

**Draft Minutes**  
**Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired**  
Westin Richmond  
6631 W Broad St, Richmond VA 23230  
March 22, 2022 at 12:30 PM

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**Board Attendees**

Bonnie Atwood; Robert Bartolotta; Mazen Basrawi, *Chair*; Paul D’Addario; Deborah Helms.

**Members Absent**

Ken Jessup, Barbara McCarthy.

**Members of the Public**

Tracy Soforenko, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia (NFBV) Board of Directors member.

**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, DBVI; Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant, Services, DBVI; Dr. Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Services, DBVI.

**Guests**

R. Bryce Lee, Managing Director – Investments – The Optimal Service Group  
Karen Logan, Vice President – Investments – The Optimal Service Group  
Joe Montgomery, Managing Director - Investments – The Optimal Service Group

**Call to Order & Welcome**

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

**Business Items**

**Introductions**

Chairman Basrawi conducted a roundtable of introductions.

**Consent of Agenda**

The agenda was amended adding one item: a request from Deputy Commissioner Koch. The agenda was also amended to add additional time for Public Comment to accommodate Tracy Soforenko’s itinerary. The amendments to the agenda were unanimously passed. Chairman Basrawi moved to approve the agenda; motion passed unanimously.

**Consent of Minutes**

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Bonnie Atwood advised of a procedural error recorded on the December 14, 2021 minutes. Ms. Atwood advised that going forward the Board is permitted to call for a motion to adopt the minutes as presented and not to vote on the minutes as presented. Chairman Basrawi requested a motion to adopt the December minutes. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were adopted.

**Investment Report:** The Optimal Service Group (OSG)

OSG reviewed DBVI's investment portfolio to date which has been in a long-term asset allocation since December.

**Public Comment**

Tracy Soforenko commented on the Silver BELL program that the DBVI Board help fund last year. Mr. Soforenko would like to apply for another grant to continue the program during the second quarter of the calendar year. Chair Mazen requested the application be submitted by April 1 for the grant.

**Agency Reports**

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

The General Assembly ended its 2022 session in Richmond earlier this month pushing final decision on the Commonwealth's two-year budget to a Special Session. They must have an approved budget by July 1 or the Agency will not have State funds.

The Commissioner was reappointed by Governor Youngkin. Commissioner Hopkins has consented to serve for 60-90 days from beginning of the new administration before retiring. No transition plans have been announced as far as the Agency's future leadership.

Dr. Mitchell reported that the Services Division is now back to serving clients in person as COVID cases have markedly decreased. The summer programs will once again commence, adding cyber security training. VR caseloads will focus on working with students in high school due the WIOA Act.

DBVI is required under the WIOA Act to work with our workforce partners across the state to create a four-year State Plan. After two years it is required to be updated, and that was completed in January. The State Plan was recently made available for Public Comment.

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Deputy Commissioner Gaines reported that renovations have begun on the Library and Resource Center on the DBVI campus. The original cost estimate was just over \$8M; however, due to supply shortages, COVID and rising construction costs, the cost is now estimated at \$15M. There are plans to improve the roadways and sidewalks on the campus, as well as plans for the construction of an outdoor pavilion/classroom, and upgrading of air conditioning systems in the campus buildings. There were also plans to renovate the Charlottesville VIB building, but costs have risen to \$32M. Funds will be used to improve the roof and security related systems. The Agency will continue to work on receiving additional funds for additional renovations at the VIB building. A new Capital Outlay Manager has been hired. The Budget Manager position is still vacant.

Deputy Commissioner Koch reported that the Virginia Enterprises for the Blind (VEB) had applied for solicitation for full-food serve at Ft. Lee. VEB had a contract, lost it, and is now competing for it again. VEB is going to arbitration, because it believes proper procedure was not followed regarding bidding rules.

An audit of Virginia Industries for the Blind by the International Organization of Standardization (IOS) was conducted last week, and VIB passed with no issues and three commendations. Certification will be renewed for another year.

Deputy Commissioner Koch requested the Board's endorsement to add Yvette Jackson to the VIB Advisory Board. Bonnie Atwood moved that the Board endorse Yvette Jackson. Paul D'Addario seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

**Finance Committee Member Discussion**

Chair Basrawi requested that members interested in looking at DBVI's investment portfolio on a more regular basis advise Deputy Commissioner Gaines or himself.

**New Business**

**Approval of Revised Bylaws on Remote Participation**

Chair Basrawi motioned to adopt the Remote Attendance Policy. Paul D'Addario moved to adopt the Policy. Bonnie Atwood seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried. The policy will be shared again with the Board members.

Deputy Commissioner Gaines reported that the Bill regarding remote participation was never acted on and will carry over into the Special Session. It did pass the House.

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**Adjournment**

Chair Basrawi moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 pm; motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: June 28, 2022