

**Minutes**  
**Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired**  
DBVI Headquarters Building  
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond VA 23227  
June 19, 2018 at 1:00 PM

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**Board Attendees**

Mr. Ken Jessup, *Chair*; Mr. Mazen Basraw; Ms. Deborah Helms; Mr. Leo Kim.

**Members Absent**

None.

**Members of the Public**

None.

**DBVI Staff to the Board**

Raymond Hopkins, Commissioner, DBVI; Dr. Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Services, DBVI; Mr. Matt Koch, Deputy Commissioner for Enterprises, DBVI; Ms. Wallica Gaines, Deputy Commissioner for Administration, DBVI; Ms. Takeisha Henley, Executive Assistant, DBVI.

**Call to Order & Introductions** (*Action Item*)

Chairman Ken Jessup called the meeting to order and members. Members also were informed of the resignation of Ms. Lynn Lesko.

**Consent Agenda**

**Adoption of Agenda** (*Action Item*)

Chairman Ken Jessup moved to adopt agenda; Mr. Leo Kim seconded and motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment**

How is the Virginia Board for Blind and Vision Impaired meeting publicized to the public?  
Commissioner Hopkins responded that the meetings are published in Townhall per the Commonwealth requirements. In addition, the meetings are posted on the Agency calendar of events. There is not a comprehensive email list. However, under Townhall people are allowed to specify/opt-in to receive notices of their choice. More specifically, Townhall is the Commonwealth's website that is maintained to announce public meetings and to collect comment on public policy.

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**Program Spotlight:** Overview of Children & Youth Services and Sensory Stimulation Quilts  
(working lunch).

*Caren Phipps, Director of Services for Children and Youth, DBVI*

*Tracy DeLuca, Education Coordinator, DBVI Richmond Regional Office*

*Jill Tomlinson, Education Coordinator, DBVI Roanoke Regional Office*

Information was shared with Board members about services delivered by DBVI to children and youth, as well as a new initiative involving sensory stimulation quilts for younger children.

**Action Items**

**Release of Board Member addresses/ emails for Mailing List**

Chairman Ken Jessup asked permission to release board members email addresses (not for solicitation) to VA Voice (as well as consumers, service organizations, AFB etc.) to receive the E-Newsletters, events, and reports for information purposes.

Chairman Ken Jessup motioned to release board member(s) email addresses to VA Voice; Mr. Leo Kim seconded and motion passed unanimously.

**Funding Request by Virginia Voice**

*Jim Wark, CEO, Virginia Voice; Scott Kocen, Director of Development, Virginia Voice*

Mr. Wark updated the Board on numerous items that happened over the last year. The discussion continued and focused on support for their ongoing audio information service, which allows them to develop new programming. Additional funding would also help with the purchase of new radios, and encoders/decoders (inputs the audio signal into a digital signal) that will allow them the ability to provide regular live stream 24 hours a day 7 days a week to local, national, magazines, newspapers, publications, in addition to the original programs and more.

Moving forward, the future of Virginia Voice includes a migration of listenership from radios to a digital platform. Completing the network and studio upgrades puts VA Voice in a position where they needed to be. Although the migration is coming along slowly, they are confident that they are ready.

Virginia Voice has been provided a remarkable funding opportunity. Virginia Voice is considered a very small and independent non-profit. Their funding comes from Boards,

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foundations, individuals, and corporate foundations. Based on a non-profit organization consultant provide to them by the Virginia Sargent Reynolds Foundation, came in and looked at their development plan. She suggested that they not to begin fundraising in the same year that funds are needed. This is common among non-profits. This new approach is called forward funding. Virginia Voice's budget is between \$350k - \$400k a year; the consultant recommends a quiet capitol campaign to build up a forward fund with a \$500k target. The \$500k stands between the operating expenses and the endowment.

If VA Voice can raise \$350k, the Virginia Sargent Reynolds foundation will grant them \$150k. To date, they have raised a little over \$250k of that \$350k. Forward funding allows VA Voice to plan for and budget activities based on that funding that is already available. In the case of an emergency, they can borrow from that funding to see plans through. The idea is to get out of the vicious cycle of only being able to make tentative plans based on what they hope to raise this year for this year. VA Voice is asking for \$20k for forward funding as well as \$20k for primary request to continue to support previous programs and initiatives.

Since VA Voice is so close to raising the entire \$350k, the Board offered to give them the \$140k for this year as well as the forward fund.

Chairman Ken Jessup moved to approve funding of \$140,000 for VA Voice; Ms. Deborah Helms seconded and motion passed unanimously.

### Funding Request by DBVI

Commissioner Ray Hopkins gave a general overview of two areas in which the Board has helped DBVI fund in the past. Traditionally, the board has been generous and supported Super Summer camp held at Camp Easter Seals. The demand for that camp continues to grow after several decades. The Board supported the camp at \$55,000, which DBVI does not expect to exceed this year.

The other area the Board funded has been the drivers (DBVI direct service personnel). DBVI has 16 professionals who are blind or otherwise unable to operate a vehicle due to disability. The estimate we have to fund driver services for all 16 of those professional staff is \$161,000. Drivers are wage employees that are not classified employees of the department.

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DBVI requested a significant investment into the services areas (Low Vision and Services to individuals who are deafblind) that are not required by law; however, they are vital to people who receive those services. The budgeted amount for those programs is \$567,000. Through other cuts made, the agency is asking the Board to consider an investment in Deafblind and Low Vision services a combined amount of \$435,000. If that funding were made available, it would allow us to continue services at a high quality.

Mr. Leo Kim motioned to fund DBVI \$650, 000; Ms. Deborah Helms seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Other items discussed worth noting:

- The Board discussed the need to align the annual budget with operational plans, and then consider thoughtful and occasional disbursement of the endowment funds for special needs
- It was understood the state budget is only half of what it used to be in (what year did we use as a reference?), controlling after population growth and inflation.
- Careful review and selection of the endowment fund management firm was requested.

### Reports

Commissioner's Report – *Commissioner Ray Hopkins*

Written report submitted.

Services Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Richard Mitchell*

Written report submitted.

Administration Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Wallica Gaines*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

DBVI has been updated that the renovation of the Headquarters Building was included in budget that just passed.

Enterprise Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Matt Koch*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

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Each week, the Deputies submit a weekly report to the Commissioner. Matt said he will add a few board members to the distribution list. Through this report, Matt passes along mostly good news and things that are relatively optimistic in regards to Virginia Industries for the Blind.

**Old Business**

None.

**Future Action Items & New Business**

None.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned.

Mr. Ken Jessup motion to adjourn and Mr. Leo Kim second

Next Meeting(s): September 25, 2018