

Oregon Commission for the Blind
Regular Meeting
Portland, Oregon – December 2, 2022 - 1:00 pm
Draft 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:

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

WELCOME TO NEW COMMISSIONER – Dr. Alan Labrum

Chair McCallum welcomed the new Commissioner, Alan Labrum, O.D. Dr. Labrum was appointed in September to fill the board vacancy left when Dr. Closson resigned June 30, 2022.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 7, 2022 (Action Item)

Chair McCallum requested a motion to approve the October 7, 2022, meeting minutes. Commissioner Vivian Carlile-Smith moved to accept the minutes, and Commissioner Lillian Goodman seconded. The motion passed.

AUDIENCE INTRODUCTION

Each member of the audience was asked to introduce themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Three individuals provided public comment:

- Jerry Bird, Vending Facility Manager
- Linda Haseman, Interested Person and partner to Randy Hauth
- Randy Hauth (Vending Facility Manager and Business Enterprise Consumer Committee (BECC) Chair

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Executive Director Johnson welcomed the commissioners and delivered the report.

Donations and Financial Reports

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

Monthly Summary Report - OCB's Legislatively Approved Budget for 2021-23 is \$24,865,520, sixty-nine positions and 66.42 full-time equivalents (FTE).

Based upon sixteen months of activity through October, 2022, plus projections for the remainder of the biennium, a variance representing an underspend of 2.2% or \$555,683 of our Legislatively Adopted Budget is forecasted, with overspending on services and supplies offset by underspending on salaries, wages, other payroll expenses, and special payments.

Donations Report – Our cash balance in the Bequest and Donations Fund was \$277,792 on October 31, 2022. As a costs 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 new biennium and, after considering sixteen months of activity, the remaining obligation on this special project is \$9,576 meaning our unobligated donations balance after this adjustment is \$268,216.

There were no questions.

State of Oregon Update

Executive Director Johnson recounted for Commissioners the process anticipated for the coming months and agency budget activities under the Governor-Elect, Tina Kotek, as they assemble their administration and initiate their vision for Oregon. We expect the budget season to be delayed but await notice of legislative committee appointments for the 2023 session. The Governor's Budget is expected early in 2023.

Chair McCallum asked if the Executive Director position is one of those appointed by the Governor. Ms. Johnson explained that the Commission Board holds the appointing authority.

Chair McCallum asked if Director Johnson has a sense of the budget outlook for Oregon and whether there was a sense of potential success for the policy option packages the agency is requesting. Director Johnson acknowledged that state government is preparing for a potential minor recession, but that we are unclear of the extent it would affect our budget request.

Federal Update

Confirmation by Congress of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner is still pending.

The RSA Monitoring Report of our Vocational Rehabilitation Services program (undertaken in June 2022) has not yet been received. Commissioner Babcock asked if we could estimate when the RSA Monitoring results would be available. RSA has estimated a release by the end of 2022.

Report from All Staff Training 2022

Executive Director Johnson reported on the agency-wide meeting and training held for agency staff the week of October 17 in Portland. Agency staff attended presentations on topics such as the state of the agency, our employee assistance program, and information security, and attended workshops such as Strength Finders, de-escalation training, training in adult learning, and various types of adaptive technology as well as time spent with their teams and co-workers. Presenters represented a broad background of expertise in their fields.

The staff continue to have a strong desire for technical training. Chair McCallum suggested the Agency engage (if they do not already) with the American Printing House about the Federal Quota System as a resource for training equipment.

Staff Recognition Program

Executive Director Johnson presented an overview of the recently updated Staff Recognition Program which will launch January 1, 2023.

Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) 2023

Planning is underway for the 2023 Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP). SWEP is offered to pre-transition age youth 16-20 years old with separate cohorts forming to attend in Salem and Portland. Flyers announcing “We’re Hiring” for Summer 2023 were recently distributed.

It was discussed at the October meeting that the 2023 SWEP Salem program funding was not approved by the Blind Visually Impaired Student (BVIS) Fund. Chair McCallum commented that this funding stream was established by the Legislature when the Oregon School of the Blind closed as a means to secure funding for existing services, including Salem’s SWEP program; Administered by the Oregon Department of Education, the current fund administrator is Northwest Educational Service District (NWESD) who has declined to support the Salem program this year.

Paperless Case File Project

The agency has initiated a project to discontinue physical (paper) case files. During RSA Monitoring, and as a result of adopting the Aware Case Management System, it became clear that maintaining matching file systems, digital and physical, was not a sustainable business practice. In October, we began a project to convert open and new vocational rehabilitation case files into electronic records. Leading the project is Clay France, our Internal Auditor, in partnership with Angel Hale, Malinda Carlson, and Eric Morris.

NEW BUSINESS

Legislative Funding Request for 2021-23 (Action Item)

Executive Director Johnson reviewed the draft letter shared with commissioners seeking a funding increase from the Legislature. This is to replace funds lost due to the Blind Visually Impaired Student (BVIS) Fund’s denial of Salem SWEP 2023 funding and to provide sufficient federal limitation for the remainder of 21-23.

The Agency is seeking permission to request \$200,000 in General Fund and \$866,000 in Federal Fund limitation from the 2023 legislative session.

Chair McCallum called for a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Carlile-Smith motioned to approve the request, and Chair McCallum seconded. The motion passed.

Agency 2023-24 Audit Plan

Clay France, Internal Auditor, presented and discussed the Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2023. There were no questions.

Highlights of Agency Program Performance for FFY 22

Each program director provided a high-level summary of the agency's performance data for FFY 2022. The presenters and topics were:

- Angel Hale, Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Jonathan Scrimenti, Director, Orientation and Career Center for the Blind
- Eric Morris, Director, Business Enterprise Program
- Malinda Carlson, Director, Independent Living Services

OLD BUSINESS

Business Enterprise Program Update

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

Vending Machine Rollout – Machinery orders (interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain shortages) have begun to arrive and are being scheduled for deployment in vending facility routes.

RSA 15 Report – The Aware Case Management System has required technical support in order to produce the report accurately. We expect to deliver the report when it comes due at the end of December.

Bi-annual Operating Agreements – These are being distributed to vending facility managers now.

Staff Activity and Task Reports – The Business Enterprise Consumer Committee (BECC) has asked to be informed of the work that program staff are performing. Director Morris has been sharing that list with the BECC.

Commissioner Carlile-Smith asked how long it takes to get someone a facility once they are licensed. Director Morris explained that there are multiple factors involved: Geographic location is one factor in that the site needs to be located somewhere that licensees want to work and live; The timing of the opportunity needs to correspond to the candidate's life goals and their current situation; and Licensure, once achieved, is for life, and vendors are not penalized for waiting for the appropriate opportunity.

Commissioner Carlile-Smith also inquired about the resources committed to a licensee's training – are we losing money if someone doesn't join the program right away? Executive Director Johnson explained that it is common for states to have more licensees than opportunities. OCB regularly receives phone calls from licensees in other states who are seeking opportunities and relocation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair McCallum adjourned the meeting at 2:51 pm.