**Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

**June 8, 2021, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

**Virtual via Zoom**

Meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.

Commissioners in Attendance: Britt Raubenheimer (chair), BJ Stinger, Al Schneider (vice-chair), and Sue Walker

ICBVI Staff in Attendance: Beth Cunningham, Bailie Weir, Steve Achabal. Mike Walsh, Corey Bresina, Trina Ayres, Kevin Jernigan, Chris Johnston, Earl Hoover, Larry Henrie, and Alison Steven.

Guest in attendance:

ICBVI Mission statement read by Bailie Weir.

**Agenda Amendments:**

Kevin Jernigan will be providing the report for the Assessment and Training Center in place of Greg Metsker.

The **MOTION** to approve the amended agenda was made by Al Schneider and seconded by Sue Walker, all were in favor.

The **MOTION** for all board members to approve the minutes for the March 9, 2021, Regular Board Meeting, and the May 11, 2021, Special Board Meeting was made by Al Schneider and seconded by BJ Stinger, all were in favor.

**Administrators Report-Beth Cunningham**

We are back! We are back in the office and excited to see the “normal” start to creep back into our daily lives. While some things will still be virtual this summer, many things are beginning to be in person again. Staff have begun to make home visits, we are nearing the end of our Spring term and gearing up for the Summer term of ATC. Since our last board meeting, Mike and I have visited each of the regional offices and now I am starting to meet individually, with all of the Boise staff. I have met with each staff from the ATC and will meet with the clinic and store (Lynn and Collene) tomorrow. I will then proceed to meet with the VR and IL and accounting staff. As I meet with people, the feeling seems to be very positive, optimistic and glad to be getting back to their old routines.

We have had 2 special board meetings over the past couple of months due rules and regulations. Mike will be explaining more about the Governor’s new zero-based regulation initiative. In March, I presented an agency update to the NFB at their Spring Conference and to the BEP vendors during their Spring meeting. Most of our staff including me, participated in the new Windmills training, which is a training on working with employers and reducing stigma and fear that employers may have in hiring people with disabilities. Earl did a great job providing this training and Bailie did a great job assisting him in the facilitation with the virtual platform.

Brenda, long-time Rehabilitation Teacher in TF retired at the end of March and we will miss her. We hired Diana and she has been participating in shades training with the ATC staff. We surveyed the staff to determine the best way to deliver an in-service training this year and found that the vast majority would like to attend an in-person in-service, so we have begun planning that for late September.

In May, we had a one-day meeting with our Region X partners, virtually. I am so grateful we are in a smaller state and one, which has been able to open up safely a little more than Oregon, Washington and Alaska. We have been able to serve clients and teach students in the ATC since last June and the other states in our region have been completely virtual all year. It did appear as though Alaska’s Governor and our Governor may have attended the same meeting as they both send out directives the week of May 19th indicating that it is now time to get state workers back into the offices. This timing quickly followed the new CDC guidelines that fully vaccinated people no longer needed to wear masks and can resume activities that they did before the pandemic. Therefore, we have also provided new to protocol to our staff letting them know that if they have been fully vaccinated they no longer need to wear a mask in the office. However, if they have not, then they should be wearing a mask. In addition, we have asked that if they are meeting with a co-worker or client who would like them to wear a mask, that they do that. Therefore, beginning last week, all ICBVI staff have returned to the office full-time.

**A little information about Idaho’s current and projected revenue:**

Idaho’s unemployment rate leapt from 2.6–2.7% in February and March of 2020 to 11.6% in April that year, but the recovery began as soon as May. That month the unemployment rate had fallen to 8.3%.

Closing the year, December saw 3.8%. The March 2021 reading is 3.2%. Total personal income in

Idaho was $82.1 billion in 2019, up about $4.2 billion from the prior year. While jobs were lost during the pandemic, federal stimulus measures helped raise Idaho personal income to $88.8 billion, an advance of $6.7 billion in one year. With substantial stimulus continuing in 2021, total personal income is expected to reach $95.8 billion, but without new rounds of that, personal income is expected to advance to $97.9 billion in 2022. Thereafter, personal income is expected to increase by $5.2 billion across 2023 and $5.7 billion across 2024. Total nonfarm jobs are expected to reach 797,600 across 2021 with 827,500 predicted for 2022. Those represent growth rates above 3.75%. Annual job growth in the 2.25–3.0% rate range is expected thereafter.

(federal reserve.com)

Last year the Nampa expansion of Amazon was a large, employment augmenting shock to the Idaho economy. Azek is bringing a construction materials manufacturing facility to the Boise area. The company uses plastic and wood waste to make composite materials for outdoor use. Another news item is the intermodal facility near the Pocatello Airport. This will aid exporting materials from Idaho. Tying the jobs forecast and the income forecast are wage and salary payments. Those were $33.8 billion in 2018, $35.6 billion in 2019, and $37.6 billion in 2020. Growth had been 7.1% in 2018, with 5.5% occurring in both 2019 and 2020. Growth of 10.1% is predicted for 2021, with 7.0% in 2022 and 5.6–6.0% annually through 2026.

<https://dfm.idaho.gov/publications/eab/>

With that being said, we were able to provide all ICBVI staff with substantial raises, which went into effect in April. The Governor just approved the raise that was recommended for me by the Board and that will go into effect for the first pay check in July. Thank you.

We recently purchased a new vehicle and we are trying to purchase more. We had several with over 100,000 miles. Greg took a new vehicle up to Gayle to replace hers as hers had previously been totaled and was needing more repairs.

I was invited to attend Mayor McLean’s stakeholder committee on transportation (mobility focus group) to represent issues/needs relating to people who are blind. Kevin and I attended this and were in a zoom meeting that had a break-out discussion group that included Valley Regional Transit. We discussed a number of things including round abouts, inconsistency in crosswalks, public transportation and the accessibility of the greenbelt. This was for the Boise Economic Development Strategy.

BEP news – we were provided with federal funds RSA called Financial Relief and Restoration Payments that are going back to help vendor recover losses – Corey will explain that further. This is welcomed news to all of the vendors.

We are looking forward to our summer programs, which are beginning to get started and I know Alison is here to discuss that further. It is nice to see Al in person and we hope to see more of you this Fall. I believe that is all I have to discuss at this time.

**Idaho Statute 67-5408: Legislation Proposal-Mike Walsh**

Mike received out State Statutes tittle 67, One of them. 67-5408, is outdated. It points to us providing seriousness as directed in the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1965. The VR Act of 1965 was repealed and replaced with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Mike did go in and take a look at IDVR’s statute and in 2016 they had updated theirs to include the Rahab act of 1973 and WIOA. This being said, we need to get this statue updated. Mike requested approval to move forward with getting this statue updated/

The **MOTION** to approve the rewording of Idaho Statue 67-5048 was made by Al Schneider and seconded by BJ Stinger. All were in favor.

**Staff Survey Results-Britt Raubenheimer**

The Board Members discussed the results of the recent staff survey. some ideas were generated based on the feedback that was provided, witch are shown below. Staff are urged to feel free to respond with any feedback or other ideas that these may spark. Overall, ICBVI staff seem to be feeling fairly positive and optimistic.

Ideas:

* Spotlight a staff member–We could do this quarterly and individuals could nominate their co-workers for something they have been doing.
* Staff and agency-wide meetings- people said they like having these meetings.
* Another idea was to have a region present or highlighted at each board meeting.

Please respond with feedback to any of these ideas to Beth Cunningham and provide other ideas of your own.

**Assessment and Training Center Report: Greg Metsker**

It has been exactly 3 months since the last board meeting and in that time the winter term in the ATC ended, and the spring term is just about over as well. Our student numbers did not increase spring term, in fact they went down by one. We had one client who injured a foot (at home, not in the ATC) and had to put her ATC training on pause until the summer term. We had another client who was supposed to begin training at the start of the spring term but has not been able to make it here for various reasons. We have had 3 full time students attending this spring, plus Diana Lerh, the new Rehab Teacher in the Twin Falls office has been in training as well. Although it is a small group, they have been a lot of fun and have made a great deal of progress. As of this writing, we have 4 new clients who are set to begin training in July. I am hopeful that by the beginning of the fall term we might be back to a more “normal” student count of 10 or more students.

On April 6th, the ATC team conducted another Blindness and Transition 101 seminar, only this time we did it virtually using Zoom. We had 12 participants signed up, but on the day of the seminar there seemed to be a lot more people logged on than that, 29 to be exact. The bulk of the participants were from different CRP’s around the state and I believe most of them were Job Coaches or Employment Specialists. There were some Commission staff who attended as well. I would like to say that the virtual seminar was a great success, but I cannot. It appeared that many of the people who were logged on were not really paying attention, or perhaps they just had us on in the background, I am not sure. There were 3 or 4 people who appeared to be attentive and were asking relevant questions all through the day, and there were 3 people who filled out evaluations via Survey Monkey afterwards. We essentially did the seminar the same way we do the in-person seminars. Those have been so successful that we did not feel the need to alter the format too much. When it came time to have participants experience the ATC classes, through very creative efforts on the part of the ATC team, we presented the classes via video. Lisa, Scott, and Chris all had cameras set up in their classrooms and they demonstrated kitchen skills, shop techniques and Braille live on video. Kevin and Mel used a previously recorded video which featured Scott walking from the bus to ICBVI one morning, and Kevin and Mel simply commented on what Scott was doing and the considerations that he was making as he crossed streets and so forth. They also used a video that Jason and Justin had made last spring that presented techniques for using human guide properly. Larry was able to share his screen as he discussed screen magnification and speech programs. Kevin and Mel used a Power Point presentation to discuss different eye conditions and their functional impacts. To pull this seminar off, there was quite a lot of trial and error, innovation and work that went into making it all look seamless and professional. Alison did a nice job of training Chris to be our Zoom expert so that we could insert the videos, power points, camera shots and so forth. Unfortunately, the seminar just did not seem like it worked well. The three surveys that were filled out afterwards indicated that one of the participants really got a lot out of it, one was only lukewarm in terms of their remarks and one was fairly negative with their feedback. The primary issue on the negative survey was that we had tried to emphasize that blindness is kind of unique in terms of the disability spectrum, but they felt like there is no difference between blindness and other disabilities and that as a Job Coach or Employment Specialist they shouldn’t treat a person who is blind any differently than someone with a developmental disability, or another physical disability of some sort. I suppose that is a debate for another time, perhaps a Discussion class in the ATC. Anyway, we learned a lot in the process of preparing for and presenting the seminar, but I am not sure we will do it this way again. The live versions are so much more energetic and well received that it is hard to beat that format.

In other ATC news, we mostly lifted the mask mandate in the ATC on May 20th, at least for those who have been vaccinated. I think there is only one student and one staff member who have not been fully vaccinated yet, so most of us are maskless currently and I cannot tell you how great that is! We also began a new era in how we present the Job Readiness class to our students. Instead of contracting with a provider to conduct the class, we are now working with the Department of Labor, Lance Kaldor to be specific, and he comes to the ATC twice a month for 2 hours and works with our students on Job Readiness material. WIOA mandates that we work with our partner agencies to help Idahoans in these programs get back to work, and it just made sense at this time to acknowledge that part of the legislation. Lance has been here 5 times now as of this board meeting and the students are all very excited about their prospects after having worked with Lance. He has made himself available to them anytime as needed and he assigns them homework to complete in between his visits to the ATC. Time will tell how well this new approach is working, but at this point it seems to be a good fit. Those of you who know K’Lynn Hand may know that she has been one of our Resident Advisors in the dorms for several years now. K’Lynn had to move out of the dorms earlier this spring and likely won’t be able to return as an RA. I want to publicly thank her for all her hard work and attentiveness in the dorms these past few years. She was very detail oriented and did a great job of keeping me informed of issues and needs in the dorms, as well as providing support for our students. I am going to miss having her around. Of course, Arianah is also serving in the RA capacity, so we still have a great advisor for our dorm residents to work with. Last, but certainly not least, Larry Henrie has announced his retirement. His last day with the agency will be September 24th unless we can talk him out of it before then. It will not be easy, or probably even possible to replace Larry with anybody who has the skill set or experience that he has. When you sit down and list all the things he does (which I recently asked him to do) it is impressive, and more than a little daunting when considering how you are going to replace all those services and skills. In addition to teaching computers and assistive technology, Larry has of course coordinated our SWEP program for the last 15 or 16 years, he installs software and repairs computers for Counselors and clients, he created and maintains a separate ATC network for students and staff to use, he builds new computers for agency staff and assists Tom with tech support issues as needed. He has also been the liaison between HP and the agency on several of HP’s accessible printer projects. The list of things Larry does on a regular basis is much longer, but for the sake of keeping this short I will only list those items.

**Fiscal Update: Trina Ayres**

Current status of the SFY21 budget:

Appropriation: Expended: Percentage:

Personnel - General Fund 799,400\* 779,394.61 98.56%

Federal Fund 2,199,700 1,913,932.52 87.00%

Adaptive A & A 21,100 19,659.72 93.17%

Operating - General Fund 56,830\* 56,259.19 98.87%

Randolph-Sheppard 27,600 12,818.99 46.44%

Rehab Revenue (SSA) 34,300 8,629.76 56.40% Miscellaneous 28,100 6,328.37 22.52%

Adaptive A & A 62,900 56,929.14 90.50%

Federal Fund 613,900 352,948.54 57.49%

Trustee/Benefit - General Fund 572,950\* 417,162.11 72.81%

Randolph-Sheppard 100,100 26,941.22 26.91%

Rehab Revenue 13,000 25,346.68 79.20%

Miscellaneous 56,300 -0- -0- %

Federal Fund 470,300 266,312.00 56.62%

Total - 5,056,480

Reminder - the governor implemented a holdback and ICBVI’s plan included reductions in Personnel of $35,000; Operating, $13,970; and Trustee Benefit payments of $26,250.

Not much to report at this time. The fiscal year end process is beginning – which means utilize all of the General Fund appropriation prior to June 30th. With the decrease in purchased services this past year, this isn’t as easy as it has been in the past.

The FFY20 15% reserve requirement still has not yet been met. We have expended $407,704.15 of the $416,730.15 requirement. The summer programs will definitely take care of the FFY20 balance and get us into the FFY21 reserve. The reserve amount for FFY21 is 430,511.

**Consumer input**

No consumers participated.

**Vocational Rehabilitation report: Mike Walsh**

**Federal Reporting:**

The RSA 911 was submitted on May 20th.

**Program Statistics**

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| **VR Program Statistics – PY 2019** | | | | | | |
| **Quarter** | **Total VR Clients** | **Pre-ETS** | **Enrolled in training** | **MSG** | **MSG Rate** | **Employment Outcomes** |
| Q1 | 373 | 65 | 116 | 10 | 8.9% | 23 |
| Q2¹ | 342 | 70 | 106 | 10 | 9.1% | 9 |
| Q3 | 321 | 63 | 97 | 7 | 6.4% | 7 |
| Q4 | 299 | 61 | 98 | 19 | 15.8% | 6 |

¹ Beginning of COVID-19

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VR Program Statistics – PY 2020** | | | | | | |
| **Quarter** | **Total VR Clients** | **New Referrals¹** | **Pre-ETS** | **# MSG** | **MSG Rate** | **Employment Outcomes** |
| Q1 | 297 | 8 | 67 | 3 | 2.3% | 6 |
| Q2 | 313 | 21 | 73 | 7 | 5.1% | 4 |
| Q3 | 312 | 19 | 73 | 10 | 6.9% | 7 |
| Q4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

¹ New referrals that achieve an IPE across 2 quarters.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Other Measures That Matter – PY 2020** | | | | | | |
|  | Sustain Employment After Exit¹ | | VR Service Provision | | Enrolled in Education/Training | |
|  | ICBVI | National | ICBVI | National | ICBVI | National |
| Idaho-B |
| Q1 | 45% | 49.7%² | 64.7% | 83.8%³ | 48.3% | 29.5%³ |
| Q2 | 55% | 54.9% | 49.1% |
| Q3 |  | 37.5%² |  |  |
| Q4 |  |  |  |

1. Sustained employment 2nd and 4th quarters after program exit
2. Average for PY 2018.
3. Average for all VR programs in PY2019.

**Zero-Based Regulation**

On May25th, the two bulletin notices for the VR and IL chapters were approved for publication in the June 6, 2021, Vol. 21-6, Idaho Administrative Bulletin. To review, the following changes were approved by the board on May 11th:

15.02.02 Vocational Rehabilitation

* Organizing new chapter and renaming IDAPA 15.02.02, “Rules Governing the Rehabilitation Programs”
* Reorganizing this rule under “Subchapter A” in the new chapter.
* Removing the requirement for participants to complete a financial needs assessment prior to receiving vocational rehabilitation services.
* Adding Incorporations by Reference under 34 CFR 364 and 367.
* Adding a new definition.
* Removing redundant, unnecessary, and restrictive language.

15.02.03 Independent Living

* Reorganizing, moving, and integrating this rule into new chapter IDAPA 15.02.02 “Rules Governing the Rehabilitation Programs,” under Subchapter B.
* Revising and reducing Section 200 – Client Financial Participation.
* Removing redundant, unnecessary, and restrictive language.

Bulletin notices will be posted in all offices and on our website. A copy of the chapter revisions will be posted on the website or available upon request.

One public meeting will be conducted via phone on June 10th @ 1pm. Written comments can be submitted through May 25th.

On May 26th, Beth and Mike met with the administrator of DFM (Alex Adams) to discuss the upcoming ZBR review of the BEP chapter. Alex had some valuable input for us, and he will share a copy of the chapter with his comments with us.

**IDAPA – Adoption of Temporary Rule**

Due to legislative inaction, our rules are set to expire on June 30th. With that, executive action has been taken by the Governors office.

On May 26th, the board convened to approve the republishing of our rules (all 4 chapters). The Notice for the Adoption of the Temporary Rule was submitted to DFM on May 26th.

A special bulletin will be published on July 21st that will include our temporary rules with an effective date of July 1, 2021.

Since this is executive administration action, no public comment or posting on our web site is necessary.

**CSPD and Staff Training**

NRA - The Idaho Chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association will be hosting their conference virtually July 22-23.

Adobe Enterprise – Three of our staff are participating in training in the enterprise platform. Phase 1 of this project is to develop the ability for staff to capture signature electronically.

In-Service – Bailie sent out a one question survey to staff regarding in-service this year. A total of 33 staff participated in the survey. The responses are as follows:

* Yes, I would be comfortable attending. 81.82% - 27 responses
* No, I would not feel comfortable attending. 6.06% - 2 responses
* I would rather it be virtual like last year. 12.12% - 4 responses
* I would not like to attend an In-Service this year. 0.00% - 0 responses

**Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQA)**

I am working with Tom on building data validation measures (error and anomalies queries) in Orion.

RSA 911 Dashboards – We have used the data dash boards that are provided by RSA to initiate reporting improvements in the following data elements:

* WIOA Program Involvement (co-enrollment in other programs)
* Measurable Skills Gains (MSG’s)

**IDVR Monitoring**

IDVR is in the thick of their motoring. They begin their discussion calls with RSA in topic areas beginning June 8th. I will be sitting in on 3 of the calls:

* June 15th – Data Tables
* June 29th – Pre-ETS
* July 6th – Policies, Procedures, and Internal Controls

**COVID Survey**

I administered a survey to VR clients to get their thoughts on VR service delivery during the pandemic. 38 clients responded to the survey, with a fairly even distribution across regions. 61% of all respondents have been in the VR program 1 year or longer.

Takeaways from the respondents:

* 89% of respondents reported being satisfied with their counselor during the pandemic.
* 78% of respondents reported getting training services that they required.
* Feelings about using technology for virtual services/meetings:
  + 80% are comfortable with online meetings or trainings and report having the necessary skills.
  + 9% reported not having the skills to meet online but would like to learn.
  + 11% of respondents reported not being comfortable participating in online training or meetings.

**Assistive Technologist and Business Engagement (Reported by Earl Hoover)**

***Assistive Technology***

During this second quarter, I have transitioned from working at home and have returned to the office. I have continued to provide Assistive Technology Assessments to counselors, and I have also been working with some of the instructors to provide them with remote hardware and software training to update or refine AT skills. I partnered with vendors to learn about new and developing technologies. I have participated in regional AT and ICBVI staff meetings via Zoom and Microsoft Teams. I have also been working with Alison Steven, Transition Services Coordinator, on her Community of Practice program, a statewide program to collaborate with BVI teaching staff throughout the state to provide better services to staff and students. Additionally, I am working on the College Days Planning Committee. I have also consulted with some of the TVIs from IESDB with questions on newer assistive technology products. I completed Windmill’s training with our agency staff with exception to the ATC Staff who will be attending a two-day seminar in June. Last, I recently visited all the regions where I was able to provide in-person AT Assessments for the counselors and work with regional RTs.

***Business Engagement***

During this second Quarter, I participated in regional meetings remotely using Zoom. I have continued to provide consultation services with IESDB Staff on AT devices. While in Idaho Falls, I met with Tim at Transitions, a local CRP, and discussed designing a Windmills hybrid seminar on diversity training for his staff which will most likely occur this coming fall. Last, Mikayla Cobbler, Business Engagement Coordinator, DVR and I have planned a meeting on June 9th to collaborate Business Engagement efforts for both agencies.

**Pre-employment Transition Services (Reported by Alison Steven)**

***Putting Your Best Foot Forward*** – Work Readiness curriculum, February 2 through April 13, 2021: The first group of six Pre-ETS clients completed this program in mid-April. Participants gained a lot of practical experience developing resumes, filling out applications, doing informational interviews and culminating in mock interviews with Earl Hoover, Bailie Weir and Greg Metsker. They will all be involved in work experience this summer. Two have already started with Famous Footwear and a veterinary clinic.

Some of the comments from participants include:

“There’s a lot of stuff in this program that I would never have thought of doing.”

“I learned what to do, how to dress and how to behave in an interview.”

“The reason I would recommend this program to other students is that they might not know what to do to prepare for a job or they might think it is something short, but it takes a lot of time to do.”

“I learned how to do interviews.”

“I would recommend this program to other students because they can learn how to do a resume if they don’t have a job yet.”

“I Learned to answer the terrible question ‘Tell me about yourself.’”

“I would recommend this program If you struggle with dealing with disclosing what your disability is.”

***ICoP***, monthly on the 3rd Thursday of the month: The Idaho Educators of the Blind and visually Impaired Community of Practice continues to meet monthly. Visiting speakers came from Michigan in April and shared their perspective and resources on collaborating in IEP meetings.

In May, teachers and counselors shared on the latest advances in assistive technology appropriately enough on Global Accessibility Awareness Day. The group decided to take a break for the summer and reconvene once school restarts.

***4SHOWI***, monthly on the 4th Thursday of the month: This program has been renamed the Interstate Network Collaborative (INC): Idaho Pre-ETS clients led the March meeting of INC with a team building exercise, “On the Moon” and a discussion on (56) I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much | Stella Young - YouTube. Three Idaho participants did a great job of leading the team building exercise and discussions. This group meets monthly through June and has been a great opportunity for networking and virtual social interactions.

***Blind and socially savvy***, April 19 through May 24, 2021: Twelve Pre-ETS clients have energetically and enthusiastically participated in this program with only one session to go as of this writing. One new client who is taking part was heard to say “Does the Commission do any other programs like this?.” Participants have enjoyed the freedom to converse on a broad range of topics in break out rooms; they have had networking sessions with sighted and blind professionals including a NASA engineer and have learned a lot about dining etiquette. Their eagerness to share their thoughts and their commitment to a weekly 2.5 hour meeting after school on Mondays is testament to the quality and appeal of this program.

***Virtual College Days***, June 10 – 18, 2021: There are five Pre-ETS clients signed up for this year’s College Days program. The program consists of two orientation days prior to the full-time week. Once participants finish up the College Days week, they will take a summer college class for credit. This will be at a College of their choice and online. Participants are looking at classes at BYU Idaho, CSI, and ISU.

***Hybrid SWEP***, June 21 through August 6, 2021: 18 Pre-ETS clients have signed up to participate in this program. Counselors are working diligently to find local work experience for each of them. Several of the CRPs that counselors have approached have reported being understaffed and therefore being unable to work with ICBVI to develop these work experiences. The counselors should be recognized for the work they have put in to find creative solutions in the face of these obstacles.

For the virtual piece of the hybrid SWEP, Alison has recruited David DeNotaris of The Sky’s the Limit Communications to work with participants once a week for 6 weeks. He plans to bring in a variety of successful blind professionals in different careers to speak with the students.

In May of this year Alison traveled to the Coeur d’Alene and Lewiston offices and was able to meet in person with a number of Pre-ETS clients. Also, while in Northern Idaho, Alison and Jackie Stallings presented on the topic of the impact of Universal Design on the blind and visually impaired to a group of architecture students at University of Idaho. This is the second year Alison has been invited by Head and professor of Interior architecture and Design, Rula Rafferty to present and the presentation was very well received.

**Business Enterprise Program: Corey Bresina**

**Financial Snapshot**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2021** | **OCT-DEC**  **(Q1)** | **JAN-MAR**  **(Q2)** | **APRIL-JUNE (Q3)** | **JULY- SEPT**  **(Q4)** |  | **Total** |
| Total Sales | $374,811.62 | $469,947.55 |  |  |  | $844,759.17 |
| Total Net Income | $105,615.28 | $151,487.49 |  |  |  | $219,350.68 |
| Set Aside Collected | $7,872.60 | $15,440.23 |  |  |  | $23,312.84 |
| Average income % | 21.50% | 25.74% |  |  |  | 23.62% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2020** | **OCT-DEC**  **(Q1)** | **JAN-MAR**  **(Q2)** | **APRIL-JUNE (Q3)** | **JULY- SEPT**  **(Q4)** |  | **Total** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Total Sales | $569,432.16 | $552,635.34 | $159,624.72 | $473,124.02 |  | $1,754,816.24 |
| Total Net Income | $146,611.94 | $131,955.55 | $(20,445.52) | $112,706.49 |  | $371,114.43 |
| Set Aside Collected | $14,749.54 | $13,240.05 | $3,990.24 | $12,769.86 |  | $44,778.28 |
| Average income % | 26.84% | 24.60% | -97.26% | 22.32% |  | -15.04% |

Overall sales made a nice jump in Q2 and total net income did as well. A couple locations are almost back to pre-Covid numbers, but the majority of locations remain well below normal. The Spring and Summer are typically the busiest time for most locations, so we are optimistic that Q3 and Q4 will continue to rebound.

RSA: Financial Relief and Restoration Payments

Application – The Idaho BEP was potentially eligible for $124,646.00 in Federal Grant funds to compensate for loss of income in calendar year 2020 vs 2019. The SLA and the Idaho Blind Merchants Elected Committee held four (4) conference calls to specifically discuss the use of FRRP funds. Additionally, there were many emails between the IBMEC and the SLA to discuss these funds.

Proposal - These FRRP funds are to be distributed proportional to individual losses incurred and based on losses due to spoiled or expired stock. We calculated the loss of net income from 2019 to 2020 - for each vendor - based on the monthly set aside reports submitted by the vendors. Accounting records of other funds used to provide financial relief (Cares Act funds, set aside funds used for Fair Minimum Return, PPP funds, and Paid Sick & Vacation funds) were also used to calculate losses. To receive funds, vendors signed an attestation document that losses occurred, and other grant/loan funds were disclosed to determine total loss impact. The SLA determined that 5 (five) Idaho blind vendors had a net profit loss. The IBMEC held a vote and agreed with the SLA proposed distribution of these funds.

Approval - In early May I received an approval notification for our FRRP application. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), within the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, approved the *State of Idaho’s Randolph-Sheppard Financial Relief and Restoration (FRRP) Appropriation Assurances and Use of FRRP Funds* resubmitted on May 6, 2021, consistent with The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Division H, title III, section 318 (section 318). The approved Assurances and Use of FRRP Funds was effective immediately. Ultimately, we used $71,931.90 to offset the loss in income for 5 of the 9 vendors, and the remaining $52,714.10 was paid out equally as ‘Paid Sick Leave Benefits’ to all vendors.

BEP Specialist –

* Attended meetings with the Idaho Blind Merchants Elected Committee to determine use and distribution of the RSA FRRP Funds.
* Coordinated purchase of equipment for a subcontract cafeteria at Gowen.
* Coordinating transfer and distribution of 60 new credit card readers for six vendors.
* Training with the ATC to become proficient with JAWS.
* Performed regular housekeeping tasks: processing bills, set asides, machine income, cash sales, internal audits, travel arrangements, etc.

Overall sales made a nice jump in Q2 and total net income did as well. A couple locations are almost back to pre-Covid numbers, but the majority of locations remain well below normal. The Spring and Summer are typically the busiest time for most locations, so we are optimistic that Q3 and Q4 will continue to rebound.

RSA: Financial Relief and Restoration Payments

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**Independent Living and Sight Restoration Report: Steve Achabal**

**IL/ILOB Programs :**

With the announcement of the state moving to Stage 4, we have opened up much more in providing services to clients on an in-person basis. Rehabilitation Teachers are still meeting with clients remotely, especially when desired by the client, and when circumstances warrant these remote meetings, but many clients are happy and eager to have these in person meetings and trainings.

I have seen a shift in the desire of clients to meet in person more which I attribute to many more individuals getting vaccinated, warmer weather, restrictions being lifted or less restrictive, and a desire for people to get back to pre-pandemic normality. As discussed in previous reports, isolation was/is extremely hard for many individuals during COVID, but especially for the elderly and disabled populations throughout our state.

Many clients are excited to start meeting with their Rehabilitation Teachers in-person and the response from the RT’s have been very positive about meeting with clients face to face again, and their meeting schedules are filling up fast. This all being said, RT’s are to still follow proper guidelines such as those promoted by the CDC when meeting with clients.

Starting June 2, Rehabilitation Teachers are in the office or out in the field full time. None are continuing to telecommute being that the emphasis of their positions are to be working out in the field with clients. The Rehabilitation Teachers have done a very admirable job of working with clients throughout the pandemic remotely and many times virtually. All RT’s participated in various trainings and of course the time allowed for the ICBVI Video Project, which has already proven to be a valuable training and information resource. More videos are on the way in areas of DYI around the home, and videos offering information about different programs and services ICBVI offers.

Diana (pronounced Dee-ann-a) Lerh the new RT in Twin Falls has finished up her training in the ATC. She spent the last 8 weeks taking classes and working with ATC staff. She has also spent time with various staff outside of the ATC and observed other RT’s in the field. She will be working in the Twin Falls office taking over the caseloads full time on June 14th. Diana has proven to be a very interested and willing student while in the ATC and I believe she will thrive in the RT position.

Support groups are also starting to meet more regularly and in person which is also something that many of the groups’ members are extremely grateful for.

**Sight Restoration:**

Given the end of the state fiscal year, VRA’s are winding down with the Sight Restoration clients. So far for SFY2021, 23 clients have been closed successfully, with approximately 4-7 more that will have their procedures during the month of June. Any new referrals, if found eligible, seeking services in June will most likely be assisted with the cost of their needed services starting the next fiscal year.

**Low Vision Clinic:**

The Low Vision Clinic has stayed open and has seen patients for almost all of the pandemic. With the exception of a few months at the start of the pandemic in 2020. We have altered the clinics schedule from 5 days per month to 4, through the end of August 2021. We are seeing an increase of referrals to the clinic but want to make sure that the clinic schedules are full optimizing Dr. Hansen’s time and patient services.

Currently clients are out from an appointment no longer than 4 weeks, which is where we would like to be. We will reevaluate increasing the number of clinics per month back to 5, as our referrals and appointments warrant.

Of course proper COVID-19 related guidelines are continuing to be followed in the clinic.

**ICBVI Store:**

The ICBVI Store also has stayed open serving customers and clients throughout the majority of the pandemic. Staff continue to adhere to COVID related safety guidelines.

**New Business**

The next ICBVI Regular Board Meeting will be held in Twin Falls Idaho on September 15, 2021at Town Place Suites. Information on how to participate in this meeting will be shared with the staff and individuals in this region.

**Meeting concluded at**

Sue moved to end the board meeting at 2:20

Meeting minutes were respectfully submitted by Bailie Weir on September 2, 2021.