

Approved Minutes
Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired
DBVI Headquarters
397 Azalea Avenue Richmond VA 23227
September 27, 2022

Board Attendees

Bonnie Atwood, Mazen Basrawi - *Chair*, Ken Jessup.
Robert Bartolotta (attended virtually from Falls Church, VA, due to caregiving obligations)
Deborah Helms (attended virtually from Roanoke, VA, due to medical condition)

Members of the Public

Paul D'Addario
Barbara McCarthy

DBVI Staff to the Board

Pam Cato, Deputy Commissioner for Services; Wallica Gaines, Deputy Commissioner for Administration; Matt Koch, Deputy Commissioner of Enterprises; Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner; Dr. Rick Mitchell, Commissioner.

Guests

R. Bryce Lee, Managing Director – Investments – The Optimal Service Group
Karen Logan, Vice President – Investments – The Optimal Service Group
Jeff Rakes - Investments – The Optimal Service Group
Olu Rosanwo – Investments – The Optimal Service Group

Welcome

Ken Jessup welcomed the members in attendance.

Business Items

Introductions

Ken Jessup conducted a roundtable of introductions

Investment Report

The Optimal Service Group (OSG) reviewed DBVI's investment portfolio to date which has been in a long-term asset allocation since December 2021.

Call to Order

Chair Basrawi called the meeting to order.

Consent of Agenda

Chair Basrawi motioned to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Consent of Minutes

No changes to the June 28, 2022, Minutes were made. Minutes were accepted for filing

Public Comment

None

Agency Reports

Deputy Commissioner Koch presented a request for nomination for Irene Conlin as a member of the VIB Advisory Board. Bonnie Atwood motioned to approve the nomination. Ken Jessup seconded the motion. The nomination was approved.

It was reported that VIB currently has \$14M net operating cash. Many positions have been vacant for months. The Agency now subscribing to NSITE which is a website that provides employment services that connect employers with people who are blind, visually impaired, and/or veterans to meet their workforce needs. Virginia Voice will interview Matt Koch in the near future regarding Enterprise jobs. Virginia Voice will start reading job openings to its listeners.

Langley Base Supply Center has been awarded a national award for its size which will be presented in October in DC at the National NIB Conference.

One of the Agency's key objectives is to increase the number of individuals employed. Enterprise is working on creating new opportunities to recruit.

Deputy Commissioner Pam Cato was introduced as the new Deputy Commissioner for Services. She reported there are many vacancies to fill in the Services Division. She announced Megan Hall as the new Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services.

The Agency has hired a new Regional Officer for the Norfolk area who will be starting in November. She is bilingual in Spanish and has very good sign language skills.

Peggy Fields is retiring in January after 38 years of service. Her last day in office will be some time in October.

VRCBVI hired a new Access Technology Instructor who started September 26, Neel Sheth, who worked as a mentor in the 2022 LIFE Program.

Deputy Commissioner Cato reviewed the Agency's summer programs that have completed.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Bristol is celebrating with an Out of Sight Experience event on October 12.

October 5 is the annual Celebrating Ability in the Workplace event. Secretary Littell is scheduled to be the Keynote speaker. There is a Zoom option to attend.

Deputy Commissioner Gaines reported twelve vacancies in Administration. Five of those twelve are new positions for Security Officers. The Agency is transitioning from contracted Security Officers to Classified Employees.

Interviews for the Budget Manager position are being scheduled.

Currently there are four major capital projects in various stages. The Agency lost its Capital Outlay Manager recently. A contract manager is working with the Agency now.

DBVI Headquarters renovations are in close-out warranty phase. The LRC renovation is in the design phase. The cost for renovations has doubled what was originally anticipated and the Agency is hoping to receive additional funding to continue the project.

The VIB in Charlottesville project is in progress.

The Azalea infrastructure project will replace the current asphalt with a higher quality for the heavy GRTC buses that are required to travel through the complex due to the GRTC bus stop on campus.

The Agency will be migrating from Google to Microsoft effective Dec 16-19.

The Agency is working on the language and disability access initiative from the Governor's office to increase and ensure people with limited English and all disabilities have access to the programs we provide.

Legislation season is upon us so the Agency is preparing decision packages for review and is in the process of reviewing base budget operations and making recommendations for budgets and reviewing appropriations.

Unfinished Business

Appointments to Board

The Board is awaiting announcement of Board appointments to replace those seats that expired June 2022.

Grant Status

Appropriations for the Endowment are less than the grants that were awarded by the Board. Chair Mazen wishes to call the Secretary's Office to discuss this issue.

Unfinished Business

Finance Committee Member Discussion
Events Involving Members of the Legislature
Alternative Locations Future Meetings

The meeting was adjourned without objection.

Next Meeting: December 13, 2022