

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2019

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Clark, At-Large
Sandra Edwards, ACB
Basil Julian, LIONS
Bill Johnson, AER
Teresa Sheeler, NFB
Stephanie Smith, ASBVI

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

James Caton, ASBVI
Sandy Rowland, VFP

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Erika Evans, At-Large

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Kara Aaron, BVA
Sharon Giovinazzo, WSB
Harold Brewer, VFP
June Richardson, OIB
Lisa Reynolds, AER
Larry Wayland, FAIRS

DWS Representative: None

Attorney General's Office Representative: None

Governor's Office Representative: None

Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Board Meeting Support Staff: Betsy Barnes, Megan Lamb, Mason Murphey, Debra Newton, Jim Pearson, Angela Thomas, and Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes.

Others Present: Christian Adcock, DRA, and Erma Nelson, former VFP.

Approval of the Agenda: Bill Johnson moved, and Keith Clark seconded the motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. The motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting from June 14, 2019 Keith Clark moved, and Basil Julian seconded a motion to accept the minutes with three corrections from last Board meeting. The motion carried.

Director's Report – Dr. Williams-Stokes, DSB Director

Transformation

Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Director, Cassandra Williams-Stokes, began her report stating that there have been a few issues since the transformation to the Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services (DWS), but all were resolved. She thanked Board Chair Terry

Sheeler and Board members for their support during this challenging period. Those issues included a legal name change, which resulted in delay of federal funding. She reported that DSB is in the position to provide services to all eligible consumers.

Dr. Williams-Stokes recommended that the Board consider requesting an Order of Selection (OOS) in the 2020 state plan from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to allow the agency options in the event of a funding shortage. She noted that the last OOS was approved in 2003 in the DSB State Plan. The OOS allows the agency to prioritize consumers with the greatest need for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. DSB will coordinate with Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) regarding draft language for the Board to review at the December meeting. The process includes RSA approval, public comment, and promulgation.

Board member James Caton mentioned that going without Order of Selection since 2003 is a long time and moving forward ensuring that the OOS would always be a part of the State plan. It would have been really useful in recent issues we have faced.

Board Chairman Terry Sheeler commented that she attended the meetings with RSA and that DSB is now headed in a better direction. She stated that DSB needed a vote from the Board to move forward on this matter.

Basil Julian moved that the DSB Board empower the DSB Director to draft an OOS policy and that it be brought to the Board for approval. Keith Clark seconded the motion. Unanimous vote proceeded.

Needs Assessment

DSB is still working to finalize the Comprehensive Needs Assessment process. The assessment will include consumers, consumer groups, stakeholders, vendors and DSB employees. Participants will also include the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI), Arkansas Council of the Blind (ACB), National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Arkansas and the Vending Facility Program (VFP). She asked that the Board let her know of any other businesses stake holders that should be informed.

Prior Approval from RSA for Board Travel

DSB will continue to require prior approval for its Board members to travel to out-of-state national meetings. She mentioned that prior approval will be included on the December Board Statewide meeting agenda for to request RSA approval for calendar year 2020.

DSB Board Annual Training

DSB Board was provided training on Workforce Innovative Opportunities Act (WIOA) during last year's annual training. The plan for the annual training this year is related to reviewing the 2020 DSB State Plan initiatives and the combined state data on Thursday, December 12th, along with any other recommendations the Board would like to see as part of their annual training. Board Chairman Terry Sheeler mentioned that at the DSB Statewide meeting last year, Department of Human Services talked to the Board in great length about their performance review system for the Division

Director. This year DSB is under DWS. Mrs. Sheeler and Dr. Williams-Stokes met with Dr. Charisse Childers and she was receptive to providing any information the board needed on the performance evaluation process.

Chairman Sheeler asked the Board for feedback on any other training recommendations. Bill Johnson asked about the about the evaluation form for the performance review for the Director for 2019-2020. Chairman Terry Sheeler responded that the form will be the same as last year. Dr. Williams-Stokes responded that DSB will continue with the same categories implemented in April 2019 while under DHS. There is a possibility that the categories will change in April 2020 during the new performance evaluation period. Mr. James Caton mentioned that he would like an overview of DSB programs and what policies and procedures they follow; for example, in the “Older Blind” (OIB) program, or when deciding on kids who are going on to college, and those services. He would like a better understanding of all the bits and pieces they sometimes miss.

RSA II Report – Megan Lamb- A copy of report was emailed to Board members

Dr. Megan Lamb provided a brief overview of the funds expended by DSB October 2018-June 2019. The RSA II is a report sent to Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) every year to provide an update on October 1-September 30 of the following year. The report provides costs based on service categories to include training, and diagnosis/treatment. The report also includes the number of consumers who received each service and services provided by community rehab partners, such as World Services for the Blind (WSB), Louisiana Center for the Blind, and Alpha Point. October 1, 2018 to June 2019, DSB expended \$645,314.32 at World Services for the Blind (WSB), \$20,168.00 at Alpha Point, and \$50,795.78 at the Louisiana Center for the Blind (LCB). The Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) at WSB, which is separated out, is \$154,662.93.

Successful Closures

Based on this reporting period, DSB closed one participant successfully from WSB. They have five participants currently in employment status and will hopefully close successfully in the next couple of weeks; 58 participants who have open cases in “service” status participating in various services and programs; and, 14 who closed unsuccessfully for various reasons. For LCB, DSB has two participants they paid for this year, and both have cases in “service” status. For Alpha Point, both of those closed unsuccessfully.

Categories of Service

Dr. Lamb then briefly mentioned the service categories used to track expenditures. DSB’s largest expenditures are training, and diagnosis/treatment. DSB spent \$571,774.77 on training services, and \$535,114.64 on diagnosis and treatment. DSB expended \$216,794.54 for “other” services, which is a catch-all for services that do not fit in a category. Rehab technology is the next largest category and the others show decreased expenditures.

Training Services

Training services are also separated in sub-categories: \$267,000 going to four-year colleges; vocational training at \$118,700; also, graduate college, disability skills training, on the job training, associate degrees, and various programs.

Job Services

Job services are also broken down: job search assistant, job placement, on the job support, and supported employment at on the job support. The largest is \$39,000 for job placement, which is paying for assistance of various clients placed in various jobs and receiving support.

Duplication of Services

Duplication occurs if clients receive more than one service. The total number of services received does not reflect the number of participants. The numbers reflect how many people receive each individual service. The largest category is diagnosis/treatment at 345 participants. The next category is rehab technology with 79 participants. RSA II report does not capture “in house” services such as counseling and guidance.

Performance Measures for the Program Year

The program year in the report is from June 1st through July 30th. DSB completed 92 measurable skill gains this year with 66 secondary diplomas, 20 report cards and transcripts, and 6 skill progressions. DSB reported 11 credential attainments to include vocational licenses, seven bachelor’s degrees and one master’s degree. The employment rate from second quarter was 33%, with 130 participants who still had their jobs in the second quarter after exit, and fourth quarter after exit 65 participants, or 18.4% were still employed. For retention, 46 participants of 65 still had the same job at the fourth quarter that they had at the second quarter, which was 35% of participants. In terms of median wages, at exit is \$12.50 per hour with an average of 40 hours per week worked. For second quarter after exit wage information is used to report quarterly income, or \$6,623.43 per quarter is the median.

Questions

Superintendent James Caton asked what constitutes a successful “closure”. Dr. Lamb answered that a successful closure is based on achieving employment. When the consumer finds a job before finishing college and decides not to finish with the degree that is considered a successful closure before they get a degree. They are only a successful closure if they can document employment.

Mr. Caton asked about documentation. Dr. Lamb responded that before a counselor can pay for the next semester they must send in proof of application for financial aid, previous semester grades, and a class schedule for the upcoming semester. The counselor must enter this into AWARE.

Dr. Williams-Stokes stated the final report is due to RSA December 2019, and the final report will be provided at the December Board meeting.

Assistant Director's Report – Angela Thomas Financial Report

Ms. Thomas mentioned that the financial report for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY2019) was in the packet given to the Board. DSB received re-allotment for \$2,580,375.00. This brings the budget to \$4,076,537. DSB has until September 30, 2020 to spend the re-allotment award. Due to funding delays during the transformation to DWS, Department of Finance and Administration loaned DSB \$700,000 until federal funding was restored on August 2, 2019. DSB has repaid \$400,000 to DFA and will repay the other \$300,000 next week. DSB is currently below their planned expenses for the Fiscal Year because of their delay in access to AASIS, issuing new contracts and paying invoices. As of September 12, 2019, DSB has expended \$1,022,188.

Changes in Processing

Ms. Thomas mentioned that DSB has changed the way they process accounts receivable and account payables in Human Resources, due to transformation. Accounts receivables are preparing weekly calculations for Federal drawdowns. Once DSB has prepares those calculations, they complete a revenue receipt form. Once they return a deposit slip to DSB they forward the deposit slip to the treasury to get the Federal money moved to pay for the expenses.

Accounts Payable Forms

There are two different forms one is called Direct Pay and the other one is called Purchase Requests. The P Card process for DSB similar except they have one other step. Since they are no longer under DHS, DSB is going into the accounts payable system to find the document number that is associated with their P Card process.

Procurement

For procurement, at the beginning this fiscal year DSB still had some outstanding contracts that were active. All contracts have now been closed that were associated with DHS. Replacement contracts were automatically created due to their new funding and coding. Ms. Thomas thinks they have primarily resolved all those contracts ready for DSB to use. Purchase requisitions have been created and DSB will be placing their own orders once they get the contacts back in place.

Federal Match Requirement

Ms. Thomas reported that the invoices for Independent Living (Arkansas State Independent Living Council (ARSILC) for state match will be paid by the end of the month. For Supported Employment, DSB has not incurred any expenses for Supported Employment. For Older Blind (OIB) the invoices have been submitted to DFA to be processed.

Human Resources

Since the last meeting, DSB has had one new hire, Mr. Terrence Boatwright, for the Vending Facility Program (VFP), and they have had five resignations. Two in Little Rock, one Fayetteville, one in El Dorado, and one in Batesville. DSB currently has 14 positions vacant, 13 of those have recently been advertised.

Dr. Williams-Stokes mentioned that Board member Sandra Edwards suggested there were a lot of vacant positions. The reason for the vacancies is partly due to the freeze that occurred under DHS and DSB was not allowed to advertise. The increase in the number of employees provides DSB an opportunity to serve more consumers.

Field Services Report – Betsy Barnes, Field Administrator

Funding

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors are working 21 caseloads and serving about 900 clients. They are coordinating services that match consumer Individual Plan of Employment (IPE).

Staff Updates

All vacant positions have been advertised except for the Batesville office and the Business Engagement position. All but three Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA) cases have been resolved, two of them before July of this year.

State Plan

DSB will continue to provide services to match goals listed in the current state plan Vocational Rehab (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) as follows: DSB will increase the employment opportunities for people who are blind or severely visually impaired; Increase Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to high school students and increase transition services to out-of-school youth; DSB will expand its outreach efforts to include the general public, as well as the unserved, under-served, minorities, and stakeholders; and DSB will increase coordination with employers.

Supported Employment State Plan Goals

DSB will increase the number of Supported Employment (SE) providers to better serve DSB participants, increase SE services to youth with the most significant disabilities students and out-of-school youth, and DSB will increase the quality of SE providers for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. The revised State Plan is due spring 2020. Ms. Barnes mentioned that the DSB Board will receive an update regarding Goals and Strategies at the December meeting.

Quality Assurance and Internal Controls

DSB is working to strengthen the outcomes in quality assurance (QA), internal controls, and accountability. The outcomes in this area ensure we are following state and federal guidelines. A team was developed to track action and progress; review policies and procedures to make recommendations for updates to DSB Director. Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center Agreement (WINTAC) consultants are working with DSB to improve the process used within the agency.

New Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Activities

DSB has a new College and Career Success program at the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI) that will be conducted by Superior Success. The students will meet during their classes for 13 weeks. This program includes a great curriculum to prepare students for

college after graduation, including ACT (American College Testing) test preparation. Ms. Barnes stated that DSB is fortunate to be working with Superior Success to provide this cost-effective program at \$1000 per student for a 13-week course. Superior Success also provides work experience placements to four ASBVI seniors. These assignments are developed to match the individuals' interest, and the goal is for the student to become a permanent employee afterwards.

Other Pre-ETS Activities

The Jump Start program was a success for 27 high school juniors and seniors. World Services for the Blind (WSB) conducted their Student Transition Youth Learning Experience (STYLE) program during the summer months at their Little Rock headquarters and continues to have a strong presence in NW Arkansas. In August, DSB held their annual Back to School Student and Parent Summit. They call it "Back to School" because they do it in August; it is a Career Readiness Workshop; they bring in speakers, work on setting goals, advocacy skills, and post-secondary options. This is also an opportunity to provide school supplies. New this year, DSB is participating in the Project Search program. Students spend nine months (three, 3-month rotations) with hospitals and colleges. A Transition Fair for the South and SE areas of the state will be held October 30th in Dumas, AR. Finally, a new dual caseload system that enable Pre-ETS and VR counselors to share caseloads and document potentially eligible clients.

Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center Agreement (WINTAC)

WINTAC consultants are providing additional technical assistance with several major projects to enhance services for DSB. They meet monthly with consultants to ensure accurate federal reporting and compliance with federal regulations. There is an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) case management pilot project with counselors from two DSB offices, involving ten to twelve clients, co-enrolled with the Division of Workforce Services (DWS) and Career Education. The IRT strategy will be to develop employment goals and align resources around these clients and their goals to meet or exceed WIOA performance goals.

Field Services Training

Field Services training was held in July with a focus on Quality Case Management. They are now planning for December Field Services and Statewide training on December 11th, and 13th. Field Staff will be participating in Immersion Training. This will include one week using a blindfold. They will attend classes for Orientation and Mobility (O & M), cane skills, daily living skills (cooking, kitchen, technology, and woodshop). DSB plans to return to sending staff to training. Staff interested in attending the Vision Specialist training at Mississippi State University (MSU) will have an opportunity to participate in the future. Ms. Barnes thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute at San Diego State this year.

Deaf-Blind Program

An interagency team will be working together to coordinate a new program for individuals that are deaf and blind. Goodwill will be the services provider. DSB conducted a training modeled after the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) staff in August.

Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB)

DSB is working to incorporate monitoring and quality assurance activities within the OIB program. Long and short-term plans and timelines were created with the assistance of Mississippi State University (MSU). MSU is scheduled to return for technical assistance with the agency to finalize program development goals. A new OIB referral form has been implemented. The DSB QA Manager is working to develop an OIB case management module in AWARE (Accessible Web-Based Activity and Reporting Environment). OIB Manager, Tina Shores, recently attended OIB TAC convention in Minnesota. She returned with lots of information and ideas.

Independent Living Aids

Ms. Barnes said that DSB continues to provide independent living aids. Technology changes daily and they do their best to keep up to date on technology and equipment.

Up-Coming Dates

White Cane Awareness Day will be October 15th, and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) convention will be October 28-30, 2019.

Dr. Williams Stoke mention to the Board she needed a vote to continue in the areas that Ms. Betsy Barnes mentioned. Bill made a motion to continue with our current goal State plan for 2020. It was Second by Basil Julian. The motion was approved unanimously.

Vending Facility Program (VFP) Report – Jim Pearson

Highway Vending

Jim Pearson reported that DSB has a new contract starting in October that will continue for three years. He mentioned that the painting and upgrades are finished in the Vending Facility Program (VFP) facilities and are ready for the new vendors to move in.

Local Vendors

DSB opened the 1515 Building location. This is where the Arkansas Building Authority is housed. This is a pre-packaged vending location that is currently without a manager. DSB is currently looking for two managers for the Vending Program.

The 1515 Building History

Mr. Pearson provided history involving the 1515 Building cafeteria. Former DSB Director Jim Hudson and Assistant Director Katy Morris created the Vending Facility Program (VFP) together with Jim Pearson, and the 1515 building was exempt from the DSB Act. When the State upgraded the cafeteria in the basement of the Capitol, that went out for bids to public entities and the person who was located at the site was not awarded the bid. When 1515 site became available, Anne Laidlaw called us to let inquire about our interest to manage the location. She was present in 1998 when these legislative issues occurred. DSB was provided an opportunity to manage the location. DSB is selling pre-packaged foods only because it was not cost efficient to serve hot foods.

VFP and Tech Lab Clients

Mr. Pearson mentioned that both the Vending Facility Program and the Tech Program receive client referrals from the VR counselors. VFP provides training and on the job training certification and place the managers in a vending location. Consumers are required to be legally blind to participate in the Vending Facility Program. Consumers do not have to be legally blind to receive training in the DSB Tech Lab.

Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)

The Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) with DWS began with just a phone-line in the comprehensive sites, but now we will have our offices in these one-stop operations. DSB will move out of the DHS facility by the end of this year. DSB is assessing what needs to be done to move to the new locations.

Little Rock Offices

Some DSB staff will move to 1 Verizon Center, which is at 1 Verizon Way. This is the old Verizon building at the bottom of Cantrell Hill. Old Verizon Building. They are dealing with office space and where to put the DSB Tech Lab. DSB will coordinate the move and provide details as they become available.

Old Business – Teresa Sheeler, Board Chair

New DSB Board Appointments

The Governor's office has not made any decisions on board reappointments. Ms. Sheeler thanked Mason Murphey for notifying the Board and making sure all DSB Board members have re-applied for membership.

Transformation Update – Cassandra Williams

Dr. Williams-Stokes reported that DSB met with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) this week. Attending were Dr. Charisse Childers and the CFO for DWS, and Arkansas Rehab Services Director and their staff. DWS proposed that ARS begin serving as DSB administrative support and shared fiscal, human resources, communication and legal services. RSA requested a written proposal. DSB is working with ARS to draft a proposal to begin the support on January 1, 2020. The Governor has recommended that all state agencies use shared services to improve state government efficiencies.

DSB Employee Training – Cassandra Williams

Dr. Williams-Stokes reported that the Board has expressed interest in learning more about the training provided to DSB employees. The Immersion training will be required for all VR Counselors to provide opportunities for them to understand consumer experience. DSB's partnership with Mississippi State assists with ongoing training with blindness and visual impairment issues. MSU offers free training and DSB staff is encouraged to participate for continuing education credits. DSB requires two new trainings in each performance rating year. In addition, the administrative staff receives opportunities to participate in training to develop their skills.

Employee of the Year – Basil Julian, Board Member

Basil Julian reported that the Employee of the Year (EOY) Committee consisted of Board members Kara Aaron, Stephanie Smith, and himself. Mr. Julian thanked and congratulated all employees nominated for the award, and supervisors who took the time to nominate their employees through the state evaluation system. The Committee received the evaluations of the employees who were nominated for the highest employee evaluation rating. The nominations were not divided into individual job classifications; all nominations were scored against each other. The rating system includes four categories: initiative and internal drive; efficiency and improving operations; professional relationships; and mentoring. The Employee of the Year Committee reviewed the narratives in each category one to ten. The Committee recommends the top three scorers be awarded prizes of one hundred dollars and that the overall winner be awarded an additional one-hundred-dollar prize and a plaque. A total of twelve nominations were received and considered. The twelve nominees were Crystal Anderson, Betsy Barnes, Contrena Bowie, LaTasha Carter, Connie Crawford, Rhonda Garmon, Heather Grigsby, Megan Lamb, LaTasha Mays, Debra Newton, Bessie Talley and Sherrie Walston-Friday. Since all the employees were rated as “outstanding employees” the ratings were very close. The three nominees selected were chosen as representative of all the outstanding work done throughout DSB. The top three scorers were Crystal Anderson, Dr. Megan Lamb and LaTasha Mays. The overall DSB employee of the Year was Dr. Megan Lamb. With that, Basil Julian motioned for acceptance of the report.

Board Chair Terry Sheeler entertained a motion from Basil Julian to accept this report. Keith Clark seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion carried. Chairman Sheeler congratulated all nominated for their hard work.

ACB National Convention Report – Sandy Edwards

The American Counsel of the Blind (ACB) National Convention was held from July 5th through the 12th, in Rochester, NY. They started at 8 o'clock in the morning and finished midnight. The general sessions were in the morning, and in the afternoon they would have special interest groups: one for teachers, one for the United Way, one for Citizens with Low Vision, a blind attorneys association; there were many you could go to, and all had their own agenda and program. The sponsors that helped finance the convention were present. They had Aira [Aira Tech Corp, a low vision aids company], Google, Microsoft, Humanware [a low vision aids company], JP Morgan Chase, and a myriad of sponsors. Aira gave them a discount on their room. In the general sessions they varied. Marti Shultz, who founded the Blindfold Games, had another program called Objective Ed, in which he's developing games that teach specific concepts to blind and visually impaired children. Children play games to aid in learning.

The United States Joined the Marrakesh Treaty

On May 8th, the US became the 50th country to become a member of the Marrakesh Treaty. This treaty will make available to make books and resources available to blind and visually impaired persons in many countries that have not been as fortunate as we have. They are going to have to rewrite the BARD website. There is a service to call IRA and, if it is a small question, it can be answered for free. The ACB website has 2000 listings available for visually impaired to access. This includes movies and other media that are described.

Accommodations

This conference was a challenge for visually impaired because they were in two different hotels and there were a lot of steps and elevators from one to the other. The next convention will be at the Renaissance Hotel, in Schaumberg, Illinois, from July 3-10, 2019.

National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Convention – Terry Sheeler

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Convention was held July 7-12 this year in a very hot Las Vegas, Nevada, at Mandalay Bay with 3000 attending. DSB sent Owen Wallace “Wally” Thomas to attend. Chairman Sheeler thanked the DSB sponsorship to the convention. There were a lot of good speakers and companies with products to provide hands-on experience. Also, the NFB independent market is a good source to visit and get literature and Braille calendars, and things of that sort. These were available at the convention and online for counselors. Souvenirs were given out for donations to the local NFB affiliate. 20 members from Arkansas came. There was a full row from Arkansas, which was a large number for the state. Mark Riccobono, NFB President, described how they have strategized growth for the organization. This included the following: education and rehabilitation and employment, previous membership, community building and various advocacy towards development. He shared with them the purpose of their Code of Conduct that was adopted by their National Board in 2017, and he asked members to get out their New Membership Coins introduced in January when they all paid their member dues. The Braille coins are symbolic for membership with the National Federation of the Blind.

Legislation

Mark Riccobono also shared current legislation and issues that have been signed into law. He reported how NFB should assist people who needed support with accessibility for Kiosks, point of sale machines, and accessibility issues with voting machines, and accessibility for education for Blind Students. He talked about blind parents and how their rights were being challenged and how we should be there to speak up for them.

Family Atmosphere

If you have never attended an NFB national convention, please consider attending one so that you yourself can have that family atmosphere. The thrills, the experience, the enrichment the power of positivity of blind people and how they can do things and seeing blind people living the philosophy of the Federation. Even if you are not blind yourself, you can get the experience and knowledge that you can share with one of your clients. You can go to nfb.org and search for the 2019 National Convention to see the list of speakers and hear their speeches. There were three days of general events and a banquet address provided by Mark Riccobono, titled “Choice, Exploration and Resistance, the Road to Freedom for the Blind. He mentioned two poems written by Robert Frost, “The Road not Taken,” and “The Arm Full”. He talked about how persons who are blind should take ownership for their freedom and the choices that they make for themselves. He also talked about the national leaders of NFB, Jacobus Tenbroek, Kenneth Jernigan, and Mark Maurer and emphasized the choices these leaders have made and the impact those choices had on NFB. The more they live by the philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind, the more choices they will have as blind people. Choices are fundamental to freedom. Commitment to making choices with love, hope, and determination.

Scholarships for Students

Every year the NFB gives out 30 scholarships to 30 students. These range from \$3000 to 12000, plus perks from vendors. Arkansas did not have one. They do try to get that information out about that scholarship. The information will be out soon, and the deadline is March 31st. Ms. Sheeler gave thanks to DSB and the Board for their support to attend the conference this year.

New Business – Terry Sheeler

Board Membership Protocol, By-Laws, and Constitution

Ms. Sheeler has worked with Director Williams-Stokes to identify the DSB Board protocol, by-laws, and constitution. The documents are in compliance with federal regulations. Chairman Sheeler highlighted a few items and asked DSB to send the documents out to board members again. Under article 1 section 1 the board will meet quarterly; also, under section 3 a quorum will consist of a majority of the seven voting members; also, article 3 section 1, “The Board will recommend to the Governor the removal of any member absent for 3 consecutive meetings. Section 2, “In the case of an extreme circumstance a member may request, and may be excused from the meeting, by a majority vote of the board.” If a member needs to be excused, they should notify the Chairperson ahead of time. Section 2, “All committees shall be composed of at least three members appointed by the Board and shall have such duties as may be delegated by the Chairperson. The Chairperson may appoint as many ex officio members as he, or she, desires to serve in the advisory capacity of each committee.” Ms. Sheeler clarified a couple of amendments. The first, “It was recommended that no proxy votes be allowed.” Number two, “It was recommended that the Board follow the interpretation of Mr. Joachum, with the Attorney General’s that ex officio members be allowed to sit in on meetings of the board to listen. Ex officio members may discuss issues, but not vote.” Number three, “It is recommended that the ex officio Board members may be allowed to vote in their committee.” The Board should watch for by-laws, the constitution and an updated Board list. An updated committee list will be attached.

DSB Board Annual Training

DSB Board Annual training will be at the statewide meeting December 12, 2019. The training will occur Thursday, December 12th. The time has not been announced yet. The reception will take place that evening at the Holiday Inn Airport, Little Rock. The DSB Board meeting will be at 10:00 am, Friday, December 13th.

Friends of Arkansas Information Reading Service (FAIRS) – Larry Wayland

Larry Wayland was not present to give his report.

World Services for the Blind (WSB) – Sharon Giovinazzo

Sharon Giovinazzo was not present to give her report.

Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA)

Christian Adcock spoke on behalf of Disability Rights Arkansas (DRA). Mr. Adcock reported that a few months ago DRA received an increase in calls from DSB clients. The clients reported they were being denied services and having communication issues with their counselors. Many of the issues were resolved after funding was restored to DSB.

Arkansas State Independent Living Council (ARSILC) – Sha Anderson

Dr. Sha’ Anderson was not present to give her report. Report was included in board packet.

Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) – June Richardson

June Richardson was not present to give her report.

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) Report – Bill Johnson

Bill Johnson is the governor appointed member of the DSB Board who is a member of Arkansas’ Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Mr. Johnson mentioned that Sandee Pinkstaff informed him of upcoming AER events. The annual conference for Arkansas chapter AER is coming up the week of September 19th through 20th at the Sheridan Four Points, on South University. There will be a Thursday evening social and the Friday awards luncheon. They are also meeting board members of various state agencies. Anyone with interest to serve on the AER board should contact them through arkansasaer@gmail.com. Also, an Arkansan, Janie Blome, Chair Elect, has taken over for the executive level at the national level in July.

Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair – Terry Sheeler

From the DSB Constitution, Board Chair Terry Sheeler read, “The officers of the Board shall be a Chairperson, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary. The Chairperson shall serve for a term of two years. The Vice-Chair and Secretary shall serve a term of one year.”

Nomination of DSB Board Chair – Bill Johnson

DSB Board Vice-Chair Bill Johnson thanked Board Chair Terry Sheeler for her hard work over the past two years and nominated Teresa “Terry” Sheeler as DSB Board Chair. Keith Clark seconded. Bill Johnson asked three times if there were any other nominations from the floor. There were none. A vote was taken, and Terry Sheeler was re-elected as DSB Board Chair for another term of two years. Board Chair Terry Sheeler thanked the Board.

Nomination of DSB Board Vice-Chair – Terry Sheeler

DSB Board Chairman Terry Sheeler entertained a motion for nominations for DSB Board Vice-Chair. Basil Julian nominated Bill Johnson as Vice-Chair. Board member Sandy Edwards seconded the motion. Board Chair asked three times if there were any other nominations from the floor. There were none and a vote was taken. The motion carried and Bill Johnson was re-elected as DSB Vice-Chair for another term of one year.

Nomination of the DSB Board Secretary

DSB Board Chairman Terry Sheeler entertained a motion for nominations for DSB Board Secretary. Basil Julian nominated Keith Clark as DSB Board Secretary. Bill Johnson seconded the nomination. Board Chair asked three times if there were any other nominations from the floor. There were none and a vote was taken. The motion carried and Keith Clark was elected as DSB Secretary for a term of one year.

Questions from the Floor

Irma Nelson, former VFP member, asked when the move for DSB will be. Jim Pearson responded that we would try to move the week of the DSB Statewide and Board meeting in December. The plan is to attend the meeting Thursday and Friday and move into the new facility the following Monday. Bill Johnson asked if they knew where the following DSB Board meeting, in March 2020, will be. Dr. Williams-Stokes stated that DSB does have a confirmed location, but the Board will be informed when the information becomes available.

Consumer Input

DSB Board Chairman Terry Sheeler announced the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) State Convention will be coming up on November 1-3, 2019, at the Embassy Suites, in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Hotel reservations can be made through September 24th to get the blocked rate. Reservations can also be made at the convention. The key speaker will be NFB National President Mark Riccobono. Also, the National Convention in July 2020, will be in Houston, Texas. The Arkansas State Conventions for 2020 and 2021 will be in Northwest Arkansas. The location has not been determined but will be somewhere between Fayetteville and Bentonville.

American Council of the Blind (ACB) – Sandy Edwards, Arkansas Chapter Representative

Next year the ACB state convention will be held the weekend of April 18th at the Hilton Garden Inn, on Kanis, in Little Rock. The dates have not been announced. The ACB national convention is set for July 3-10, 2019 at the Renaissance Hotel, in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Next DSB Board Quarterly Meeting

The next Division of Services for the Blind Board meeting is scheduled at 10:00 am, on December 13, 2019, at the Holiday Inn Airport, Little Rock. If the meeting location is changed an announcement will be made. The meeting was adjourned.