

Minutes
Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired
1535 High Street Richmond VA 23220
December 12, 2017 at 1:00 PM
Phone Number 804-371-3140

**Pre-meeting Tour of Virginia Industries for the Blind Richmond Location
(12:15PM – 12:45PM)**

Board Attendees

Mr. Ken Jessup, Chair; Ms. Lynn Lesko; Ms. Deborah Helms.

Members Absent

None.

Members of the Public

Mr. Jerry Drake, Charlottesville; Ms. Charlotte McGee, US Trust; Mr. David Yarder, US Trust.

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. Jessica Collette, Interim Staff Assistant, DBVI.

Call to Order & Introductions

Members took time to recognize the service of Ms. Marsha Hester, past board member, who passed away earlier this year. Chairman Jessup asked for DBVI to send a letter to Ms. Hester's family on the behalf of the Board.

Due to only three members being present, there was no quorum and the Board will not take action and will receive reports.

Public Comment

Mr. Jerry Drake shared with the Board about his company, Educational Media Consulting, and a refreshable Braille display tablets that he is working to create. Currently a patent application has been sent to the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Mr. Drake explained that his company is looking to create a 1,000 cell refreshable Braille tablet that is affordable, \$500 – 1,000. Commissioner Hopkins asked for Mr. Drake to email contact information and would connect him with consumer organizations throughout the Commonwealth.

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Program Spotlight: Virginia Industries for the Blind (*working lunch*)

Mr. Matt Koch spoke more on the information that was given during the tour of the VIB Richmond facility and the other areas of VIB.

Reports

Commissioner's Report – *Commissioner Ray Hopkins*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

DBVI does run several federally funded programs that are currently operating under a continuing resolution. This funding was approved for an additional two weeks. However, federal agencies are moving slow in awarding monies for services. Work has been done in Congress at the committee level in regards to funding. DBVI is following the proposed tax reform and specifically the Pay as You Go provision. There is concern of loss of funding for the vocational rehabilitation program with either potential tax reform plans.

Enterprise Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Matt Koch*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

Last week, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) held its Quarterly Performance Review for Highway Vending with its contractor, Canteen, and VDOT staff. Another strong quarter finished out the fiscal year with revenue to the state exceeding the guaranteed amount by roughly \$500,000. This increase in revenue is due to two primary reasons – the first being the implementation of industry best-practices for telemetry data collection to ensure proper reporting of sales and the partnership of a proactive vendor who is continuously analyzing sales and making adjustments to the product mix.

Services Division Report – *Deputy Commissioner Richard Mitchell*

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

Beginning October 1st, DBVI closed all categories, meaning those cases deemed eligible are placed on a wait list for services. As of today, there are 35 individuals on the waitlist.

Earlier in October, DBVI held the *Celebrating Ability* event on the Azalea campus, where 70 employers from across the Commonwealth came together to speak about the benefit of working with individuals with disabilities. This event was a partnered event with the Business Leadership Network and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

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VRCVBI has begun recruitment for its summer programs, LIFE and LEAP. The application process is currently online and this is the earliest the process has begun.

Administration Division Report – Deputy Commissioner Wallica Gaines

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

DBVI is looking forward to the renovation of its Headquarters building. We are currently waiting for the Governor's budget package later this month to ensure our construction funding. If it is included, in around 12 months staff will be moving to other buildings on the Azalea campus for renovations to begin.

Ms. Gaines serves as the Legislative Liaison for DBVI. She reviews the bills that are being introduced for the agency and consumers. The plan is to post these bills of interest on the DBVI website for people to follow in the coming weeks.

Endowment Fund Report– Charlotte McGee, US Trust

Written report submitted. Additional information follows.

The focus of the endowment fund will stay similar to the process that was discussed at the previous meeting. The endowment fund is currently up over 4% for this quarter, with the stock portion up over 6% and bond portion staying flat. As for YTD, the fund is up a total of 14.5%. Historically 8% has been the rate of growth.

Old Business

None.

Future Action Items & New Business

None.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting(s): April 3, 2018 and June 26, 2018