

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2022

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Clark, At-Large, Board Chair
Erika Evans, At-Large
Theresa Petrey, ACB
David Henry, NFB
William “Bill” Heaston, Lions
Tyrone Williams, ASBVI
Tiffany Moore, AER

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandra Edwards, OIB
James Caton, ASBVI
Sharon Giovinazzo, WSB
Eric Yarberry, AER

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Kara Aaron, ASBVI
Larry Wayland, FAIRS

Attorney General’s Office Representative: None

Governor’s Office Representative: None

Consumer Present: Selina Pruitt

Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Board Meeting Support Staff: Betsy Barnes, Theresa Bertram, Megan Lamb, Brandy Bryant, and Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes.

Meeting Agenda Approval-

Chairman Keith Clark asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. William Heaston made a motion, and Theresa Petrey seconded the motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. The motion carried.

Board Meeting Minutes Approval-

Chairman Keith Clark asked for approval of the June 10, 2022, minutes. William Heaston made a motion, and David Henry seconded the motion to approve the June 10, 2022, minutes. The motion carried.

Approval for Board Members to attend the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Council (NCSRC) 2022 Fall Conference-

Erika Evans made the motion, and Theresa Petrey seconded the motion to approve 2 Board Members to attend the NCSRC 2022 Fall Conference. The motion carried.

Director's Report – Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes

Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes began the Director's report by thanking the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) staff, and the DSB Board for their support this quarter. There have been changes since the last board meeting, Eric Yarberry is welcomed as a new board member. Eric will represent AER and replaces Whitney Musick.

DSB Board Meetings are open to the public. Act 56 allows for the posting of the agenda and meeting information on the DSB website and www.Arkansas.gov. Everyone is encouraged to forward the meeting notice to members in their respective organizations.

The DSB Board's role is to provide supervisory responsibility for the Division of Services for the Blind agency operations including budget, policymaking, employees, and professional development as a requirement under state and federal law. Training is provided to board members to provide guidance regarding the legal and ethical responsibilities of serving as a board member.

Fiscal- Notification was received on August 22, 2022, from RSA that DSB was awarded \$1,547,965 in Reallotment Award Vocational Rehabilitation dollars. The incentive award is in direct result of DSB meeting grant award requirements, expending the FFY award by the deadline, and the ability to match the additional funds. Director Williams-Stokes applauded the efforts of all the DSB staff who worked together to make this possible. Most of the funds will be used to provide services to consumers, 15% will be used in the Pre-Employment Transition Services Program, equipment updates for the DSB Technology Lab, necessary VFP updates, AWARE updates, and AIRS equipment updates. The funds cannot be used to create new positions because the funds are meant to provide short-term funding (1 year) for projects. DSB did not receive reallotment funds in OIB or SE. DSB is required to match the federal grant awards to be eligible for carryover of an additional year for the federal grant awards. Additionally, the 15% required match for the Pre-Employment Transition Program is also on target.

GR/Maintenance of Effort- The Maintenance of Effort (match) for the 2022 Vocational Rehabilitation Program is due by September 30, 2022. Dr. Williams-Stokes stated that the work and the efforts of staff DSB is on target to expend \$1,782,112 of state general revenue funds to meet this requirement. The Maintenance of Effort/Match (MOE) also includes the Vending Facility Program Set-aside funds. The Division of Services for the Blind is also on target to expend the State General Revenue (SGR) SFY 2022 funds allotted in the amount of \$1,897,471.

Indirect Cost Rate Proposal- Dr. Williams-Stokes mentioned that the fiscal team is working to finalize the Indirect Cost Rate Proposal. The proposal was submitted to the Department of Health

and Human Services (DHHS) for approval. The proposal is also a requirement listed in the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) issued by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

Corrective Action Plan for Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind (DSB)

Dr. Williams-Stokes provided the update on the Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The third quarterly update is due to RSA by October 30, 2022. DSB has not received feedback on the second quarterly update that was submitted on July 27th. Dr. Williams-Stokes commended the work that the team has done to coordinate and participate in meetings with the Technical Assistance Centers to ensure DSB addresses all the updates per RSA requirements. **A summary of updates includes:**

Finding 1 - Insufficient Policies-Draft policy revisions for fiscal and program are being finalized for the October 30th submission to RSA.

Finding 2 - Insufficient Internal Controls- DSB is working to update internal controls in AWARE and within the AASIS financial accounting system process. DSB is working to procure a new grants management system.

Finding 3 - Provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services to Potentially Eligible Students with Disabilities – DSB is currently able to track Potentially Eligible students in AWARE which allows counselors to provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services. During the RSA monitoring review period 2017-2019, DSB did not have that in place.

Finding 4 - Obligations and Expenditures Not Properly Assigned to Correct Period of Performance -DSB is working with Alliance to address the budget module to ensure the period of performance is captured in AWARE. DSB is working to identify a grants management system to address the period of performance on the administrative side and capture non-Federal and Federal obligations and ensure expenditures are paid from the correct Federal award for the VR award. The AWARE case management system has been updated to include internal controls to include period of performance.

Finding 5 - Financial Management System and Internal Controls Fail to Ensure Supporting Documentation is Maintained - A new grants management system (WebGrants) is under procurement to ensure DSB can implement fiscal management and internal control procedures and to ensure proper expenditure of program funds.

Finding 6 - Internal Control Deficiencies – Rates of Payment, Financial Reporting, and Personnel Costs- DSB is working with the VR TAC QM to develop effective internal controls and rates of the payment fee schedule to address this item. The procedures for PARS the tool used to report and track personnel costs are under development. DSB has a draft policy on rates of payment process that will be submitted on October 30th.

Finding 7 - Lack of Internal Controls for the Development, Implementation, and Monitoring of Contracts- A draft contract monitoring policy will be submitted to RSA on October 30th.

Finding 8 - Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Reporting- DSB is working to finalize the MOE reporting for FFY 2017-2019 to include the Vending Facility Program Set-aside funds.

Assistant Director's Report – Betsy Barnes

Assistant Director Barnes stated that the DSB SFY 2022 Budget Report and Expenditures for April 1, 2022, to June 30, 2022 are included in the Board Packet. DSB expended \$988,437.10 on Client Services and \$1,327,002.73 on Agency Operations, for a Total Expenditure of \$2,315,439.83.

Human Resources Update

DSB has sixty-one employed staff or 78% of positions filled. Currently, 17 positions are either advertised, conducting interviews, or pending completion of background checks or hire dates. Since our March Board meeting, the staff that has joined the DSB family is Brandy Bryant, Executive Assistant for Dr. Williams-Stokes. Lisa Grice, Administrative Specialist in the Little Rock field office, and Emily Turner whom DSB was fortunate to have as an Intern this summer will return to work part-time while attending college. Emily will be working with Contrena Bowie in the Outreach unit. Amy Jackson was promoted to the Quality Assurance Coordinator position with the field services unit on August 22, 2022. There were 2 resignations during this quarter, Kimberly Harkey in the Jonesboro field office and Kaylebrae Clark in the Little Rock office both were Rehabilitation Counselors.

Staff Development

DSB has four staff working toward their Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling program: Heather Grigsby, LaTasha Age, Bridget Glover, and Stephanie Moten. Currently, universities across the nation have lost their accreditation for their Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling programs. Staff enrolled at UALR, and the University of Wisconsin Strout have transferred to the University of North Texas. Some of the hour earned at UALR, and Wisconsin Strout transferred, and therefore some courses are being taken again.

LaToya Baker is enrolled in the Master of Human Resources program at UALR.

Jacob Grace is doing his Internship in the Orientation and Mobility of the Blind (O&M) Master's program at UALR.

Megan Lamb, Field Administrator is enrolled in the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute at San Diego State University.

Pre-ETS Manager, LaTasha Mays is enrolled in the University of Mississippi, Vision Specialist program.

Heather Grigsby and Deon Harris completed the Rehabilitation Leadership program.

Rakim Cheeks is enrolled in the CRC Exam Prep Course

Sixteen staff and 3 vendors are enrolled in the Virginia Commonwealth University Supported Employment Certification program.

The staff has attended several conferences this summer. Jacob Grace attended the National Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) conference, Director Williams traveled to Indianapolis for the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Executive Meeting, Virginia Robertson attended the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) national conference in New Orleans, and Gustavo Manzanales attended the American Council of the Blind (ACB) national conference in Omaha. Management attended Leadership training with ARS. Several staff attended Nanopac's Technology Solutions for the Visually Impaired and last week staff attended the state Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) conference.

Next quarter, staff will attend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Partners meeting on October 19-21, 2022, in Little Rock. DSB is planning for staff to attend CSAVR and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) meetings Oct 29th to November 4th, in San Antonio, Texas. Agency staff will attend the AER conference on November 3 – 4, 2022 to be held in Little Rock.

Ms. Barnes stated that the annual statewide meeting and training will be held December 8-9, 2022. This year the meeting will be held in person at the Little Rock Embassy Suites. The Board reception will be held on the evening of Thursday, December 8, 2022. The December Board meeting will be held Friday, December 9th, 2022, at the Embassy Suites.

Recruitment and Retention Pilot Project

DSB is one (1) of five (5) agencies in the nation to participate in a Recruitment and Retention Pilot project with VR-TAC-Quality Management consultants. DSB staff have participated in an Assessment to gain information to develop an overall agency plan for the recruitment and retention of counselors and staff. Next week DSB plans to meet with our consultants and identify our top priority areas to be addressed in the Work Plan to be implemented.

DSB Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment-Betsy Barnes

Assistant Director Betsy Barnes provided an update on DSB Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. UALR is conducting DSB's Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment will identify the needs of individuals with blindness and severe visual impairment in Arkansas, including minorities and those who have been underserved by DSB.

UALR has been conducting surveys and focus groups with staff and consumers. UALR should have reached out to each board member to participate in a survey or focus group. Board members are asked to notify Ms. Barnes if they have not been contacted. It is the intent to have UALR present a report at the December board meeting. The final report will identify any barriers to providing quality rehabilitation services. After the barriers have been identified, DSB will establish a work plan to address the barriers in the Combined State Plan.

Business and Technology Administrator's Report - Jim Pearson

Most highway locations are open for business, except for the two White River sites. Although it is VFP's biggest site there is no scheduled date for reopening the sites. Sales are down about 50% overall. The VA site in Fayetteville remains closed and Byron Todd has resigned. The VA officials have asked DSB to get another manager to assist with getting the site back open. In the Little Rock location at DHS, Kourtnei Felts, a trainee, is doing very well and enjoying her new career in the vending program. Ms. Felts should receive her license after the required probationary period in a couple of months, and she will have her seniority back to the first day that she started.

DSB currently has three vacant locations. The locations are the VA in Fayetteville, 1 Capitol Mall in Little Rock, and the Revenue Department in Little Rock. The Capitol Mall and Revenue Department in Little Rock are vending machine-only sites. The Fayetteville location is an over-the-counter sale like a normal vending snack bar which is open Monday – Friday 7:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.

AIRS Report -Theresa Bertram

Theresa Bertram updated the DSB Board concerning Arkansas Information Reading Services (AIRS). Listenership numbers remain steady according to ARPBS analytics at <http://airs.aetn.org>. AIRS averages approximately 2400 listeners a week. AETN-4 Audio is accessible on televisions with local channels, and the platform has about 100 listeners a week. AIRS Plus, which can be reached at (844)-888-0981, has approximately 300 listeners. Newslines has approximately 300 listeners signed up with 40 to 50 loyal users. Information to join Newslines is on nfb.org. AIRS Radio has 281 active followers on Facebook. Theresa Bertram stated that it is time for the Newspapers to be renewed and Mr. Larry Wayland has been contacted to assist with that. Some changes will be made to the newspaper to see if a better section of Arkansas can be covered instead of just a concentrated area. AIRS is now on Alexa. The command is "Open AIRS Radio." New production music has been added to this service. Mr. Bill Heaston interjected and stated that he has used this service and it is exciting and works just fine. Mr. Heaston also asked Ms. Bertram what she was doing to get the word out about AIRS Radio. Ms. Bertram responded that AIRS staff was going to different clubs including Lions Club, however, it can be hard sometimes to advertise. Yet, AIRS also relies on counselors to make consumers knowledgeable about sharing the services. Theresa Petrey stated that the information will be shared with members of the local ACB chapter at the next meeting and on Facebook. Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes answered by stating that counselors are sharing AIRS information with consumers and that in print, or email notifications could be sent out to any constituents as needed. Nena Chadwick asked if there was any information about AIRS that could be put together and sent out. Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes stated that DSB does have a flyer for AIRS that can be sent to the NFB.

Old Business:

RSA/WIOA DASHBOARDS/WIOA UPDATE – JUSTIN SMITH & MEGAN LAMB

DSB Program and Financial Report PowerPoint – Justin Smith/ Dr. Megan Lab

A written report was provided to the Board and emailed members prior to the meeting.

WIOA Update-Dr. Megan Lamb

Dr. Lamb discussed the RSA II. The RSA II is compiled by using the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) from October 1, 2021, to August 23, 2022. The report categorizes expenditures by service category. For the same period of October 1, 2021, to present, the expenses by service category were as follows: assessment was \$12,214.15; diagnosis and treatment \$600,089.30; training \$977,558.34; job services \$6,800.00; transportation \$33,571.68; maintenance \$63,908.97; rehabilitation technology \$279,551.24; supported employment \$0; reader services \$0; personal attendant services \$7,524.00; other services \$685,853.98; technical assistance \$395. Training category as follows: graduate college was \$49,030.63; four-year college \$285,173.99; junior college \$34,766.92; vocational \$106,408.47; on-the-job \$4,640.00; disability skills training \$180,150.43; and, miscellaneous (costs that were more specific to the consumer's individual needs) \$250,215.30; job readiness \$67,172.60. Job services are as follows: job search assistance \$2,000.00; job placement \$4,000.00; on-the-job support time-limited \$800.00.

Dr. Lamb explained that the RSA II not only outlines expenditures but identifies the specific number of actual participants who receive each service. The chart represents "paid for" services between October 1, 2021, present in these categories. The breakdown is as follows: assessment 35; diagnosis and treatment 236; graduate college 8; four-year college 41; junior college 12; vocational training 14; on-the-job training 4; disability skills training 26; miscellaneous training 26; job search assistance 3; job placement assistance 4; on-the-job supports time-limited 1; transportation 39; maintenance 17; rehabilitation technology 93; reader services 0; personal attendant services 1; other services 82; reader 0; job readiness training 7; and technical assistance 1.

Dr. Lamb presented an update on the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). She stated that the program year 2021 contains two-quarters of the data. The program year runs from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. The Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) include 57 with 5 secondary diplomas, 1 educational functioning level 55 secondary report cards or post-secondary transcripts, 1 training milestone, and 2 skill progression. The reported credential rate is 0% per RSA. For the year 2021, there were 50 Measurable Skill Gains, 42 secondary report cards or post-secondary transcripts, 5 skill progressions, 2 training milestones, and 1 educational functional level increase.

The program Year 2020 – 2 Quarters

- ▶ 23 Credentials
- ▶ 2 Associate's Degrees
- ▶ 5 Bachelor's Degrees
- ▶ 13 Secondary Diplomas
- ▶ 2 Vocational/Technical Certificates
- ▶ 1 other Recognized Diploma, Degree, or Certificate

The Program Year 2021 – 2 Quarters

- ▶ 6 Credentials
- ▶ 1 Vocational/Technical Certificate
- ▶ 1 Bachelor's Degree
- ▶ 2 Master's Degrees
- ▶ 2 "other" Certifications/Degrees

Employment Rate PY2020

- ▶ 2nd Quarter After Exit – 78 Participants
- ▶ Employment Rate (78/340) is 22.9%
- ▶ 4th Quarter After Exit – 14 Participants
- ▶ Employment Rate (14/356) is 3.9%
- ▶ Retention PY2020 (36/78) is 46.2%

Employment Rate PY2021

- ▶ 2nd Quarter After Exit – 114 Participants
- ▶ Employment Rate (114/197) is 57.87%
- ▶ 4th Quarter After Exit – 65 Participants
- ▶ Employment Rate (65/225) is 28.89%
- ▶ Retention PY2021 (56/94) is 59.57%

Median Wages PY2020

- ▶ At Exit - \$13.27 per hour
- ▶ 2nd Quarter After Exit - \$7,116.69/quarter or (\$14.83 per hour)

Median Wages PY2021

- ▶ At Exit - \$14.00 per hour
- ▶ 2nd Quarter After Exit - \$7,262.69/quarter (\$14.00 p/hour)

Program Outcomes

- ▶ VR Program Year 2020 Closures (July 1, 2020 – June 10, 2021)
 - 139 Closed-Rehabilitated

- ▶ VR Program Year 2021 Closures (July 1, 2020 – June 2022)
 - 145 Closed – Rehabilitated

- ▶ OIB Federal Fiscal Year 2021 (October 2020 - September 2021)
 - 25 Closed-Goals Met
- ▶ OIB Federal Fiscal Year 2022 Closures (October 2021 – August 1, 2022)
 - 76 Closed-Goals Met

OIB Services and Outcomes Update- Dr. Megan Lamb

DSB is currently serving 387 individuals in the OIB program. For Federal Fiscal Year 2021, which runs from October 2020 until September 2021, DSB received 411 referrals to the OIB program and closed 35 cases successfully. For Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which began October 1, 2021, DSB has received 445 OIB referrals and closed 81 cases successfully. DSB continues to provide assessments, assistive technology devices and training, surgical and therapeutic treatment related to visual disabilities, orientation and mobility training, daily living skills, and transportation as needed to our consumers. The largest service request continues to be for assistive technology devices and training on how to use the devices.

Field Services Administrator’s Report – Megan Lamb

DSB had its annual Field Services Meeting June 27-29, 2022, in Hot Springs, Arkansas. During the meeting, the Quality Management Technical Assistance Center led Field Staff in a very productive training and sessions on how to remove barriers and improve services for DSB consumers. An email listserv and workgroup for the Support Staff has been created. The Support Staff group met in June and will have quarterly in-person meetings. The meetings will focus on how to improve processes which directly impact the workload and provide feedback to help DSB become consistent across the state. One of the first projects is to review DSB’s forms for improvement. The DSB counselors created a Microsoft Teams group to share best practices and provide support to each other across the state. This group has recommended ideas for future training to assist counselors. The Area Managers are participating in Leadership Coaching with the VR Quality Management TAC.

The Functional Job Descriptions for staff are being updated to better reflect the work and expectations of Field Services Staff with support from the Technical Assistance Centers. Each month staff are recognized for a variety of measures related to DSB’s overall performance and goals. DSB’s training has been posted on Sharepoint and shared with all staff to use as a resource. DSB is working to hire a dedicated Education and Training Instructor and Cost Reimbursement Specialist to support Field Services.

13 Field Services Staff are participating in Virginia Commonwealth University’s Supported Employment Course. The Supported Employment Policy Draft has been reviewed and edited to respond to all feedback from RSA and will be ready to submit to RSA for final review. DSB has

submitted edits to RSA based on feedback received for Chapter 6: Individual Plan for Employment.

Field Staff has been faced with the relocation of offices. In Texarkana and El Dorado, DWS Offices were closed, and DSB staff have or are in the process of relocating to the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services offices in those cities. As part of the change for El Dorado, some staff was able to relocate DWS offices in the Magnolia and Monticello DWS offices. The Fort Smith and Jonesboro offices have moved within the current buildings to areas that allow for better ability to serve consumers and located in closer proximity to other DSB staff. In addition, there is the staff who are collocating in the Benton and Conway DWS offices. These changes offer an opportunity for DSB to serve consumers closer to home in those areas.

On July 5th as part of the new State Fiscal Year, DSB turned on autobudget and regional budgets in AWARE. These changes reduce some of the paperwork burdens on staff while enhancing the ability to better meet RSA's expectations for managing VR funds.

The Pre-ETS Team hosted a new robotics camp this year for 7 students who stayed on the University of Central Arkansas campus and had the opportunity to build their own robots. The students completed a variety of tasks and built state of the art robots. The camp was a learning experience, and the Pre-ETS team hopes to continue offering this camp each year.

Quality Assurance Report - Sherlyn Harris

New Hires/Vacancies:

Currently, the Quality Assurance Unit (QA) has two vacant positions, the Administrative Support Specialist and DSB Auditor. QA is in the process of advertising both positions.

Case Reviews/Reporting:

The DSB Auditor continues to review cases daily to confirm counselors are adhering to federal guidelines when processing cases. The Statistician prepares the monthly stats and all other federal reporting documents. The RSA-911 has been submitted for this quarter.

Training, AWARE, and Activities:

Ms. Harris attended the ARS/TSS Leadership Training, onsite, in mid-June, and at the end of June, the QA Team attended the Field Service Meeting in Hot Springs, AR. The QA Team is currently enrolled in a 12-week Supported Employment course through Virginia Commonwealth University – Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCU-RRT), and Justin Smith, the Statistician, and Ms. Harris are attending CSAVR in October in San Antonio, TX. AWARE VR version 6.10 is presently being tested in the AWARE Testing environment before releasing into AWARE Production.

EOY Update – Betsy Barnes

Betsy Barnes indicated that the DSB Employee of the Year will be announced at the December 9th, 2022 statewide meeting. DSB will submit the nominees' information to board members by the end of October.

COY Update – Megan Lamb

Dr. Lamb stated that each caseload has identified a consumer who closed successfully within the last two fiscal years to nominate for Consumer of the Year. The nominations are due to the Field Administrator by October 1, 2022. The packet will be ready for the Board to review by October 15, 2022.

DSB Board Committee Assignments as of 9/2022

Chairman Clark designated committee assignments for Employee of the Year, and Consumer of the Year. It was determined that David Henry would fill the vacancy for the Employee of the Year committee. The EOY committee will now consist of Keith Clark, Theresa Petrey, and David Henry. The Consumer of the Year committee vacancies were filled by Eric Yarberry and Bill Heaston. The COY committee will consist of Keith Clark, Eric Yarberry, and William Heaston.

NEW BUSINESS:

OIB Committee Meeting- Keith Clark

Chairman Clark started by discussing the purpose of the OIB Committee. Theresa Petrey stated she felt the purpose of the OIB committee was to help continue to serve older people who are blind. Chairman Clark suggested the committee does not need to meet every quarter, however, to be efficient it only needs to meet when necessary and can report during the regular scheduled 1:00 p.m. Board meetings or thereafter. Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes stated that some of the OIB committee members expressed concerns regarding the purpose of the OIB Committee. Chairman Edwards stated there have been some problems with committee members not showing up to meetings. Chairman Sandra Edwards said that she was fine with suspending the committee meetings for a while if the older individuals who are blind are still served and getting what they need. Bill Heaston stated that he is on the OIB Committee but has never been notified of any meetings. Mr. Heaston told Chairman Clark he would like to be notified of the meetings and that he feels the OIB Committee should continue to meet. Bill Heaston said he feels that it should be an active committee because he believes there are still issues with OIB that need to be addressed. Terry Sheeler commented and said that she agrees with Mr. Heaston's statements. Chairman Clark determined that Mr. Heaston's recommendation will be accepted and the OIB Committee will continue to meet. Dr. Stokes noted that there will not be an OIB meeting in December 2022 due to the DSB Statewide Conference.

DSB Board Travel – NCSRC – Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes *Vote required

Dr. Stokes stated that the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) meeting will be held in San Antonio, TX along with the CSAVR/NCSAB meeting on October 28 – 29,

2022. Dr. Stokes asked if any Board members would like to attend the meeting. The meeting provides training to board members focusing on the roles and responsibilities of the board. DSB will pay travel expenses for the Board members who are interested in attending. Dr. Stokes stated a vote is required to allow two Board members to attend NCSRC. Chairman Clark asked for a motion to approve two Board members to attend the conference. Erika Evans made the motion to approve the travel, and Theresa Petrey seconded the motion. The motion carried.

DSB Technology Lab Update- Gustavo Manzanales

Gustavo Manzanales stated that the visits to the tech lab increased and that 52 consumers were physically in the lab. The online training implemented during the pandemic has been good for those who preferred virtual assistance due to the pandemic. However, lately more people have been back in the lab in the last month or two since the pandemic has settled some. Mr. Manzanales stated an upgrade to Windows 11, which requires JAWS 2022, is the most recent technology update requested. Technology Coordinator position is vacant and is planned to be filled in the next couple of months. Mr. Manzanales stated that he attended the American Council of the Blind National conference. Mr. Manzanales stated that attending conferences offer opportunities to stay abreast of the latest technology and trends, as well as connect with vendors directly. Mr. Manzanales provided a demonstration on Envision Glasses that come equipped with a camera, Bluetooth, and scanning features. The glasses have smart guidance which allow those with visual impairments to access most their environment independently, hands-free, and discreetly. Mr. Manzanales demonstrated a call feature with the assistance of Dr. Megan Lamb. Eric Yarberry stated that World Services for the Blind is hosting a webinar on September 29, 2022, with an Envision co-creator and invited anyone interested to join to learn more about the Envision Glasses. Tyrone Williams with the School for the Blind asked Mr. Manzanales about the OrCam and does the Envision Glasses store people's faces. Mr. Manzanales stated that is correct and that the best features are accessible with either Wi-Fi connections or a 5G hotspot.

DSB Board Annual Training- Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes

Dr. Williams-Stokes stated that she hoped the board members learned new information from the training provided by the Assistant Attorney General, Nga Mahfouz. The training was designed to provide additional background and knowledge of the board member's responsibilities and the importance of ethics. A supervisory board has many duties and members should be knowledgeable and have active participation in the activities of the agency. Dr. Stokes recommended that the training in December should focus on the Vocational Rehabilitation process and VR Fiscal Management.

OIB Report- Sandra Edwards

Sandra Edwards stated she was not in attendance at the OIB Committee meeting and did not have a report.

CONSUMER INPUT

FAIRS Update-Larry Wayland

Larry Wayland was not present, and Theresa Bertram stated that the AIRS report can be used as an update for FAIRS.

Disability Rights Arkansas (DRC) – Tom Masseau was not present on his behalf Molly Hernandez with the Client Assistance Program (CAP) provided a report.

Molly Hernandez stated that at this moment there are no active CAP cases with DSB consumers. The DRC continues to serve blind individuals in Arkansas under other grants. Disability Rights Arkansas offers various grants other than just the CAP program. Ms. Hernandez stated that the DRC has developed a presentation to discuss the programs. Ms. Hernandez indicated that the DRC has purchased a braille embosser so that any documents or publications can be available to consumers in another accessible format. Ms. Hernandez extended to Dr. Williams-Stokes an opportunity to attend the DSB statewide meeting and give a presentation that will discuss any grant work the DRC can provide.

Report on Quarterly AR State Independent Living Council (AR-SILC) Activities-. Dr. Sha' Anderson or designee

Dr. Sha' Anderson was not present. A written report was provided to Board Members prior to the meeting.

DSB Consumer-Selina Pruitt

Selina Pruitt stated that she has been a DSB Consumer since 2004. She has an undergraduate degree in psychology and a Master's degree in education counseling. Ms. Pruitt stated how she has received overwhelming support from the Division of Services for the Blind. Ms. Pruitt thanked Angela Gray her counselor for being one of the main contributors to the support and services she has received. She mentioned how she has received good rehab counseling support services in addition to financial assistance with her education. Ms. Pruitt mentioned that she appreciates being given the opportunity to obtain supportive services and receive any assistive technologies she may need.

Chair Clark stated that the next meeting will be the DSB Statewide Meeting held on Friday, December 9, 2022, at Embassy Suites Hotel @ 10:00 a.m.

Keith Clarke asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. William Heaston motioned to adjourn the meeting and Theresa Petrey seconded. The motion carried.

3:13 P.M.

ADJOURN