

Idaho Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2013

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

ICBVI Staff present: Angela Jones; Raelene Thomas; Trina Ayres; Bruce Christopherson; Greg Metsker; Gina Washburn; Linda Upton; Judy Jones and Brenda Knight

Guests present: Craig Fredericksen

The mission statement was read by Raelene Thomas

MOTION to approve the minutes from June 13, 2013. Made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Gibson – all in favor.

Consumer Input:

Craig Fredericksen is working in the Twin Falls area as a vendor who is doing the route including the Interstate rest areas in Bliss and Twin Falls, plus the Twin Falls Post Office. Craig and Gina Washburn have been able to work together to grow the route by 25% and they hope to obtain Fish and Game in Jerome. Summer time is his busiest time of the year. He is very appreciative of the team situation he has with the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) staff of Gina and Justin.

We also received a few phone calls from clients (Richard Sexton and Brenda Davis) who were unable to attend the board meeting, but who indicated they were very satisfied with the services they were receiving from the Twin Falls staff.

Administrator's Report – Angela Jones:

ICBVI will be getting the same amount in the budget request for SFY 2015 as we did this last state fiscal year. We have requested an authorization for spending the IL Donation (amount reduced from \$100,000 to \$50,000 for SYF 2015). The sequestration amount of \$53,000 was taken from ICBVI in July, which would have affected SWEP if we had not decide earlier to postpone the 2013 SWEP session. We did recoup some of that funding from the general VR agency by matching some of the funds they had to revert in August.

Angela met with Ramona Walhoff from the Idaho Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind and committed to helping this next summer with the Bell (Braille Enrichment Learning Literacy) Program to be held here in Boise, Idaho Falls and maybe a location up North.

Our agency bill for Attorney General's services has gone up to \$25,000 for this next fiscal year.

Our agency is awaiting the federal arbitration dates; we have secured JoAnn Wilson to represent us, while Fred Schroeder has been asked to represent the BEP Vendor. Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has indicated that there are nineteen arbitrations ahead of us, so we may not hear anything until spring 2014.

Angela is looking at possibly contracting a rehabilitation teacher position in the Treasure Valley area. We also have to look at eastern Idaho as we have only one Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor managing two caseloads for Idaho Falls and Pocatello clients. Linda Upton in Twin Falls indicated they have a great referral base from the eye doctors in the area.

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) has a new program offered on line called E-learning. The ICBVI has signed up for staff to be able to use this program this next year at a cost of \$2,500. Some of the topics for training are Aging, Cultural Diversity, Diabetes and Common Eye Conditions. George Abbott who used to work for ICBVI, helped develop this program for the AFB.

We just recently had our all staff In-Service Training here in Twin Falls. Thanks and good job to Bruce, Nancy, Raelene and Greg for working as a team and putting this together. One of the sessions was an Employer Panel put together by Greg and Linda Upton, which had four employers from the Twin Falls area. It was an open discussion with staff and the employers on what employers are looking for when they hire someone. Most employers like to have a resume from that person and to see that they have been at previous jobs for at least two years.

We just recently had a Management Audit from the Legislative Services Office and there were no findings.

The salary savings that we had between 2008 – 2013 were used for increases based on performance; the average increase was around 5%. We are looking at possibly doing some increases this year and Angela will get recommendations from the Management team based on employee's performances.

Angela reviewed some ATC survey comments. Most clients are indicating that they really learn a lot even if they don't like wearing the shades throughout the training. Angela commented on the good team work that happens between the VR Chief and the ATC Manager.

For Bioptic users, names of anyone who claims a blind exemption on their State of Idaho Income Taxes will be sent to Department of Transportation and they will receive a letter asking them to recertify that they can pass a 20/40 eye exam with the use of a Bioptic device. If people have concerns about this process, they should contact their local Department of Transportation, the Governor's Office, or their local legislator. There is still some discussion going on about the tax commission making changes to this tax exemption. However, this event would be probably a consumer group issue and not something in which the ICBVI would get involved.

Angela is still reviewing the VR policies draft changes. The BEP is also proposing to make changes to their policies as well. The vendors just had a meeting and they will vote on those changes in March 2014 before they go to the ICBVI Board for approval.

The Senate Bill 1356 for Rehabilitation Services Administration states that they will be placed under the Department of Labor, and that the Older Blind Independent Living Program will be placed under Health & Human Services. This bill has been put on hold so far with the Federal Government shutdown. Despite the shutdown, we as a state agency will be okay for three to four months as we have drawn down federal money's before the shutdown occurred. They are proposing to fund a continuing resolution for the VR program, however, they are not indicating that there will be increases.

The Idaho Health Care Exchange began October 1st. Angela asked our agency Assistive Technologist, Laine Amoureux, to check the website. There are over 150 individuals you can contact about the health exchange.

Summer Work Experience Program Group Discussion:

Since SWEP was cancelled this last summer Bruce and Greg have discussed a few new possible changes within the program.

- The maximum number of times a student can attend SWEP would be kept to two.
- They have to be at least 16 to attend.
- We can send them to another states program like the YES 1 Program in Washington State, which costs us about \$700.00 per student, and have them attend before they come to SWEP. Commissioner Gibson likes that idea of giving the student other opportunities in other states programs.
- Create a SWEP in their own hometown to give them the opportunity to have a full time summer job with the idea of it expanding it into more.
- Changing the upper age limit from 21 to 18.
- Alternate SWEP every other year based on age.
- Do SWEP every other year or only when the threshold reaches a certain number.
- 19-21 year olds could come in for the week of training and then go back to their hometowns to get the job experience.
- 16-18 year olds could come to Boise and stay in town for the jobs in Boise.

Sight Restoration & Special Projects Update - Raelene Thomas:

For SFY 13, we had a total of 61 successful closures in the SR Program, serving over 95 people.

Coeur d'Alene Office had 13 successful closures with 1 person working

Lewiston Office had 16 successful closures with 8 people working

Boise Office had 8 successful closures with 1 person working

Twin Falls Office had 10 successful closures with 4 people working

Pocatello Office had 14 successful closures with 4 people working

Our budget for this program is \$177,000 a year in general fund money. We received over \$219,000 worth of vendor discounts. The VRAs are doing a good job of securing those discounts by getting Medicare rates with their local eye doctors. Of the 61 successful closures, the average cost is about \$2,900.00 per caseload of ICBVI funding. I want to give a special thanks to Marge Coulter in our

Pocatello Office, who has been a great help this past year with the Sight Restoration Program, and also trouble shooting with other VRAs when I'm not available.

We have hired a new Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant for our Coeur d'Alene Office; her name is Merrilee Jackson Teal. Merrilee worked for the Department of Health & Welfare for five years as a reliance specialist, so she comes to us with some good knowledge of working with persons with disabilities and the older population. Kris Grant, receptionist in the Boise Office, went to California for two weeks to work with a new guide dog, whose name is Kiwi and who is a yellow lab. Judy Jones in the Twin Falls Office is hoping to obtain another guide dog in the next six months.

As of the end of October, we will have made improvements with remodels or obtained new office space for all of our office locations. Special thanks to our Administrator, Angela Jones for allowing this.

Coming up by the first of November we will be moving the Coeur d'Alene office to a new location. We will also be trading in their 2009 GMC Van for a smaller minivan or car, which will be easier for staff to drive around.

We have also requested a replacement vehicle on our budget for one of the mini vans in the Twin Falls office.

Assessment and Training Center Update – Greg Metsker:

The Fall Term in the ATC started on September 24th. We have 11 students taking classes this term, 5 full-time and 6 part-time. We have one student who is brand new, one student who is beginning his 5th term and a handful of clients who are starting their 2nd term. As Greg did some research into statistics for the ATC during Federal Fiscal Year 2013, he discovered that the average length of time our students spent in the ATC last year was right at 2 terms. As Greg recalls, when he looked at those numbers just a couple of years ago, the average length of stay was 2.5 terms and a few years prior to that training seemed to average 3 terms. Greg is not sure why the average dropped but he would guess that it stems from the fact that we seem to be serving more and more part time students who have very specific goals in mind when they come to the ATC. That makes it easier to hone in on specifically what the client wants and therefore reduces the amount of time they spend in the center. We also ask all full time students to turn in a list of their personal training goals at the beginning of each term, and he thinks that also helps keep them focus and reminds us exactly what is most important to them in terms of training. We ask them to make the goals measurable and we discuss their progress towards those goals at least 3 times during the course of a term. Some examples of the kind of goals our students submit would be: To make it to the Jackson's store at 8th and Fort during Mobility class by the middle of the term, to get through Grade One Braille by the end of the term, to learn how to customize Zoom Text to match my visual needs by the end of the term, and others similar to that.

Other interesting facts about the ATC this past year: We served 48 students in the center. That number only includes full and part time students and does not include non-ATC Job Readiness clients that Beth works with, the one-time computer assistance that Larry and Scott provide to clients from time to time, school tours, AT Assessments, new staff who were in training and so forth. Of the 48 students we had last year, 26 of them lived in the dorms (that is a relatively high number), 32 were legally blind, 8 were totally blind and 8 were classified as functionally blind. By comparison we served 24 students in 2007, 31 in 2008, 47 in 2009, 53 in 2010, 55 in 2011 and 57 in 2012. As Greg mentioned earlier we worked with several new staff members in the ATC this past year as well, including Gayle Worthington, Justin Fish, Jack Bierle and Connie Hansen. We also hosted a Mobility Intern and worked briefly with a VRC

Intern who Bruce is supervising as well as hosting the IESDB/ICBI Options and Opportunities Day last winter for a handful of blind Middle School and High School students from around the Treasure Valley. All things considered, FFY 2013 was a good year in the ATC.

Independent Living Update – by Angela Jones for Nancy Wise:

All teachers, the Store, and the Clinic remain very busy. This federal fiscal year the RT's have served 579 Older Blind, 91 Independent Living and provided 1-time services to 429 visually impaired, and assist VR counselors with client assessments. September and October are busy times for health fairs in all regions. Michelle recently attended two new fairs, one in Post Falls and one in Rathdrum that is put on by the Rathdrum Lions Club.

The same very pleasant young woman from a temp agency just completed the IL/OB client satisfaction survey for FFY 2013, which indicated again clients were very satisfied with the services they are receiving, or have received this fiscal year.

The major obstacle is having enough time to provide services to the many referrals that come to our offices and to see those clients living in remote areas regularly.

IL/Older Blind Program Survey Results - Surveys Completed: 80 (September 2013)

Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being poor and 5 being excellent, please rate how well the ICBI Staff explained the services available to you through the independent living program?

Average score: 4.96

Question 2: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being none and 5 being all, did you receive the services you requested? Average score: 4.92

Question 3: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, please rate your satisfaction with the services you did receive. Average score: 5

Question 4: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, please rate the timeliness of the services you did receive. Average score: 4.92

Question 5: Would you recommend this program to a family member or friend with vision loss? Yes: ALL
No:

Question 6: Did you have an appointment at our Low Vision Clinic in Boise? Yes: 27 No: 53

*If so, were you satisfied with the services you received here? Yes:27 No:

Question 7: Are there any services or information that the Commission doesn't already offer that you would recommend in order to effectively meet the needs of Idahoans who are blind or visually impaired and who want to live independently?

"My special glasses are too heavy and make my nose sore."

"It would be nice to get brighter lights offered."

"Maybe the rehab teacher could come more often upon request?"

"Everything is wonderful. However, I wouldn't mind more help with my computer."

"I would like to know more about new books on tape."

"I'm very happy with the help I have received. Thank you very much."

"The television cover for my TV is helpful."

"I am still getting the books on tape and really enjoy them."

"It would be nice if I could get some sort of updated list monthly of the services/items available to me."

Question 8: Are there any additional comments you would like to make regarding the Older Blind Program, the Rehab Teacher, or the services you received?

"The dots on my stuff helps me a lot."

"I enjoy listening to the stories on tape!"

"The rehab teacher has been very helpful to me."

"Gayle is a great lady."

"Candy is a very sweet lady."

"April comes to visit and I really enjoy that."

"As far as I know I am doing okay. But I don't know if there's anything else that could help me. The doctor told me there's nothing we can do to make my vision better."

"Heidi is very pleasant and sweet."

"I appreciate how much Michelle has helped me and would love to see her again soon."

Independent Living Survey Results - Surveys Completed: 20 (September, 2013)

Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being poor and 5 being excellent, please rate how well the ICBVI Staff explained the services available to you through the independent living program?

Average score: 4.9

Question 2: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being none and 5 being all, did you receive the services you requested? Average score: 4.9

Question 3: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, please rate your satisfaction with the services you did receive. Average score: 4.85

Question 4: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, please rate the timeliness of the services you did receive. Average score: 4.9

Question 5: Would you recommend this program to a family member or friend with vision loss? Yes: 20
No: 0

Question 6: Did you have an appointment at our Low Vision Clinic in Boise? Yes: 8 No: 12

*If so, were you satisfied with the services you received here? Yes: 8 No:

Question 7: Are there any services or information that the Commission doesn't currently offer that you would recommend in order to effectively meet the needs of Idahoans who are blind or visually impaired and who want to live independently?

"I could use better eyes to see with!" 😊

"No, I feel as though I was provided everything that I need."

"So far so good...I can't think of anything at the moment."

"I think some of us could use some more time with our teacher from the Commission."

"I don't think I know of any other services my son could use right now. The Commission has done a good job getting us information and help we need."

Question 8: Are there any additional comments you would like to make regarding the Independent Living Program, the Rehab Teacher who worked with you, or the services you received?

"Candy is wonderful. I haven't heard from her in a while but I'll contact her."

"Brenda has been very helpful with everything."

"April is a great teacher."

"Heidi is a very sweet lady and was very informative."

"I think Michelle has given us everything we need at this point. Thank you!"

"Steve came to our home and helped set our stuff up. Thanks!"

"Gayle was very nice and we are interested in getting anything new to help please."

Our IL Program breakout session during in-service provided information from Sue Walker, Accessing Talking Book Service Materials: Tips and Tricks; Collene brought several big button phones for get the teachers input on their favorite; A new Digital Voice Recorder - \$35; It was a great time for all teachers to get together for a discussion on services and challenges working with a person who has other issues besides blindness and low vision, such as a language barrier.

Business Enterprise Program Update – Gina Washburn:

Development & Changes

INL- SMC & CFA Micro Market Hybrids

Though we were not awarded the cafeteria contracts we were given a contract to operate two smaller locations as micro market hybrids. Each site has a kiosk for self-checkout as well as one employee on site to provide fresh food. So far the feedback has been excellent!

Gowen Field- Army Update

This “bridge” contract was scheduled to be directly negotiated into a full term contract as of October. However, at the last minute the contracting officer notified us that they are unable to do that until we have had the contract for a full year. Therefore, we have signed another six month bridge contract and will not be placing this out as a stand-alone location until next spring.

Rest Area Re-Integration

We brought two rest areas back into the program to be directly run by Operators. These two, Timmerman and Snake River, had been contracted out to Coke by a previous vendor for machine income due to their location.

Centennial Job Corps

I went out and met with the facility manager and student leaders regarding their vending. We have not received the official green light from them yet but as a Federal Facility they are bound by Randolph Sheppard and so this is a when, not if, situation. Once we get in there, this site, which they estimated sees approximately \$3000 per month in revenue, will anchor the Nampa/Caldwell route and be a great boost for our vendor there.

Vendor Updates:

Rodney Johnston was the sole bidder for the Boise “Post Office” route vacated by Charlotte Kalina. He made the move from Coeur d’ Alene and has been busy establishing himself in his new location. Upon his departure from CDA the Program re-evaluated the routes in Northern Idaho and decided that a change was needed. Due to significant decreases in income for the Operators in the region in recent years, we condensed two routes into one that covers CDA, Moscow and Lewiston. This change has been very positive and has created a solid route for the remaining Operator. The sites that were given up in Grangeville, Orofino, etc... were contracted to Coca Cola for Machine Income.

Terry Harris has been working hard throughout his continued chemotherapy. Though he responded very well to chemo and appears to have won round one, his doctors have strongly recommended a bone marrow transplant. He has agreed and is scheduled to go down to Salt Lake City the first week of October to begin the procedure. All in all he expects to be there for four months. He has employees in place to help him maintain his business during his medical leave and will no doubt be on the computer or phone running things from SLC every moment he is able to! Terry has been part of the BEP family for many years, and he is greatly loved and strongly admired. We will be thinking of him and sending him all the positive and healing energy we have while he is in Salt Lake fighting this next battle!

Rule Revisions

The Rules Committee appointed at the last annual meeting requested that, instead of presenting the agency with suggestions and/or changes, Gina would go through and create a rough draft for them to review. Gina agreed to the request and collected Program Rules from more than ten states to help. Gina submitted my draft to the Idaho Blind Merchants Council (IBMC) members via email at the beginning of August, and has scheduled an informal vendor meeting for Saturday September 28th to answer questions. My hope is that they will come away from the meeting with a collective list of ideas, suggestions and even concerns that we can then use to move forward working together until we come up with a draft that works and is vetted and ready to go through the approval process.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Update – Bruce Christopherson:

Federal Reporting: The RSA-113 was completed and successfully submitted on July 2nd. The State Plan was approved by RSA in July – it needed no corrections or modifications. The RSA-911 has been run, and errors, anomalies, and other issues have been corrected. It will need to be run again in October, cleaned up, and submitted to RSA by the end of November.

Staff Training: The VRC in CDA successfully passed the CRC examination in July. With her successful completion of the CRC, there is only one counselor (in Lewiston) that does not meet CSPD. The counselor in Lewiston will complete his Master's Degree in December 2014, at which point he will then meet CSPD.

Three staff attended the Idaho Chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association (ID-NRA) Summer Conference in Boise. Content for the conference included Ethics Issues, Growth and Change in the Counseling Field, ADA Updates, Self-Care, and Co-Occurring Psychiatric Disabilities. ICBVI helped to sponsor this conference. Bruce is the current President of the ID-NRA, and Matthew Queen was elected President-Elect.

In-Service was held in Twin Falls September 10th – 12th. Sessions included Emerging Trends in Technology, Personality Disorders, Ethics, a local community Employer Panel, presentation by the Veterans Administration, and breakout sessions specific to each program area. Responses from the staff have been positive. They enjoyed having the In-Service outside of Boise. They enjoyed the hotel in Twin Falls, and seemed to like most of the presentations that were offered.

Three staff attended the Northwest ADA Regional Conference in Boise on September 19th – 20th, 2013.

As part of the Cooperative Agreement between IDVR/SDE/and ICBVI, Regional Trainings have been provided to the staff throughout the state during the month of September. These trainings were held in Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Twin Falls, Nampa, Boise, Lewiston, and CDA.

Assistive Technology: Facebook interaction has pretty much leveled off. An average of 2 new likes per month, and a minimum of 5 people “interact” with the page by “liking” posts or writing their own comments.

Between 6/14 and 9/10 an average of 22 people saw each post. The most popular posts were wishing everyone a safe and happy 4th of July and 256 people saw the board meeting.

The most interaction by fans was with a post saying “Happy RT Appreciation Week. The second most popular was our post wishing everyone a safe 4th of July. And the third most popular post was a link to a Forbes article about the iPhone.

60 people each week are reached by the Commission's posts - 100 people like the page.

We purchased the Remote Incident Manager Software that will allow for remote training/troubleshooting with client's using assistive technology other than JAWS. April did her first remote training session with a client on 9/10/2013 while in Twin Falls for In-Service, working with a client in Rexburg.

Laine has assisted the Twin Falls VRC in successfully setting up a job site in Rupert. While the client did not remain employed, the technology all worked well, and we made several local business contacts as well as national AT business contacts.

Laine has also worked with accommodating Miracle Tire Garage for a client in Boise – by making contact with Good Year Tire and by working with Hunter Engineering on making their software more accessible, and training the client in how to use the accessibility features that are already available.

Program Development: Quality Assurance Reviews were completed at the Twin Falls Office August 12th – 13th. Summaries from this review were sent to the Administrator for her approval. These findings were then shared with the Twin Falls staff.

After having addressed the two findings that Social Security had at their review in May, ICBVI has not been officially cleared to handle Social Security information.

Laine Amoureux and Jackie Paulding are on the planning committee for the 2014 Tools for Life Conference. The conference is hosted by Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP) and will be held in Idaho Falls in March. Laine will also be presenting at this conference.

ICBVI has a new Intern who started September 3rd. His name is Kade Stone and he is working on his Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Idaho. He will be spending some time in the ATC, and then splitting his time between Dana, Jeff, and Laine. He will finish up his Internship in mid-December.

Program Statistics: Statistically the VR Program exceeded two of its four projections for the federal fiscal year. Listed below are the VR Statistics as of September 30th for ICBVI:

New Applications – 96.05% (Goal 177 – we completed 170)

Eligibilities – 90.58% (Goal 1388 – we completed 125)

New Individual Plans for Employment – 100% (Goal 112 – we completed 112)

Successful Closures – 119.40% (Goal 67 – we completed 80)

Rehabilitation Rate – 69.40% (Goal is 68.9%)

In addition, all the RSA Performance Standards and Indicators were met for FFY 2013.

Fiscal Update – Trina Ayres:

Fiscal status of the agency to-date is stated below; 25% of the year has elapsed.

Our state fiscal year appropriations are as follows:				Expended:	Percentage:
Personnel	-	General Fund	\$ 635,100	143,477.00	22.59%
		Federal Fund	1,763,200	375,984.13	21.32%
		Adaptive A & A	17,900	3,306.01	18.46%
Operating	-	General Fund	\$ 48,500	4,445.39	9.16%
		Randolph-Sheppard	27,300	-0-	-0-
		Rehab Revenue (SSA)	34,300	-0-	-0-

	Miscellaneous	52,400	6,091.76	11.62%
	Adaptive A & A	47,600	13,154.20	27.63%
	Federal Fund	546,200	98,826.46	10.02%
Trustee/Benefit -	General Fund	599,200	89,858.93	14.99%
	Randolph-Sheppard	100,100	5,325.00	5.31%
	Rehab Revenue	13,000	-0-	-0-
	Miscellaneous	81,300	8,483.17	10.43%
	Federal Fund	541,500	38,176.43	7.05%
Total	-	4,507,600		

ICBVI received an increase in the Basic Support Grant of \$63,814 from IDVR this year. IDVR was unable to match its entire grant award so Mark Boisselle, their Chief Fiscal Officer, contacted Trina to ask how much more ICBVI could match. He then created the transfer request.

The FY 2015 budget has been submitted. The only line item is the request for continued use of the donation for Older Blind. The 2015 budget request is simply a maintenance request; meaning ICBVI's current spending authority is sufficient to cover its needs.

New Business:

The next ICBVI Board meeting will be in Boise on January 30th at the ICBVI 2nd Floor Library Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm after Board Members took a brief tour of the new Twin Falls Office. Minutes respectfully submitted by Raelene Thomas on October 11, 2013.