

Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (FRCB)
Quarterly Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2021

Chair Paul Edwards called the meeting to order with the introductions.

Council Members Present

- Bruce Miles
- Nancy Bateh
- Robert Kelly
- Jorge Hernandez
- Bessie Outman
- Patricia Lipovsky
- Donte Mickens
- Robert Doyle
- Misty Porter
- Kim Carr
- Douglas Ingram
- Paul Edwards
- Howard Bell

Excused Absents

- Jennifer Coburn

Council Staff

- Brandis Hall

Adoption of Agenda

Patricia Lipovsky made a **motion** to accept the agenda. Jorge Hernandez seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

Approval of Ocala Meeting Minutes

Jorge Hernandez made a **motion** to accept the May 27, 2021 meeting minutes. Bessie Outman seconded the motion. The motion was **passed**.

Director's Report

Director Doyle presented his report.

Staff Updates:

- Amy Grissom will be transitioning from the DBS team to Chief Executive Officer at FASB.
- Trina Travis is DBS's new Deputy Director.

In terms of working with consumers, DBS has returned to pre-Covid 19 success. While there was a small decrease in numbers due to Covid, in the last FY which ended June 30th the DBS team reached their employment goals with 890 successfully closed cases. Every district met or exceeded their goals.

Recognitions:

Most Improved District (# of closures) - District 9 with 125% and District 10 with 141%

Highest Percentage of Goals – District 12 with 159%

Johnny Slaton Award – Counselor Kelly Simmons with 45 clients, Counselor Nancy Bateh with 48 clients, Counselor Kia Williams with 41 clients, Counselor George Rosario with 48 clients, Counselor Carmen Rapp with 30 clients, Counselor Delcie Pasco with 35 clients.

Juan Carlos Diaz Award – District 1 Deborah Carty and District 2 Wayne Jennings

Rate / Sustainability Study

- San Diego State University will help us in this area.
- The rate study will envision all programs and consist of data, cost, contracts, and various other analyzations.
- Evaluations, comparisons, recommendations and strategies will be given to implement change in payment structure.
- A report is expected to be completed by the end of the year and revisions to the contract will undergo 2022.

Gifts and Donations

- Account balance as of July 29, 2021 is 8.5 million dollars.

Plans for utilization of some funds next year:

- Senior activities such as equipment purchases

- Social media
- Computer Training
- Accessibility Program

Residential Facilities:

- Conklin Davis Center Update
A new contract has been executed with an effective date of July 15, 2021.

VR Report

Bridget Giles presented an overview of the VR Report.

- The total number of clients served for the fourth quarter was 3666 compared to last year when 3495 were served
- Total number of closed cases 683 of which 447 were successful
- Last year successful closed cases were 334
- The number of unsuccessful closures after receiving services is 143
- Last year unsuccessful closures after receiving services were 193
- Rehabilitation rate for closed cases was 76%
- Average hourly wage is \$9.40
- Highest wage is \$80.00
- The lowest wage is \$8.00

The top 5 reasons for unsuccessful closures are:

- Unable to locate (62 cases)
- Refused services or no further services (48 cases)
- Other Reasons (29 cases)
- Does not require VR services (22 cases)
- Failure to cooperate (22 cases)

Improvements for quarter 4:

- The quality assurance measures
- Initial interview completion
- Timely obtained vocational evaluations

Employer Recognition

Ed James, District Administrator – District 6 Orlando, recognized Amazon. Andrea Vaccari accepted the award on their behalf.

DA Report: District 6

Ed James, District Administrator, presented the report.

Population

- Total general population is 2,740,115
- Total DBS/VR population 320 open cases
- Total BB population 86 open cases
- Total CP population 90 open cases
- Total IL (OB & AP) population 269 open cases
- Total population visually impaired 765 open cases

Closures

- 101 VR successful closures
- 128 Independent Living Successful Closures

Present Employment

- 18 scheduled to be closed First Quarter (July-September)

A full detailed report has been provided to the Council.

New Vision for Independence CRP Report

Chantel Buck, President/CEO presented this report:

Mission

Eliminate barriers to independence for people with vision loss through rehabilitation, community education, advocacy, and support services.

Services

- Blind Babies
 - Currently 5 clients

- VIKING Children's Program (Visually Impaired Kids Investigating New Ground)
 - Currently 15 clients
- VITAL Transition Program (Visually Impaired Teens Accessing Life) (no DBS contract)
 - Currently 5 clients
- Employability for VIPs vocational rehabilitation
 - Currently 13 clients
- Adult BLIND Program (Blind Living with Independence and New Dexterity)
 - Adult Program (no DBS contract): currently 3 active clients
 - Older Blind: currently 56 clients

Pandemic Updates

- New Vision has re-opened fully. Services are offered in-home/community, in-office, or via phone, as appropriate with an emphasis on client choice.
- Intro ILS class (6 sessions, pre-req for other training) is still occurring via phone, with supplies delivered in advance. Plans to bring this class onsite in September but may continue with a phone option if clients demand because of transportation difficulties. New round of classes monthly.
- New Vision offers in-person and remote support services that clients are invited to participate in regardless of their case status with DBS. These support services include weekly support group, Circle of Sharing grief group, bingo, and fitness classes, plus month Apple group. In-person support groups as well are offered.

A full detailed report has been provided to the Council.

The Sunshine Law

Brent McNeal, Deputy General Counsel

REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND.—There is created in the department the Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, which is an advisory council as defined in s. [20.03](#), to assist the division in the planning and development of statewide vocational rehabilitation programs and services pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act

of 1973, as amended, to recommend improvements to such programs and services, and to perform the functions provided in this section.

A full overview of the Sunshine Law can be provided upon request. Contact DBS.RehabCouncil@dbs.fldoe.org

Business Enterprise Program Update

Bill Findley, Bureau Chief presented this report

- During FY 2021 5 out of 5 vendors completed 12 months in their first facility.
- One of BEP goals is to recruit individuals 34 years old or younger.
- The last FY 3 individuals were recruited who were 34 years old or younger.
- Pre-Covid sales (April-May 2019) vendors reported over 2.1 Million dollars each month.
- During the pandemic (April-May 2020) vendor reported sales were 1.8 Million total.
- Vendor sales for April-May 2021 were 1.5 Million.
- Pre-pandemic (April-May 2019) total vendor net profit reported over \$830,000 each month.
- Vendor net profit dropped 63% in April-May 2020
- As of 2021 vendor net profit is only down 20%

Comparison of a 12-month period to the previous 12-month period:

- Cafeterias lost nearly 60% in sales
- Snack Bars lost 72% in sales.
- Vendor routes varied
- Federal Prisons are not allowing vending currently.
- Interstate rest area rebounded over the last 12 months and are only down 10%.

96 vendors received FRRP funds. The payout was based on 46.93% of their calculated losses after compensation.

Library Patron Trends Update

Jim Woolyhand, Bureau Chief, Braille & Talking Book Library presented this report

- Currently there are 28,000 active patrons
- There has been an increase in patrons leaving services due to various reasons such as, Covid 19 and relocating.
- However, a taskforce has been implicated to increase the patron count throughout the state.
- Within the first 7 month of the taskforce in action new partnerships have been made that has increased the patron count.
- 135 books have been produced and posted to BARD through the Library's recording studio.
- For more information about BARD please visit <http://dbs.myflorida.com/Library/bard.html>

Lighthouse of Central Florida CRP Report

Mike Walsh, CFO, presented this report

Mission:

Charting a course for living, learning, and earning with vision loss.

Services offered

- Orientation and Mobility
- Independent Living Skill
- Braille Instruction
- Assistive Technology
- Early Intervention Services
- Children's Program
- Transition Services
- Adjustment to Vision Loss
- Functional Low Vision Services

Statistics

Last fiscal year, which ended 9/30/2020 the Lighthouse of Central Florida helped 709 people with vision loss and their families.

In the current fiscal year to date they have helped

- 106 babies age birth through 5 years
- 30 children ages 6 through 13
- 44 Transitions students ages 14-22
- Approximately 100 adults seeking employment
- Approximately 200 non-vocational and older clients

Over the past 12 months, Lighthouse Central Florida has continued to build a string interdisciplinary team, adding a COMS, two new Assistive Technology Instructors, as well as their first Certified Low Vision Therapist in over 7 years, their first Occupational Therapist in as many years, and our first COTA ever. These latter three positions are key to building our new functional low vision services to augment our long-standing Vision Rehabilitation Services.

A full detailed report has been provided to the Council.

The Council held elections for Chair, Vice Chair, and 2nd Vice Chair.

Patricia Lipovsky nominated Howard Bell for Chair. Howard Bell was not present at the time of nomination; nomination could not be accepted.

Doug Ingram nominated Jorge Hernandez for Chair. No further nominations for Chair were given. Paul Edwards **motioned** to declare Jorge Hernandez elected by acclamation. Doug Ingram **moved**, and Bruce Miles **seconded**. There were no objections. Nomination **passed**.

Patricia Lipovsky nominated Donte Mickens for Vice Chair. No further nominations for Vice Chair were given. Paul Edwards **motioned** to declare Donte Mickens elected by acclamation. Bessie Outman **moved**, and Doug Ingram **seconded**. There were no objections. Nomination **passed**.

Patricia Lipovsky nominated Doug Ingram for 2nd Vice Chair. No further nominations for 2nd Vice Chair were given. Paul Edwards **motioned** to declare Doug Ingram elected by acclamation. Patricia Lipovsky **moved**, and Jorge Hernandez **seconded**. There were no objections. Nomination **passed**.

Agenda Items

- Appointment of Committees
- BSF Vocational Evaluation Tool Update
- BESE Update
- Conklin Davis Center Update
- Client Satisfaction Survey
- Public Transportation Representative

Bruce Miles made a **motion** to have July 2022 meeting in Orlando. Patricia Lipovsky **second**. The motion was **passed**.

The council held a brief discussion about future meeting dates and travel.

Bessie Outman made a **motion** to adjourn. Jorge Hernandez **seconded** the motion. The meeting was adjourned.