We will spread the cuts out over our July 2013 budget if this goes through. Congress is trying to push the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, which requires VR agencies to designate 10% of their budgets to transition services only. Commissioner Raubenheimer asked how much we spend on transition currently. Angela Jones answered her with about \$100,000 a year, which we use on the Summer Work Experience Program.

The below letter will be going out from the Department of Transportation regarding all licensed drivers who use bioptics. They will begin sending it out in July.

NOTICE OF VISUAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT’S AND PURPOSED NOTICE OF CANCELLATION

THE DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED RECORDS FROM THE IDAHO STATE TAX COMMISSION INDICATING THAT YOU FILED A RETURN CLAIMING A TAX EXEMPTION FOR THE BLIND. BY STATUTE, SECTION 49-326 (1) (C) (2), IDAHO CODE STATES: “ANY PERSON WHO APPLIES FOR OR RECEIVES ANY TYPE OF TAX, WELFARE OR OTHER BENEFITS OR EXEMPTIONS FOR THE BLIND SHALL BE PRESUMED INCOMPETENT TO OPERATE A MOTOR VEHICLE. THIS PRESUMPTION CAN BE OVERCOME BY ANY PERSON WHOSE VISION CAN BE CORRECTED TO A VISUAL ACUITY OF 20/40 OR BETTER IN ONE (1) EYE AS DOCUMENTED BY A LICENSED OPHTHALMOLOGIST OR OPTOMETRIST.”

TO AVOID CANCELLATION OF YOUR IDAHO DRIVERS LICENSE, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE ENCLOSED CERTIFICATE OF VISUAL EXAMINATION TO THE IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT BY _____.

FAILURE TO SUBMIT THE EXAMINATION AND RETURN THE EXAMINATION CERTIFICATE TO THE DEPARTMENT BY THE DUE DATE WILL RESULT IN THE CANCELLATION OF YOUR IDAHO DRIVERS LICENSE.

ENCLOSURES: CERTIFICATE OF VISUAL EXAMINATION
RETURN ENVELOPE

CC: IDAHO STATE TAX COMMISSION

We will let staff know that this is going out and if we get calls we will be sure to let them know to contact Department of Transportation as those names came from the State Tax Commission and not us. Commissioner Schneider thinks we should send out something from ICBVI, and wants to know if we can get the same list from the State Tax Commission to use so that we can offer our services to those that may need it. Angela was going to check into this.

We just recently had an audit in which they found one finding regarding our maintenance of effort. We felt that we were doing this correctly and our federal partners agreed with us.

Newsline statistics – We spend \$30,000 a year for this service. In July 2006, we had 544 registered users, and in April 2013, we had 747 registered users. This July, the charge for Newsline will be \$33,971, and we have not decided what budget this will come out of.

The intent of the 2014 Budget passed by the legislature was for agencies to use any one time salary savings for permanent increases for staff.

We will be making changes this summer to the VR policy manual and the BEP policy manual. which has not been changed since 2003. Vendors will have to approve the BEP changes.

We are still waiting to find out more about the arbitration case, for which we have a meeting scheduled with our attorney general. Angela will keep the board up to date with this issue.

How BEP Locations are awarded: A notice goes out to the vendors and the vendors can bid on it, which is a service bid for the contract. A normal BEP location is secure forever; however, some of these locations like Ada County and Gowen Field are secured by contracts, which may be from one to four years and you are not guaranteed renewal. If two people bid on the same location, then a panel is selected to review the written proposals of each vendor who bid.

Nancy Wise received the Patriot Award from Office of the Secretary of Defense, which recognizes individual supervisors and bosses nominated by an employee serving in the National Guard or Reserve (or their family) for support provided. The Patriot Award reflects the efforts made to support Citizen Warriors (and their family) through a wide-range of measures including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for families and granting leaves of absence if needed.

MOTION to approve the ICBVI State Plan for FFY 2014 made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Gibson – all in favor.

MOTION to approve the ICBVI Strategic Plan for SFY 2014 as provided to the Board made by Commissioner Gibson, seconded by Commission Payne – all in favor.

College Days Update – Melanie Schonhardt:

ICBVI's College Days Program was held the week of June 10th with four participants. We were able to bring in a panel of current students to talk to the group about the types of challenges that they had in their first year of college. One of the sessions that the group all liked was the one on Note Taking and how there are so many different options out there for a student to use to stay on task during college. Other sessions included orientation and mobility; laundry 101; nutrition expectations; assistive technology; and budgeting.

Consumer Input:

Tony Bridges, a BEP Vendor, wanted to express his appreciation for the program and is very happy working for himself as this program allows for that to happen. For an individual to be in this program you have to be a go getter. His only recommendation is that ICBVI staff could be a little more thorough with the communications that start within the agency.

Don Nepple recently signed up for the web service Linked In and the Flying Blind LLC.

Jan Gawith, a former BEP Vendor, is going to be 81 years old in a week. She recommends to vendors to hang in there and do things together and be supportive of each other. She gave us an update on BEP vendor Terry Harris, who is currently undergoing chemotherapy three times a week and will have to spend some time in Salt Lake City to see about a bone marrow transplant. Best recovery wishes out to you Terry.

Travis Beck, a former ICBVI Board Member, wanted to thank the agency and the Board for the opportunity he had to serve on the board. He felt like it was time for him to step down from the Board for now. He is now conducting monthly vendor conference calls with all the BEP vendors and that is going well. Travis attended the NAMA and BLAST conferences this year and he felt that the BLAST conference was definitely worth going to. Commissioner Raubenheimer thanked Travis for all his years of service to the Board and agency.

Amber Beck wanted to thank all the vendor's spouses. Being in the BEP is really a family affair on a day to day basis.

Mike Gibson gave the Board the NFB Report – on May 18th the NFB had over 480 riders participate in the Cycle for Independence. It was a very successful year. Lots of credit goes to Mary Simm, Ramona Walhoff, and Earl Hoover. Earl will assume a lot of the responsibility for the 2014 Cycle for Independence event. The Bell Program will be held again this summer at the end of July in Boise and the first week of August in Idaho Falls. The State Convention was on April 12-13, 2013 in Boise. One of the speakers at the convention was Joanne Wilson, former RSA Commissioner. The NFB scholarship winners are both going into the medical field. We have had very few applicants for the NFB Scholarships.

Independent Living Update – Nancy Wise:

Since October 1, 2012 the Rehab Teachers have served 634 individuals (552 – Older Blind and 82 IL). By the end of the state fiscal year, all case file budgets and \$40,000 of donation funds will have been spent

providing direct client services. All offices are busy with new referrals.

Steve and Candy have been very busy following up with their referrals, teaching OB/IL and VR clients, and assisting in the Low Vision Clinic. Steve continues with the State Transportation Committee and Candy serves on the Blind Services Foundation Board. This year alone, BSF has funded \$16,750 for low vision equipment to visually impaired Idahoans. ICBVI often partners with them.

Michelle Grandstaff, Rehabilitation Teacher in Coeur d'Alene, attended an Elder Fair in Plummer, ID on May 16th. There were approximately 30 tribal and non-tribal members that attended the fair. On July 29th we will be holding the first low vision clinic with Dr. Hansen, Michelle Grandstaff and members from the Coeur d'Alene tribe in collaboration with the Career Renewal Project in Plummer Idaho.

On May 26, Heidi Gainan, Rehabilitation Teacher in Idaho Falls presented an in-service for The Long-term Care Ombudsmen organization. This is a new referral source for us, so hopefully "we will get referrals from them in the future now that they know about ICBVI and our awesome-ness!"

April Mills, Rehabilitation Teacher in our Pocatello office recently attended two health fairs; and served as a guest presenter at the South East Idaho Council of Governments. She informed Senior Service Providers from Caribou, Oneida, Bingham and Bear Lake Counties about various eye conditions common in the elderly; and different ways seniors can stay independent in their home with proper training and tools. Recently April attended a quarterly meeting with the Bannock Transportation Committee to provide input on the transportation needs of blind and low vision commuters in the Pocatello area.

The Twin Falls regional low vision clinic was very successful (18 patients were seen). Collene assisted the team by driving to Twin, loading up Dr. Hansen's equipment, and bringing it back to Boise, which was very much appreciated! Brenda wanted to let me know how much she also appreciates working with Heidi. "She does such a great job with O&M with VR, IL and OB clients." Brenda has learned a lot from Heidi by watching and also by staffing client cases with her. "Heidi is compassionate and professional." They are currently working with a refugee from Iraq and both plowing this field of Arabic culture together.

Kudos to Kevin Jernigan, ATC O&M instructor, for coming to the Twin Falls region to work with clients on O&M. It was especially great to have the intense training available for Brenda's IL client on O&M and the client really appreciated Kevin as well. "Kevin was great to work with and I appreciate his expertise and rapport with clients."

We had an optometric student from Idaho Falls, Matt Green; shadow Dr. Hansen in the clinic all day on May 29th as part of his training requirements. The low vision clinic team received a nice thank from Matt – "I really enjoyed my day observing all of you. You are a wonderful and dedicated group of professionals, and to make it even better, you seem like pretty nice people as well."

Joni Wilmoth, Low Vision Clinic Office Manager is retiring on July 31st after 29 years at the Commission. She has performed a variety of tasks for the agency, but her 10 years' service as the clinic manager/assistant has been a perfect fit for her particular skills, which include: scheduling LV appointments, discussing agency services with prospective patients, mailing patient packets, plus providing Carmen Jacobsen, medical Billing Services with all the essential information for billing purposes, monthly reminders to (MBS) for outstanding client claims, and printing/distributing Dr. Hansen's reports, and also problem solving for patients when Dr. Hansen isn't in the office and maintaining clinic training room supplies during a 20 hour work week. She completed a 32-page procedures manual and organized all computer and office files in preparation for training a replacement.

Joni is a great representative of our agency and she is always pleasant and kind to patients. She will certainly be missed. Our celebration party for Joni will be July 22 (also her 60th birthday)!

Business Enterprise Program Update – Trina Ayres for Gina Washburn:

Development:

Gowen Field- Army Full Food Service - This contract was a sudden development and is a temporary “bridge” contract with the army. It will be re-negotiated into a full term contract this fall at which time it will be put out to bid as a Primary Location. The cafeteria is open 7 days a week for all 3 meals and is expected to provide field feedings as needed.

INL Cafeterias- We put together proposals for a total of 8 new food service facilities at various INL sites. This potential opportunity was sent out to all Licensed Blind Vendors from whom we received one response of interest. We should know by early July how the contracts are awarded.

Health and Welfare – Pocatello - This is a new vending site for the Pocatello route that was developed due to a key H & W employee seeing the new machine we had placed at the H &W in Blackfoot and calling to request our services!

Vendor Updates:

Charlotte Kalina resigned from the program on June 6, 2013. Her route has been put out to bid in accordance with Program Rules.

Terry Harris was diagnosed with Leukemia last month. He has undergone intense chemotherapy to which he has responded well, though he still has a long road to recovery. In spite of this he is back to work on his route!

Daniel Solis is a licensed vendor from California who has moved to Boise to help out in the ATC and to join our BE Program. He is currently working at The Galley as part of his licensing process.

Annual Meeting:

The annual Idaho Blind Merchants Committee annual meeting was held in Las Vegas this year during the National Automated Merchandisers Association’s One Show Conference. It was a great training opportunity for all 8 vendors who were able to attend. At the IBMC Meeting a committee was formed to collaborate with agency staff in a review of the rules of the program; the last time there was a full review of the rules was in 2003.

Fiscal Update – Trina Ayres:

Another fiscal year end is at hand. Financially the agency is in good shape. Because it is June, STARS indicates 100% of the year has elapsed which skews the format of my usual fiscal report, but overall the agency has spent 86.6% of its budget. This percentage is where we anticipate being at this time of year for several reasons: There needs to be enough spending authority to encumber client authorized services; the Aids and Appliances fund fluctuates depending on the timing of expenditures versus reimbursements; there is more spending authority than cash available in the BEP fund 0210; and in the Miscellaneous Fund insurance reimbursements and donations are unpredictable causing it to fluctuate.

As in past years, we do not anticipate turning back much spending authority. As I've previously reported to the board, Angela closely monitors all budgets throughout the year but in June she turns up the heat on managers so everyone is on top of things.

There has been no official word of the effect of sequestration on our grant awards. The VR grant's final award is usually given on or immediately after July 1st; we will know at that point how we have been affected. We did receive the full grant of \$225,000 for the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) but received less in the Independent Living, Part B (ILB) grant; last year we received \$140,295 and this year we received \$132,957. The ILB grant has slightly decreased every year for the past four years with this reduction being the greatest at \$7,338, which I am guessing is due to sequestration.

Sight Restoration & Special Projects Update - Raelene Thomas:

As of the beginning of June, the Vocational Rehabilitation Assistants have served 103 clients in the Sight Restoration Program for SFY 2013. We have had 53 successful closures so far out of the 103 clients served.

Breakdown by regions:

Coeur d' Alene - Closed 17 clients, with 12 successful closures who received services for cataracts, macular edema and diabetic retinopathy.

Lewiston – Closed 14 clients, with 12 successful closures who all received services for cataracts.

Boise – Closed 14 clients, with 8 successful closures who all received services for cataracts.

Twin Falls – 9 closed, with 8 successful closures who received services for cataracts, macular edema and diabetic retinopathy.

Pocatello – 15 closed, with 13 successful closures who received services for cataracts, and detached retina's.

We currently have 37 potential client referrals waiting for the Sight Restoration Program funding for the SFY 2014. Staff will open these clients according to the time of the referral to the program. Priority is still given to those who are in need of services and are in danger of losing their job due to difficulties with their vision.

The VRA's have done a good job this year obtaining Medicare rates from the doctor's and additional vendor discounts in their regions.

We have a retirement as of June 18th, Mary Johnson our VRA in our Coeur d'Alene office will be retiring. Bruce, Nancy, Raelene, Jackie and Michelle will all be conducting VRA interviews on June 17th in Coeur d'Alene. Raelene is hopeful that we will be able to hire and have someone start the position the week of July 8th. Raelene will be travelling up there to the office to train the new hire for that entire week.

The Twin Falls Office has officially relocated to their new address at the Twin Falls County West building off of Addison Avenue in Twin Falls. The Twin Falls staff really like their new location and are looking forward to building a good working relationship with IDVR, which is right down the hall from them.

The Lewiston Office will be obtaining some additional space beginning July 1st. This space will be located right across the hall from them, which will give them an area to demonstrate CCTVs and other products to consumers. Plus it will allow for a little extra space in the office so they have a waiting room area. The additional cost for this space is \$1400.00 for the year.

Our Coeur d'Alene office lease will be expiring at the end of September and we will be looking at possible new locations for them as they are in much need of more space for aids and appliances, and product demonstration.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Update – Bruce Christopherson:

Federal Reporting: The updates to the State Plan were completed and made available for public comment May 13th – 17th. A copy was posted on the website and announcements were placed in the newspapers throughout the state. There was no public comment.

The updates to In-Service Training Grant were completed and submitted on April 30, 2013. The RSA-113 was completed and successfully submitted on April 1st as well.

Staff Training: The counselor in Coeur d' Alene is scheduled to sit for the CRC examination in July (2013). She has attended a prep course to help her prepare for this examination. The Rehabilitation Services Chief continues to work with her to become a high production counselor. She was off entrance probation on June 3rd.

Preparation for In-Service training in September continues. Meetings have been regularly scheduled. Up to this point sessions on technology, Personality Disorders, Veteran's Administration, and Employment have been confirmed. Ethics should be confirmed shortly and we are still looking for a speaker for the topic of Traumatic Brain Injury.

Training sponsored through Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation was held in April. The training will include Medical Aspects of the Eye and Diseases of the Eye. A total of nine staff attended the training. It was done through their individual computers so there was no cost to the agency.

The Rehabilitation Services Chief attended the NCSAB conference in Washington DC in April. Topics covered included CSAVR update, Assistive Technology, Independent Living, and Transition.

Program Development: Quality Assurance Reviews were completed at the Lewiston Office April 8th – 9th, Idaho Falls Office May 20th – 21st, and the Pocatello Office May 21st and 22nd.

Summaries from these reviews were sent to the Administrator for her approval and after that will be disseminated to the appropriate Regions. Findings were also shared with the staff on the VR Conference Call on May 31st. The Quality Assurance Review Instrument continues to be refined as a result of these reviews.

A Social Security Compliance Review was completed on May 1st. They had just two findings, the first was there was no protocol established in the case of a security breach regarding Social Security information, and the second finding was that staff do not have annual training on security awareness about the sensitivity of Social Security information. These processes will be incorporated into the Quality Assurance Reviews.

ICBVI has also been established as an Intern/Practicum site for the University of Idaho's Rehabilitation Counseling Program.

Program Statistics: Statistically the VR Program is on track to meet its projections. Through May listed below are the performance statistics for the VR Program:

New applications – 64% (Goal is 177 - completed 113)

Eligibilities – 55% (Goal is 138 – completed 76)

New IPEs – 68% (Goal is 112 – completed 76)

Successful closures – 76% (Goal is 59 (Federal), 67 (Agency), 71 (Personal) - completed 51

Rehabilitation Rate – 73.16% (Goal is 68.9%)

Assessment and Training Center Update – Greg Metsker:

The regular ATC Spring Term is winding down and the staff are preparing to conduct the ATC College Days program next week. This has been a good term in a lot of respects. Naturally our clients got 10 weeks of great training, which is always good. In addition this term we had one student who went back to work at the automotive garage where he worked previously. We also had another student get accepted into Graduate School, one student who went to work at a restaurant and a fourth student who may be getting an opportunity to volunteer in a library, which has been a long time goal of his. We also got a report from a client who finished ATC training last winter that in addition to doing the bookkeeping for her family's business, she has entered into a partnership with a Boise real estate developer to develop a 500 acre industrial park in the Twin Falls area. We have had a very motivated and driven group of students these past few terms and their hard work is paying off, which is fantastic to watch and be a part of.

We have received a handful of ATC satisfaction surveys recently from clients who have completed the training over the course of the last 6 months or so. The remarks and the feedback have been overwhelmingly positive. Greg shared a few of the comments. When asked if their attitude about blindness has changed since attending the ATC, one client replied: "Yes. From hopeless/victim... to take charge of your life." Another response to the same question was "Oh yes, big time. I'm a brand new woman, remodeled. My attitude is so much more positive!" Yet another client added a comment at the end of their survey saying "If it wasn't for the ATC I'd be hopeless – I wouldn't know what to do." Of course we get comments about how to improve the training as well. Most of the recently returned surveys were from clients who attended the ATC last summer, fall and winter when we had large numbers of students. Thus, we had several comments related to student to teacher ratios being too high in Shop and ADL, and suggestions that we should group students who are at the same level in Braille and Computer classes. There were several respondents who indicated that classmates who learned at a slower pace were occupying all of the instructor's time. That situation is difficult to avoid. When we put together our schedule at the beginning of each term, we definitely take into account the characteristics of each student and we try to group them together in classes with other students who are at similar levels of training. Not every client learns at the same rate however, so after a few weeks there are always students who are moving through the material much quicker than others and we soon have big gaps forming in terms of where the students are in the curriculum. Braille class is where we see the biggest differences in student performance as some clients can feel the Braille just fine, and have the ability to learn quickly, and others need more time and attention in order to memorize the code and may have trouble with their sense of touch.

Currently we have 13 clients who are signed up to attend the ATC for the Summer Term. Eight of them will be full time and 5 will be part time students. Seven of the students will be living in the dorms, including 5 women and 2 men. The average age of the new full time students is 21.5 years old. The average age of our clients the last two terms has been about 45, so the ATC staff are going to have to re-group and get ready to keep up with a much younger crowd this summer.

New Business:

The next ICBVI Board meeting will be in Twin Falls on October 3rd. The location in Twin Falls has not been determined yet.

Elections for Chair and Vice Chair of the ICBVI Board were held, motions are as follows:

MOTION made by Commissioner Payne to re-elect Commissioner Raubenheimer as Chair of the Board, seconded by Commissioner Schneider - all in favor.

MOTION made by Commissioner Raubenheimer to elect Commissioner Gibson as Vice Chair of the Board, seconded by Commissioner Schneider – all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm, minutes respectfully submitted by Raelene Thomas on July 3, 2013.