

**DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2021**

**DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Keith Clark, At-Large, Board Chair  
Erika Evans, At-Large  
Theresa Petrey, ACB  
David Henry, NFB  
William “Bill” Heaston, Lions

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sandy Rowland, VFP  
James Caton, ASBVI  
Larry Wayland, FAIRS  
Whitney Musick, AER  
Kara Aaron, BVA  
Sandra Edwards, OIB

**DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Tiffany Moore, AER

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT**

Sharon Giovinazzo, WSB

Attorney General’s Office Representative: None

Governor’s Office Representative: None

Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Board Meeting Support Staff: Betsy Barnes, Theresa Bertram, Megan Lamb, LaToya Baker, Jim Pearson, LaTasha Mays, Sherlyn Harris and Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes.

**Meeting Agenda Approval**

Chairman Clark asked for approval of the agenda. William “Bill” Heaston motioned to accept the agenda as printed, and Theresa Petrey seconded. The motion carried.

**Board Meeting Minutes Approval-**

Chairman Clark asked for approval of the September 10, 2021 minutes. Erika Evans moved, and David Henry seconded the motion to approve the September 10, 2021 minutes. The motion carried.

**Director’s Report – Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes**

Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes began her Director’s report by thanking the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) staff, the DSB Board, and Chairman Keith Clark for their support this quarter. Dr. Williams-Stokes gave thanks to Chairman Clark and Older Blind Committee (OIB) member Terry Sheeler for their participation in the DSB Statewide meeting. She stated that the training received by staff focused on customer service, stakeholder engagement, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Process-Fiscal and Programmatic side, and Overview of the Corrective

Action Plan from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Overview of the Corrective Action Plan was discussed on December 9, 2021. The Corrective Action Plan outlines all actions implemented to document how staff will move forward to improve the Fiscal and Programmatic Operations to ensure compliance with Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Dr Williams-Stokes thanked Contrena Bowie and Dr. Megan Lamb for their leadership to make the meeting a success for all involved.

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

Dr. Williams-Stokes stated that DSB submitted a request to start the process to request an indirect rate and expect to receive a response from RSA within 60 days.

Dr. Williams-Stokes noted the findings as follows:

**Finding 1 - Insufficient Policies-** DSB did not maintain written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the VR services specified in 34 C.F.R. § 361.48, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.50, and the criteria under which each service is provided.

**Finding 2 - Insufficient Internal Controls-** DSB did not maintain effective internal controls over the Federal award that would provide a reasonable assurance that it was managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303 and the requirements at 34 C.F.R. § 361.47(a).

**Finding 3 - Provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services to Potentially Eligible Students with Disabilities -** DSB is not in compliance with Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a) that require that VR agencies provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services.

**Finding 4 - Obligations and Expenditures Not Properly Assigned to Correct Period of Performance -**DSB is not in compliance with the Federal requirements to accurately account for and report non-Federal and Federal obligations and ensure expenditures are paid from the correct Federal award for the VR award.

**Finding 5 - Financial Management System and Internal Controls Fail to Ensure Supporting Documentation is Maintained -** DSB has not exercised the requisite methods of administration, financial management, or internal controls necessary to ensure financial accountability and the proper expenditure of funds. DSB must employ methods of administration that ensure the proper and efficient administration of the VR program, including financial accountability. DSB must implement financial management and internal control procedures necessary to ensure the proper expenditure of program funds for allowable program costs. These procedures must include the retention of supporting documentation for the expenditures.

**Finding 6 - Internal Control Deficiencies – Rates of Payment, Financial Reporting, and Personnel Costs-** DSB does not maintain effective internal controls over the Federal awards necessary to provide reasonable assurances that it is managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award. Specifically, internal control deficiencies exist for developing rates of payment and tracking personnel costs to ensure that expenditures reported are accurate, reasonable, allocable, and allowable, and deficiencies exist for tracking accounting and reporting program and fiscal data for service provision accurately on the RSA-2 or RSA-911 reports.

**Finding 7 - Lack of Internal Controls for the Development, Implementation, and Monitoring of Contracts-** DSB does not maintain effective internal controls over the Federal awards necessary to provide reasonable assurances that it is managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award. Specifically, internal control deficiencies exist for developing contracts, monitoring contracts, reviewing, and approving invoices and supporting documentation, which does not permit DSB to ensure all costs charged to the contracts are reasonable, necessary, allocable, and allowable under the VR program. DSB does not have mechanisms to monitor and reconcile contracts reimbursed with Federal funds, to ensure that expenditures reported are accurate, allocable, and allowable, or to track, account, and report program and fiscal data for service provision accurately on the RSA-2 or RSA-911 reports.

**Finding 8 - Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Reporting-** DSB did not report all its non-Federal expenditures on its SF-425 reports, particularly VR expenditures determined through the DHS/DSB cost allocation process, as well as expenditures for new and replacement equipment, maintenance of equipment, and management services paid with the State’s Randolph-Sheppard Act vending facility program set-aside funds and State appropriated funds in FFYs 2017 through 2019. Specifically, DSB did not report non-Federal expenditures totaling \$89,261.00 in FFY 2017, \$81,318.00 in FY 2018, and \$454,238.00 in FFY 2019. As a result, RSA has not been able to determine, with certainty, whether the State of Arkansas has met its MOE requirements under the VR program for the period covered by this review.

**Assistant Director’s Report – Betsy Barnes**

Assistant Director Barnes stated that the DSB SFY 2021 Budget Report and Expenditures for July 1, 2021, to September 30, 2021, are included in the board packet. DSB expended \$965,315.50 on Client Services and \$1,091,486.96 on Agency Operations for a total SFY expenditure to date of \$2,056,802.46. DSB is working with 3 Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Centers (VRTAC) regarding the RSA Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The VRTAC for Quality Management team is working to assist DSB with improving program and fiscal management, policies and procedures and internal controls. There have been several online meetings to review the CAP. Last week 3 of the team members did an on-site meeting with DSB to discuss DSB program, and fiscal management. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was conducted. This plan identified 25 activities for DSB to complete.

DSB has developed a technical assistance plan with VRTAC-QE – Quality Employment for technical assistance related to supported employment, policy and procedures and apprenticeship opportunities. Plans are in motion for this team to conduct an on-site training with a focus on Supported Employment soon.

The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACTC) team is working with DSB with the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and program management.

### **Human Resources Update**

DSB has 57 employed staff or 75% of positions filled. There are 19 positions that are in the process of being advertised, interviews, pending completion of background checks or hire date selection. Since the June Board meeting, staff that have joined the DSB family are Melanie Smith, Multi-Media Technician with our AIRS program; Pamala Hoover, DSB Staff Development Coordinator; Al Paraon, Administrative Specialist III in Fort Smith; Katrina Floyd, Administrative Specialist III, Ida Holmes, Rehab Counselor in West Memphis; and Jeffrey Seay, Administrative Analyst (AA) with DSB Quality Assurance (QA) unit. There have been 3 voluntary terminations during this quarter.

DSB has five staff enrolled in Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling (MRC) programs, and one staff enrolled in Orientation and Mobility of the Blind (O&M) program at UALR. That staff member will begin an internship for the spring semester. One of our staff, Angela Gray, recently graduated with MRC. Currently, 7 out of 16 counselors have a CRC.

Five of DSB's counselors recently completed their Certified Employment Specialist (CES) program with Virginia Commonwealth University. Two of DSB staff are enrolled in the National Certified Rehabilitation Leadership Certification (NCRLC) program with the Institute on Community Inclusion with the University of Wisconsin Stout. DSB Pre-ETS Manager, LaTasha Mays, has enrolled in the University of Mississippi Vision Specialist program.

DSB supervisors conducted mid-point evaluations in October 2021. Annual Performance Evaluations will be conducted March or April 2022.

This quarter, staff attended the virtual Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Partners conferences. Last week, DSB staff participated in the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) on-line. Staff attended Arkansas National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in October 2021. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) conference will be held in the spring the week of April 2-6, 2022. National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) will be held April 6-8, 2022.

### **Quality Assurance Report- Sherlyn Harris**

Sherlyn Harris presented the Quality Assurance (QA) report. The Quality Assurance Unit has four active working positions: The Quality Assurance Manager, two Auditors, and an Administrative Assistant. The Statistician position is vacant; however, it has been re-advertised,

and the advertisement closes today, Friday, December 10th. In the interim, the Quality Assurance Manager generates the monthly reports. The Quality Assurance Team is currently working on the policies and procedures manual to provide a standardized plan for accurate and unbiased case reviews. The manual will include step-by-step instructions to offer a visual for procedural and training purposes. Amy Jackson, an Auditor, is currently working on a Self-Paced AWARE System Administration Certification while completing assigned case review sets. This quarter Amy has completed 41 case reviews. Jeffery “Scott” Seay, an Auditor, is new to the team and he is still in training.

QA is gathering data to update, report, and maintain the Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) for the agency. The data has been converted to an excel spreadsheet to highlight progress made on the state plan. The spreadsheet reflects the data for the State and Federal PY2020. Data for PY2021 is in progress. QA is meeting with VRTAC-QM next month to discuss three areas of concern: general activities in the AWARE QA Tool, monitoring of vendors/contracts versus verification of services, and identifying the fiscal components in the QA Tool for tracking.

### **Field Services Administrator’s Report**

Dr. Megan Lamb presented the Field Administrator’s report by stating Field Services Staff participated in Field Meeting Day on December 8th as part of the Statewide meeting. The Arkansas Children and Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI) organization presented resources and their role to support youth up to age 22. CAYSI will be a valuable partner and resource for DSB consumers and staff moving forward. CAYSI is also one of the partners in the Pre-ETS Interagency Deafblind Project and the Deafblind Pilot Project. The Field Services meeting included an update from Director Williams-Stokes on the DSB monitoring report and RSA Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Dr. Vire from University of Arkansas provided training to Field Staff on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment process and purpose. Unfortunately, the presentation from the Helen Keller National Center had to be postponed but will be reschedule for January 2022. This will also allow DSB to offer CRC credit for the training.

Dr. Williams-Stokes and Dr. Lamb visited offices to meet with DSB staff. In October 2021, Dr. Williams-Stokes recognized the top 3 performers (statewide) in Rehabilitation closures. A challenge was issued to the field offices. The office with the highest average successful closures will win a lunch of their choice with administration.

Field Staff and DSB Business Engagement Coordinator along with DSB’s Outreach Manager are working to connect with employers and consumers around the state. Staff continue participation in Job Fairs, Business Expos, Chamber of Commerce Events, and other outreach events. In addition, two DSB counselors from the Fayetteville Office, Heather Grigsby, and Shane Bronson, participated in a panel on ADA accommodations.

Independent Living Funds for Federal Fiscal Year 2021 were expended, and staff are currently working to expend the 2022 grant award. The funds must be spent by September 30, 2022.

Field Services staff are key to working on the upcoming tasks in the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) from RSA. Currently, training, and technical assistance plans are being created with all 3 technical assistance centers. As part of the plan to improve, Field will be working with the VRTAC-QM (Quality Management) to develop a rate setting methodology and fee schedule for all DSB services. This process includes a review of the regulations to govern rates for VR agencies as well as establish a formal process for DSB rate setting. The Quality Management Technical Assistance Collaborative (QM TAC) will assist with training on best practices and research to determine the rates during this process. Rate setting includes research to identify neighboring state rates, vendor rates, and DSB specific information. The Quality Management Technical Assistance Collaborative (QM TAC) is working with staff to improve processes and automation in AWARE. Field Services staff will receive training and guidance on Supported Employment through the Quality Employment TAC. The work with the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) is designed to provide support for staff to identify consumers who may benefit from supported employment, and to determine the best method to support the consumer in the process. RSA requires DSB to update and review policy and procedures to ensure all federal regulations are being followed. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT-C) is working with the Pre-ETS team to document DSB's procedures and improve the tracking of availability of services and provide those services to potentially eligible students.

#### **Business and Technology Administrator's Report- Jim Pearson**

Jim Pearson provided a report for the Vending Facility Program (VFP). Mr. Pearson announced that most highway locations are open for business, except for the two White River sites. Sales are down about 50%. The federal sites are still closed, and sales are down about 50% overall at manned locations due to Covid-19 issues. Mr. Pearson stated that VFP has 5 vacant locations and need trainees for these locations. The locations are #037 1 Capitol Mall, #005 DHS, #68 PCCH, #074 Federal Building and #097 Revenue Department.

Federal Relief and Restoration Payments (FRRP) are being used to purchase vending machines for the VFP locations. However, the Office of State Procurement cancelled the first bid process due to lack of vendor bid participation. A public bid is scheduled for January 2022. Tech Lab visits are back to normal, with an average of about 6 training clients per month.

#### **AIRS Report- Theresa Bertram**

Theresa Bertram updated the DSB Board concerning Arkansas Information Reading Services (AIRS). The number of listeners remain steady according to ARPBS analytics at <http://airs.aetn.org>. AIRS averages approximately 2,400 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](http://nfb.org). AIRS Radio has 276 active followers on Facebook.

AIRS is adding holiday themed shows for the season such as books, and theatrical readings. AIRS is still actively looking for more career and educational related shows like Arkansas Jobs and Careers.

AIRS help aide in the recording of the Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist for People with Visual Impairments (CATIS) training with Eric Yarberry, Director of Education and Training at World Services for the Blind. Ms. Bertram met with the Central Arkansas Blind Veterans support group in August. She commended DSB Board member, Ms. Kara Aaron for giving her that opportunity. Ms. Bertram stated that she enjoyed speaking with the Central Arkansas Blind Veterans support group.

In October, Mrs. Bertram had an in-person meeting with the Lions Club in Little Rock. Mrs. Bertram is hoping for future meetings with civic organizations.

The AIRS staff to include Ida Lewis, Shawn Smith, and Theresa Bertram continue to read out of local magazines like “501 Life Magazine”, “Searcy Living”, and “About the River Valley”. AIRS has started local newspaper reading including “Mena Star”, “DeQueen Bee”, “Petit Jean County Headlight”, “Pocahontas Star Herald”, and “Newton County Times”. There are approximately 19 other papers that can be heard on AIRS plus. Newly employed member Melanie Smith, also works for Channel 7, is helping to get these shows produced in a timely manner. Recordings of meetings will be added to the station for accessibility to consumers who cannot join due to travel or technology.

AIRS Kids Radio is going strong every weekend, and Mrs. Bertram is grateful for the teens who volunteer at the station. This help is a good training for the teens and a great help to AIRS.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **DSB Board Appointments-Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes**

Dr. Williams-stokes discussed the DSB Board Appointments. A resignation from Stephanie Smith, Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI) was received. A request was submitted to the Governor’s office Board of Appointments representative on October 29, 2021 to inquire about filling the vacant board position to represent the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI). The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) nominated Whitney Musick to fill the ex-officio to represent AER on the DSB Board.

### **DSB Board Annual Training-Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes**

A request was submitted to the Attorney General’s office on November 1, 2021, for training on board member responsibilities and ethics. Dr. Williams-Stokes stated that she will update the board when tentative dates are available. New members will receive an email with virtual orientation instructions in January.

### **OIB Update-Dr. Megan Lamb**

Dr. Lamb presented an update on the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). She stated that the program year 2020 contains 3 quarters of data. A program year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. The Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) includes: 57 skill gains that were 5 secondary diplomas, 1 educational function level, 55 secondary report cards/ post-secondary transcripts, 1 training milestone, and 2 skill progression. The 2020 target rate for the state was 24%.

- ▶ Program Year 2020 – 3 Quarters
  - ▶ 23 Credentials
    - ▶ 2 Associate’s Degree
    - ▶ 5 Bachelor’s Degrees
    - ▶ 13 Secondary Diplomas
    - ▶ 2 Vocational/Technical Certificates
    - ▶ 1 other Recognized Diploma, Degree or Certificate

#### Employment Rate PY2020

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

#### Median Wages PY2019

- ▶ At Exit - \$11.00 40/week
- ▶ 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit - \$5,892.21/quarter or \$12.27 per hour

#### Median Wages PY2020

- ▶ At Exit - \$13.27 p/hour
- ▶ 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit - \$7,116.69/quarter (\$14.83 p/hour)

#### Training

- ▶ 47% of Arkansas (ARS and DSB) Participants are enrolled in training programs
- ▶ 3<sup>rd</sup> Highest State percentage
- ▶ 20% of DSB participants received training services
- ▶ 15% of DSB participants received post-secondary training
- ▶ 90% of DSB participants received career services

### **2021 Employee of the Year-Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes**

The DSB Board employee of the Year Committee selected Debra Newton and Karen Henderson. The selected employees were awarded \$100 cashier’s checks for Employee of the Year and



Overall Employee of the year. Both also received an acrylic plaque to recognize the achievement. A recognition ceremony was held via Zoom on December 10, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.

### **2021 Student of the Year-LaTasha Mays**

LaTasha Mays announced the Student of the Year is Macy James. Transition student, Macy James has been an outstanding student with the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). The consumer demonstrated her commitment as a Pre-ETS student with the DSB Pre-ETS counselor Jacob Grace. Macy graduated Valedictorian of her high school, graduating with a 4.18 GPA and earned a score of 33 on her ACT. She also earned the following scholarships: the Sturgis Fellowship (\$72k); the Arkansas Governors Distinguished Scholarships (\$40k); as a member of the marching band at the University of Arkansas Fayetteville, she earned the Music Department Scholarship (\$30k); as well as several onetime awards, such as the 2021 Bill Tomlin Scholarship (\$1,000); the Arkansas Small Band Association Scholarship (\$500); and a variety of other community funded awards. Macy attends the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and participates in the marching band, Honors college and is member of the CREW ministry organization on campus.

Macy is an amazing self-advocate, as well as an advocate for the needs of the blind and low vision community. She is forward thinking and always ready to help someone who is in need. Macy is aware of the avenues available to her for advocacy needs, using them as necessary for school or personal success. Mrs. Mays stated that she is privileged to share in the recognition of a job well done, and trust that success will continue to follow Ms. James who has demonstrated that blindness is not a barrier to success with determination.

### **2021 Consumer of the Year-Dr. Megan Lamb**

Dr. Megan Lamb stated DSB staff and Board viewed a PowerPoint that showcased DSB Consumers and Employers of the Year earlier today. Each DSB counselor provided a consumer to represent their area and the stories and success of these consumers. Dr. Lamb expressed how she hoped everyone enjoyed the PowerPoint and the chance to celebrate the consumers recognized in the regions.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **DSB Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment-Betsy Barnes**

Assistant Director Betsy Barnes provided an update on DSB Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment that is expected to be conducted in 2022. The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to provide current and relevant information on the needs of individuals who experience blindness and visual impairments to allow DSB to develop programs and allocate resources to address identified needs. The Needs Assessment will establish DSB's program priorities and state plan goals. The needs assessment is completed every 2 years per federal guidelines. The assessment establishes DSB's program priorities, define DSB State Plan goals, objectives, strategies, services provided and establishes the need to develop and improve DSB programs and services. Lastly, the assessment provides public and community awareness of DSB programs and services. RSA requires DSB to identify the service needs of the following: Individuals with blindness that

have not been served or who are underserved; those with most significant disabilities, including those needing supported employment; minorities with disabilities; youth and students with disabilities; and identifies those jointly served with other WIOA partners. The Needs Assessment will identify strategies to connect DSB with quality training programs; improve employment outcomes; enhance supported employment and Job Placement vendors; and improve DSB performance outcomes with credential attainment, median earnings, and sustained employment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters after exit. Ms. Barnes explained that the needs assessment data will include a program evaluation such as internal and external data and information, surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews, and quantitative and qualitative analysis. Ms. Barnes stated that she looked forward to the participation from board members, staff, and stakeholders. Results will be presented at a DSB Board meeting in the Fall.

### **OIB Committee Report- Sandra Edwards, Chairman**

Sandra Edwards provided an update on Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB). The OIB committee met via teleconference on December 10, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. DSB OIB staff reported that 284 individuals are currently being served and staff are meeting in person with consumers. The next meeting will be on March 10th via teleconference.

### **OIB Board Report-Dr. Megan Lamb**

Dr. Lamb stated as part of the continued efforts to improve and update the OIB program, an updated accessible application and ineligible letter were finalized and distributed to staff. A draft of an updated OIB eligibility letter has been developed and will be added to AWARE for staff use. Dr. Lamb stated that she is working with Eschenbach to plan trainings for staff on a variety of low vision devices, especially those in the counselor low vision kits. Dr. Lamb stated that she wants to ensure that everyone stays up-to-date and is comfortable with the equipment and plans to continue training for new and seasoned staff.

### OIB Services and Outcomes Update

DSB is currently serving 284 individuals in the OIB program. For Federal Fiscal Year 2021, which ran from October 2020 until September 2021, DSB received 411 referrals to the OIB program. During this year, DSB has closed 35 cases successfully. For Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which began October 1, 2021, DSB received 84 OIB referrals and closed 17 cases successfully. DSB staff provides many assistive technology devices and training, surgical and therapeutic treatment related to visual disabilities, orientation and mobility training, and transportation as needed to the consumers. The most popular service request is to provide more assistive living devices and training on how to use them correctly. VR Counselors are working to respond these requests to address consumer needs. DSB staff are now able to visit consumers in their home, making it easier to assess the needs and evaluate progress for our OIB consumers.

### **FAIRS Update-Mr. Larry Wayland**

Mr. Wayland provided an update on the FAIRS staff that met in November. Mr. Wayland acknowledged Theresa Bertram's report and stated that she is doing a terrific job at AIRS Broadcast and Newline.

**Report on Quarterly Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA) Activities-Mr. Tom Masseau or designee**

No report.

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

Dr. Sha' Anderson was not present. Provided written quarterly report prior to meeting.

**CONSUMER INPUT**

**Arkansas Council of the Blind-Theresa Petrey**

Theresa Petrey stated the Arkansas Council of the Blind (ACB) Statewide board meeting will be December 11, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. The ACB State Convention will be in-person on April 22-23, 2022. The convention will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn West Little Rock. DSB Board, staff and Director are invited to attend. More information will be shared in March 2022. The National Convention will be in Omaha, NE from July 1-7, 2022. The meeting will offer a hybrid component for those not able to attend in person. A fundraiser for an auction will be conducted virtually for the upcoming year. ACB chapter will meet on December 11, 2021, prior to the 2:00 p.m. board meeting. The meeting will be held at Fletcher Library. To call in and listen to ACB state board meeting the number is 605-475-6777 Access Code: 275222#.

**National Federation of the Blind (NFB)**

Board member David Henry provided the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Arkansas report. NFB-Arkansas had a virtual annual state convention on the October 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. The virtual auction and fundraisers were included. Reports were provided by Dr. Williams-Stokes, Toni Fraser, Charlotte Glass and Vision of America. The speaker and national representative was Beverly Harrison from California. Beverly touched on her experience during the civil rights movement and life as an individual living with blindness. The virtual state convention is scheduled to be held on March 30, 2022, April 1-2, 2022. Mr. Henry invited all to attend. NFB statewide board meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2021, at 8:00 p.m. The Zoom link can be received by contacting David Henry, Terry Sheeler, or Nina Chadwick. The Washington seminar is scheduled via virtual platform to speak with State US Representative, and senators and getting them to sign on to legislative initiatives for 2022.

**Chair Clarke stated that the next meeting will be held on Friday, March 11, 2022- 1:00 p.m.**

Chairman Clarke asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Erika Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting and Theresa Petrey second. The motion carried.

**3:00 P.M. ADJORN**