



**Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS)
Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)
DeafBlind Advisory Committee (DBAC)
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2025
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Location: Hybrid (Zoom & In-Person)
Chairperson: Hannah Tyler

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Hannah Tyler called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format to ensure accessibility. Marjorie Santos reviewed communication protocols and accommodations, including ASL, voice, and captioning services.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by Marjorie Santos. A quorum was confirmed.

Voting Members Present:

Hannah Tyler, Wayne Seidel, Jesse Stanley, Lisa Flaherty-Vaughn, Barbara Cloonan, Karen Olson, Cheri Byrnes, Bruce Stovall, Kathy Morgan, Sandra Miles, Dwayne Strawder, Christine Telford,

Voting Members Absent:

Stephen Thal, Muriel Aparo, Abigail O'Neil

Non-Voting Members Present:

Carol Jenkins, Marjorie Santos, Alvin Chege, Krystal Kelly

Others Present:

Lisa Drew, Sue Shatney

III. Approval of Minutes – March 11, 2025

MOTION: Ms. Lisa Flaherty-Vaughn moved to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2025; meeting as presented.

SECOND: The motion was seconded by Ms. Christine Telford.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously with no further discussion.

IV. Contracts Update

Presenter: Carol Jenkins, Director, BESB

Carol Jenkins, Director of BESB, provided an update on DBAC-supported contracts:

- **Three DeafBlind community inclusion contracts** are finalized and ready for implementation starting **July 1, 2025**, aligning with the start of the new state fiscal year.
- The contract with **Communication Advocacy Network (CAN)** is still pending due to ongoing **rate negotiations**.
- As per fiscal guidelines, all current contracts will end on **June 30, 2025**, with renewals or replacements expected to begin immediately after.

V. Financial Report

Marjorie Santos reviewed total expenditures to date under the current grant year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025), with spending through May 29, 2025, totaling **\$131,346**.

Breakdown of expenses includes:

- **Communication Advocacy Network:** \$105,622
- **Connecticut Institute for the Blind:** \$12,000
- **UCP of Eastern Connecticut:** \$5,098

- Elizabeth Hilton: \$3,351
- Consumer reimbursements: \$2,942 (transportation, access costs)
- American School for the Deaf: \$1,920
- CoSign (interpreting services): \$3,135
- NWI Global (CART services): \$218

This spending supports community access, consumer support, interpreter services, and training within the DeafBlind population.

VI. New Business

A. DeafBlind Technology Program (ATT)

This item was deferred as Ms. Muriel Aparo was unavailable to present.

B. Report from the Chair

Chairperson Hannah Tyler provided comments on the committee's recent accomplishments, acknowledged the work of BESB staff and partners, and encouraged continued collaboration in expanding access for the DeafBlind community.

C. FY 2025–2026 Quarterly Meeting Dates

The following dates were proposed and approved for the next fiscal year's quarterly meetings:

- Tuesday, September 9, 2025
- Tuesday, December 9, 2025
- Tuesday, March 10, 2026
- Tuesday, June 9, 2026

MOTION: Ms. Christine Telford moved to approve the proposed quarterly meeting dates.

SECOND: Ms. Cheri Byrnes

VOTE: Motion carried without objection.

VII. Announcements and Community Updates

Presenter: Hannah Tyler, Chairperson

A. Research Updates

Chair Tyler shared highlights from recent research relevant to the DeafBlind community:

- Zebrafish Retinal Regeneration: Groundbreaking research into vision restoration
- Infrared Light Therapy: Potential treatments for individuals with partial vision loss
- Blue Light Protection Tools: Recommendations for screen filter use and accessibility apps to reduce strain

B. Community Events- By Committee members

Committee members also provided information on upcoming events and encouraged attendance:

Saturday, June 14, 2025

- West Hartford Starbucks Social
- West Springfield Park DeafBlind Awareness Event

Saturday, June 28, 2025

- Repeat West Hartford Starbucks Social
- American School for the Deaf (ASD) GCEC Cookout

Flyers and digital materials will be circulated by BESB staff to help with outreach.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: Ms. Sandra Miles moved to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Ms. Cheri Byrnes

Vote: The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

Time of Adjournment: 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Drew

ADS-BESB