**Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**

**Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)**

# Deafblind Advisory Committee Meeting

**Draft Minutes**

## September 26, 2017

**Voting Members Present**

**Barbara Cloonan, Parent/Guardian; Lisa Flaherty-Vaughn, Deafblind Association of CT; Sandra Miles, Department of Developmental Services - Southbury Training School; Karen Olson (representing Tracy Evans-Luiselli), New England Consortium of Deafblind Technical Assistance and Training; Hana Tyler, Consumer Representative.**

**Non-Voting Members Present**

**Marsha Brown, BESB; Chris Lassen, BESB; Mary Quinn, BESB; Brian Sigman, BESB.**

**Voting Members Absent**

**Still Fowler, Oak Hill; Erich Krengel, Capitol Region Mental Health Clinic; Kathy Morgan, Conservator; Emily Morgante, Parent/Guardian; Al Sylvestre, BESB Advisory Board Representative; Robert C. Smith, Department of Developmental Services; Patricia Richardson, Department on Aging; Charlotte Spinkston, Helen Keller National Center (HKNC)**

**Non-Voting Members Absent**

**Heidi Henaire, BRS; Mark Ward, BESB**

**Others Present:**

**Muriel Aparo, DORS-CT Tech Act Project**

**Michelle Clark, Guest**

**Old Business**

**Approval of Minutes**

**Voting on the minutes from the June 6, 2017 meeting was deferred to the December 5, 2017 meeting since there was not a quorum.**

**It was noted that a correction should be made to the second paragraph under the Report from the BESB Director to read, “Order of Selection” rather than Order of “Section”. A motion to approve this correction has been deferred to the December 5, 2017 meeting since there was not a quorum.**

**Update on Deafblind Awareness Activities**

**Ms. Brown reported that the two new posters for the Deafblind Awareness campaign have been designed by Hana Tyler (featuring Ms. Tyler on one and Michelle Clark on the other).**

**The next seminars in the “Losing Sight and Sound without Losing Confidence” series are scheduled for October 16 in Manchester and in Windsor for November 6, 2017.**

**Update on Deafblind Technology Program**

**Ms. Aparo distributed a report on the federal Access Through Technology Grant (NDBEDP). The total allocation for Year 4 is $125,685. The total expenditures for the first three quarters of the current year is $23,766. Ten consumers have been served through this grant.**

**New Business:**

**Michelle Clark – Success Story**

**In June of 2017, the Deafblind Advisory Committee voted to honor Michelle Clark in conjunction with the Helen Keller National Center’s campaign to recognize the achievements and contributions of people who are deafblind. Ms. Clark was selected for her mastery of braille, braille technology and for her work in providing braille instruction to two other clients of DORS who are deafblind. Ms. Brown shared the success story poster featuring Ms. Clark that will be distributed to various organizations such as the Hadley School and the Helen Keller National Center. Mr. Sigman recognized Ms. Clark for her accomplishments and presented her with a written and brailled Certificate of Appreciation.**

**Year End Outcome for fiscal 2017 services**

**Ms. Brown provided an update on expenditures. A total of $2,293.00 in invoices for services provided in FY 17 was paid in FY18 based on when the invoices arrived.**

**Plans for allocating remaining 2018 funding**

**Mr. Sigman reported that there was an additional $4,108 authorized through the Executive Order for the Deafblind Program. In the absence of a quorum at this meeting, and factoring in the possibility of a state budget being passed that could have a different funding level in it, Mr. Sigman indicated that a special meeting of the Committee to discuss how to allocate any remaining funds may become necessary.**

**Meeting Dates for 2018**

**The proposed meeting dates for 2018 are January 30, April 24, July 24, and October 30. Approval of these meetings dates was deferred to the December 5, 2017 meeting.**

**Report from the BESB Director**

**Mr. Sigman reported that the Bureau anticipates learning very soon about the federal re-allotment funding award. While the Vocational Rehabilitation Program has sufficient funding to meet expenses in Federal FY 18, without additional funding through the re-allotment process, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program will be on the brink of needing to implement an Order of Selection in FY 19.**

**Report from the Chair**

**Chairperson Tyler distributed several links of interest to the committee members which provided a variety of information on technology devices available to assist individuals with visual impairments with activities of daily activities.**

**Announcements**

**Ms. Cloonan announced that the Jewish Community Center has an exhibit featuring the work of the Hartford Artisan Weaving Center, whose artisans are individuals with visual impairments or blindness.**

**Ms. Olson announced that the New England Consortium (NEC) was involved with their second summer program in coordination with the Helen Keller National Center and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.  This weeklong camp program focused on independent living skills.**

**The meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.**

**Next Meeting: December 5, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at BESB**