

APPROVED MINUTES

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Public Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

Nebraska Energy Office; 1111 O Street, 2nd Floor

Lincoln, NE

November 19, 2011

Call to order

Welcome and Introductions, announcements concerning public comments, meeting agendas, open meeting act, proof of publication, recordings and lunch arrangements

Julie Johnson, Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and she welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Commission Board toured the Center client apartments at 9:00 a.m. The Focus Topic for the meeting is the Center Apartment Resource Position and the Residential Component to Center Training.

It was noted that public comments are always welcome regarding the agenda items. Hubert Paulson recorded the meeting and the recordings are available on the website. Pizza will be delivered at around noon.

A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act was available. The Act was available in both print and Braille format. The Notice of the Meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star, the State Government Calendar, NCBVI Website, NFB Newsline® and Radio Talking Book.

Chairperson Johnson highlighted the Public Comment Protocol which went into effect on May 14, 2011. The Protocol is available at the meetings in both Braille and print. The Protocol is stated below:

Public Comment Period Protocol

1. There will be no public comments outside of public comment time. If a Commissioner or the Executive Director has a question about the current topic and someone in attendance can answer it, that person may be called on for information. However the person may only speak to the question at hand and must be called on, by the Board Chair, to speak.
2. Names will be taken at the beginning of the public comment time. Those individuals will get a turn to speak in the order the names were received. At the end of that series of speakers, names will again be asked of those wishing to speak. This process will continue until the public comment time has elapsed.
3. Persons who raise their hand to speak will not be recognized. Names should be given verbally.
4. Only the recognized person may speak. The speaker will address the commissioners from the podium or table designated for this purpose.
5. If the Executive Director or Commissioners have questions for the recognized speaker, discussion may proceed with only that speaker. No one else from the public may make comments at this time.

6. If individuals from the public attending the meeting insist on speaking during a time when they are not recognized after being warned, they will be asked to leave. Likewise if there is any other behavior the Chairperson deems inappropriate, i.e. excessive shouting, threats, obscenities etc. that person will be asked to leave.

Reading of the agenda

Commissioner Hansen read the agenda items and introductions were made.

Commissioners Present: Mike Hansen, Designee of the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska, Lincoln; Nancy Oltman, Hastings; Julie Johnson, Chairperson, York; Jim Jirak, Vice Chairperson, Designee of the American Council of the Blind of Nebraska, Omaha.

Commissioners Absent: Darrell Walla, Omaha

NCBVI Staff Present: Dr. Pearl Van Zandt, Executive Director; Carlos Servàn, Deputy Director VR; Bob Deaton, Deputy Director IL; Fatos Floyd, Center Director; Kathy Stephens, Administrative Assistant; Lin Cain, Apartment Resource Counselor; Sahar Hussein, Center Braille instructor; Connie Daly, Lincoln District Supervisor.

Center Clients: Zach Haye, Abby Stone, Leah Johnson, Dave Freitag, Ron Davison, Angela Marin.

Others Present: Vickie Rasmussen, CAP-Lincoln; Dan Bird, NCBVI Driver; Anna Givens, Lincoln; Terry Brennfoerder, ACBN-Lincoln; Kelsey Saltzman, Lincoln; Barbara Epworth, ACBN-Omaha; Charli Saltzman, Lincoln; Rachna Keshwani, Lincoln; Laural Friesen, Lincoln; Carol Gibilisco, ACBN-Omaha; Mark Bulger, ACBN-Omaha; Glennie Weiland, ACBN-Omaha; Jeff Altman, NFBN-Lincoln; Kelly Coleman, NFBN-Lincoln; Karen Anderson, NFBN-Lincoln; Tony Olivero, NFB-Baltimore; Kayde Rieken NFBN-Lincoln, Chris Turner NFBN-North Platte, Jamie Forbis, North Platte; Mike Jolls, NFBN-Omaha; Tanna Shoyo, NFBN-Lincoln; Bonnie Ainsworth, NFBN-Lincoln; Barbara Loos, NFBN-Lincoln; Brad Loos, NFBN-Lincoln; Kim Adams, Morris Town; Robert Newman, NFBN-Omaha; Cheryl Livingston, NFBN-Lincoln; Mike Floyd, NFBN-Lincoln; Jeremy Fifield, NFBN-Lincoln; Ronnie Kellogg, Lincoln; Elizabeth Weisser, Lincoln; Kenda Slavin, ACBN-Omaha; Shirley Allen, ACB-Omaha; Louis Ellis, Lincoln; Katie Redinbaugh, ACBN Omaha; Janis Compton, ACBN-Omaha; Howard Compton, ACBN-Omaha; Stephanie Wagle, NFBN-Lincoln.

Approve August 2011 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Jirak moved to approve the Minutes of the August 13, 2011 Commission Board Meeting. Commissioner Oltman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and all were in favor of the motion.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Presentation presented by: Victoria Rasmussen

Vicki thanked the commissioners for asking her to come today to share some information about the Client Assistance Program. Most of the time the Client Assistance Program is referred to as CAP and often times it is referred to as "I've been capped."

Vicki stated that CAP's work with NCBVI is very positive. Vicki stated she has been the director of CAP for about 28 years. Each state is required to have a Client Assistance Program. Vicki noted that she is housed within the general VR Agency. Many years ago, when each state received funding and then the funding was pulled, the Nebraska general VR Agency continued to provide a CAP program for clients. Once money was available again, they were grandfathered in. This is how she ended up being internal to VR. Most of the Client Assistance Programs are in the protection and advocacy agencies and there are about four internal CAPs left across the state. It started with about twenty.

With the NCBVI, Dr. Van Zandt has asked her to come to the Commission on Wednesday afternoons so she has been doing this for approximately thirteen years. Vicki stated that she feels it has been very beneficial. Before, the only time that she would really show up at the Commission was anytime she received a complaint. At that time she felt like she always walked into NCBVI on an unhappy note. By coming on Wednesday afternoons this has allowed her to develop working relationships and learn every time she visits. Vicki stated she is also involved with the Placement Committee; she attends the administrative staff meetings, the philosophy meetings, provides new staff training and attends the supervisor meetings. Vicki stated that she appreciates these opportunities.

The Client Assistance Program handles any complaints or concerns that applicants or clients of the Commission for the Blind, the General VR agency and the Centers for Independent Living. Any time you hear of an individual who is unhappy with organizations such as the League of Human Dignity, they should be referred to her. Vicki also handles complaints for Part B money. NCBVI receives Part B money and so does Nebraska Assistive Technology.

When an individual contacts her she sends out release forms and after she receives the forms back she informs Bob Deaton or Carlos Serván that she is investigating a complaint. Vicki then reviews the file, reviews the case notes, talks to the staff person and, if need be, the supervisor. Vicki's main responsibility is to review the decision that has been made and apply it to all of the policies and procedures and the Federal law. After she has reviewed the decision she must decide if it was an appropriate decision. If it is appropriate, the staff person and she will work together to help the client understand it. If she disagrees with the counselor's decision she will need to explain to the counselor why she disagrees and show it in the Rule or the Federal law why she disagrees. Vicki cannot simply come in and say she disagrees and you need to do this. Vicki noted that she has been seeing in the General VR agency case notes that it states "we are paying for this because CAP said so." Vicki stated that this is not the case; it does not work that way. She will be working with the General VR agency to fix this and put in the real reason why. Vicki noted that she does explain why she feels a decision should be overturned. If there is a disagreement in the decision they will try to work something out. If need be, she would then assist the individual through the next appeal process which would be the impartial hearing. Vicki stated that she has found that with NCBVI the client definitely comes first and they are always looking for ways to resolve complaints and move cases forward. At times she simply receives calls from clients who want to double check on a policy. She can provide this information over the phone without getting a release form. She also gets calls from clients asking how to talk to a counselor or how to ask for a certain piece of equipment, etc. This she can also do without a release form. As long as she does not contact any staff within NCBVI she will not need a release form.

Clients are informed about CAP at the time of application, when they complete the IPE, when the case is closed, if they are found ineligible for services or if they have requested a hearing. Sometimes in surveys completed, the numbers have shown that individuals are not recalling the Client Assistance Program.

Vicki stated that she does know that the information is being given to the clients and the applicants. Vicki stated that she feels that the information is not being remembered. Vicki depends on NCBVI staff to remind the clients about the CAP program should there be a time of impasse or disagreement. Vicki reported that this year she has had seven CAP cases and they were regarding timeliness of services, computer training, reapplying for services, process for requesting new counselor, not returning phone calls, and equipment on the VR and IL side.

Vicki stated that brochures on the Client Assistance Program are available in Braille, large print or any other accessible format. The number is 800-742-7594 and her direct number is 402-471-3656.

Chairperson Johnson asked how the number of complaints that NCBVI receives compare to other agencies. Vicki stated that she has only compared NCBVI to the General VR agency and the percentage has been about the same because of the number of clients each agency works with.

Director Van Zandt asked of the seven cases this year, were they all resolved? Vicki stated all the cases were resolved and there were no hearings.

The commissioners thanked Vicki Rasmussen for her report.

Focus Topic: The Focus Topic for the meeting is the Center Apartment Resource Position and the Residential Component to Center Training.

Chairperson Johnson thanked the Center clients for serving them breakfast this morning and for the tour of the apartments.

Fatos Floyd thanked the commissioners for taking the tour of the apartments. Fatos noted that Chairperson Johnson was the Commission's apartment resource counselor at one time so she knew many of the aspects of the apartments.

Fatos reported that when they get a tour for the Center, the next step is that if the client is interested in coming, they set up a three day stay. If the apartments are not full during this time, the client will stay at the apartments and they will be assigned a mentor. They kind of duplicate the training at the Center and the apartments so the client has a full informed choice as to if they want to attend the Center training. During the first night of the three day stay the other clients will cook a meal for the new potential client to welcome him or her. During their three day stay they spend two nights at the apartments and have an opportunity to talk to the other clients about the training. This also assists them in making an informed choice.

Commissioner Oltman stated that she felt it was a wonderful tour and that the apartments are very nice.

Chairperson Johnson noted that she was the NCBVI apartment resource counselor at one time. They are nice individual apartments, it is a secured building and they are in a nice downtown location.

Commissioner Hansen stated that he was impressed to see that the apartments were accessible for other disabilities besides blindness. The one apartment was wheelchair accessible in all aspects.

Fatos noted that several years ago they decided to accept single parents with children into the apartments. This gave them an opportunity not only to train an individual as a blind person, but also as a parent taking care of a blind child.

Lin Cain introduced herself as the Apartment Resource Counselor. Lin reported that once a month the Center clients have a social activity in addition to the independent living activities that they do at the Center and at the apartments. Basically, the activities at the apartments are an extension of the training at the Center. They take on various projects. A few weeks ago they learned how to totally clean the stoves. This included raising the hood, pulling off the burners and the drip pans. They do various cleaning activities and maintenance. Once a month they also do a public social activity. They have gone ice skating, to a Saltdogs ball game and this afternoon they are going to go experience the new blind, Braille and audio at the Sheldon Art Museum. They will have a guided tour and experience the alternatives available.

Commissioner Hansen asked if the Center clients who have children also stay in the apartments. Commissioner Hansen also asked how they worked the children into the training and how was daycare arranged.

Fatos stated that they do several varieties of options depending on the age of the children. At one time Fatos had two cribs in her office. They had a six week old and a three month old child. These children stayed at the Center during the clients' training. This offered the client a chance to do some travel training carrying the baby. They also did travel alone at times and the children would stay in Fatos' office. The children stay with the parents at the apartments.

If the children are older the Commission provides daycare and the parents take the children to daycare and then come to the Center for training. This also provided opportunities for other clients to babysit. This helped other clients to learn that a blind person can be a great parent.

Commissioner Oltman asked if clients are required to go on all activities or are they given a choice. Fatos noted that there are two types of activities: Center activities and apartment activities. Clients are required to participate in all Center activities. Clients are encouraged to attend apartment activities, but it is not required. Clients are not required to wear sleepshades during the apartment activities. It was noted that most clients do participate in all activities.

Commissioner Hansen asked what the atmosphere was like at the apartments. Clients were asked to answer this question.

Anna Givens – Anna stated that she just graduated last week from the Center. Anna stated that she was at Center training and the apartments for about one year. There have been clients coming in and going out during this time. Anna stated that it depends on the group of people. Clients mostly hang out with each other, either going out to dinner or studying together. There are also times when people have alone time in their own apartments. Overall, Anna stated that it is a very social environment.

Stephanie Wagle – Stephanie stated that she graduated from the Center last May. Stephanie stated she agrees with what Anna stated. Many times during the winter the clients would go out for coffee in the morning. The clients kind of fall into routines with each other. The clientele at the apartments is always changing. Stephanie added that the Center has a “family dynamic.”

Lewis Ellis – Lewis stated that he has been at the Center for one year now. Lewis stated that he feels it is very family orientated. When he has a problem he can go to his fellow clients and problem solve. Lewis stated that from day one he did not want to go back home. Lewis stated that he loves the family atmosphere of the Center and the apartments. He loves the friendships that he has developed.

Charli Salzman – Charli stated that she is a past client of the Center. Charli stated that she loved the potlucks they often had in the evenings.

Commissioner Hansen asked the clients if there was an aspect of the apartment living that they wish was different.

Lewis Ellis – Lewis stated that he would like to have maids at the apartments.

Ron Davison - Ron stated that he would like better WiFi connection at the apartments. Some apartments have good connection and others do not.

Anna Givens – About six apartments get good internet connection, others do not. It is not a huge issue but seems somewhat unfair. Anna stated that Lin's schedule changes a lot and the days of the meeting change and this gets confusing. She would like more structure with the instruction.

Director Van Zandt encouraged clients to send to the Commission their ideas for improving things at the apartments. While the suggestions may not all be implemented, at least they can be considered.

Lin Cain noted that the Center clients recently voted to change the weekly meetings to Wednesday evenings.

Chairperson Johnson noted that ten years ago when she was the Apartment Resource Counselor the apartments had no internet at all, so this is an improvement. She also noted that she always thought it would be nice if the apartments had a yard space.

Chairperson Johnson thanked everyone for their contributions.

Public Comment

Jeff Altman – stated that he came today to talk about some of the concerns that were expressed at a previous Board of Commissioner meeting. There were some issues raised regarding whether structured discovery and techniques used by the NCBVI are the most appropriate and effective for the people who are served by the agency. Jeff noted that he is speaking today on the behalf of the National Federation of the Blind and not as an employee of the Commission. The NFB is a very strong supporter of the structured discovery methodology and they believe that it creates the best opportunity for individuals to learn effective techniques for daily life and also provides them with the greatest sense of independence and understanding of blindness. Jeff noted that he asked a number of folks to come to today's meeting and he asked if he could have them answer a few questions by voice regarding their Center training. Chairperson Johnson agreed to this.

Several questions were asked and answered yes by persons in the audience.

Jeff Altman stated that from the responses from the clients, you can see that what the NCBVI is doing works. Most individuals find that Center training is very successful for them. Not every program works for everyone, but this does work for the majority of people who go through it. Jeff noted that he is aware that there is some concern that an individual has to come in and take the full program and it involves sleepshades and structured discovery. Even though he understands the concern of those thinking why do I have to go out of the state if I want to have a different form of training, but in reality, if you lived in one of those other states that did not offer structured discovery and you prefer to have that type of training, then you would have to go out of state to get that training as well. All things considered, he does not feel that there are too many states who can afford to have both a structured discovery and a conventional training available for their clients. Jeff noted that the two do not mix. It would be too confusing and not effective.

Howard Compton – stated that he has a two point question that he would like to ask the NFB-N representative on the Board, Mike Hansen. Howard asked Mike what has happened to the NFB lawsuit that was filed against ONI on behalf of NFB-N.

Commissioner Hansen stated that this is not a topic that he can talk about. Mike apologized but noted that this is a legal matter that would need to be addressed to the individuals involved in the lawsuit. He said that the NFB is not the plaintiff in the lawsuit.

Howard noted that on October 20, 2011, there was an article published in the Omaha World Herald. Howard stated that he would read only the first two lines.

The lines read “A federal judge has thrown out a lawsuit alleging that a company set up to employ blind workers favored sighted workers for promotions and targeted the blind when laying people off. Judge Joseph Bataillon ruled last week that the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska lacked standing to sue Outlook Nebraska, Inc.” Howard stated that this is the end of his comments.

Bob Deaton – stated that he graduated from the Nebraska Training Center in 1985. Bob stated that it was a life changing program for him. It was also an extremely emotional program with extreme highs and lows. Bob stated that everyone he knew in the program was experiencing many of the same things. A lot of client interaction occurred in the apartments and he had many bonding friendships. The atmosphere was very family like.

Barbara Epworth – asked if the apartments had a name. It was noted that the apartments are the Continental Commons. Our space in the building contains ten apartments total, nine are efficiency apartments and one is a two bedroom. The space rented for Center clients also has a meeting room, a common room and storage area.

Kim Adams – noted that she is a public school teacher of blind children. She has been teaching for 37 years. Kim stated that she began teaching blind children in 1982. Previously she was a special education teacher. Kim stated between 1982 and 1990, she had three students who were capable of going on for further education training. Out of those three, two chose not to go on and one chose to but then dropped out. Beginning in 1990 until 2008, she had six more students who graduated from her program. Of those six, all six went on to college. What made the difference? In 1989, she went to the Center and spent three months under sleep shades.

Kim stated that she did not realize until her training that she was afraid of blindness and she was projecting her fear of blindness on her students. The Center training changed her life and gave her confidence in herself. When she started using structured discovery teaching her students she feels that they began having confidence in themselves.

Brad Loos – stated that he went through Center training and graduated in 1979. Brad stated that he began going to Hines in Chicago. There, the only time you got a cane in your hand was during cane travel class. Otherwise you were not allowed to use one because they thought you would develop bad habits. When he came to Nebraska for training, the greatest thing they did for him was the very first day they not only gave him a cane, but they insisted that he use it all the time. Being able to reach out in front of him boosted his confidence 100 percent. He also met other blind people and got to learn what worked for them.

Stephanie Wagel –stated that she is a junior at the University of Nebraska majoring in English, theater and education. The main thing that the Center training gave her was confidence. This confidence sprung from structured discovery.

Abby Stone – stated that structured discovery is the best deal. She is gradually losing her sight and she does not want to have to go through Center training again as she loses more sight.

Ron Davison – said ditto to what Abby said. As far as the WiFi issue at the apartments, while it may not seem to be very important to people who have been in the apartments in the past, these days you need the internet for many things in life and it is part of the learning process. Ron noted that for all that Lin has to do, she rocks.

Fatos Floyd – stated that she does believe that WiFi is very important and she will be speaking with Chris Turner to try to work out a solution.

Attached to the Minutes are documents that were submitted to the NCBVI Commission Board for the Focus Topic Discussion.

Report from the Executive Director

Van Zandt verbally gave highlights of her report and she thanked the Commissioners for their time. The entire report of the Executive Director is pasted below.

Executive Director's Report – November 19, 2011

National Blindness Professionals Certification Board (NBPCB) completed their visit and assessment of the Nebraska Center for the Blind. Our Center was recertified for another three years. The statement on our website has changed to specifically refer to the Center, not the agency.

Following the visit, there were emails between a Board member and the NBPCB. The use of sleep shades and structured discovery were challenged, asking that national research be conducted and published. NBPCB does not do research.

I want to be very clear to this Board, Nebraska consumers and our staff that, based on the extremely positive outcomes achieved by Center graduates, and by our training statewide, NCBVI has a policy to provide training as we currently do. We know that it is extremely effective. This is agency policy; it is not about politics between the two national and state organizations of the blind. We do provide low vision training to clients in the field and also in the residential portion of our Center Training. In December, we have a low vision specialist coming to provide training to each of our Districts. Focusing on problem solving with non-visual techniques in the Center and in Home Teaching provides clients with life long skills and strategies for all facets of life.

RSA Monitoring Review January 23 – 26, 2012. A team will be here from Washington DC. The monitoring topics are Organizational Structure, Transition Services and Fiscal Integrity. They will want to meet with staff, Commissioners, and other stakeholders. More details of that will be provided as they develop the structure. Conference call meetings will be used in some cases, so that more can be involved – especially Commissioners. Even though the visit is late January, the team has already held 2 and scheduled 3 more conference calls. They have sent us a lot of materials to read and analyze; they have also required many documents from us. There are very short timelines for all this – the documents are required to be submitted by November 29; meetings scheduled will be held in the first two weeks of December.

Our Public Service Announcement has been seen by people in Kearney and Lincoln, at different times.

“Living the Full Life”: spring conference for the blind will be in Kearney, May 15 – 17, 2011 at the Kearney Holiday Inn. We have decided that IL clients closed since February 2010 or still active should have the opportunity to register, excluding those who attended the NCBVI 2010 or earlier VIPS conferences. This decision is based on the work involved, and time needed from already busy staff. It is not a financial decision. We feel that bigger is not necessarily better; with fewer people attending, staff will be able to give more quality time and training to participants.

We have always been prevented from assigning agency equipment to clients. We’ve tried before to get this changed, so that we have the ability to do this when needed and appropriate. Bill Brown and Kathy met with Surplus Property recently to discuss a procedure for assigning agency equipment to clients. A procedure will be developed by the Surplus division, but we were given verbal permission to proceed. We are still waiting for

the official procedure. Of course any computer or related item will be completely wiped free of all data, so that confidentiality is assured.

The State Plan was finalized and submitted, as reported in August. It has been approved by RSA.

Bill Brown and I attended a National Financial Management Conference in D.C. We are working on implementing information and strategies for improving NCBVI's business processes.

I spoke at the ACB of Omaha Chapter meeting, at their request.

I have completed and submitted the request to create the Technology Program Manager. State Personnel will be meeting with me and others, to assess and hopefully approve the position. The person hired will be expected to go through the four month Center Training.

I attended the Memorial Service for Richard 'Dick' Zlab of Omaha.

I attended and spoke at the NFB-N State Convention, held in Lincoln.

I have been meeting regularly with Mark Schultz, Director of the Nebraska general Vocational Rehabilitation agency. We learn from each other in many regards to improving services for all Nebraskans with disabilities.

I attended meetings of the Transition Advisory Committee for the Board of Education, the Lincoln/Lancaster Multicultural Advisory Council, the NCECVBI Stakeholders annual meeting, the AFB Board of Trustees meeting in Dallas, quarterly meetings of Friends of the Commission, the National Networking Teleconferences for State Rehab Council and Commission Board members, and others.

There are many other things taking my attention, including use of interpreters or SSP/interveners for the deaf-blind, state Building Division efforts to move our staff in Scottsbluff and Kearney, etc.

We have begun to work on the financial piece of eForce, so that case services will be directly linked to fiscal. For example, purchase orders will be connected to services authorized in the Individualized Plan for Employment. The system should be an excellent tool for us to use. A lot of programming will need to be done, before we can 'go live' with it.

We did receive the reallocation funds that we requested. Part is going for the eForce programming, also for the IL Skills Spring Conference, and many other projects that are in the works.

Nebraska Center for the Blind

Total Full-time Clients Served between 1996 through November, 2011 is 197. 87.5 percent achieved their employment goal. 23 percent from the total number are students. Only 9.6 percent are not working (down from 9.8% in August).

Activities for the past Quarter

August: Clients entered some items in the County Fair and won ribbons; swimming activity; baseball game.

September: Taco day; Cooking challenge; YGA visit (leadership academy from Turkey); Bowling and dinner; Recertification; Jim and Mark came for 3 day visit.

October: NFB state convention; White Cane proclamation; Pumpkin carving; Sheldon Art Gallery tour to test accessibility.

New Shop equipment is almost all set up now. We are working with Surplus Property and getting a mover to get the old equipment out of the shop.

Field Services

During the entire Federal Fiscal Year 2011 (October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011), we served 532 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients in all statuses. 63 were closed having achieved their employment goals. This is more than twice the 2010 figure (31). 62 were closed without achieving employment. We credit this positive number to many things, including good training, employment focused workshops, emphasis on employment in seminars in the Center and the field offices.

Our Social Security Reimbursements are also up. In 2011, we received \$430,359, compared to \$227,351 in 2010. The total received since 1999 to date is \$2,831,711. We credit this to investing in our clients so that they can get really good jobs with benefits and the chance for advancement.

In the Independent Living (IL) track, from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011, we served 841 clients in all statuses. 217 were closed successfully. 70 were closed without achieving their goals (withdrew, moved, deceased, institutionalized, and other reasons).

Deputy Directors and North Platte District

Carlos, Don, and three clients attended the BLAST conference the second week of September. The highlights from this conference are that we need to have ongoing training as our competitors in the private sector do it, for ourselves and the people we supervise. Subway will waive the franchise fee for blind vendors. Commercialization on the rest areas is a big issue. In a couple of months, Congress will take a look at this language for the Transportation bill. Dr. Van Zandt wrote a letter to Senator Johanns, who is in the committee.

We don't have a blind vendor for Hall County since September 30; thus we are sub-contracting with Universal Vending. They started to manage those machines since October 1.

We had planned to write a proposal for the Zorinsky building cafeteria which should be open in a month. There is an Omaha client interested who completed his training at the center. He is also helping with the transition at the state office building cafeteria. Unfortunately, we did not find out when we could bid on this until it was closed. We are working on our internal processes to make sure such opportunities are not missed in the future.

The Lincoln post offices are still checking with their supervisors to make sure that they could contract with us.

We sent our proposal on September 22 to get the contract for the vending machines at the Omaha State Office Building. Unfortunately, we did not get the contract.

September 30 and October 1, we had the NBE Training Retreat. It was a success. Vendors were very happy about it, the speakers were excellent. We intend to put a similar training for next year.

October 26, Don and Carlos met with Department of Roads staff to talk about the renegotiation of our contract, more specifically about the amount we pay for electricity.

The blind manager left the Lincoln State Office Building at the end of October. A new blind manager started on November 1 on a temporary, training basis. He is doing very well. The memo has gone to all vendors offering the opportunity, as is required, so that vendors with seniority have the chance for upward mobility.

Carlos met with Senator Fulton on October 26 to talk about the Priority provision regarding the NBE Program. Senator Fulton thinks that he will sponsor it but want to make sure that he gets support from Senator Avery, Chair of the Government Committee. Carlos met with Sen. Avery on November 3, and the senator agrees to cosponsor this bill. The idea is to call it "The Jobs for the Blind Bill". We will know more about this later.

PLACEMENT COMMITTEE:

We have doubled employment outcomes over last year and received nearly \$400,000 on Social Security reimbursement. The committee concluded that focusing on employment, providing training, counselors having goals for employment outcomes, etc. is helping to get these good results. We will have an Employment Conference and a College Workshop during the first week of August of 2012. NCBVI will contract with Robert Newman to help us. From this point on, the "Placement Committee" will be called the "Employment Committee."

The PSA is being played on channel 10-11. A sub-committee is following-up with the other channels.

OTHERS:

Cristal Grado started to work on the field on October 17. We contracted with Robert Newman to provide some training to her.

Lincoln completed the interviews for the new VR counselor. The new staff member is Conchita Hernandez.

Eight students attended Winnerfest at Aurora. The theme was "When the Going Gets Tough." The group had good discussions on bullying and positive interactions with peers.

Six clients attended For Your Independence (FYI) in North Platte on September 19-22.

Denise Johnston-Rauterkus and Deanna Jesse represented NCBVI at the annual Nebraska Optometric Association in Kearney in September.

The Independent Living skills spring conference planning committee had its first meeting on October 25.

Sherrie was celebrated as NCBVI's Employee of the Year on October 27. Carlos Serván was celebrated as our Manager of the Year.

Lincoln District Activity Report – Connie Daly

Candy Laursen retired from her position as an Orientation Counselor. She will be missed. Larry Roos accepted the position of Orientation Counselor. We are very excited to announce that we hired Conchita Hernandez to fill the Rehabilitation Counselor position. She is finishing up her Masters at Louisiana Tech University. She has worked our WAGES program as well as doing some Spanish translation for us. She will start Dec. 6th.

This quarter we had clients get jobs as an Orientation Counselor, a Technology Instructor, a Baler, and a phone interviewer. We were invited by the Olive Garden to come and learn about the restaurant industry. Four clients had a tour of the kitchen and lunch with the General Manager. One of our clients has had an interview with them and was hired as a hostess.

Amy Buresh worked with Omaha staff to start a deaf-blind group for youths.

We had some one day sessions of GATE. We had a sewing workshop with the help of Omaha and Kearney staff. Four clients and two staff were shown alternatives for sewing.

Omaha District Update – Nancy Flearl

We have had 3-4 new students with a dual sensory loss that we have started working with this month. We have started a group for younger individuals who experience a dual sensory loss to get together. This is open to youth and young adults across the state. The next time they meet will be in January.

Placements continue to be at the forefront of our minds. We have had a project with Unisource in Omaha where they have a large order with Omaha Steaks to package their gift boxes. It is one of the busiest times of year for Omaha Steaks. We have had 9-10 people working a temporary job for current work experience. Several have a goal of production and will hopefully have some employment opportunities that will stem from this partnership. The head of the warehouse has been very impressed with the employees and their work ethic. This project will run to December 23rd. The project with Unisource has served a two-fold purpose as it allows us to do a community based assessment of skills on the job. By spending time on the job with our consumers, we are able to note strengths, weaknesses, work readiness, ability to work as a team, etc.

We continue to do a lot of contacts with employers! We have a number of clients getting interviews.

We are finishing up this month with our Omaha group teaching sessions (SAILS). It has been a busy time around the office for sure and many wonderful meals have teased us all. The Norfolk office will be holding a group teaching the week of November 15th. Glenn Ervin has been working hard to coordinate this program.

We have several volunteers that are active in assisting with our group teaching sessions. We always hold a holiday dinner in December to thank the drivers and volunteers for all they do to support us in doing our jobs.

We had 2 clients attend Winnerfest, it was a huge success. The students were very excited about the program. Thanks to the team for all their hard work.

TABS did a wellness session this month where they took the bus to the KROC center and worked out on equipment and had lunch. It was to help students use their skills and resources in their community.

We have had increased contact with the school districts in our district. We have been to an increasing number of IEPs (team meetings in the schools).

Norfolk is winding down from their support of the Kearney Office. John Schmitt will continue to work and finish with a few clients in the area. Cristal Grado has started her position and John is working with her on any cases that will be transferred to her caseload.

Referrals have been a little sluggish.

We continue to struggle with finding additional drivers in Omaha.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) – Victoria Rasmussen

There were no issues this quarter. Ms. Rasmussen is here for part of the meeting today, to discuss CAP in general.

Business Office

Bill Brown – Business Manager

Work on Contracting Document

Propose new NIS report in Excel format for Monthly Grant Information

Work on Plan for eForce Financial

Work on plans for reallocation funds End of Grant Year activities

Close out ARRA funds expenditures and reports

Attend Federal Financial management Conference

Prepare for Monitoring

Kathy Stephens – Administrative Assistant

Worked with Linda Duran of Specially for You in Lincoln to design staff appreciation gift.

Bill Brown and I are working with State Surplus Property to develop a procedure to assign NCBVI equipment (such as computers) to clients.

Attended an Interactive Informational Forum put on by State Personnel. Topics of discussion were worker's compensation and risk management, political activities of state employees, nepotism and an update on LINK.

Worked with BEP staff on RFP 3773ZI which was vending for the Omaha State Office Building. NCBVI was not awarded the bid.

Attended a meeting for the Michael Hingson Project. To date, \$13,750 has been donated. We are waiting to see if we are awarded funds from the Cooper Foundation. Michael will present at the NCBVI all staff meeting on Wednesday morning, April 18, 2012.

Completed registrations and reservations for staff and clients attending the NFB-N Convention.

Assisted with NCSAB 2011 Fall Conference registrations and payments.

Dave Robinson – Personnel Officer

Candy Laursen's last day with the agency was September 23, 2011.

Larry Roos assumed the position previously occupied by Candy Laursen on September 26, 2011, which opened the VR Counselor position occupied by Larry.

The position formerly occupied by Larry Roos was opened from September 15-30, 2011, with an anticipated start date by the candidate of October 30, 2011.

Attended a September 21, 2011 seminar focused on internal controls and heard some stories by a gentleman from New York, of fraud that his office uncovered. The dollar amount was astounding, as were the details behind how the fraudulent incidents were perpetrated.

Attended a September 23 I.I.F. (Interactive Informational Forum) where we learned about a new online system for reporting worker's comp. cases. The system is much better than the way we used to submit cases and has a wealth of reports in it.

We were also given a few details about the upcoming dependent eligibility audit. The state is about to roll out a new "one-stop" website for state employees. It's called "LINK". LINK will enable those of us that use several state applications to go to one website and log on to the application we need. In the future they will be moving towards a "one site/one password" system, which those of us that use several applications will welcome.

We were also given a presentation from the Accountability and Disclosure Commission regarding campaign activity by state employees and nepotism.

I participated in a September 28th webinar for H/R people, giving us the details on the upcoming dependent verification audit. This audit is being conducted by a third party and its purpose is to verify that people that are being insured as dependents on state employee's health, dental and vision plans are legally eligible.

We were told that when the University of Nebraska conducted a similar audit, that they uncovered 421 people that were insured, that weren't eligible.

The state is a much larger group, so while it is not hoped, there is anticipation that the numbers may be higher. Since the state is self-insured, it is hoped that the audit will result in lower insurance costs, or at least slowing down the rate of increase.

The audit is retroactive to June 30, 2011, so anyone that was insured that is discovered to have been ineligible, will have to pay back the full amount of any insurance claims paid out from July 1, 2011 forward.

Mary Davis resigned on October 4, 2011 without notice.

Attend a Payroll/HR User Group meeting on October 5, 2011 and learned about a new H/R component being added to our system.

It seems that although Enterprise 1 seemed to have most of what the state needed, it fell a little short in the H/R functionality area. The new program is called Workday and will interface with Enterprise 1 on H/R issues only and will not replace Enterprise 1. We will still process payroll through Enterprise 1, but it is handing off the H/R component to Workday. Workday will also be the vehicle we will use for open enrollment next May.

Connie Daly announced that Conchita Hernandez has been hired as a Rehab. Counselor, to fill the vacancy created when Larry Roos filled the Orientation Counselor position. She starts December 6, 2011.

End of Director's Report.

A question was asked about the Older Blind Conference – Living the Full Life. Bob Deaton stated that the conference will be for people who have not attended a conference in the past. In 2010 we had much more work than anticipated by opening it to everyone who wanted to come. Bob agreed that there is benefit to be gained for people who have been to a convention in the past, but in the terms of staff commitment they felt they had to ensure that they were making the conference available to individuals who have not attended in the past.

Chairperson Johnson asked about the reallocation funds. She asked what the plans were for the funding besides the conference. Director Van Zandt stated that they started with a whole spreadsheet about ideas for the funds. Reallocation funds are also being used for eForce. Carlos Serván noted that the final amount available is about \$450,000. Carlos noted that we are also going to purchase some technology equipment for staff members, furniture and equipment for the Business Enterprise Program. Van Zandt noted that all of the purchases are for items that we have needed for quite some time but we put off in an effort to keep expenditures down.

Commissioner Jirak asked if someone who has attended the Older Blind conference in the past is willing to pay their registration and so on, will they be encouraged to come and do we know if there will be a cost to the first time attendees. Commissioner Jirak noted that he feels that if someone has to pay a nominal fee they sometimes get more out of the conference. Bob Deaton stated that this will be something to take a look at. The issue is the complications that arise. It became more practical to pay for all the expenses of those who attend.

Report from the Chairperson

Chairperson Johnson stated that she planned to attend the NFB-N convention but she was not able to and therefore, did receive no reimbursement.

Chairperson Johnson noted that she has not yet written her report for the National ACB Convention that she attended. Because she did not write the report, she did not seek reimbursement because that is the rule.

Chairperson Johnson stated that she continues with the Lions Club and the Peer Support group in her local area. She has been invited to speak in April at the ACB State Convention.

Commissioner Oltman stated that she felt that Chairperson Johnson should still be reimbursed for her trip to the National ACB Convention with the provision that the report will be on its way. Director Van Zandt noted that State regulations govern reimbursement and there are time limits. The time limit for this reimbursement is past.

Commissioner Oltman noted that she tries to participate in the networking group conference call which is held every other month. She noted that she missed the September call, but she did attend the last call. She noted that she feels that these calls are very worthwhile.

Commissioner Jirak reported that he and Mark Bulger attended a three day stay at the Center in September. He noted that at the August 2011 Commission Board meeting him and Mark were encouraged to attend the

Center training as a three day stay to see exactly what does happen with the rehabilitation process. Commissioner Jirak stated that the morning of, he wanted to call and state he was not coming because he was not looking forward to it. He stated that by the end of the stay he hated to leave. He found the staff to be very courteous and very polite. Commissioner Jirak stated that it was a positive experience for him. The staff appears to be dedicated in what they do and the clients appear that they want to learn. He was impressed with what he came away with.

Mark Bulger commented that it is great to see so many graduates of the Center at today's meeting. Mark stated that he believes that the Center is the best that Nebraska has to offer. Number one, it is the only thing we have and as consumers we need to be behind what we have. Mark stated that he too fully enjoyed his experience during the three day stay. They were welcomed by everyone. The staff tries to create an encouraging and fun environment for learning. It appeared that the clients cared for and respected the staff. He was impressed with the apartments. Mark stated that he truly enjoyed meeting the clients and he commended staff for their commitment. Mark stated that he feels that the Center Director does a great job in promoting a positive attitude about blindness. She does a great job of orchestrating the program. Mark stated that he gets the impression that they were trying to say that structured discovery was a viable method of training. Mark noted that he does believe that structured discovery is a viable method of training. The past discussions were more about the certification from the National Blindness Certification Board being only a certification for the Orientation Center and not the statewide agency. They were seeking some clarification. They had heard comments saying that structured discovery cannot exist with any other conventional methods of training. Mark asked if there was any support to this statement. ACB-N members are consumers seeking the best possible services. They are not providers of the services. As consumers that want the best information and the best services for people with differing abilities, different roles and different capabilities. The best way to get blind people the services they need is to encourage them.

Director Van Zandt noted that the statement on the website has been revised to state:

Nebraska Center for the Blind has been approved by the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB). This approval is granted only to those Centers that meet strict standards for high quality services, uphold a positive philosophy of blindness and high expectations, adhere to Structured Discovery instructional methodology, and are dedicated to assuring genuine Informed Choice for all consumers. The Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired adheres to these standards of quality assurance in every area of its service delivery.

Commissioner Jirak reported that Fatos Floyd encouraged him and Mark Bulger to write an article about their experience for the January newsletter. Commissioner Jirak stated that this has been completed and he will email it to Fatos early next week. Commissioner Jirak also encouraged the other commissioners to participate in a three day stay at the Center.

Commissioner Hansen stated that in October 2011 he attended the NFB-N convention in Lincoln. As the NFB representative of the Commission Board he provided a summary of the Boards activities for the past year. Also, due to the discussions that have taken place over the past months regarding the National Blindness Professional Certification that we hold, he wanted to seek out additional information. He is asking them to contact people he knows at different organizations around the country to help clarify structured discovery more clearly in his mind. As part of this, Mike noted that the NCBVI Commission Board has received some emails during the past few weeks from some Nebraskans who wanted to submit testimonials mostly regarding the training they received at the Center. The letters are attached to the Minutes for reference.

Lunch - A break was taken at approximately 12:25 p.m. The meeting resumed at 1:15 p.m.

Old Business

Budget Update

Director Van Zandt reported that NCBVI is in good shape with the budget. The staff is being very mindful of making sure that the expenditures they put together for authorizations are well advised and needed by the clients. As mentioned earlier, NCBVI has some extra funding which is very beneficial. The ARRA stimulus funds ended at the end of September 2011. NCBVI did fully expend all of the ARRA funds and now we have reallocation funds to expend. All of the funding helps NCBVI to manage things so we can provide the services that are needed and do whatever extra kinds of things that we have wanted to do.

Director Van Zandt noted that NCBVI also received Social Security reimbursements which are funds that we cannot plan on every year because it varies a lot.

Director Van Zandt reported that she received a letter from Howard Compton, Treasurer of the ACB-N regarding the funds of the transportation program that NCBVI had funded. As of November 15, 2011 ACB-N has expended the funds that were in the Statewide Transportation Grant project between the Omaha Share a Fare and the Lincoln Give a Lift programs. Therefore, those funds have now been distributed to those two local programs. The grant funding project is now closed. Director Van Zandt thanked Howard Compton for the letter.

NFB Newsline® Update

Nebraska NFB-Newsline®

November 15, 2011

Jamie K. Forbis, Out Reach Coordinator

It's been three and a half months since the last NFB-Newsline® report and lots of updates have occurred so let's get right to it!

August started out with 1521 subscribers and 4 new subscribers were added throughout the month. Subscribers read 18,966 minutes of content, with each call lasting approximately 15.08 minutes and 46.08% of the calls were made through the local number. During these calls the state newspapers were accessed 4,436 times, the TV Listings 466 and the local channel 98 times. During the August report the addition of the Target circulars were announced. NFB-Newsline® plans to have more major circulars by the first of the year, so keep checking under option 6 from the main menu.

With the start of autumn the call minutes for September did fall a little bit, but I'm sure the numbers will spring back up! Eight new subscribers were added to Nebraska NFB-Newsline® in September. Total call minutes to the system in September were 15,435. The state newspapers were accessed 4,108 times, TV listings 543 and the local channel 99 times. Subscribers spent approximately 14.23 minutes per call this month with 38.92% of those calls being made through the local access number. Speaking of local access numbers, subscribers are encouraged to use the local access number whenever possible to cut down on the cost of the service. With unlimited calling plans on home and cell phones now, calling the local number is a snap! A new number has been established for subscribers wishing to use a local number. Please dial (646) 600-6969 and

remember the toll-free number is always available for those who are unable to use the local number.

With October being the 10th month of the year 10 new subscribers were added! Nebraska subscribers read 19,773 minutes of content on Newsline. Subscribers didn't read as long this month with the average call lasting 12.49 minutes, but 43.76% of those calls were made using the local number. The state newspapers saw the most action with 4,702 accesses; TV Listings were next with 457 accesses and the local channel trailing behind at 211 accesses. Speaking of the local information channel; whether you wish to access Newsline on the phone or via the web subscribers can now add the local information channel to their favorites list. This makes accessing the information you need quick and easy. A new section was added to the local information channel which provides a place for announcements relating the blindness, but not related to any agency or organization. Currently information on new technology at the Omaha Public Library can be found under this section. Just remember to select option 2 from the main menu to keep up-to-date on the happenings across Nebraska.

We are half way through the month of November and already 19 subscribers have been added! The minutes continue to add up and subscribers have used 10,083 minutes so far this month. The average call length is still around 12.82, but the percentage of local calls is up to 51.19!

The state newspapers, TV listings and local channel have been accessed 2,054, 104 and 228 times respectively.

Searching for content on NFB-Newsline® has always been quite a challenge, well things are about to get a whole lot easier! The Global

Publication feature has been available to users of NFB-Newsline Online making searches faster and more precise. This feature is now available through the phone system. Simply choose option 0 from the main menu and then press 4. Subscribers will be asked to set up their search parameters. Previous searches' are stored so recent information can be accessed quickly. And as always the article can then be emailed to the subscriber by pressing the pound sign then the number 9.

Subscribers have always wanted a way to skip the welcome greeting after logging into the system. For most subscribers the words of the greeting message are ingrained into their memory and it isn't necessary to listen each time they log in. The subscriber's wish has come true! Now when subscribers call NFB-Newsline® the first welcome greeting will play and then the prompted to press 1 to log in. The system will then take you directly to the main menu and the greeting information can be found under the local information channel if subscribers have questions. If a subscriber doesn't access Newsline for a length of time the welcome greeting will be spoken to remind subscribers of the contact information and such.

In other news; the Kearney Hub has been experiencing some issues and the National Office hopes to have the problem resolved soon. Several sections have been disappearing from local papers as well, so this issue is being researched. All in all things are going well on the Nebraska front.

This concludes the quarterly report of Nebraska NFB-Newsline®. As always if there are questions please contact me. Happy holidays and happy reading!

Client Assistance Program complaints or issues

There were no CAP complaints or issues this past quarter.

Update on Randolph-Sheppard Program Bids

Carlos Serván reported that the Zorinsky Federal building in Omaha was open for bids. However, due to miscommunications the Nebraska Business Enterprise Program did not submit a bid. It was his understanding that when there is an opening, they are to let us know. Nebraska Business Enterprise contacted them in August 2011 and we were informed that the bid would be open in December 2011. Therefore, Nebraska Business Enterprise staff was waiting to be contacted and informed when the bid opened. Unfortunately, Nebraska Business Enterprise then missed the deadline as the bid opened on October 6, 2011 and closed on November 7, 2011. Nebraska Business Enterprise staff called and asked why we were not informed of the bid solicitation. We were informed that the cafeteria in the building is considered commercial; and therefore, we need to be looking for it just as any private entity must.

There is another vending bid opportunity at the Lincoln Post Office buildings. Nebraska Business Enterprise spoke with the postmaster and he said that within 60 days they will provide us with the locations. Carlos Serván stated he will follow-up on this issue.

Director Van Zandt reported that Carlos Serván, Don Ward and three clients attended the BLAST conference in Nashville, TN in September. Highlights from that conference are that we need to have on-going training for staff and the blind managers just as our competitors in the private sector do. Subway, at a national level, will waive the franchise fee for blind vendors. Therefore, this will be an excellent opportunity for some individuals. Carlos Serván and his staff are looking into this. Commercialization on the rest areas is a big issue. Nothing more has happened with the Federal Transportation bill, but she is in communication with Senator Johan's office as he is on that committee. If it gets closer to

being worked on by that committee, then either they will contact Pearl or she will contact them to get additional details.

Nebraska Business Enterprise does not have a blind vendor for Hall County since September 30, 2011. The location did not provide enough earnings to be of any interest to our current vendors. Therefore, we are subcontracting that location with a company called Universal Vending. It does not employ a blind manager, but they must still pay the set aside into the program to help buy new machines, etc. for existing vendors. There are some states who do almost all of their Randolph-Sheppard sites through a non-blind vending company.

Nebraska Business Enterprise submitted a proposal at the end of September for the contract for vending machines at the Omaha State Office Building. We did not get that contract as it was awarded to Canteen Vending who had been operating the vending at that location.

There was a Nebraska Business Enterprise Training Retreat on September 30 and October 1 in Omaha. The NBE Staff coordinated the retreat. They had excellent speakers and it was attended by our blind managers and NBE staff. The training was excellent. Nebraska Business Enterprise will do a similar retreat next year.

Don Ward and Carlos Serván met with Department of Roads regarding renegotiating our contract with Roads for the interstate rest stops.

A blind manager who is in training status has been working in the Lincoln State Office Building cafeteria. This has been working well for him.

This went out as an opportunity only for vendors currently in the program as they are always given the first opportunity for upward mobility.

NCBVI is working with Senator Fulton and Senator Avery on a state bill. The federal bill for Randolph-Sheppard states that the Randolph-Sheppard program has priority for federal buildings and properties. In the state bill, which we refer to as mini Randolph-Sheppard, we do not have priority, but preference if comparable. This has caused Nebraska Business Enterprise to lose bids to some of the larger private companies in the last couple rounds of bids that we have lost. We are trying to change the state legislation with a bill entitled the Jobs for the Blind bill. Typically the state agency does not get involved with legislation except where it deals with something that the agency operates.

Chairperson Johnson asked if the federal law would not supersede the state law. Director Van Zandt reported that the federal law is specific to federal property. The state law talks about state property.

Commissioner Jirak stated that the way he understands the vending program is that it gives preference to the blind. The question becomes could this be considered sheltered employment because we are dealing with one specific group of individuals.

Director Van Zandt noted that this has been a controversy at the national level. Van Zandt stated that it is not sheltered employment in other ways. The blind managers independently manage their facility; they determine the pricing, marketing and other such things. A blind vendor can also make tremendous amounts of money.

Commissioner Hansen stated that earlier Director Van Zandt mentioned that reallocation money will be given to Nebraska Business Enterprise in the amount of about \$50,000 to \$60,000. Commissioner Hansen asked what this money will be used for.

Director Van Zandt stated that the agency will purchase replacement equipment and vending machines for Nebraska Business Enterprise.

Public Comment

Carlos Serván – noted that it was mentioned earlier that some NCBVI staff had a teleconference with the RSA monitoring team. They took a look at numbers of NCBVI compared to other similar agencies for the blind across the country. The numbers show that about 33% of our referrals come from transition from public schools. NCBVI is much higher than other states in this area. NCBVI clients with successful employment have better benefits and wages in their placements compared to other states. Also, other states have about 25% recidivism and NCBVI has 4%. The numbers also show that NCBVI spends more money on our clients and NCBVI has higher numbers for social security reimbursements. Carlos Serván noted that he is proud of the job our counselors do.

Mark Bulger – inquired about RSA and the report card they do. Mark noted that everything Carlos stated was true. Mark Bulger noted that he compared some numbers between Nebraska and Missouri. Mark noted that NCBVI has not scored very well on attracting minorities. He pointed out that the people Nebraska is serving we are serving well; however, he would like to see Nebraska have more clients.

Director Van Zandt noted that the RSA report card looks at approximately 111 data elements. It is very extensive. On the point of attracting minorities to the agency, this is one of the standards on the Standards and Indicators. It reads that if there are less than 100 clients from a minority background that the state is considered as not passing; regardless if the number is a proportion of people with disabilities within a state. Nebraska is a very White dominated state, but we are seeing an increase of individuals with Hispanic backgrounds. The number for Nebraska is less than 100 because our population overall is smaller. Since Nebraska is under 100 we need to have a system in place to make sure that we are communicating to make sure that minorities are aware of the services. NCBVI has a pretty extensive system. Each office has a list of contacts that they make every year and we communicate our services. Each district does outreach in their area to communicate services.

Carlos Serván – stated that when he went to a conference recently, he found out that a lot of agencies open a lot of cases and then close them out by simply buying the client a new computer. Therefore, in a sense they were playing with the numbers. This is not what Nebraska does.

Director Van Zandt noted that there were some email exchanges asking what was wrong with a client coming back to the agency for services. Director Van Zandt stated that she wants to make it clear that a person who is eligible for our services, if they have a new need in the future, they have every right to come back to the agency for services. Our emphasis is that we try to provide clients with the rehabilitation and training that is going to stand them well throughout their life. If a person needs more services at a later date, this is fine.

Glennie Weiland – asked why the Older Blind Conference was only for first time attendees. She noted that a person does not learn everything in three days.

Bob Deaton noted the conference will be for first time attendees; clients who are being served in a more comprehensive program. The conference does not replace individual training. Bob stated that there is no doubt that conventions and conferences are beneficial to people regardless of how many times they come. The reason the attendance is being limited this time is simply because of the staff time to provide support. Putting on a conference is very labor intensive and requires a lot of staff time.

Glennie noted that she would like to see more help for the older blind people. It appears to her that most of the help goes to the younger blind people. Chairperson Johnson noted that the core responsibility of NCBVI is to provide rehabilitation services with the ultimate goal of people becoming employed. There are limited funds for those in an independent living track. It is unfortunate, but that is the way it is.

Director Van Zandt noted that NCBVI exists because of funding from the Rehab Act as amended. The Rehab Act is an employment program and it provides funding to get people working. In Nebraska, regardless of age if a blind person wants to go to work we will provide services. It is not that NCBVI does not want to work with blind seniors, but the federal funding is 80 to 90 percent of the funding for the agency, and the money must be used to put people to work. NCBVI also gets a grant for the elderly, but it is much smaller. Most of this funding is used to provide direct services.

Bob Deaton noted that the need for services to the older blind is definitely there.

Bob Deaton stated that it is important that state legislatures are made aware that the needs of the older blind are not being met and that more funding is needed for the older blind. Bob Deaton noted that several years ago the state legislature did provide funding for two staff positions dedicated to working with the older blind.

Discuss and act on parliamentary procedure regarding parliamentarian for NCBVI Board meetings

Chairperson Johnson noted that there was a question at the August 2011 meeting regarding whether the Commission was going to appoint a parliamentarian since they will be following Robert's Rules of Order. Commissioner Hansen did some research to see if this was something the Commission needs to do. Commissioner Hansen stated that he went back and looked at the actual rules and it talks about having a parliamentarian, but it is a choice. If you wish to appoint one you can. That person is only a resource. The Chairperson still presides over the meeting.

Chairperson Johnson noted that she has always gone to Kathy for questions about procedural issues and she said she is fine with giving Kathy the title of parliamentarian. All commissioners agreed.

Discuss and Act on Version of Robert's Rules of Order to be used for NCBVI Board meetings

Commissioner Hansen noted that at the August meeting when they were going to adopt Roberts Rules of Order it was noted that a revised version was going to be published in September.

The issue became whether the board was going to adopt Roberts Rules of Order and follow the most current issue or adopt a specific version. The commissioners had indicated that they did not want to simply adopt the most current issue because they wanted to be conscious when the Rules that they function under change. At this time the commissioners decided they wanted to adopt a specific version. A revised version of Roberts Rules of Order comes out about once every ten years and it was a coincidence that the new version (Edition 11) was coming out in September. Commissioner Hansen stated that he reviewed Edition 11 and he compiled a list of the changes between Edition 10 and Edition 11 and he sent them to the commissioners in an email in order that they would be aware of what they were. The changes can be found at <http://www.robertsrules.com/> Commissioner Hansen noted that the commissioners are voted in at the present to use Edition 10. The issue becomes whether or not they want to change to Edition 11.

Commissioner Jirak stated that he was originally one that was in favor of jumping up to Edition 11. Commissioner Jirak stated that he feels this issue has been discussed extensively and he feels a decision must be made.

Commissioner Jirak moved that the commission board continue to use Roberts Rules of Order Edition 10. There was no second. Being no second, the commission board will continue to use Roberts Rules of Order Edition 10.

New Business

Discussion of dates, locations and focus topic for upcoming meetings

February 4, 2012 in Omaha, NE. Focus topic will be RSA Review.

May 5, 2012 in Kearney, NE. Focus topic will be Annual Evaluation of the Executive Director.

August 4, 2012 in Scottsbluff, NE. Focus topic to be Transition Process – Relationship between schools and our program.

November 3, 2012 in Lincoln, NE. Focus topic to be determined.

Final Announcements

Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

If you have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda of the February 4, 2012 Commission Board meeting, please email it to the NCBVI Commission Board at ncbvi.commission-board@nebraska.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Stephens, Administrative Assistant

NCBVI

Julie Johnson, Chairperson

NCBVI Board of Commissioners