

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2018

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Clark, At-Large
Sandra Edwards, ACB
Erika Evans, At-Large
Basil Julian, LIONS
Terry Sheeler, NFB
Stephanie Smith, ASBVI

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Kara Aaron, BVA
James Caton, ASBVI
James Gatewood, Vendors
Sharon Giovinazzo, WSB
Larry Wayland, FAIRS

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Bill Johnson, AER

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Lisa Reynolds, AER
Beverly Kindle, Vendors

DHS Representative: None

Attorney General's Office Representative: None

Governor's Office Representative: None

DSB Board Meeting Support Staff: Betsy Barnes, Contrena Bowie, Charlie Cain-Davis, Kandy Cayce, Mary Douglas, Katy Morris, Mason Murphey, Amber Neal, Debra Newton, Jim Pearson, Jackie Plummer, Brian Sanders, Tina Shores, Lou Talley, Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes and Elizabeth Whitaker.

Others Present: Anthony Sheeler, NFB and Gene Sharp, NFB.

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Mrs. Terry Sheeler called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Motion was made by Mr. Basil Julian, to approve the agenda. Ms. Erika Evans seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

APPROVAL OF MARCH MINUTES. Motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting was made by Ms. Erika Evans. Mr. Basil Julian seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Katy Morris, Director

Director Morris thanked the Board for their faithful attendance and stated that they are the only reason the Division still exists. She also thanked the DSB staff around the State for picking up extra assignments and doing amazing amounts of work for the Division while there are still a few vacancies to fill.

NATIONAL ISSUES:

WIOA – The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) requires us to plan all our services in conjunction with the various partners involved in that Act. One of the things that we have been working on with the 10 local Workforce Boards across the state is the infrastructure funding agreements that outline where we are going to have our staff collocated as the Workforce Innovation Act requires. As yet, none of the infrastructure funding agreements are signed because there are still a few sticking points. For example, where all of the varied partners are going to absorb the costs of the one-stop operators which with the small ones, it does not amount to that much, but when they get larger it is significant. Several partners have said they are not willing to shoulder that additional amount, and DSB cannot because we cannot shoulder a disproportionate share of that cost.

How do they define “colocation”? Looking at WIOA it is pretty clear that they do expect our direct service staff to be shoulder-to-shoulder with the Workforce staff in as many locations as possible around the state. Right now, we will only be in 10 locations and there are about 54 locations Workforce has throughout the state. DSB does not have the staff to cover those areas. But, we are looking at moving counselors and support staff to have an actual staff member in about 22 locations. In other locations we are considering half a day, twice a month, so consumers can depend on us.

DSB ISSUES:

Section 511 – DSB does not buy services from entities that pay sub-minimum wage. At the national level, they are looking to gradually eliminate these types of facilities. But the question is, what are they putting in its place? That is what is not happening, meaning, there is not a viable solution. Some sort of facility, or some sort of program that would absorb and provide similar types of services for persons that come day in and day out. Maybe they are working on a contract and maybe they are putting nuts and bolts in a zip-lock for an industry nearby. That is part of it so, yes, it is very much sub-minimum wage. But, what is the benefit of it. Are they receiving socialization? Are they working alongside people they have known for 15 years? So that is the argument that is going on nationwide. Even though it really does not apply to DSB, it is a very hot topic.

Director Morris further explained that in a situation, like IFB Solutions DSB’s long-time partner, Lighthouse for the Blind, under WIOA, sheltered workshop locations are no longer considered a vocational rehabilitation employment outcome. They are paid above minimum wage and in Arkansas it has been an excellent situation. The difference is that if someone does not need rehab services, they just need a job and ask to be sent to the Lighthouse we can introduce them, but we cannot use VR money.

HR 5658 – Has been filed with Congress and the idea is to redefine what constitutes an integrated setting. Unless it is 51% persons without a disability, it is not an integrated setting which is why the Lighthouse is not an integrated setting.

THE “ABLE ACT” – Right now this act allows that there will be more tax breaks in savings for being able to purchase disability related items. And, it applies if your disability occurred prior to age 26. The latest proposal moved it from pre-26 to age 46. Not all inclusive, but a whole lot better than it had been.

THE MARRAKESH TREATY – This treaty is allowing people to share the books all over the world. Basically the US has balked. And, what has passed in the House has yet to pass in the Senate. So, no it is not home-free yet, but it is moving.

ACB – DSB had almost a dozen staff attend ACB State in April. Ms. Morris thanked Sandy Edwards for the inclusion of our staff and added that they enjoyed and benefited from the meeting. The hot topic is transformation of state government which at this stage we know very little about as various state agencies are moving forward developing their budgets. The state is holding it close to the vest as they will have the agencies move forward in developing their budgets and then they will move the agencies, budget and all through some sort of transfer. Will they move DSB, with the Board in place, as a governing board, to some entity? Based on the fact that we are going to collocate our direct service staff with DWS it is highly likely they will move us in some direction toward DWS as opposed to DHS. In the meantime it is only the direct care staff that is collocating, which leave the remainder of DSB in DHS and DHS facilities, which is an odd structure.

WIOA REORGANIZATION – The Governor has told DHS that their agency has already done its reorganization, so it is really not going to be affected by the transformation of state government, except that DSB left is hanging in the balance. Ms. Morris stated that she really does not think that applies to DSB. She fully expects that DSB will have some sort of restructuring. We have talked about restructure, in all of this that we are doing with all of the partners with WIOA and have been highly commended with how DSB has been working in teamwork with the rest of them. What it falls to is that DSB is having to do the balancing act between DHS and DWS, and so far we are keeping those two masters relatively happy. She suspects it will be 3 to 5 years before the dust settles on WIOA, and then by that time WIOA will be up for a redo with Congress and we will see where that goes.

DSB MISSION – Ms. Morris stated DSB can accomplish its mission even if its structure changes. We just need to serve our clients while following state and federal regulations and following the guidelines of the Board. Everything in state government is about planning, implementation and evaluation. The Board lays out the philosophy and vision for the agency, and DSB is supposed to implement those directions while following state and federal regulations. The Board will then evaluate the agency’s performance throughout the year to commend any outcomes and correct DSB, when we are not doing what the Board wants us to do. The state and federal government will monitor for fiscal compliance monthly, quarterly, and annually. The legislative audit is performed yearly for the full VR program of both DSB and the general rehab agency. The feds then perform an audit every 3 to 5 years, except we may be in the 7th year. They brought in WIOA and said last year they would do it. Director Morris indicated that

she thinks the feds are going to wait until after the transformation and then look at DSB and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS).

BUSINESS & TECHNICAL SERVICES REPORT – JIM PEARSON:

COMMERCIALIZATION – The commercialization of all rest areas has been a really big topic. DSB is in pretty good shape because the two major rest areas that would be conducive for this, have recently been renovated by the AR Highway Department, and we just opened these sites less than a year ago. The other good news is that it seems to have gotten buried in the Washington DC politics. Mr. Pearson said he was on a committee meeting about a week ago and participants discussed that this issue has been pushed to the back burner, which is also good.

TRAINING – The Vending Facility Program (VFP) is looking to move to using the Hadley Institute Training Program for the managers. There is on-line course work and some modules set for all states to use. We are trying to get this implemented in our program over the next couple of months. We have several managers over the age of 65+ and their computer skills are not as good as people coming out of high school and college today. DSB is trying to update some of those training areas as well, to go along with the national movement efforts.

COMMISSIONS – All of the rest stops are open. One in Forrest City was damaged by a tornado, but it should be open today. Sales have increased and VFP is looking to get everything back to normal with outputs and commissions. The bad news is the set-aside contributions and our manager sales are down again this year. This is a result of the state office buildings moving people around, and they are moving them to outlying locations. Some of the new locations are not large enough for us to have manned facilities in them. VFP can move in contracted vending, and third-party vending, which helps the commission. The problem with that is our commissions were lowered through the last contract, so we are getting less in commissions than years past. This is what a lot of states are running into. Either sales are steady or declining in a lot of their facilities and the average age for a vending manager continues to increase.

INVENTORY – We completed our DHS inventory and asset certification with two items missing. This is very good compared to a lot of DHS agencies. Our offices are scattered and very few things are being able to be locked up in the 10 offices around the state.

KIOSKS – All of the kiosk sites are up and running, but four of them have had staff turnover already; so we have got to do more training. The numbers aren't looking good as the clients are not using the facilities. Many of our clients now are getting on-line themselves from other locations and do not need the computer and kiosks. We do have the kiosks available and Department of Workforce Services has served as a partner.

FIELD SERVICES REPORT – Betsy Barnes:

NEW STAFF – Ms. Barnes stated that the DSB Field Services is like the city that never sleeps and they have been very busy covering all bases to comply with WIOA. She recognized the Area

Managers for the wonderful job they are doing. She introduced Tina Shores who is the new Area Manager for the Northwest offices of Fayetteville, Fort Smith and Harrison.

TRAINING – Ms. Barnes thanked the Quality Assurance staff who conducted a lot of training in March and April on performance measures. Darwin Moore had some training in PreETS from the Arkansas Rehab Training Conference.

- In March and April, we conducted another round of training on the Performance measures and AWARE in each of the area offices
- Attended ACB Conference – Fayetteville
- Pre-ETS and VR Counselors attended AER Conference
- ARA Conference – Pre-ETS and VR Counselors
- In July 17-19, Field Service Training Hot Springs

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT – We have a new WIOA Business Engagement Roundtable Committee. Henry Washington is our new Business Engagement Coordinator, and his focus will be on DSB’s effectiveness in serving employers. Mr. Washington will join the WIOA Business Engagement Roundtable Committee Partners and will put DSB on the map with our national partners. Mr. Washington will attend the NET Business Summit in Detroit with our national partners.

NEW STAFF – Hired:

- Henry Washington – (promotion) Business Engagement Coordinator
- Matthew “Shane” Bronson – VR Counselor - Fayetteville Office
- Erin Cates – Administrative Assistant II - Central Region
- Darwin Moore – PreETS Counselor – El Dorado Office

NEW STAFF – In the process of hiring:

- El Dorado– Administrative Assistant III
- Fayetteville – VR Counselor Benton Co.
- Jonesboro – Administrative Assistant II

STAFF VACANCIES – Vacancies:

- Pre-ETS Counselors – West Memphis, Harrison, Central (Batesville/ Pine Bluff)
- VR Counselors – Fort Smith, El Dorado

STATISTICS – February 2018

Ms. Barnes mentioned that the DSB VR Counselors have been working hard. Our Pre-ETS cases remain up. Non-rehab closures remain down (158 – decreased 23 from 2017, which was 181). We still have active cases up (988 total active) and we anticipate getting rehab closures up once

we get the staff. Now we have Tina Shores in the Northwest to help with the backlog of 20 cases to be closed but they must wait 90 days.

PRE-ETS ACTIVITIES:

Mrs. Barnes stated that staff met with Parents Without Partners to discuss options for deaf and blind students, and we are looking forward to joining that partnership. Monthly meetings are held with ARS to make sure we are on target to spend our 15%. We watch it like a hawk, and I promised Cassandra and Katy to spend every last penny this year.

Other Pre-ETS activities that are going on this summer are: World Services for the Blind. They are doing three programs, two here in Little Rock and one in Fayetteville. They are also doing a college prep ACT program for these students.

Jump Start – Summer 2018

- Started last Sunday and runs 3 weeks through June 22nd
- 27 youth from all over the State
- DHS job site placements, Dept. of Health, Peter Miller Law Firm, Animal Village, Children’s hospital, and Pulaski County Courthouse – where one of the clerks has a vision impairment
- Graduation and Talent Show – June 21 Governor’s Mansion with the 1st Lady

WSB STYLE Program

- 3 Summer programs in Little Rock and Fayetteville
- College Prep/ ACT Prep

Independent Living Council – Parents, Advocacy, Training, and Staff. We are planning something new with the Arkansas Independent Living Council. We are doing a program with parents and literacy. They are involving staff, parents, and students on educating themselves and going in that direction.

CASE REVIEWS – Case reviews will start Monday of next week in Little Rock. They will review any deficiencies from the 2014, 2015, and 2016 closed cases, moving forward to 2017 closed cases.

WINTAC and OIB – DSB had a visit with Mississippi State University for our Older Individuals who are Blind program. They have a technical assistance center, and they did quite a few telephone calls to plan their first site visit involving the staff of Older Individuals who are Blind. They met with focus groups with consumers and stake-holders, and everything was positive with the comments we got back. They reviewed case files and reviewed practices. A summary of what has and is going on:

Mississippi State Univ. – Technical Assistance Center Project:

- Phase I: Inquiry of Needs, Perceptions, and Partnerships
- Telephone conferences in preparation for site visits
- Conducted telephone interviews with consumers in West Memphis and Delta area
- 1st Site Visit April 24-26
- Focus groups met (Stake holders, Staff, and Consumers) – very positive
- Reviewed case files for evidence bases practices
- They will return July 2nd for a site visit
- Phase II: Selection of Long-Term and Short Term Goals, Action Plans
- Will put together Best Practices among other states in service delivery and quality assurance to be incorporated into our program
- The second site visit will be in July for long-term planning and action plans. They have put together Best Practices from states from all over the nation and it will be coming out soon. We plan to utilize the Best Practices information and incorporate into our long term plan. We are focusing on service delivery, monitoring quality assurance.

HELEN KELLER PROCLAMATION DAY:

Ms. Barnes urged us to put on our calendar the Helen Keller Deaf Blind Awareness Week Proclamation at the Governor’s office. We will meet for a photograph with the Governor on June 27th at 10:30 in the Governor’s Conference Room at the State Capitol. An individual from Fort Smith will be honored.

OPERATIONS REPORT – Dr. Cassondra Williams-Stokes, Assistant Director:

FINANCE TOPICS -

- Staff working to finalize the SFY 2019 biennial budget. State general revenue funds are on track to be fully expended by June 30, 2018.
- SFY 2018 year-end closeout in process
- AOP for SFY 2019 submitted planning begins in April
- Cost Allocation Plan
- The expenditure budget report for the period of July 1 through March 31, 2018 is provided in your board packet

STATE REVENUE – Dr. Williams-Stokes mentioned that the work presented by the Field Staff has made DSB’s job easier, on the finance side to make sure that our State general revenue has been allocated, and we will be on target to spend every penny we have for the year. We are in the process of year-end close out. Making sure that all contracts and payments are turned in on time and that our vendors can meet their payroll and other deadlines. Anyone who has been around a while or worked in State Government knows that goes hand in hand with making sure

that our purchase orders are ready for July 1st as well. So, we close those out and reopen our purchase orders if that is the case with any contracts we have, and I think we only have one, that is National Federation of the Blind. Dr. Williams-Stokes then thanked Jackie and her staff for all of the work they have done to make sure things are on target and up-to-date. In addition, she indicated that the agency is working on the cost reallocation plan with DHS, to ensure federal grant awards are in alignment with expenditures. The federal government requires that if we expend VR funds that the individuals working in VR are being paid with those funds only. So that means that when buying equipment the individuals who receive that grant award are authorized to use that equipment. DSB's cost allocation plan will keep expenditures in alignment with the funding source.

RISK ASSESSMENT – Dr. Williams-Stokes said that DSB is working on updating the risk assessment system. We have a deadline of June 15th, and this is a new system. We already had an Excel spreadsheet to reflect our risk assessment. She mentioned that it is coveted around the country by other agencies that do not have one in place, and they use Arkansas as an example, but DHS and the rest of State government are moving to the new system.

PRIOR APPROVAL – Dr. Williams-Stokes stated that RSA has moved forward with a requirement for prior approval for items over \$5000. This means that items not prior authorized, such as a vehicle in order to provide services to our clients, we are required now to send in a letter of approval to RSA in order to purchase that equipment. Also, in order to send our staff to trainings, or whatever the case may be, for anything over \$5000. Mainly it is to prevent unallowable expenditures for federal funds, and to track inventory to make sure we are purchasing items that are required by law with the Federal grant awards. Right now we have one request that we are working on for a vehicle in the Jonesboro area, but we have not received that as of yet. Hopefully, this will not be a hindrance to us being able to provide timely services to our clients. They did send a letter forward to all state agencies that the intent is not to hinder program implementation services. We believe it is more of an accountability issue.

BUDGET REPORT – Dr. Williams-Stokes noted that the Bi-annual Budget is under way. We are due to submit that in mid-July. We are working towards that process, and Jackie is leading that for us and will have it submitted. In addition, in dealing with Finance, our expenditure budget report is in your packet. If the Board has any questions, do give us a call or an email, and we will get those questions answered.

CONTRACTS – Dr. Williams-Stokes noted that existing contracts with a July 1 or after start date have met deliverables and are on schedule to be renewed on July 1, contingent upon legislative approval. She also stated that some contracts are not in the Board packet. DSB has quite a few starting July 1st. She named 3, all at \$19,920. One that will be representing two renewals awarded under a combined package to one vendor – The Spa Disability Resources Advocacy Center for the Delta and Garland County region. The other two at \$19,920 are Mainstreaming, in central Arkansas, and Sources, in the Northwest area. World Services for the Blind will begin

on July 1st as well. They will continue with their services for Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB), which Sharon will mention later, and the amount is \$350,000.

REIMBURSEMENTS – Dr. Williams-Stokes mentioned that DSB is in the process of receiving Social Security reimbursement funds. Normally, the funds are expended in the Older Blind (OIB) program because we are required by law to expend any funds from SSA reimbursement first. OIB is the only program income we have control over in how to spend funds, because we actually submit payments on the bill, and the VR program receives indirect expenditures.

AR-SILC – The Arkansas State Independent Living Counsel (AR-SILC) was also awarded the \$23,420, and that is the normal amount that we allocate to them. I know we upped the contract maybe a couple of thousand dollars in the last two years

RECRUITMENT – Key Positions that are Currently Vacant:

- Rehab Counselors – Harrison, West Memphis, and Little Rock. In the event that DSB is unable to attract applicants who are certified, we will continue to downgrade and recruit at the non-certified level as needed.
- Job Vacancy Announcements are emailed to the ACB and NFB representatives, Secretary Sandy Edwards and Chairman Terry Sheeler.

RECRUITMENT – Dr. Williams-Stokes noted that, in relation to recruitment, DSB is currently under a freeze with DHS and said that the Board has probably heard on the news that the Governor is trying to make of state government more efficient. Part of that is for the Departments to ensure that any positions filled are needed, and they are providing an outcome that is helping the state be more efficient. The position freeze authorizes DSB to fill 70 of those positions without prior approval from the DHS Director’s Office. DSB has submitted a request for 8 positions to be released from that freeze. We have not received a response. Those positions do include rehab counselors, rehab assistants, and one administrative assistant. Possible impact could include delayed client services and funds not utilized timely per RSA requirements. As Betsy mentioned, we do have that 15% PreETS requirement, and those Pre-Employment Transition Counselors are a part of those frozen positions. So, it is very important that we have those positions released and filled in a timely manner. She said she did not know if the Board can assist our Director with accomplishing that task.

DSB Director Morris mentioned that a call to the Director of DHS from the Board would be good.

Dr. Stokes-Williams reminded the Board that all advertisement for vacancy positions are emailed to the NFB Chairman and ABC Chairman. She also noted that Ms. Sheeler has had some issues with the notices, and we have tried resolve those issues.

Dr. Williams-Stokes thanked her supervisors and staff for their hard work making DSB Finance and Recruitment more efficient.

OLD BUSINESS:

WIOA REPORT – Betsy Barnes:

PERFORMANCE MEASURES UNDER WIOA – Ms. Barnes wanted to say that when it comes to DSB addressing the WIOA required Performance Measures, we appreciate our Quality Assurance team – Crystal Anderson and Megan Lamb. WIOA established performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements, to assess the effectiveness of achieving positive outcomes for the individuals we serve.

The Primary Indicators

- Employment Rate – at 2nd and 4th Quarter after exit
- Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter after Exit compared to when they started
- Credential Attainment – what did they gain from education or training program
- Measureable Skill Gains – what skills did participants gain that did not result in a credential from training or education
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers – retention, repeat employers
- The Quality Assurance team has conducted several rounds of training. The success of these trainings is reflected by running the 911 report. At first it had a high percentage of errors, after the training the errors were less than 1%. We will not stop until it is zero before we turn it in to the Feds. This means every counselor must correctly enter and update the employment, earnings, training and academic achievements.

2018 COY NOMINATIONS – Betsy Barnes:

2018 COY PROCESS – Ms. Barnes thanked the Board members that serve on the Consumer of the Year (COY) Selections Committee for updating the COY Nomination Form. The changes included:

- Changed consumer commitment as a Rehabilitation Partner, with their DSB Counselor, from a rating on the form, to a requirement – you must have the commitment from the consumer in order to be nominated for the award.
- Added Community Involvement and/or Mentorship as a new scoring category
- The Counselors are taking the lead to make the arrangements for the local presentations rather than the LR staff.

Nomination packets will be available in October so that the committee can select the Consumer of the Year to be honored at our December Awards Luncheon.

EOY PROCESS – Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes:

Dr. Williams-Stokes began by thanking Chairman Sheeler and mentioned that DSB does not have the Board's nominations for this year. She began by explaining the new employees' Performance Goals Compensation System (PGCS) for 2018. To complete the evaluation process

supervisors were tasked with submitting an evaluation for each employee. The Governor has said the funds were there to provide a merit increase. He is in the process of answering the question of how to provide a merit increase and what percentage the increase should be. It is expected to be finalized by next Friday and we should have all of this information out to all employees so it can be implemented beginning July 1st.

In doing that, PGCS supervisors have to nominate:

1. Needs development – which was a 2.
2. Solid performer – was a 3, or someone who routinely does their job 99.5% correctly
3. Highly effective – who goes above and beyond their job and adds value to the division – you never have to get on them for disciplinary, and with minimum supervision.
4. Role model – outstanding employee.

10%, just 8 or 9 in all of DSB staff were selected for a 4 or 5 category. It is going to be kind of difficult for our employees to recommend those to you in the manner in which you have received those before. She said, offhand, that DSB did not receive 2 nominations in the clerical category; so we would not be able to send 2 nominations to the committee. So, that would be one issue. She believes that the best recommendation would be to look at what is available and appoint a committee to look at how we would want to implement the Employee of the Year process, or if you would want to the 4, or 5, that were submitted and look at who would be best suited to win Employee of the Year for 2018. Dr. Williams-Stokes stated that she is not sure how the Board wants to move forward with the process. She does know that this is not in alignment with what the Board has in their instructions for Employee of the Year.

Chairman. Sheeler stated that the Board will probably have to look at that beforehand and thanked Dr. Williams-Stokes for explaining that. She said she does know they do have that committee in place, so they may want to look at that.

Dr. Williams-Stokes offered to follow-up with the committee and said we do have the DSB Employee of the year nomination coming forward. She mentioned the AHSEA is in October and DSB usually has to have the nomination right after the September Board meeting.

Director Katy Morris asked to make a suggestion. She said for that with Employee of the Year for all of DHS there are very few of these that came back from the departmental committee. The evaluations were turned in and what came back to DSB did not match what was submitted. In any case, if you only have a small number you might select at least the overall employee of the Year from that small number, because you have all of the evaluations there. It will not be based on the current DSB EOY guidelines. You would be using the new state guidelines for this one year, but what that does not do is give you a categorical winner, because we do not have the 2 in each category to consider.

Chairman Ms. Sheeler said the Board would definitely look at it and put that into place so they will be able to make the decision.

NEW BUSINESS

SFY 2019 BUDGET – Dr. Cassondra Williams-Stokes:

Dr. Williams-Stokes was pleased to report that DSB submitted our annual operating plan in May and on July 1st we are expecting to start spending that appropriation.

WINTAC – Dr. Williams-Stokes said that DSB applied for WINTAC, and our application has been accepted. Many of our team members are involved in the process. DSB is receiving technical assistance (TA) with PreETS and with performance measurement, business engagement and other areas where we are trying to improve how we do business.

WIOA – WIOA has been out since 2014, and it has been a transition for DSB with staff turnovers and training new people in WIOA. Our first onsite visit will be during the Field meeting July 17th through 19th for 3 days of training – half-days on the first and last day. They will provide information for DSB to train all staff at the same time while making sure implementation is consistent across the board. This will be a plus for us to help fix some deficiencies of how we are operating or receiving TA when the RSA comes for a site visit.

OIB REPORT – Mary Douglas for June Richardson:

NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS – Ms. Douglas reported that Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) had met earlier that morning and elected officers. June Richardson was reelected as the Chair. Ms. Richardson had just retired from the VA as a rehab teacher and volunteering is what she planned to do in retirement. Before that she had worked for DSB as a rehab teacher, so DSB and the Board all know her well. The remaining officers are Pat Smith as Secretary-Treasurer and Sandy Edwards as Vice-Chair.

MSU-TAC – Ms. Douglas noted that Betsy Barnes had mentioned the MSU-TAC. She stated that what she liked was the focus on the Older Blind in that group and how to provide services in a client-centered manner with focus on their independence from their viewpoint, not ours. She also noted that MSU has also posted “16 Best Practices for Administration of OIB Programs” nationwide and anyone can go to their website to read them.

ACB MEMBERSHIP – Another subject mentioned was how to increase membership in the local chapter in Arkansas of the ACB Council. The topic of discussion included how people are using the phone more when they get older and the use of technology. She mentioned the possibility of trying a combination of and the use of an at-large meeting where they meet by the phone, and OIB can still have presenters via teleconference. Ms. Douglas mentioned that Sandy Edwards still has vacant ACB officer positions and reminded us that if anyone has any prospects please give them Sandy’s number.

LIBRARY PILOT PROGRAM – Ms. Douglas also wanted to mention another member of the group, J. D. Hall, of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and one of the programs he has been involved in as a pilot. Arkansas is one of 8 pilots where the library staff

download books individually or a series of books, which they can put on one digital cartridge to be mailed out. This frees up space on the library shelves and time required for copies to be made.

Ms. Douglas mentioned that June Richardson should be at the next Board meeting in September.

OIB CONTRACT – Sharon Giovinazzo:

CLIENTS – Ms. Giovinazzo stated that since July 1, last year, we have served 497 eligible Older Blind clients. Each client varies from activities of daily living to one-on-one instruction, orientation and mobility. We have group events in 10 of the 75 counties in Arkansas over the last quarter, since we last updated you. A lot of those focus groups, are focusing in the bigger cities on mobility, and being a little more independent for them. Then we have our “Healthy Habits” routine with them where we focus on using air fryers and infrared cookers, induction top cook tops, insta-pots, you know, all the things that clutter up your counter top.

MEDICAL STAFF – We continue to grow our relationship with our medical staff. We get a lot of referrals from our medical staff throughout the State, and those are really important relationships we have because it helps us to keep costs down.

REFERRALS – Some of the challenges we have due to rural tendencies in Eastern Arkansas and some of the other areas is that when we go to contact a referral, we get other individuals who answer for them. We do not want to assess the son or daughter who we are calling, we want to assess the grandma, who does not really need our services. Sometimes it may take 13 calls, but we are going to make that contact. We have taken a lot of them, especially in the rural areas, who screen our calls and simply refuse to answer them. And so, there is always a challenge along with that.

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS – We just had a meeting the day before with DHS on their foster grandparent program and this is going to be a great opportunity for them to earn a little bit more money. We can plug our OIB folks in to it, they can earn a little bit more money and they get to go rock babies, and get paid to do it. They do not even have to change their diaper they just hand the baby to a nurse. What a great deal! Also, any of the money they get paid for doing this does not affect any of their federal benefits, it does not affect their subsidized housing or anything like that. So, this is a great way to plug people in.

NEW SFY – So, a new year is coming up. This is a great time for WSB. Outside of the partnership with DSB under the STYLE and new Transition we have the new Grandparent experience.

PROMOTION – Ms. Giovinazzo then spoke about her experiences in the previous months with promotion on a national level. She spoke about the issues that arise with service animals and non-service animals that cause problems for regular service animals. “And so, a few months ago WebMD called me. How they got my name I do not know, it might have been somebody I got stuck talking to at the airport until they got sick of listening to me and so they decided to

interview me. I spend a lot of time in airports and a lot of people talk to me. And so, after the WebMD interview the New York Times called me and there was a pretty good write up in there. I know you have all heard about this lady who walked into one of the airports with this peacock, who was her emotional support peacock. I'm sorry people, if you use a peacock as emotional support you really have a lot more problems because a peacock is kind of aggressive, and they poop on the floor. Exactly, it is funny. I just flew in from Orlando and this whole national thing and this guy recognized me on Sunday, the guy at the ticket booth, and said, "You just do not know how big of a problem this is." He said, "We see at least a hundred service animals (air quotes I'm doing for everybody who is blind) "service animals" come through here a day. Not a week or a month but a hundred a day." Little old people traveling with their Mickey Mouse ears on and their little dogs. You know, they have their little dogs; some of them two pounds. I had one of them the other day, you know, sitting behind me and barking and I finally asked them, "Would you please move that person. I mean, he does not even have a real dog." It is kind of taken off a life of its own, so. My name and World Services for the Blind thing was talked about in the New York Times, so you do not get that every day. You know, it is something that people need to know about our consumers. One, it is something that people see all the time and it is this pre-conceived notion that they just see a little Pomeranian go down and the gate agent has said there are probably seeing 10-15 accidents a day of dogs urinating and defecating on the floor in the airport. And, so it makes it hard for me. I actually carry all of my certifications with me when I fly. I carry a letter from the United Dog School, Proof of Blindness, Proof of Hearing Impairment, you know, a letter from the VA. I do not know, I carry it all with me. This is real stuff folks and we are dealing with this every day."

FAIRS REPORT – Larry Wayland:

Non-Profit Status – Mr. Wayland spoke about FAIRS and the meeting they had yesterday before World Services for the Blind and a meeting they had on May 10th. He reported that they are still waiting for their 501c3 from the IRS. However, the last time it was mailed it in was the end of January, and all he has heard from them is that they have received it. Assistant Director Cassandra Williams-Stokes said that normally this is good. We are expecting them to accept it this time, and they did keep the check this time.

LIAISON REPLACEMENT – Mr. Wayland announced that Mike McCullers, the DSB Board liaison between FAIRS and ABT, resigned from the Board and returned to UCA to teach. AETN has not replaced him. Director Morris has volunteered to write a letter to the director of AETN to request a meeting to replace Mr. McCullers.

PUBLICATIONS – FAIRS plans to review their brochures and update them so we can get better information out to others including the counselors, and the new blind consumers about how to listen to the broadcast of FAIRS.

BACK-UP EQUIPMENT – Larry added that AIRS is in need of back-up equipment for broadcasting. Currently, if the equipment goes down the service will go down. He said the

501(c)3 status will help FAIRS with fundraising for AIRS. Without the 501(c)3 they will have to pay taxes on new equipment. He has stated at one time that it might be \$8k.

DISABILITY RIGHTS – Tom Masseau:

Chairman Terry Sheeler noted that Tom Masseau is not present and the Board will check up on that at the next meeting.

AR-SILC QUARTERLY REPORT – Sha Anderson:

Chairman Terry Sheeler noted that Sha Anderson is not present to give the Arkansas State Living Independent Council quarterly report, but that her March, April, and May monthly reports are in the Board packet.

OLD BUSINESS – Chairman Terry Sheeler:

BOARD MEMBER TERMS – Chairman Terry Sheeler asked Director Katy Morris whether we have any new information regarding reappointment of the Board members. Director Morris stated that DSB has checked with the Governor’s office and gotten no response. In the minutes of the last meeting it was discussed that one of the ways the Governor has handled down-sizing is, in the event that board members, who are standing members cease to attend and the board ends up with a lack of a quorum, the board folds. That has never happened with DSB, and as long as we have got faithful attendance we have got a Board.

QUORUM – Board member Larry Wayland asked how many are needed for a quorum. Director Morris answered 4 of the 7 standing, voting Board Members. Mr. Wayland asked how many times that can happen before the Board is dissolved. Director Morris answered that it has never happened and that the Board must meet once every quarter. If the Board meets without filling a quorum the must meet again in that quarter and fill a quorum to meet the requirement. Director Morris also stated that she would find out how many times the Board could fail to meet before it is dissolved.

CONSUMER INPUT:

ACB – ACB State President Sandy Edwards announced that the ACB convention will be held in 3 weeks in St. Louis, and their State convention will be in Little Rock. The location is pending and will be announced later.

NFB – NFB State President Terry Sheeler announced that the NFB national convention is July 3rd though July 8th in Orlando, Florida. Anyone who cannot attend is invited to attend live streaming to see where it will be next year. And our state convention is going to be October 12th through the 14th in Hot Springs, Arkansas at the Hotel Hot Springs.

MEMBERSHIP – Terry Sheeler also announced that ACB is in need of a treasurer and a membership chair, and if anybody interested in the position send them to ACB State President Sandy Edwards and tell them it is \$7 to join ACB. Also, they are looking for members.

NEXT MEETING – Board Chairman Terry Sheeler reminded everyone that the next Board Meeting is here September 14th. Ms. Sheeler then asked all the DSB Board members to remain afterwards to have a word.

MEETING ADJOURNED