

Oregon Commission for the Blind  
Regular Meeting  
Portland, Oregon – April 6, 2023 - 1:00 pm  
Approved Minutes

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

Michael Babcock  
Nadeera Broome  
Vivian Carlile-Smith  
Lillian Goodman  
Laurel Hudson  
Alan Labrum, OD  
Scott McCallum

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 3, 2023 (Action Item)

Chair McCallum requested a motion to approve the February 3, 2023 meeting minutes. Commissioner Laurel Hudson moved to accept the minutes, and Commissioner Nadeera Broome seconded. The motion passed.

AUDIENCE INTRODUCTION

Each member of the audience was asked to introduce themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was submitted.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Executive Director Johnson presented the report.

**Donations and Financial Reports**

The Agency's CFIO, Kat Martin, provided the Financial and Donations reports.

Bequest and Donations Fund Statement: Our cash balance in the fund was \$301,746 on February 28, 2023.

As a cost savings measure to reduce our general fund obligation, the legislature directed OCB to use a portion of donations to match the salary expense of one transition counselor. That obligation was carried forward to the 2021-23 biennium and, after considering twenty months of activity and adjusting for salary increases, the remaining obligation on this special project is \$24,534 meaning our unobligated donations balance is \$277,212.

Financial Status Report: The agency's legislatively approved budget for 2021-23 is \$24,865,520, sixty-nine positions and 66.42 full-time equivalents (FTE).

Based upon twenty months of activity through February 28, 2023, plus projections for the remainder of the biennium, a variance representing an overspend of 2.8% or \$696,102 of our Legislatively Approved Budget is forecasted, with overspending on services and supplies offset by underspending on salaries, wages, other payroll expenses, and special payments.

OCB's request for an additional \$200,000 in General Fund appropriation and 1.6 million (\$1,618,248) in federal limitation for the remainder of the 2021-23 biennium, representing a 7.3 percent change in the agency budget, is part of House Bill 5045 and awaits the Governor's signature.

Looking ahead to 2023-25, which begins on July 1st, the Governor and her Chief Financial Office reviewed the agency's requested budget and recommended the following:

- Denial of Policy Option Package 101 – Expanding Opportunity and Access.
- Denial of Policy Option Package 102 – Business Enterprise Program Economic Recovery and Resilience.
- Partial approval of Policy Option Package 103 – Information Technology and Modernization with a modification removing the requested establishment of one Human Resource Assistant position.
- Partial approval of policy Option Package 104 – Specialized Staff was modified to approve ten reclassifications already implemented, while removing the fund shift from Federal Funds to General Fund for indirect employees, establishment of the Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist classification, and increased funding for continuing education and professional development.

On February 16th, the agency presented our budget before the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services, and we await legislative approval on our budget for 2023-25.

There were no questions.

### **Federal Update**

We received the report on the federal monitoring by Rehabilitation Services Administration last June. This will be discussed under NEW BUSINESS.

Dante Allen, the RSA Commissioner nominee in 2022 (which expired at the close of 2022 session), has been renominated and awaits confirmation by the newly seated 2023 Congress.

A deputy commissioner has been appointed at RSA – Carol Dobak. Dobak is a longtime staff member with RSA with many years of experience.

### **Legislative Session Update**

House Bill 5045 has been approved and is moving through the appropriation process to provide sufficient resources for the remainder of the biennium. Otherwise, there has been no further action on the agency budget for 2023-25.

Chair McCallum asked if Ms. Johnson had a sense of what we could expect. Director Johnson mentioned that the previous forecast projected a downturn, but not significantly, during the next biennium.

The subcommittee will often wait to make a decision and recommendation on the level of funding and the staffing level for the agency, um, until the May forecast. That is the final prediction of how much money they will have to fund the government for the next two years. Our work session will give us a sense as to what our budget will look like starting July 1.

## NEW BUSINESS

### **Briefing of Oregon’s Older Population and Vision Loss**

The Commission for the Blind was one of several states that took advantage of a unique opportunity to partner with VisionServe Alliance and the Ohio State University College of Optometry to examine data collected by the U.S. Census’ American Community Survey (ACS) and the Central Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS) to provide information about Oregon’s senior population (65 and older) and their experience of vision loss.

The report was presented by Libby Murphy, MS, Director of Program Development at VisionServe Alliance.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Program Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)**

The agency’s Vocational Rehabilitation Program is required to, every three years and by federal law, perform a statewide needs assessment. The assessment gathers and reports data that focuses on Oregon residents who could potentially benefit from our Vocational Rehabilitation programs, specifically those with unserved and underserved communities, unmet needs, especially those with significant disabilities and their needs for supported employment so they may obtain and maintain employment. This will help inform our strategic priorities and plan and future budget(s).

### **Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) 2023**

Angel Hale shared an update about the upcoming Summer Work Experience Program.

The SWEP program will celebrate its 50th anniversary this summer at the Commission for the Blind. The programs will begin June 24 and run through July 28 (Salem) and August 4 (Portland).

We are expecting 15 and 10 students for the Salem and Portland programs, respectively. The programs will be held at Willamette University (Salem) and Portland State University as in 2022. Staff is performing job development tasks in preparation. Angel asked commissioners to ask business they know of that would be interested in SWEP students in the Portland or Salem areas to please contact us.

Many of the summer positions have already been staffed, and Angel recognized her staff for their diligence managing the recruitment process. We have been in conversation with regional programs so that we may create a robust relationship for the community-based work experiences. We hope to get more teachers for the visually impaired involved over the summer to strengthen future programs.

Commissioner Babcock asked if there was anything that the commissioner can do to help SWEP? Director Hale invited the commissioners to join a weekend event or join a panel to present to the students, inviting anyone interested to contact her directly.

### **Federal Fiscal Year 2022 Monitoring Report**

The agency has received the final Fiscal Year 2022 Monitoring Report from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). There are four recommendations that will be corrective actions:

1. Accuracy and the supporting documentation of information reported to the Feds.
2. Pre-employment Transition Services' List of Allowable Services. Correction for this has already been submitted to RSA.
3. Documentation of SAM.gov check for eligible contractor status for contracts.
4. Training Center Apartments expenses changed from Services to Groups to Services for Individual Plan of Employment (IPE).

Director Johnson, and Chair McCallum agreed that it is very helpful to have an opportunity like this – an independent group review the procedures and identify gaps to recommend strengthening our controls and processes.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### **Business Enterprise Program Update**

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

The vending machine rollout project continues. We have three vending routes we are focusing on as we approach the end of the biennium.

Also, the Business Enterprise Program's Elected Committee (BECC) will participate in a strategic planning session June 7-8 at the Portland office. The session will be offered in person and the vending facility members who are not members of the BECC will be able to participate virtually.

### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair McCallum adjourned the meeting at 2:21 pm.