

**Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2008
341 W. Washington Street
Boise, Idaho**

Commissioners Present:

Britt Raubenheimer, Chair; Dave Hand, Vice Chair; and Kent Ireton

Staff Present:

Angela Jones, Administrator; Raelene Thomas, Administrative Assistant; Greg Metzker, ATC Supervisor; Nanna Hanchett, Rehabilitation Services Chief; Candy Harris, Rehabilitation Teacher; Mary Quarles, Sr. Accountant; Lisa Van Ry, BEP Supervisor; Trina Ayres, Management Assistant

Guests Present:

Ramona Walhof (National Federation of the Blind of Idaho), Jan Gawith, Sue Payne and Dianne Milhollin

Call to Order and Introductions

Chairman Raubenheimer called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and called for introductions. Raelene Thomas read the Mission Statement.

Amend/Approve Agenda:

Commissioner Hand requested to approve the agenda.

Motion: To approve the agenda as stated.

Made by: Commissioner Hand

Seconded by: Commissioner Ireton

Result: Unanimous approval

Meeting Minutes Approval

MOTION: To approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of August 8, 2008.

MADE BY: Commissioner Ireton

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Hand

RESULT: Unanimous approval

Administrator's Report

The additional building remodel will go out to bid in December, with hopes of construction to begin in January. This remodel may be completed by May 2009. The money for the building remodel is not affected by the hold backs as these funds come from a permanent building fund and as of this time we have not been told otherwise. The building is in desperate need for plumbing updates as well as new elevators, new carpeting, and a refurbished library, which will be the last of the big remodel on the building.

During the month of October we sent out a letter to current and past clients regarding accessible voting from the Secretary of State. There were approximately 2500 on the mailing list. The only problems that ICBVI had heard about were the etiquette of the poll workers helping some of the blind and visually impaired while they were trying to vote. Angela suggested that perhaps ICBVI could help out with some type of training for the poll workers regarding etiquette when approaching someone who is blind or visually impaired.

We have received approval on our State Plan from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) effective September 29, 2008. We will be following our state goals in the plan throughout the year, as this is something that RSA will be watching carefully.

In-Service Training for all ICBVI staff was held during the last week of October. Thank you goes out to Nanna Hanchett and Raelene Thomas for putting this together. One of our main focuses during this training was to get a better understanding about secondary disabilities as 75% of our clients have them. We heard from two doctors regarding functional limitations, Dr. Jason Gage from Mountain States counseling talked about mental functional limitations and Dr. Mike Weiss, from St. Lukes Hospital spoke to us about physical functional limitations.

We held a banquet one evening, during which a slide show was presented with pictures of staff that worked or are working at the ICBVI. Longevity awards and employee recognition awards were given, but there were no monetary bonuses given due to holdbacks. During the additional days of In-Service Training, staff received overviews of all programs, training on Harassment Prevention and Microsoft Outlook Calendar, IL, VR & ATC breakout sessions, a diabetes overview from Humphrey's Diabetes Center, and testimonials from clients who were in ILOB, Sight Restoration & VR.

We saved some money during this training by having staff stay here at the building, which will help as we will be able to do some additional training later in the year.

Holdbacks - we have given back \$15,500 which was the first holdback of 1%. We were told to keep another 1.5% to the side in case it was needed, which would result in another \$23,300 holdback. Our number one goal has been not to take money from any of the programs and the money for holdbacks has come out of operating.

In the Vocational Rehabilitation program, we had 79 successful closures for FFY 2008 and served 455. We have dropped our homemakers to 6% of the successful closures, which is half of last year's number. We will be sending legislators a letter highlighting our year of successes along with charts to show our growth and accomplishments. Additional statistics for FFY 2008: we served 105 clients in our school-work transition programs, spent approximately \$320,000 on assistive technology, have made approximately 10,600 contacts through community support and outreach, served 392 in our low vision clinic, and store sales have reach \$210,000.

Angela suggested that SWEP be taken out of the special programs category on the financial charts to give us a better understanding of the funds from quarter to quarter.

The Independent Living (IL) and Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) operating budgets show higher percents expended for the year than budgeted because Newsline was taken out of these budgets. Last year Newsline was taken out of social security reimbursement dollars.

The Governor has a policy in place regarding telecommuting for the state of Idaho employees. Trina Ayres mentioned that each agency is encouraged to put one together for staff.

The Emergency Preparedness of Idaho Homeland Security has sent Angela a draft copy of the Idaho Preparation Plan to review. ICBVI is listed as a resource in the plan for services, such as preparing Braille and large print documents for consumers. Greg Metzker has been to several meetings regarding the preparation plan.

Advisory Board SBOE/ISDB:

In October, a State Board of Education (SBOE) meeting was held in Lewiston. One decision was to implement an Advisory Council overseeing the education of deaf and/or blind students in the State of Idaho. This council will consist of people who participated in the Summit Meeting in August here in Boise. The 20 member Advisory Council will function as two different groups, one for the blind and one for the deaf. Angela asked not to be nominated as the representative from ICBVI due to the busy legislative session and the upcoming remodel on the building.

Financial Status Report:

Mary Quarles reviewed the previously sent out financial status memo with the Board and there were no additional questions asked of Mary by the Board at this time.

Business Enterprise Report:

Lisa Van Ry reviewed the previously sent out BEP report with the Board and added the following: The new BEP Board recently elected by the vendors will target new training program opportunities for Snack Bar and Cafeteria vendors and also will explore the option of partnering with BSU. The BEP Semi-Annual meetings are all paid for by BEP, but the conference fees for other trainings throughout the year are paid for by the vendors. If funds are available BEP can assist with some of those costs.

Consumer Input:

Ramona Walhoff – (NFBI) – Ramona commented on Angela's previous report regarding agency holdbacks, and wanted us to be cautious of holdbacks leaving a hole in services for seniors, especially those in need of assistive technology. Holdbacks also can affect services kids are receiving, and hopefully the new Advisory Council will recognize the needs of blind or visually impaired kids. The next NFBI conference is March 27-29, 2009 in Boise at the Owyhee Plaza. The recent tech fair in Coeur d'Alene allowed us to sign up five new people to be users of Newsline.

Jan Gawith – February 16th is the NFBI legislative dinner. Jan hopes to explain the importance of education for blind and visually impaired children and adults, including how services from ICBVI can and will benefit them. Jan would like the NFBI and ICBVI to consider putting together a technology fair here in Boise.

Input from current students in the Assessment Training Center (ATC):

Dianne is a part time student in the ATC and has been attending since the middle of August. Dianne also was an ICBVI Board member for about fifteen years and has been legally blind for over 40 years. The reason Dianne has come to the ATC is that she has been asked to come back and teach at the disability center at Washington State University, and she was in great need of improving her computer skills.

Larry is from Lewiston and has been diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP). Larry had no idea that ICBVI even existed until his mother referred him to the Lewiston VR Office. Larry was trying to support his family on social security, but realized it was just too hard to make ends meet. The Lewiston VR Counselor referred Larry to come down to Boise to take a tour of the ATC Center and he is now an enrolled student learning Braille and how to cook and clean. He is very excited to be here and wishes that more eye doctors would advertise ICBVI and it's services.

Bill has been at the ATC for a couple of weeks and he likes to keep a close eye on where tax dollars are being spent. Bill did not know about ICBVI and he feels like it is a pretty good investment. He did not receive any information about services here at ICBVI through his doctor. Bill feels that coming to ICBVI for training in the ATC has giving him hopes of being independent again.

Rose Marie began to lose her vision to Macular Degeneration in 2004. Rose Marie would like to do some type of customer service and has come to the ATC to enhance her computer skills.

Greg had learned about ICBVI from a VR Counselor who had approached him at the dialysis center in his home town. Greg has diabetic retinopathy and came to the ATC to help learn how to be independent as well as cope with his vision loss.

Scott was diagnosed with Eyeritis and cataracts and learned to cope with the vision that he had as it was never a problem until 2006 when his vision began to deteriorate. He was unable to drive and spent many days in depression and was wondering how he was going to raise his children. Scott's outlook back then was not really positive, but now there are things that he can do to succeed due to the assistance of the ATC.

Independent Living:

Candy Harris presented for Nancy Wise and reviewed the previously sent out Board report. The following are additions made to the IL Board Report: Senior Week is tentatively scheduled for the week of March 16th. A Breakout Session at In-service was conducted where Michelle Grandstaff demoed the kit she provided attendees at the Independent Living Skills Training Day for seniors in CDA. Staff discussed more training for seniors being held on future days in all regions. Nancy made binders for all teachers with copies of Peer Support Information including leaders, topics, attendance and hours spent on facilitation for FFY 2007 and 2008; budgets for each region; an "IL How To Guide," that we will use as a tool to develop an Independent Living skills manual as a future resource for ICBVI clients and family members. Michelle

has started this process, but all teachers will be involved. We're excited for another opportunity to improve IL services in Idaho.

Vocational Rehabilitation:

Nanna Hanchett reviewed the previously sent out Board report. The following are additional comments made regarding VR. Outreach with vocational rehabilitation occurs on a substantial level. One example is the flyers on BEP vending machines. We recently had a potential client call and come in for an appointment about services, as they had seen one of the flyers. The flyers are posted at many BEP locations, which are along the freeways and in post offices, state office buildings, city buildings, etc. Staff currently are attending chamber of commerce meetings in their areas to make contacts with any new or existing employers of the blind and visually impaired.

As well as attending the regional transition partnership meetings, we also will be participating in the upcoming Tools for Life Conference to be held in Coeur d'Alene. We have asked to have a presentation by Greg Metzker on SWEP and the ATC and how we can integrate the training into employment or education plans.

School Districts have to have permission from the parents of a transition student for any VR Counselor to attend the students IEP Meeting. Most students that come to ICBVI are referrals from the schools.

Over the next year, we will continue to provide training to staff on functional limitations, as well as to move forward with upgrades to the web based case management systems (ICMS).

Assessment Training Center:

Greg Metzker reviewed the previously sent out Board report. The follow are additional comments regarding ATC. The ATC will have 2 more students enrolled for classes within the next quarter, bringing the total to 16 full time and part time students. We have had a total of 11 tours this quarter as well as 3 upcoming in the next week. The possibility of 20 or more students next semester enrolled at the ATC is looking good.

Americorps – Kim Steinberg & Susan Bradley:

The State Independent Living Council (SILC) applied for and received a new grant called Americorps Transportation Network group, which started in September 08. The grant consists of one grant coordinator who is Kim Steinberg, and 11 full time Americorps members who are located at host sites, such as ICBVI, LINC, DAC NW, and LIFE in 11 locations across the state. During the 3 year grant cycle, the 11 members will work together with other volunteers to create 22 new transportation options in the state (2 per each site). One of the options that the members in the Treasure Valley area are considering is to buy an accessible vehicle for taxi service. One idea for up north has been to expand the bus service routes. Some of the ideas for funding these transportation options are to use the Freedom Dollar Grants that are for people with disabilities. Most of the Americorps full time members have a disability and range in experience and education.

Susan Bradley was hired to be the Americorps member located here at ICBVI. Susan is legally blind and until 1999 was able to drive. After she was unable to drive, Susan found the public transportation system here in the Treasure Valley hard to figure out, which lead Susan to become very active in several transportation groups in the area as well as to join the Chamber of Commerce in Boise. Susan was very excited to take on this new challenge as transportation issues have been a big concern for her and she keeps a close watch on what is happening in the Treasure Valley area.

VR split in funds between IDVR & ICBVI:

Angela explained that Idaho is one of the states in which vocational rehabilitation for the blind receives the lowest percent of federal dollars through the general VR program. We currently receive only 12% of the Federal funds for vocational rehabilitation given to Idaho, and Angela has researched that the general program has had sizable carryover of federal dollars since 2002. The carryover has been the following, in 2002 \$986,000, in 2003 \$2 million, in 2004 \$609,000, in 2006 \$350,000, and in 2007 \$951,000. It is expected that 2008 could be another large year. All of these statistics were found on the RSA website under the RSA – 2 reports. The Governor’s office and the Division of Financial Management have recommended that Angela try to work this out with the general VR Program before they intervene. Angela would like to know if the Board wants her to continue to attempt to obtain a larger percentage of the split.

MOTION: A motion in favor of Angela Jones to continue pursuing a larger split of Vocational Rehabilitation federal dollars from the General VR Program (IDVR).

MADE BY: Commissioner Hand

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Raubenheimer

RESULT: 2 in favor, 1 abstained

New Business:

The date of the next Board Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 2009.

MOTION: To adjourn

MADE BY: Commissioner Raubenheimer

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Hand

RESULT: Unanimous approval

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 pm