

Oregon Commission for the Blind
Regular Meeting – February 5, 2021 - 1:00 pm
Approved Minutes

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Scott McCallum called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm via Zoom.com for a regular meeting of the Oregon Commission for the Blind. Members in attendance were:

Scott McCallum
Michael Babcock
Vivian Carlile-Smith
Dr. Christie Closson
Lillian Goodman
Laurel Hudson
Sharon Zenger

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 4, 2020 (Action Item)

Chair McCallum asked for a motion to approve the December 4, 2020, meeting minutes. Commissioner Laurel Hudson made a motion to approve the minutes, as written, Commissioner Christi Closson seconded, and the motion passed.

AUDIENCE INTRODUCTION

Each audience member introduced themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one submitted public comment.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Executive Director Dacia Johnson presented the Executive Director report.

Donations and Financial Reports

CFO Kat Martin presented the Donations and Financial Status Reports. Donations, as of December 31, 2020, have a cash balance of \$360,000. The Oregon Legislature required us to spend a portion of donations to support one Transition Counselor as a cost-savings measure to reduce our general fund obligation. Our remaining obligation on this is \$13,000, and the unobligated donations balance after this adjustment is \$347,144.

The 2019-21 Biennium actuals for 18 months through December 2020 reflects the adjustments made by the Legislature in August that included a reduction of \$415,497 in General Fund (GF), an increase in \$500,000 Other Funds (OF) expenditure limitation, and an increase of \$2,552,443 in Federal Funds (FF) expenditure limitation. Actuals do not yet include an increase in expenditure limitation from Emergency Board Actions communicated in January 2021 of \$185,923 GF, \$5,942 OF and \$454,430 FF for salary pot adjustments. The salary pot is to true up personnel-related costs frozen during budget development with the actuality of economic factors bargained after the freeze.

Based on the actuals for 18 months through December 2020, combined with forecasted expenditures for the remainder of the biennium, General Funds are projected to be overspent compared to the budget plan while Other and Federal Funds are underspent. Continued fine-tuning of expenses recorded on GF will occur over the remaining months of the biennium in order to be within budget for all fund types.

There were no questions.

Case Management System Update Status Report

Director Johnson presented an update on the case management system upgrade. The statewide steering committee meets monthly, and is made up of the Legislative Fiscal Office, the Department of Administrative Services, Enterprise Information Systems, Chief Financial Office, as well as the contract service provider and project management.

Director Johnson also mentioned the Agency will be moving to the Microsoft 365 platform this spring, which may have some impact on the commissioners' email access. Microsoft 365 will provide updated versions of software, several new features, and will be cloud-based (rather than located on fixed servers).

COVID-19 Emergency Update

There have been no changes since our December meeting:

- Remote service delivery through telephone and computer
- Majority of staff are telecommuting
- Drop-off and pick-up for materials and information exchange

Director Johnson discussed the State's plan to prioritize vaccinations for various groups. Chair McCallum encouraged consideration be given to immunizing the Agency's direct service personnel.

Federal Update

The Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) Commissioner position is now filled with an Acting Deputy Commissioner, as the role was vacated by Mark Schulz, a Trump administration appointee, at the beginning of the Biden administration.

We're working on a letter with Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services to compel action by Congress to allow flexibilities with grant administration for VR grants. These include:

- Maintenance of effort
- 15% Pre-ETS reserve
- Period of performance

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – 2021 SESSION

The 2021 Legislative Session convened in January, one of the topics of which will be the budget appropriation for our (and all) agency(ies). The budget had advanced to the stage of Governor's Budget, and is now in the hands of legislators' final appropriation authority. We will present before the Joint

Ways and Means Subcommittee for Human Services. Public testimony is a great tool to inform the committee members about the important work of the Agency and the impact it has on Oregonians.

FY 20 Federal Compliance Audit

We are still undergoing the federal compliance audit. The auditors are in the process of compiling their testing (items they examine) to determine our compliance in various area on the fiscal and programmatic side for the vocational rehabilitation grant. We will present findings once they become available.

NEW BUSINESS

2021 – 2022 AGENCY AUDIT PLAN REVIEW

Clay France, Internal Auditor, presented the internal audit plan that will test some of the controls related to the high risks identified in the Risk Assessment (December 2020 meeting). Three internal audits are proposed for 2021:

- SPOTS card review
- Expenditures and payment review
- Vendor management

Additionally, time is reserved to maintain the Quality Assurance Manual and Risk Assessment, to follow up on any audit findings and for additional needs identified by leadership. Items not yet addressed by the auditing plan may be added, as time permits.

Clay also discussed formation of an Audit Committee, which will meet twice a year, and which will be formed of: Scott McCallum, Board Chair; Dacia Johnson, Agency Executive Director; and Angel Hale, Vocational Rehabilitation Services Director.

The Audit Committee purpose will be to oversee the internal audit function, to ensure the auditor has the necessary independence, to provide support of risk management and internal controls of the agency, and to review internal audit reports and help follow up on findings.

SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (SWEP) 2021

Angel Hale presented an overview of plans for the Summer Work Experience program (SWEP) which will be held during the summer of 2021.

SWEP 2021 will be held virtually, again, due to the pandemic and the need to maintain social distancing and health precautions. Applications are being accepted. We are working to develop virtual or hybrid (depending on permissions and the situation) work experience opportunities for participants.

We know the most powerful events are those where students are together, so have yet to determine whether some instructional events may be classroom-based, rather than only virtual.

Ms. Hale encouraged the commissioners to reach out to their networks to identify sources of work experience ideas, and to feel free to contact them with any and all suggestions to support creative planning for the SWEP 2021 experience.

Chair McCallum asked if the situation doesn't present an opportunity for SWEP to look at the state more broadly. The students engaged in SWEP may already be developing skills that may serve the growing effort to identify improvements needed to improve accessibility of websites, facilities, procedure manuals, etc., in a variety of professions and industries.

Commissioner Carlile-Smith suggested a SWEP participant could gain experience performing accessibility testing and help the State of Oregon's website be more accessible to those with vision loss; for example, the application to become a Governor-appointed commissioner cannot be filled out by a blind person.

OLD BUSINESS

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (BEP) UPDATE

Eric Morris, Business Enterprise Program Director, provided the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) update.

The RSA 15 Report for FY 2020 (ending September 30) has been completed.

Aware Case Management System

BEP staff have been working to establish the BEP programs in the Aware system, and BEP will go live at the end of February. Activities have included testing and verification to ensure the system performs within our business functions.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM RULE CHANGES PERMANENT RULE FILING (Action Item)

The commissioners approved the set of BEP administrative rule revisions that had been reached, after several years of coordination with, and approved by the RSA. Since then, the Agency filed a Temporary Administrative Order to implement the rules immediately while we completed the process to permanently adopt the rules. This included filing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking with the Secretary of State's office, public notification to legislative and stakeholder contacts (as specified in the rules), and a public comment period that culminated in a public hearing. No comments for changes were received, so the commissioners were asked for their approval to allow the Agency to permanently adopt the rules, as approved at the December 2020 meeting.

Chair McCallum asked for a motion to approve the rules. Commissioner Carlile-Smith motioned to accept the rules, Commissioner Hudson seconded, and the motion passed.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATIVE RULE PERMANENT RULE FILING (Action Item)

Director Hale addressed the commissioners, detailing the rulemaking activities that have occurred since the December meeting when the commissioners approved revisions to the Agency and Vocational Rehabilitation Administrative Rules. As with the BEP rules, no comments were received during the open

comment period. The Agency requested the commissioners' approval to file a Permanent Administrative Order to implement the rules, as written and previously approved at the December meeting.

Chair McCallum asked if there were any questions, and called for a motion. Commissioner Hudson motioned to approve the rules, Commissioner Carlile-Smith seconded, and the motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.