

Idaho Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2015

Board Members present: Britt Raubenheimer, Chair; Mike Gibson, Vice-Chair; Sue Payne; Al Schneider and Travis Beck.

Staff present: Nancy Wise, Raelene Thomas, Greg Metsker, Trina Ayres, Gina Washburn, Bruce Christopherson, Melanie Schonardt, Candy Harris, Lynn Vaughan, Rocio Gil and Kevin Jernigan.

Guests present: Ramona Walhof, Don Nepple, Jan Gawith, and Allison Stevens.

The agency mission statement was read by Raelene Thomas.

MOTION to approve the agenda for April 9, 2015, as stated. Motion made by Commissioner Gibson, seconded by Commissioner Payne – all in favor.

MOTION to approve the minutes from January 23, 2015. Motion made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Beck – all in favor.

Administrator's Report – Nancy Wise:

Trina and Nancy attended ICBVI budget setting March 5, 2015 and Angela's recommendation for 1.0 FTP and \$64,300 to hire an instructor for our Older Blind Program was approved by JFAC. Representative King had contacted Nancy earlier in the week wanting more information so she could advocate for this position. Nancy called her that evening to personally thank her and she said she really appreciated the call. This position will be filled in July. We will be evaluating where this instructor's home base will be – whether they travel the state. Assistance with new OB referrals in the area between Boise and Twin, such as Glens Ferry, Gooding, Wendell, Filer, Jerome and Twin would help a great deal. If the referrals become clients and need ongoing training then they would see the RT for that region. But if the referral just needs a few services such as a magnifier, talking books and marking appliances, the traveling RT could do it all.

Our budget bill was signed March 30th by the Governor – which means funding for an ongoing 3% merit-based increase in employee compensation for permanent employees will happen with guidance from DFM. We have the Guidance Memo and are working on the CEC distribution plan and Matrix.

The update of the agency's A & A system \$50,000 (one-time) and approval for \$50,000 for the continued use of the charitable contribution in the (OIB) Program will move forward as well.

The Management Team has met four times, January 14, 29 Feb, 26 and March 25, 2015. Next meeting is set for April 28th. Nancy can't thank them enough for all their support, collaborative ideas, and follow through in all the programs they manage and the dedicated ICBVI staff who continue to provide outstanding service while working with clients.

Nancy and Gina went to Idaho Falls on March 10th and 11th, coming home the evening of March 12th, 2015 for the BEP Arbitration.

March 14th Nancy attended the Idaho Blind Merchants meeting for several hours and gave a short ICBVI update report.

March 18th Trina and Nancy met with Legislative auditors Aimee Hayes and Colin Gallaher to go over the DRAFT Audit Update with them. It was a good meeting with lots of conversation. We were under a very short time frame to respond, not having the final document until Wednesday afternoon March 25th, and a response due Friday afternoon. Trina worked hard to provide details and Nancy submitted responses.

WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act released the regulations to the public for a 60 day comment period. Department of Labor has taken the lead on this endeavor. Some rumors are that general agencies may go into the order of selection because of the strict 15% obligation for transition students. There will be a Unified State Plan of all agencies involved in WIOA, which is not due until March 2016. We currently have 63 transition students for 2014, which is out of the 515 clients served in ICBVI's VR Program.

The ICBVI is funding up to \$10,000 to help serve the blind and visually impaired children in Idaho through the BELL Program (Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning) this summer. Nancy invited Allison Stevens to report on this program: The BELL Program is a 2 week summer program held in Boise July 20 – 30th and in Idaho Falls the same dates as Boise. They are also looking at trying to schedule a session up in Northern Idaho for 4 full days. Last year, 10 students attended the Boise session and 6 attended the Idaho Falls session. The kids are put into groups of 2 or 3 that have similar abilities and they take 25 minutes each in braille reading and writing and mobility. Then in the PM a field trip is planned such as crafts, outings to parks, etc. The social and food experiences are critical to these kids. Allison also holds a BEST program (Braille Enrichment Skills Training) held on a Saturday once a month in order to maintain the relationships between the students throughout the year. Lots of volunteers help out from the Treasure Valley Chapter of NFB on the Saturday outings, as parents are discouraged from participating to teach the kids independence.

Consumer Input:

Don Nepple reminded the ICBVI Board of the upcoming Cycle for Independence, which is May 16th. There also is a new chapter of NFB in Nampa, Mike Gibson is the president and they currently are recruiting new members. There is also a new chapter in the Moscow/Lewiston area.

Commissioner Schneider also talked about the ATC and SWEP outings that are being planned for a Birding Hike, in which you listen and learn about birds in the wild and identify them by their sounds.

Ramona Walhof reminded the board that the Cycle for Independence is still taking virtual riders, which is when someone pays the registration fee but doesn't ride, or sponsors another person by paying for their registration. Ramona has concerns that the reliance on the internet is complicated for college kids, who often require reader services, which are not necessarily for textbooks, but for other websites for research etc. She also has heard that payments from ICBVI for reader services can take up to 2 months. Commissioner Gibson indicated that students who are getting their degrees in business are required to take classes for Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access that are canned online delivered courses that are not accessible. Ramona commented that universities need to have a policy on enforcement of accessibility, because there is no law making the publishers produce accessible curriculum. A bill has

been introduced by NFB to get universities nationally to provide accessible format for students. However, they are asking for a study on this first, which could take up to 2 to 3 years before the bill can be reintroduced. Ramona also expressed concern that ATC students cannot use MS Outlook for email, or be trained in how it works. Greg noted that they can use other email systems, but they are not as accessible. Ideas, including loaner personal laptops, were discussed.

New ICBVI Staff were introduced to the Board: Lynn Vaughn who is half time working in the Low Vision Clinic and half time working in accounting, and Rocio Gil who is the new VR Counselor in the Boise office. Rocio comes to us with seven years of VR experience.

Discovery Days – Greg Metsker:

During the week of March 16th the ATC hosted the first ATC Discovery Days. It was a weeklong program designed to give clients a chance to “test drive” the ATC and get a feel for what the training is like. We wanted to give clients who may not have time to commit to a full term, or who may be undecided about training, a chance to spend 4 days with us and see what the ATC is all about and whether or not it would be beneficial for them. Participants were given a regular ATC schedule and they attended classes just like they would if they were in the regular full time program. The training consisted of some observation, some low vision activities, and some shaded lessons.

We had 3 participants in the Discovery Days program. One of those clients chose to leave after the first day saying that it wasn’t what he expected and he didn’t think he needed the training. The other two clients stuck around for the entire week and they both indicated that it was extremely valuable for them and they intend to enroll in the ATC for the Fall Term. One of the participants, when speaking with her VR Counselor the week after the program, said Discovery Days was “awesome” and “she highly recommends the program to others, especially the one week long session” as she states it is definitely a great way to be introduced to the training. Given that this was our first attempt at a one-week workshop, Greg feels it was very successful, especially since both clients indicated that they definitely want to return for more training later this year. Based on the success of this first attempt, we will most likely do a Discovery Days workshop every spring and perhaps one in the fall as well.

Assessment and Training Center Update – Greg Metsker:

The ATC Winter Term ended on March 13, 2015 and we had 4 students who completed their training at that time. In addition to the 8 clients who are continuing their training this Spring Term, we have 3 new clients who started training on March 31st and at least one other client who plans to begin around May 1st. Of the 11 clients in training on March 31st, 6 are full time students and 5 are part time. Six of them will be living in the dorms. With the exception of one client from Moscow, the clients are all from region 3 this term (Marsing, Kuna, Payette, Caldwell and Boise). One slight change we are making this term in the ATC is to assign a staff advisor to each student. Students can work with their advisor when they have questions about their training, their schedule, a problem in the dorms, and so forth. Greg knew that several other centers assign staff advisors to their students, including the Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center he worked at in Chicago. The staff Greg has spoken to in those centers feel like having an advisor system is a positive thing for their clients and it opens up even more avenues for communication. Many of the ATC staff are already filling this role on an informal basis, so we are just formalizing it a bit and making this communication option official.

On March 16th, after working part time on a trial basis last term in the role of Rehab Teacher/Home Instructor for a couple of months, Jason Madsen let Nancy and Greg know that he would like to move

out of the ATC and into the Rehab Teaching position vacated by Steve. That means we are now in the process of hiring a new Shop Instructor. The job was posted on the DHR website on March 23rd and will remain open until the position is filled. Trina and Greg will ask DHR to send over the first batch of applications around April 13th so we can begin evaluating and interviewing any qualified candidates. Jason had been our Shop instructor for almost 8 years. Greg hopes he enjoys his new role, and is sure he will be a great addition to the Rehab Teaching team.

SWEP planning is well underway. All the recreational activities and arrangements have been finalized, the dorms at BSU have been reserved, the Coordinator position has been filled, and most of the paperwork has been updated. To date we have 12 first time applicants and 3 approved 2nd time students, most of whom are about 16 years old. Clients who are applying for the first time have priority, then clients who are granted an exception to attend a second time are able to fill any remaining slots. The deadline for applications is Friday April 10th. The program will run from June 21st to July 31st this year. We haven't posted the job announcement yet for SWEP staff, but already I have 7 people, mostly previous staff members, who have indicated they would like to be a part of the program again this year.

Hands Around the Capitol – Candy Harris:

This year is the 25th Anniversary of the passing of the ADA (American's with Disabilities Act). Here in Boise we will be celebrating with Hands around the Capitol Celebration on July 17th from 11 am to 4 pm, with a circle of participants around the capitol holding hands. We hope to have at least a 1,000 people attend. This celebration was held in 2010 and we had around 700 participants. The ICBVI will have a booth at the celebration, and we will hear from guest speaker Kelly Buckland from the National Council on Independent Living. The Idaho Capitol after the renovations had 128 ADA violations. The feds have come in and are working with the legislature to resolve these issues.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Update – Bruce Christopherson:

Federal Reporting: The RSA-113 was completed and successfully submitted on April 1st. The data for RSA-911 was cleared on March 2nd. With the changes that WIOA is bringing there are no required updates to the State Plan. A new unified State Plan will need to be written by March 2016. The In-Service Training Grant will be complete by 09/30/2015. A summary of the 5 years of the grant will need to be provided to RSA by 12/31/2015.

Staff Training: The counselor in Lewiston (Shane) will sit for the CRC in April 2015. One counselor from Twin Falls attended a Social Media Series in the month of March, and another counselor will be attending a National Rehabilitation Association Governmental Affairs Summit in Washington D.C. March 23rd – March 25th. ICBVI and ID-NRA State Chapter helped to sponsor his attendance at this conference.

In-service training this year for staff will be held in September in Boise; however this is our last year with a specific training grant. RSA has indicated to us that we can use Title 1 money for future In-Service Training of staff. However, we did not get an increase in the Title 1 money, so we are unsure if we will hold annual staff trainings.

Assistive Technology/Social Media: January 6 – April 6, 2015

Assistive Technology Type	VR hours	IL/OB hours
Job site training	8	
Job site assessment/consultation	12	
Training/assessments in Boise office	58	2
In-home training		
In-home assessment	2	
Community Outreach/consulting	2	
Telephone/remote training/assessment/consultation		
Transition Assessment	12	

Social Media Type	Description	Number	Other
Total number of fans	Number of people who have “liked” our page	211 + 12 since last report	
Average Daily Reach	The # of people, each day, who see content from ICBVI	14.97 (avg over 90 days)	
Negative comments	Meaning that a viewer hid a post, or marked it as spam	.01 (avg over 90 days)	

Program Statistics: Statistically the VR Program is on track with its projections. Through March 31st listed below are the performance statistics for the VR Program; New applications – 103/178 - 57.87% of goal; Eligibilities – 87/136 – 63.97% of goal; New IPEs – 93/105 – 88.57% of goal; Successful Closures – 38/81 – 47% of goal; Rehabilitation Rate –79.29. Six months into the FFY 2015 the VR Program is making progress.

A new VRC was hired in December as a replacement for Dana who retired. Rocio Gil was hired from the General VR Agency. She worked there for 6 and half years. She has her Master’s in Community Counseling, her CRC, LPC, and she is bilingual. She spent 6 weeks under shades in the training center.

MOTION: To move to Executive Session (67-2345b) at 11:45 a.m., to review and discuss a personnel issue made by Commissioner Payne.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Gibson: Yes

Commissioner Raubenheimer: Yes

Commissioner Schneider: Yes

Commissioner Payne: Yes

Commissioner Beck: Yes

The ICBVI Board resumed into open session of the meeting at 1:30 p.m. with the following motions:

MOTION: The ICBVI Board would like Trina Ayres to provide quarterly spreadsheets dated and titled at the end of each quarter of the state fiscal year and email to the Board. Motion made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Schneider, all in favor.

MOTION: The ICBVI Board still requires Trina Ayres' summary report and narratives for the quarterly meetings. Motion made by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Gibson.

Business Enterprise Program Update – Gina Washburn:

North Idaho Route - Justin spent an entire week in northern Idaho with Bhavani facilitating the inventory exchange and making sure she is ready to start servicing the route. She is “nervous but confident” and is going to do great!

Vendor Meeting - The bi-annual vendor meeting was held here in Boise on March 13th & 14th. The training day went very well. The morning session was a presentation by Vistar Northwest. They covered many topics and left with a better understanding of the needs of the vendors. The afternoon session was by a local accountant to address bookkeeping.

BEP Rule Revisions - After checking with RSA regarding the status of our rule revisions it was discovered they had never been submitted to anyone there with oversight of BEP. Gina was able to get them submitted to our BEP liaison this week and has been told it should take at least 4 months to get them through the review process.

Boise City Hall - The Boise City Hall café is reopened after being closed for 2 months for construction. The city put in new tile on the floors and repainted. BEP also made some improvements and upgrades, including a self-check kiosk. The place is looking great and business seems to be increasing.

City Hall West also received an upgrade in services. A micro market is now up and running in the back employee break area. We expect to see a huge increase in the vendor's sales at this location.

The Arbitration took place in March. Gina and Nancy attended and Gina experienced 2 solid days of testimony. She feels that it went very well and that ICBVI made their case. The post hearing briefs will be out around the 1st part of May.

The ICBVI Board has asked Nancy to send out a staff survey to the BEP Vendors asking for their input, as was done last year at this time, to see how things have improved.

Fiscal Update – Trina Ayres:

The state fiscal year 2015 appropriations are as follows; 75% of the year has elapsed:

			Expended:	Percentage:	
Personnel	-	General Fund	\$ 659,300	\$ 496,699.49	75.33%
		Federal Fund	1,836,300	1,359,826.27	74.05%
		Adaptive A & A	18,600	14,353.93	77.17%
Operating	-	General Fund	\$ 48,500	46,232.35	95.32%
		Randolph-Sheppard	27,600	6,535.05	23.67%
		Rehab Revenue (SSA)	34,300	1,099.86	3.20%
		Miscellaneous	28,100	11,279.33	40.13%
		Adaptive A & A	47,900	34,305.74	71.61%
		Federal Fund	576,200	438,758.18	78.76%
Capital Outlay	-	Federal Fund	19,179.79	19,179.79	100.00%
Trustee/Benefit	-	General Fund	599,200	310,873.12	51.88%
		Randolph-Sheppard	100,100	54,275.44	54.22%
		Rehab Revenue	13,000	12,999.98	100.00%
		Miscellaneous	56,300	36,045.98	64.02%
		Federal Fund	541,500	509,348.00	94.06%
Total	-		4,586,900		

Appropriation from Operating was transferred to Capital Outlay to replace one of the vehicles.

Commissioner Schneider asked Trina how the upcoming budget for next year compares with this year’s budget, not including the funding for the new position. Trina said it’s basically the same except for the 3% recommended CEC for staff pay.

ICBVI had three audit findings that will need to be addressed within 90 days. Trina and Nancy will be working closely with the auditors to resolve these.

Independent Living & Sight Restoration Program Updates – Nancy Wise:

During FFY 2015 the RT’s have served 557 older blind and 82 IL clients and spend an average of 35 - 40% of their time providing assessments or training to VR clients. A very busy group!

The VRA’s, an equally busy group have served 83 clients in the Sight Restoration this SFY. Guyla has taken over the Lead VRA position, and has many years of experience and is always happy to answer any questions.

Judy Jones, VRA in Twin Falls suggested we change to name of the “Coping with Blindness” brochure. Speaking as a blind individual “on the other side of the fence,” so to speak, Judy didn’t like the word coping. She felt the word “coping” sends the wrong subliminal message to the very people we are trying

to educate, and we agree something more positive was needed. The new brochure reads "Vision Loss – We Can Help. Thank you Judy!

We are happy to have Jason Madsen join the Boise IL team. He and Candy have been working closely together to make sure all referrals are contacted and appointments scheduled. Once again, Candy has mentored a new RT, and is always so supportive! Jason has gone to Twin Falls to shadow Brenda and IRIS case file management practices. Carol Baron has provided training in low vision clinic tech duties.

Staff in the Pocatello office would like to report a smooth transition as the new VRA, Dawn Scott, joined the team mid-March. Matt Queen (VRC) and April Mills (RT) worked closely with staff from the central office and Lewiston region to keep processes flowing after Marge's retirement February 28th. Dawn and April will be traveling to Boise the week of May 25th. Dawn will spend time in ATC and meet staff. April wants to pursue more O & M training for her working with folks in her community.

Heidi, IF teacher has been a good resource as needed. But, because Heidi has to travel so far, the frequency of training is limited, as with April traveling providing the AT needs in the Idaho Falls area. They both want to be more comfortable/confident to provide the needed training in their own regions.

We have renewed our Trainingware Curriculum – which helps RT's with lesson plans when teaching assistive technology.

Twin Falls Happenings – The week of March 23, Linda and Brenda worked with Laine for three days assessing adaptive technology needs for six transition students during the students' Spring Break. The Low Vision Clinic is coming up in April and all three days are full with appointments. The clients and referrals are happy to have the Clinic locally because they do not need to find transportation to Boise.

The Store and Clinic continue to be extremely busy. Lynne has made a very smooth transition as the clinic assistant. Collene has provided Lynne's clinic training, along with assisting regions with receipting A & A while they have been out ill or their systems have been down. Lynne has done a wonderful job balancing both positions (20 hours low vision clinic and 20 hours accounting).

New Business:

The Vocational Rehabilitation Rules (IDAPA) were pulled by Angela in January before her medical leave and have not gone through for approval this year during the legislative session. There is an August deadline to get the rules submitted. Given the expectation that the new RSA rule changes for the WIOA will not be official yet, Nancy and the ICBVI Board opted to go ahead and resubmit the rules and plan on including the Transition Rule changes next year.

The next ICBVI Board meeting has been scheduled for July 30th, to be held at the Boise Office. The ICBVI Board would like to invite the SWEP Participants to come and give a presentation about their experience with their summer jobs and activities while attending SWEP.

The ICBVI Board Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Minutes respectfully submitted by Raelene Thomas on April 21, 2015.