**Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS)
Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)
DeafBlind Advisory Committee (DBAC)
Meeting by Zoom
Draft Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2023

Review of Meeting Protocol
The protocol for participation in the DeafBlind Advisory Committee Meeting was reviewed by Marjorie Santos.

Voting Members Present
Sandra Miles, Department of Developmental Services (DDS) - Southbury Training School (STS); Wayne Seidel, Department of Developmental Services (DDS); Jesse Stanley, American School for the Deaf (ASD); Hana Tyler, Chair, Consumer Representative; Karen Olson, New England Consortium on DeafBlindness (NEC); Kathy Morgan, Guardian; Cheri Byrnes, DeafBlind Association of Connecticut;

Non-Voting Members Present
Carol Jenkins, ADS-BESB Director; Christopher Lassen, ADS-BESB Adult Services; Marjorie Santos, ADS-BESB Adult Services; Alvin Chege, ADS-BRS

Voting Members Absent,
Lisa Flaherty-Vaughn, DeafBlind Support and Access Network (DBSAN); ; Elise Arseneau, Oak Hill; Al Sylvestre, Advisory Board for Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired; Barbara Cloonan, Parent; Erich Krengel, Capitol Region Mental Health Center (DMHAS); Christine Telford, Helen Keller National Center (HKNC);**

**Non-Voting Members Absent
Krystal Kelly, ADS-BESB Vocational Rehabilitation; Mary Johns, ADS-BESB Children’s Services; Muriel Aparo, ADS-BRS, CT Tech Act

Others Present
Alan Gunzburg, Services Recipient; Paula Tangley, Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), sitting in for Christine Telford; Rayah Martin, ADS-BESB;

Introductions
Chair Tyler called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked that a roll call be taken. BESB Director Jenkins conducted the roll call.

Ms. Santos reviewed the meeting protocols.

Approval of Minutes from February 28, 2023
Chair Tyler provided time for committee members to review the previous minutes from February 28, 2023.

Chair Tyler asked for any discussion on minutes.

Mr. Stanley noted that the initials SSP was described as Special Service Provider and noted that it should be Support Service Provider.

Ms. Byrnes stated that she did not receive the minutes. Director Jenkins stated that they were sent with the meeting invite. Some members were not able to open them.

Ms. Olson said she also did not receive the meeting invite or minutes.

MOTION: Chair Tyler made a motion for a vote to approve the minutes with the correction noted. Motion was seconded and minutes were approved.

Old Business

Update on DeafBlind Technology Program
Muriel Aparo was not present to give an update.

New Business

Expenditures Through February 28, 2023
Mr. Lassen stated he is out of state and asked if anyone else has updated information on hand.

Director Jenkins said she sent out a financial report with the meeting invite. She shared the following financial report:

Deafblind Grant Financial Report**

**7/2/2022-2/28/2023**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Vendor Name** | **Amount Paid YTD** |
| American School for the Deaf | $3,672.00 |
| Communication Advocacy Network | $62,893.71 |
| Cosign CT LLC | $220.00 |
| Michelle Clark | $5,099.97 |
| NWI Global | $655.20 |
| CT Institute for the Blind | $3,456.00 |
| United Cerebral Palsy Association  | $2,810.34 |
| Deafblind Consumer Activity | $4,800.03 |
| New England Low Vision | $4,581.32 |
| Elizabeth Hilton, Inc | $2,398.75 |
| **Grand Total** | $90,587.32 |

 **Ms. Morgan asked how much remains in the grant.
Ms. Jenkins answered that it’s $240,000 minus total expenses so far. Mr. Lassen said it was around $150,000 left.

Ms. Byrnes asked about money that is left for Braille instruction, as she was told it was put on hold. Director Jenkins clarified that there is still money in the budget and said her social worker would reach out to her.

Report from CAN on SSP Recruitment

Director Jenkins stated that Sue could not make this meeting but wanted to assure the committee that CAN is committed to recruitment of SSPs

Ms. Miles stated that she has 4 clients left from the original grant and asked if we can add new people to the rosters

Mr. Lassen stated that anyone has the right to request funding and they would just need the referral, and to discuss the documentation of blindness/ deafblindness. He said he and Margie will reach out to her.

Ms. Morgan stated that the folks at Southbury are part of the original grant, so she doesn’t think there is any question of eligibility. Ms. Miles clarified that there are additional individuals who were not part of the original grant.

BESB Program Updates
Mr. Lassen stated that as a general update the Older Individuals with Blindness Technical Assistance Center is working with federal funding. He also noted that BESB is hiring their first ever Rehabilitation Technologist, who should be starting next month.**

**Report from the Chair
Chair Tyler did not have anything new to report.

Announcements
Mr. Stanley reported on the upcoming DeafBlind camp, August 7-12, 2023. He stated they currently have ten campers accepted, with three from CT , and are waiting on a few more, with a cohort of up to 15 campers. They will have an accommodated bicycle for campers to bike, towed in tandem with another bike. They have a goal to set up a biking program in CT for people who are deafblind or low vision to enjoy the outdoors. He reminded the committee about Visitors’ Day at the retreat, which is August 10th, and said they are still looking for people who may be interested in having a booth at the event to disseminate information.

Ms. Morgan asked Mr. Stanley if there was a request in the budget last year for support at the camp for those who are deafblind and if they would consider it this year.

Mr. Stanley said they are not looking for a grant but that CAN is looking for donations to help three DeafBlind individuals from CT to get scholarships. It was agreed that a budget request might be a good idea, and more discussion would follow.

Director Jenkins suggested they put it in the grant proposal for the next year.

Director Jenkins said the appropriations committee is voting on the budget and one item is that CAN would get $100,000 for a paid director. It has not been approved yet, but it is a line item.

Mr. Stanley asked if that would be an annual budget, and Director Jenkins stated that she understands it would be an annual budget line item, but this is not final yet.

Ms. Byrnes stated the Deafblind Association of CT has asked for funding for tactile interpreting. They are meeting at the ASD campus on May 6th.

Ms. Morgan asked about the timing of the next meeting. If a budget is due by June 30, the next meeting is outside that timeline. She asked if there could be another meeting before the budget is due.

The committee discussed moving the next meeting from July to June in order to discuss and vote on the budget. Director Jenkins suggested waiting until the legislature has voted, and Ms. Santos brought up the issue of scheduling and rescheduling interpreters. The committee discussed shifting the meeting dates going forward so that the last meeting would be closer to the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Seidel made a motion to change the next meeting to June 13th, pending availability of interpreters, and the 27th otherwise.

Ms. Miles seconded the motion, which passed without objection.

Mr. Lassen suggested looking at new meeting dates for the next fiscal year after the budget has been drafted. It was suggested the second Tuesday of October, December, March, and June. Information regarding interpreters for these meeting dates will be sent out to the board once it is available.

Adjournment
Ms. Miles motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Stanley.
Chair Tyler adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Jun 13th, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom, pending availability of interpreters. Backup date is June 27th.**