**Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**

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

**Deafblind Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Draft Minutes**

**April 24, 2018**

**Voting Members Present:**

**Barbara Cloonan, Parent/Guardian Representative; Lisa Flaherty-Vaughn, Deafblind Association of CT; Erich Krengel, Capitol Region Mental Health Clinic (DMHAS); Sandra Miles, DDS - Southbury Training School; Karen Olson (representing Tracy Evans-Luiselli), New England Consortium of Deafblind Technical Assistance and Training; Hana Tyler, Consumer Representative; Robert C. Smith, Department of Developmental Services; Charlotte Dee Spinkston, Helen Keller National Center (HKNC); Al Sylvestre, BESB Advisory Board Representative.**

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

**Marsha Brown, BESB, Adult Services; Chris Lassen, BESB, Adult Services; Brian Sigman, BESB Director; Andrew Norton, DORS Legislative Liaison; Mary Johns, BESB Children’s Services; Heidi Henaire, DORS-BRS.**

**Voting Members Absent:**

**Still Fowler, Oak Hill; Kathy Morgan, Conservator; Emily Morgante, Parent/Guardian Representative**

**Non-Voting Members Absent**

**Patricia Richardson, DORS- State Unit on Aging; Mark Ward, BESB Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Old Business**

**It was noted that the minutes from the December 19, 2017 meeting were previously approved at the February 6, 2018 meeting.**

**MOTION: Ms. Miles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sylvestre to approve the February 6, 2018 minutes with an amendment to a word in the motion on the second page which should read “on a motion” by Al Sylvestre. The minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.**

**Update on Deafblind Awareness Activites**

**Ms. Brown reported that the posters are currently being worked on by Ms. Lugo to be displayed at the Deaf Blind Technology Fair on May 30, 2018. Details for the HKNC project are still being worked out. The two confident living programs were allocated up to $20,000. A breakdown of costs for the three HKNC programs was distributed reflecting an estimated cost of $7,367 for all three trainers from HKNC. Participants are still being identified for the Confident Living Program for Seniors Who are Blind and Hearing Impaired scheduled to take place on May 29, 2018. The trip to Boston sponsored by CAN for its clients and SSP’s is on May 21, 2018. BESB is paying for transportation and SSP costs, and CAN is paying for meals.**

**Update on Deafblind Technology Program**

**Ms. Brown distributed a report submitted by the CT Tech Act Project, Access Through Technology Grant, National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program. The total allocation for Year 4 starting July 1, 2017 is $124,939. Expenditures for the third quarter were $22,910. Three requests from consumers were received in this quarter for repairs and updated equipment. Ms. Brown continues to work with the staff of the CT Tech Act Project to publicize the program through mailings and outreach efforts.**

**A review of every client who has an environmental notification system will need to take place before purchase of replacement items can occur as the vendor, Harrison Communications, has notified BESB that warranties on parts expire one year from the date of purchase.**

**New Business**

**Plans for Allocating FY 2019 Funding**

**Mr. Sigman reported that he previously distributed to the committee members for review the proposed allocation recommendations for vendor contract amendments for FY 19.**

**MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Sylvestre, seconded by Ms. Olson, discussion followed on the summary of recommended amounts for Deafblind Community Inclusion Vendors for FY 19.**

**HH: Total hours: 520**

**Hourly rate: Requesting an increase from $10 per hour to new rate of $11 per hour**

**Total amount:  $5,720 with the new rate**

**MS:  Total hours: 48**

**Hourly Rate:       $27.00**

**Total amount: $1,296**

**IJ: Total hours:  453.12**

**Hourly rate: $16.00**

**Total amount: $7,250**

**JC:  Total hours:  364**

**Hourly rate:  $25.00**

**Total amount:  $9,100.00**

**UCP: Total hours: 310**

**Hourly rate:  $30.00**

**Total amount:  $9,300.00 (SSBG Funding)**

**OAK HILL: Total Hours: 334**

**Hourly rate:  $31.19**

**Total cost for 334 hours: $10,417.46**

**Camp rate:  $900 per week**

**Total amount for camp:  $9000**

**Total Contract:  $19,417.46**

**CAN:  Total hours: 1,596  
Hourly rate:  $44.00**

**Total amount:  $45,784 (Deafblind Funding)**

**Total amount:  $24,440 (SSBG Funding)**

**Total contract:  $70,224**

**FY 19 Total State Funding:   $88,567.46**

**FY 19 Total SSBG Funding:   $33,740**

**After discussion concluded, the committee voted to approve the proposed allocation recommendations for contract amendments for FY 19. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Committee Membership Status**

**Mr. Sigman reported that he has not received a nominee from the American School for the Deaf to replace Cindy Paluch. Ms. Olson offered to reach out to ASD to seek out a new representative. Ms. Olson will represent Ms. Luiselli on behalf of the New England Consortium for Deafblind Technical Assistance and Training when Ms. Luiselli is not able to attend meetings.**

**Report from the BESB**

**Ms. Brown summarized year-to-date community inclusion expenditures for FY 18. So far, $45,042 in state grant funding and $19,712.50 in SSBG funding has been expended.**

**Mr. Norton provided an update on House Bill 7237 which passed last year, establishing an Advisory Board for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. They have held their first meeting. The former Department on Aging is now the State Unit on Aging within DORS. This Unit is charged with helping to empower older adults to live full independent lives, as well as the Long Term Care Ombudsman program which promotes and protects quality of life and care for residents of skilled nursing homes, residential care homes, and assisted living.**

**Mr. Sigman reported that a public hearing will be conducted on May 2, 2018 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at BESB. The purpose of the hearing is to offer the public, consumers, advocates, agencies and organizations the opportunity to provide comments pertaining to proposed changes to the policies that govern the administration of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The proposed changes to existing policy are in the categories of “Personal Adjustment Training”, “Post-Secondary Training” and “Adaptive Equipment, Telecommunications, Sensory and Technological Aids/Devices.”  The public comment period closes May 4, 2018. Comments will go before the Advisory Board and State Rehabilitation Advisory Council for action. Mr. Sigman detailed activities that have already been taken to reduce the cost of payroll and the associated fringe benefit costs for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.**

**Report from the Chair**

**Chairperson Tyler shared her artwork, which she has generated into a new book.**

**Announcements:**

**Ms. Henaire announced that the National Association for the Deaf conference will be held in Hartford from July 5-7, 2018. For more information visit the website,** [**http://hartford.nad.org/**](http://hartford.nad.org/)**.**

**MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Sylvestre, seconded by Ms. Miles, the meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.**

**Next Meeting: July 24, 2018 – 10:00 a.m. at BESB**