

Nebraska Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Public Meeting
Saturday, June 17, 2017
Video Conference
4600 Valley Rd., Room 4A
Lincoln, NE
Scottsbluff NCBVI Office
505 A Broadway, Suite 700
Scottsbluff, NE

Call to Order. Welcome and introductions. Announcement concerning public comment periods, meeting agendas, open meeting act, proof of publication, recordings, other logistics.

Mike Hansen, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The meeting began with introductions.

Commissioners present: Mike Hansen, Chairperson, Designee of the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska, Lincoln; Mark Bulger, Designee of the American Council of the Blind of Nebraska, Omaha; Chad Bell, Alliance. Commissioners absent: Becky Rieken, Executive Secretary, Dakota City; Robert Newman, Vice Chairperson, Omaha.

Commission staff present: Dr. Pearl Van Zandt, Executive Director, Lincoln; Kathy Stephens, Administrative Assistant, Lincoln; Carlos Servan, Deputy Director Client Services, Lincoln; Bob Deaton, Deputy Director-HR, Lincoln; Angie Hoff, VR Counselor, Scottsbluff; Carol Jenkins, Center Supervisor, Lincoln; Sahar Hussein, OC Counselor, Lincoln; Kathy Brown-Hollins, VR Counselor, Omaha; Shane Buresh, Transition Coordinator, Lincoln; Amy Buresh, VR Counselor, Lincoln.

Public present: Vicki Logan, Nebraska State Personnel office, Lincoln; Christine Boone, Pickrell; Greg Johnson, York; Julie Johnson, York; Jim Jirak, Omaha; Debbie Stanton, Omaha.

Chairperson Hansen noted that Commissioner Bell is attending the meeting at the Scottsbluff office location via video conferencing using Skype for Business. This is the first time that NCBVI has used video conferencing for a Board meeting.

Kathy Stephens recorded the meeting and the recording will be available on the website.

A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting 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. The Notice was also sent to ACBN, NFBN, and the NCBVI List Serve.

Chair Hansen thanked Dr. Pearl Van Zandt for her 19 years of service as executive director of NCBVI. There was a round of applause.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Discuss / Appoint an Interim Executive Director

Commissioner Bell moved to appoint Carlos Servan as the interim executive director.

Chair Hansen asked Carlos Servan if he is willing to serve as the interim executive director. Carlos Servan stated that he is willing to do so.

Commissioner Bulger seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners present voted in favor of the motion.

Review / Approve Job Description

Chair Hansen noted that Vicki Logan from the State Personnel Office is present at today's meeting and the Board may be calling upon her throughout the meeting for her expertise on the State of Nebraska hiring process in order to ensure that the Board stays within the rules and regulations and best practices of State government. Chair Hansen also noted that he and Commissioner Bell met with State Personnel about a month ago to seek some guidance on the hiring process and other logistics of the executive director position.

Chair Hansen read the draft job description of the executive director for the record and it is posted below for reference.

Executive Director

Job Type: Perm Full Time Department: Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Job Number: 08102106

Closing Date: July 19, 2017

Description:

The Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is accepting applications for the position of Executive Director. This position serves at the pleasure of and reports to the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Board of Commissioners.

Please attach a current resume, cover letter, references and, a completed questionnaire.

Hours: 8-5, Monday – Friday (or as required)
Job location is 4600 Valley Rd.

Examples of Work

The Executive Director is responsible for the management and direction of the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. As Executive Director, an individual will oversee the operations and programs of the Commission including leading the senior management team. They will establish and set priorities for the organization and represent the interests of the Commission at the state and federal levels. They are responsible for executive oversight of the Commission's budget and personnel, a state-of-the-art residential training center, vocational rehabilitation program, Blindness Independence (OIB) services and, Business Enterprise Program (BEP). They will provide regular reports to state and federal agencies and to the commission board. They will need to collaborate with other State agencies to develop cooperative initiatives as well as key constituent groups to address needs and concerns.

Qualifications / Requirements

REQUIREMENTS: A master's degree in public or business administration, Vocational Rehabilitation or related field AND 5 years' managerial experience in vocational rehabilitation programs or delivering program services within a workforce development agency. Knowledge of federal vocational rehabilitation laws, rules and regulations; the Rehabilitation Act, Randolph Shepard act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Hold a strong belief in hands on training with high expectations and the vocational and independence abilities of blind Nebraskans.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Knowledge of: State and Federal vocational rehabilitation laws. Ability to: analyze data to identify relevant facts for making proper decisions; understand and implement relevant laws and regulations; and portray professional demeanor when meeting with partners and making presentations; plan and organize work; communicate effectively to a diverse group of people; follow instructions; interact with clients, employers, and the public; create presentations and manage multiple programs.

Commissioner Bulger moved to accept the executive director job description as read and prepared with the understanding that it may evolve if needed before it is posted.

Commissioner Bell seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners present voted in favor of the motion.

Review / Approve starting salary

A starting salary for the new executive director was discussed. Chair Hansen stated he is not aware of the Commission Board ever doing an analysis of Dr. Van Zandt's salary as to how it compares to other states and other director's within State of Nebraska government.

Julie Johnson and Jim Jirak stated that when they were NCBVI commissioners that comparison was done. Chair Hansen reiterated that he was not aware that it was done. However, with the position soon to be open, Chair Hansen stated that he felt it was a good time to do a current analysis of the NCBVI Executive Director salary. Chair Hansen noted that the State Personnel Office was very helpful in helping him gather the information needed.

The amount of a salary range was discussed. Chair Hansen asked Vicki Logan for her input on if a \$10,000 range was too much. Vicki stated that she believes a \$10,000 range gives the Board the latitude needed for a starting salary. The commissioners discussed a \$75,000 to \$85,000 pay range. Commissioner Bulger stated that from previous research that he has done this looks like where NCBVI needs to be.

Commissioner Bell moved to approve a starting salary range for the executive director at \$75,000 to \$85,000.

Commissioner Bulger suggested that the motion be amended to say that the executive director search starting salary be \$75,000 to \$85,000. If the search dictates that there is a very viable candidate who may be justified to receive a higher pay we do not want to limit our options.

Chair Hansen asked Vicki Logan for her input. Vicki recommended that whatever the range is set at, that is how the position is advertised.

Commissioner Bulger stated that he would hate to lose a very viable candidate because the salary is not high enough. Chair Hansen noted that the Board has the authority to increase the salary of the executive director at any time. In the past this has typically been done during their annual evaluation and goes into effect on July 1. However, early on the NCBVI Board was doing two pay raises per year. Therefore, the Board can actually increase the salary of the executive director at any time. Commissioner Bulger stated that with this in mind, he will

rescind his request to have the motion amended. Commissioner Bulger stated that he just wants everyone to know that the Board wants to hire the best possible candidate for the position.

Commissioner Bulger seconded the motion.
A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners present voted in favor of the motion.

Determine temporary wage increase for interim director

Chair Hansen noted that he checked with State Personnel about how to proceed with the temporary wage increase for the interim director. Chair Hansen noted that he had thought of two ways to do this and he asked State Personnel what was typical.

The first method was to increase the salary of the interim executive director to low end of the range of the starting salary that we are advertising. In this case, \$75,000.

The second method was to do a percentage increase. The Board realizes that the interim executive director will be taking on additional responsibilities while they hold that position and so to recognize that they would give them a 5 percent or 10 percent raise during the time they serve as the interim executive director.

State Personnel advised him to go with a percentage increase which is the common way that things like this are handled within the State of Nebraska. State Personnel also advised him that a 10 percent pay increase was fairly common.

Commissioner Bulger moved that the interim executive director be given a 10 percent pay increase for the time that they are in the position of interim executive director. The 10 percent increase is to go into effect on Monday, July 19, 2017 and will continue until the start date of the new executive director.

Commissioner Bell seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners present voted in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Bulger stated for the record that he wants there to be no misunderstanding and Dr. Pearl Van Zandt is the executive director until her retirement date is effective and she has the final authority on all decision making.

Review / Approve search time line

Chair Hansen outlined the Boards plan moving forward in the new executive director search and he presented the following timeline. This timeline came out of the discussion that he and Commissioner Bell had with the State Personnel office in May.

**Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Executive Director Search
Time Schedule**

June 17, 2017	Special NCBVI Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Appoint an interim Executive Director- Set Interim Executive Directors salary- Set pay range for new Executive director- Approve Executive Directory Job Description- Search Committee Training
June 20 th – July 20 th 2017	Advertise Position and Accept Applications
July 29, 2017	Quarterly NCBVI Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review Applications- Select Candidates to Interview
August 14-15, 2017 Or August 21-22, 2017	Candidate Interviews
Before August 31, 2017	Finalize Candidate Selection <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Check References- Background Check- Extend Offer
October 1, 2017	Executive Director Potential Start Date

Chair Hansen noted that the Board will review the applications in an Executive Session at the July 29 Commission Board meeting and determine who they want to interview. It was noted that only the names of the finalists will be made public. The Board will work with State Personnel to schedule the interviews.

Chair Hansen asked if the interviews are to be done in an executive session at a public meeting. Vicki Logan stated that she is not sure of the answer and will have to get clarification on this. The interviews need to be done at a public meeting, but it is not certain whether or not there needs to be an executive session.

Commissioner Bulger moved to approve the timeline schedule.
Commissioner Bell seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners present voted in favor of the motion.

Chair Hansen reported that he and Vicki Logan have talked about the different methods in which the application process could occur. The Board and State Personnel will work together to advertise the position using various methods and there are two options in the manner in which applications can be accepted.

Vicki Logan stated that the State of Nebraska uses the online application form for all applicants. Generally, they could employ this and require candidates to complete the online application which includes their education history, their employment history, their knowledge and skills and references with the ability to add any type of attachments and a cover letter. Using this method gives you a full and complete application.

The other option would be to use the State of Nebraska's website to announce the executive director opening and provide the description, but bypass the formal online application and direct the candidates to send a cover letter, writing sample and resume (or whatever the board chooses) for review.

Chair Hansen stated that he sees some obvious advantages in using the first option; however, there has been some concern in the past from NCBVI regarding the accessibility of some of the State's web services. Chair Hansen reported that he did send an email to the NCBVI Technology Manager, Wes Majerus, and inquired about the accessibility level of that website. Wes stated that it has been about a year since he has been inside the NEO.GOV, which is the cloud based site used for posting Nebraska's state jobs. Wes noted that he has had considerable problems using the site in the past. There have been some improvements, but it was still reasonably difficult to utilize with a screen reader.

Chair Hansen stated for these reasons he feels that perhaps the Board should forgo the requirement of the applicant to go through the online forms and instead apply for the position by submitting the documents electronically. Commissioner Bulger added that because the Board does not know who is going to apply for the position, he would not want to exclude anyone's desire to apply for the position because of accessibility issues. For this reason he feels that the Board should use the second option for accepting applications. Commissioner Bell stated that he agrees.

Chair Hansen stated that the Board will be working with the office of State Personnel in the coming week to finalize the application process.

The commissioners discussed including a questionnaire in the job application process. A questionnaire would give the candidates an opportunity to show they have the ability to communicate clearly amongst other things. The questionnaire would also be a good tool to help narrow down the individuals selected for an

interview. Commissioner Bulger asked Executive Director Van Zandt for her thoughts on the Board including a questionnaire in the application process. Director Van Zandt stated that she feels that a questionnaire would give the applicants an extra opportunity to put more into the Board's thought process rather than just a resume and she feels that it is a good idea to have the questionnaire.

Vicki Logan suggested using questions, but to keep them brief.

Commissioner Bulger moved to include a questionnaire in the job application process.

Commissioner Bell seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners present voted in favor of the motion.

Discuss / act on focus topic for July 29th quarterly board meeting

Commissioner Hansen reported that since the commissioners will be reviewing applications at the July 29 Commission Board meeting, the focus topic that was scheduled will be postponed.

Receive a briefing on search committee code of conduct from office of state personnel

Vicki Logan stated that she appreciates the opportunity to work with everyone on the search for a NCBVI executive director. The Board had initially asked Vicki to provide them with a Code of Conduct for the search committee to follow. Vicki noted that basically she can remind the committee to follow the federal guidelines and EEO procedures when doing their search. It is also important to treat all candidates equally and maintain consistency. The interviews should be structured and the same questions should be asked to each candidate.

Vicki noted that there are a lot of variances with Boards and Commissions as far as leeway in the advertising and posting and the means of collecting the applicants. State Personnel is there to assist Boards and Commissions along the way. State Personnel is available to collect the applications and resumes, etc. and screen them to see if they meet the first level of minimum requirements. Vicki also stated that it is best practices to keep a record of the executive director search documents for a period of four years.

Vicki stated that she thinks that overall, from a HR prospective, the NCBVI Board has done a good job of identifying the duties and responsibilities and stepping through the process.

The commissioners thanked Vicki Logan for her presentation and for all her help with the process.

Public Comment

Kathy Stephens – Kathy commented about the interviews for the executive director. The Board had mentioned that they did not know if they should go into executive session during the public meeting to hold the interviews. Kathy stated that the Board would definitely need to go into executive session; otherwise the other candidates could sit in on the other interviews which would not be fair.

Amy Buresh – Amy stated on behalf of the National Federation of the Blind she wanted to express heartfelt congratulations and thanks to Pearl Van Zandt for her excellent service and great belief in the abilities of the blind. Director Van Zandt has represented them well and has always been gracious to partner with them in activities, services and programs offered.

Carlos Servan – Carlos had a question about the July 29 Commission Board meeting. Carlos noted that the Board will be going over the applications and he inquired as to if the Board wants a report from NCBVI.

Chair Hansen stated that the only thing that will change about the meeting is that there will not be a focus topic. The Board will still expect a report from the interim executive director and all the other standard agenda items will remain the same.

Jim Jirak – Jim stated that he echo's Amy's sentiment on the congratulations and thanks to Dr. Pearl Van Zandt. She has always been supportive of ACBN and they appreciate all her past engagement and involvement.

Jim asked if the Board will be employing a search committee for a new executive director. Chair Hansen stated that the Board is the search committee. They are not going to pay a third party to head hunt for an executive director. The Board will stop taking applications on July 20 and these are the applications that they will be reviewing. Chair Hansen stated that in order to ensure that the applications are all accessible he suggests that the Board only accept electronic applications and that they be sent to an email address at State Personnel. This will allow State Personnel the opportunity to filter out the applications that do not meet the minimum requirements.

Jeff Altman – Jeff thanked Dr. Pearl Van Zandt for her service to the blind and he noted that she has done a great job. Jeff also congratulated Carlos Servan for his appointment to Interim Executive Director and he thanked the Board for selecting Carlos for that role.

Jeff noted that NCBVI has always required new employees to go through 600 hours of Center training before they perform their job duties. Jeff stated that if the Board hires someone from outside NCBVI he hopes that will be one of the

things that is required for the new executive director. This would add to the transition time.

Chair Hansen noted that he has had a private conversation about this with an individual already, so he has thought about this issue. If the Board hires someone from within NCBVI and they have already gone through Center training they don't normally have to retake the Center training. If the Board brought an individual in from outside NCBVI, they will certainly consider having them go through Center training.

Kathy Brown-Hollins – Kathy noted that she has served on a hiring committee for NCBVI and for the University in the past. After the application cut-off date is past the Board will not have access to applications that come in after that point. Chair Hansen clarified that he stated that after the cutoff date of July 20, the Board will not have access to applications submitted after that date except for the knowledge that they existed. Chair Hansen stated that the position will stay open until it is filled. Chair Hansen stated that he hopes that this does not even become an issue to have to re-post the position. Chair Hansen requested that everyone help the Board spread the news about the NCBVI executive director job opening.

Vicki Logan provided some clarification into the application process. Vicki stated that when a position is posted there is a hard and fast deadline. Anything received on the last day is official. The actual time of the shutdown will need to be very clear. Any applications submitted after that date cannot be considered. Should the search not net qualified candidate and the position needed to be reposted, all individuals could resubmit their application at that time and it would be hopeful to also receive new applications.

Commissioner Mark Bulger – Commissioner Bulger congratulated Carlos Servan on his appointment to interim executive director. Commissioner Bulger stated that Carlos' past history has demonstrated leadership ability and expertise which has well prepared him for the position. Commissioner Bulger asked that all consumers and staff get behind Carlos as he is well qualified and he deserves the respect that he has earned in this capacity. Commissioner Bulger stated that he also wants to echo what Amy and Jim said and as the current ACBN president he wants to express his appreciation to Dr. Van Zandt for all that she has done and stood for. When he looks at the definition of an executive director he sees a picture of Dr. Van Zandt on there.

Commissioner Bulger thanked the office of State Personnel for their support and he thanked Chair Hansen for his leadership on the process of finding a new executive director for NCBVI.

Chair Hansen announced that there is a retirement reception scheduled for Dr. Van Zandt on July 6 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the LMEP conference rooms at 4600 Valley Road. Those who attend should use Entrance 1.

Chair Hansen also thanked Director Van Zandt for all she has done as Executive Director of NCBVI for the past 19 years. The Board greatly appreciates all her work and NCBVI is definitely a better organization because of all her work.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

If you have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda of the July 29, 2017 Commission Board meeting, please email it to the NCBVI Commission Board at ncbvi.commission-board@nebraska.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Stephens, Administrative Assistant
NCBVI

Mike Hansen, Chairperson
NCBVI Board of Commissioners