

Oregon Commission for the Blind
Regular Meeting – July 31, 2020 - 1:00 pm
Approved Minutes

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm by board Chairperson Scott McCallum via Zoom.com for a regular meeting of the Oregon Commission for the Blind. Members in attendance were:

Chair Scott McCallum
Christie Closson, MD
Lillian Goodman
Laurel Hudson
Vivian Carlisle Smith
Sharon Zenger
Michael Babcock was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 12, 2020 (Action Item)

Dr. Closson made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Lillian Goodman seconded, and the motion passed.

AUDIENCE INTRODUCTION

Each audience member introduced themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one submitted public comment.

SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (SWEP) UPDATE

Angel Hale reported on the 2020 virtual SWEP program. 13 students participated in virtual SWEP across the three programs, Portland, Salem and Third Track. Seven Portland students pursued the program to completion in today's graduation, while Salem and Third Track students marked the end of SWEP in ways that made sense for their locale. Angel introduced two SWEP participants who reported on their 2020 virtual SWEP program experiences.

Eric Gongora, a second-year SWEP participant, spoke positively about ways virtual SWEP was similar to in-person SWEP: meeting old friends and kindling new friendships, daily life skills, cooking lessons. He especially liked the *So Extras* (personalized activities based on individual preferences and goals) such as informational interviews – one with a lawyer, and a mentorship with a lawyer that will continue beyond the summer program. Eric will enter school as a high school senior this fall.

Anna Reddick was also curious to see what she could learn through virtual SWEP. She reported she learned a lot, including job readiness, the necessary steps of finding employment, beginning with job search, and continuing through the resume, application, and interviews through accepting an offer. Her favorite was the cooking classes. She related that although she knew a little about cooking, she learned a great deal more about techniques, ways to cook, meal prep, and staying safe, especially in using the oven and stove top. Anna had four *So Extras* – an information interview with a therapist and a class on Linked In (www.Linkedin.com), and a class on helping families who experience homelessness.

Chair McCallum asked the students how virtual SWEP pushed them in a different way. Anna felt that she had to be better organized so she gained experience using her calendar to keep SWEP appointments and meeting schedules straight, “making every meeting” as well as the *So Extras* that she wanted to be present for. Eric expressed similar thoughts, that staying organized pushed him to attend and motivated him to “get up and going,” compared to regular SWEP where you “obviously have to go, or else you’re fired.”

Commissioner Laurel Hudson asked if there was a favorite meal they made? They both felt the Raspberry Puff Pastry was their favorite food they created. Anna gained confidence using the oven safely. Eric explained that he learned to use his hands (having no vision) during cooking and stay safe and organized.

Commissioner Vivian Carlile-Smith asked how cane travel was dealt with in virtual SWEP. Eric had a *So Extra* in mobility, but the pandemic prevented much of the travel, but they still covered material and learned new skills – techniques to analyze a street: how the cars are moving, patterns of movement, and how to cross the street safely. Anna also had an O & M (orientation and mobility) *So Extra*, similar to Eric’s, where they analyzed an intersection, and listened for turning cars relative to Cardinal directions. Since the beginning of the pandemic, she hasn’t been out much, so it was a good refresher for the basics of street crossing.

The commissioners thanked Anna and Eric for their presentations today, ahead of the SWEP graduation later this afternoon.

Executive Director Johnson acknowledged Anna’s and Eric’s positive perspective as they complete SWEP and recognized the staff members who enthusiastically embraced moving SWEP to a virtual platform.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2) (h) this meeting or portions thereof may be held in Executive Session to confer with legal counsel with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed.

Chair McCallum reconvened the meeting at 1:39 pm.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Executive Director Dacia Johnson presented the Executive Director report.

Donations and Financial Reports, Business Monitoring, Annual Review of Agency Head Transactions

Executive Director Johnson presented the Donation and Financial Reports and there were no questions.

Business Monitoring

Executive Director Johnson presented the Business Monitoring report and there were no questions. She added that the Internal Auditor position has been filled, and we plan to present the next iteration of OCB’s Business Monitoring at the October meeting.

Case Management System Update Status Report

Director Johnson presented the Case Management Status Report. The project is under way. Once the reports become more substantive, the project lead, Barbara Lloyd, will present the report.

COVID-19 Emergency Update

Governor Brown announced that state offices will remain closed to the public through October.

We continue to meet with staff to plan a soft-reopening that will enable us to provide socially-distanced and safe essential services.

Commissioner Carlile-Smith asked if there were specific needs that have been unmet due to the inability to meet face-to-face.

Director Johnson explained that those who may require hand-over-hand instruction have been postponed, as when beginning keyboarding or learning to read braille; also, seniors are often deferring services altogether until in-person services become available again.

Orientation and Mobility instructors have also been working particularly hard to define ways they may safely teach cane travel while remaining socially distanced.

Legislative Budget Update

The Legislature awaits action by Congress before considering rebalancing requests.

Agency Request Budget (Action Item)

Director Johnson summarized the proposed 2021-23 budget:

General Fund	\$ 6,073,658
Other Fund	988,802
Federal Funds	<u>+ 17,545,975</u>
Total Funds Budget	\$ 24,608,435

The budget includes these policy option packages (POP), which were previously approved by the commissioners:

POP 101	Pre-Employment Transition Services
POP 102	Operational Authorization for Good Government
POP 103	Business Enterprise Program Modernization & Expansion Fund
POP 104	Information Technology Infrastructure

Vivian Carlile-Smith made a motion to accept the Agency Request Budget. Laurel Hudson seconded and the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM UPDATE

Business Enterprise (BE) Program Director Eric Morris presented the BE Program Update to the commissioners.

Self-Service Initiative

Vehicle purchases are still delayed, impacted by COVID-19-related manufacturer production shortfalls. The hoped-for September 1 openings have been pushed back at least two months to November, causing instability in scheduling vending machine installations. Staff safety as they visit sites is also a major concern.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Director Morris reported on the reopening plans for most public buildings are currently unknown and subject to rapid change, depending on multiple factors including reopening schools, rates of infection and when to redeploy the (currently) teleworking workforce.

Department staff are teleworking and in touch with other teleworking employees from public buildings, arranging for new buildings, new/revised services, and training future BE VFMs.

Vending sites (food service) are being outfitted to support online ordering and contactless delivery.

Vivian Carlile-Smith asked if there had been any BECC meetings in July as she had not seen meeting announcements. Director Morris explained that would be answered in the next update item.

Administrative Rules

Director Morris reported on Business Enterprise Elected Committee (BECC) meeting dates and items for Active Participation that include COVID relief fund distribution and set-aside deferral, and BECC active participation on subject designated by RSA.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA)

Angel Hale presented the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, describing the results research conducted August-December 2019.

Chair McCallum asked Director Hale if OCB had any Spanish-language speaking rehabilitation instructors. Hale replied that our most recently retired counselor was Spanish speaking, and that preference would be given to future applicants with fluent Spanish for that position.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session called pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(i) to review and evaluate the employment-related performance of the Executive Director.

Chair McCallum reconvened the meeting at 2:40 pm. There being no further agenda items, the meeting was adjourned.