

**Draft Minutes**  
**Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired**  
Virtual  
June 21, 2021 at 11:00 AM

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**Board Attendees**

Bonnie Atwood; Mazen Basrawi, *Chair*; Paul D’Addario; Deborah Helms; Dr. Leo Kim; Barbara McCarthy; Ken Jessup.

**Members Absent**

None.

**Members of the Public**

None.

**DBVI Staff to the Board**

Jessica Collette, Staff Assistant, DBVI; Wallica Gaines, Deputy Commissioner for Administration, DBVI; Raymond Hopkins, Commissioner, DBVI; Matt Koch, Deputy Commissioner for Enterprises, DBVI; Dr. Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Services, DBVI.

**Call to Order & Welcome**

Chairman Basrawi called the meeting to order and welcomed the members in attendance.

**Business Items**

**Introductions**

Chairman Basrawi commenced the roll call.

**Consent of Agenda**

It was requested to add an “Unfinished Business” section between Program Spotlight and New Business by Ms. Bonnie Atwood. Also, the minutes to be approved will be from May 2021, not March 2021. Barbara McCarthy moved to approve the amended agenda; motion passed unanimously.

**Consent of Minutes**

Bonnie Atwood moved to approve the Minutes from the May 2021 meeting; motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment**

None.

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**Grant Proposal Presentations/ Discussion**

Discussion took place about the best way to send these proposals in the future. In the future, files will be sent individually with the original attachments in individual emails. Also, all PDFs will be reviewed for accessibility. In addition, instruction for applicants to submit their documents in an accessible format.

Due to technical difficulties, this agenda item will be tabled until the documents can be reviewed by the entire Board. A special meeting will be called in June 29, 2021 at noon. Ms. Debbie Helms moved to table the grant proposals to another meeting; motion passed unanimously.

**Agency Reports**

Commissioner Hopkins presented an update regarding the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

The Commissioner requested the all Board members send updated contact information to Jessica Collette to ensure all members have the ability to communicate with each other.

This year there is a specific opportunity for \$3.3B ARPA funds to come into Virginia. Projects have been considered and submitted from DBVI to the Secretary's Office for these funds. All proposals totaled around \$20M. The intent is for the funds to be spent in FY2022. One item that was included was for a major issue at VIB-Charlottesville and the elevators that are in disrepair. This request is for immediate assistance to be able to keep these elevators running and be able to use this building into the future. The decisions will be made public and the Board will be kept up-to-date and aware on the process for making budget recommendations for the Governor to include in his proposal.

The Commissioner also shared the opportunity for Board members to submit ideas to celebrate the Centennial year of service.

Dr. Mitchell reviewed the summer programs happening through DBVI and VRCBVI.

Mr. Matt Koch shared an update regarding Virginia Industries for the Blind, as well as additional information around the elevators at the VIB Charlottesville plant.

Ms. Wallica Gaines provided an update on construction updates around the Agency.

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**Program Spotlight: Intro to Optimal Services Group**

*Optimal Services Group team*

Mr. Bryce Lee shared information with the Board around the Optimal Services Group as this company will begin managing the Board's funds beginning July 1, 2021. Board members had the opportunity to discuss the next steps and an investment policy document.

**Unfinished Business**

Update on Memorial Resolution for Jim Wark

Ms. Bonnie Atwood provided an update on the progress of the Memorial Resolution for Jim Wark. The Agency will work with the Board to send a thank you letter on Board letterhead. Also, Bonnie Atwood will work on a press release to be sent to a number of publications that Mr. Wark was associated.

**New Business**

2021 – 2022 Board Meeting Dates

The Board discussed potential meeting dates for the remainder of 2021 and the first two meetings of 2022. Discussion took place around virtual meetings for future meetings. However, the perception is that once the State of Emergency expires, the requirement for in-person public body meetings will resume. A virtual component might be available, but an in-person quorum would still be a requirement.

The proposed meetings are September 28, 2021, December 14, 2021, March 22, 2022 and June 28, 2022. Other meetings will begin at 11 am. Mazen Basrawi moved to approve the proposed meetings dates for 2021-2022; motion passed unanimously. In the near future, the Board would like to invite appropriate legislators for an informational reception. Ms. Bonnie Atwood and Mr. Ken Jessup will work on this effort.

2021 – 2022 Board Officers

Paul D'Addario nominated Mazen Basrawi for Chairman; Barbara McCarthy seconded and motion passed. Paul D'Addario nominated Ken Jessup for Vice-Chairman; Bonnie Atwood seconded and motion passed. Mazen Basrawi nominated Bonnie Atwood for Secretary; Barbara McCarthy seconded and motion passed.

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Approval of new VIB Advisory Board Members

The Board reviewed a nomination for Mr. Travis Snellings for the Virginia Industries for the Blind Advisory Board. Mr. Paul D'Addario moved to approve Mr. Snellings nomination; motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Bonnie moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:47 pm; motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: September 28, 2021

**Attachment**  
**Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired**  
Virtual  
May 11, 2021 at 11:00 AM

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**Reports**

Agency Report – *Commissioner Ray Hopkins*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Ms. Pam Cato shared how the Vocational Rehabilitation program adjusted during the beginning of the Pandemic. One of the biggest initiatives started with the Business Relations team. They launched the Career Connections meeting. This brings together career seekers, students, DBVI staff and business connections. Coupled with these meetings, there have also been explore sector chats that look at specific sectors that have been identified as an area of interest by career seekers.

DBVI has continued its focused on pre-employment transition services. Through virtual meetings students have been able to participate in ACE Academies, credential fairs and even have 14 DBVI students now labeled as STEM Warriors. These programs are not specific to the pandemic and will continue in the future.

Commissioner Hopkins specifically mentioned Executive Order 77 regarding the elimination of single use plastics. This affects the Enterprise Division and the vending program.