South Carolina Commission for the Blind  
1430 Confederate Avenue  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Meeting Minutes  
July 21, 2020

Notifications of all regular, called, or special meetings are compliant with the FOIA requirements, Section 90-4-80.

Call to Order

Chairperson Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

Present

Dr. Judy Johnson, Chairperson, via Zoom  
Peter Smith, Vice Chairperson, via phone  
Mary Sonksen, Secretary, via phone  
Darline Graham, Commissioner, via Zoom

Invocation

Chairperson Johnson.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Accepted as written. No vote was taken. No quorum.

Finance Report

Matt Daugherty reported:

* Administration had utilized 92% of their budget.
* Rehabilitation Services had utilized 89% of their budget.
* Prevention and Older Blind had utilized 76% of their budget.
* Children’s Services had utilized 95% of their budget.
* In total, the Agency had utilized 86.15% of its budget.
* Federal Authorization was at 87%.
* State Appropriations was at 88%.
* Earmark Authorizations was at 39%.
* The split for Federal money was 87.88%.
* The Finance team had done an extremely good job to make this possible while teleworking.
* Out of 2,700 Open Encumbrances, Finance had closed all but 50.
* Matt Hall, Procurement Director, Offices of Administrative Services, had stated that the Agency was an example to follow on how to clean up open encumbrances.
* The Agency is eligible to carry Grant dollars forward due to the Federal match being met.
* State Appropriations had spent $366,000 with 10% of the original amount to be carried over.
* The IT Department had done a great job with preparing old laptops for staff to use while teleworking.

Roll Call of Participants

Mark Gamble reported:

* Sixty-five (65) participants were present.

Commissioner’s Report

Darline Graham reported:

* The Agency was in Phase 2 of the Safe Return Plan and continued to follow the guidelines from the Governor and the Department of Administration (DOA).
* According to the DOA, Phase 2 would continue until further notice.
* More staff were rotating into the offices to ensure services were available to consumers.
* All staff and/or consumers entering the Columbia Complex must go through a checkpoint located in Building D where temperatures will be checked, a brief survey of questions asked, and personal protective equipment (PPE) issued.
* District Offices have been provided with a digital thermometer and PPE. Staff will self-screen upon arrival.
* Mark Gamble developed a Safe Return video explaining the Safe Return Procedures for new hires and anyone coming to the Columbia Office. Mr. Gamble had done an excellent job with signage identifying check points and practicing social distancing.
* The following positions were filled:
  + Kevin Graham, Budget and Grants Accountant
  + DeAndrea Taylor, LPN
  + Kaire Williams, Transition Counselor, Spartanburg
* The Senior Managers used a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis and met with their individual teams to provide input for the agency’s Strategic Plan.
* The Agency will continue to operate under a budget provided by a continuing resolution until the Legislature returns in the Fall, at which time the 2021-2022 budget will be presented. The anticipated time to complete preparations in order to be on the legislative agenda is September and should appear on the September agenda.
* The National Federation for the Blind (NFB) annual convention was held via Zoom. Presentations were made on assistive technology, research, and progress.
* The NFB had signed a resolution to assist with services for the Older Blind Program on a National Level.
* The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) had sent a relief check to each eligible Blind Licensed Vendor to help cover losses due to closures and interruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Income from Federal and State Facilities where the Agency received a percentage of the total income was used. This was approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).
* A newsletter will be developed to replace The Grapevine, the former newsletter, which had been produced by Elaine Robertson. Several staff had expressed interest in receiving information about agency updates and consumer successes and achievements. A contest will be held to name the new newsletter.

Presentations

Zunaria Wasif reported:

* There had been eighty-three (83) successful closures in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, a 27% increase from the previous year.
* Unsuccessful closures had decreased by 17%.
* The most common occupational categories in which consumers had been employed in 2020 included:
  + Office and Administrative Support Professional (average pay $13.00 per hour)
  + Management (average pay $25.00 - $51.00 per hour)
  + Blind Licensed Vendor
  + Community and Social Services (counselors, case managers)
  + Labor and service occupation (customer service, packers, packaging, etc.)
* There had been a 3% increase in wages for consumers.
* Caseloads had increased due to the number of referrals received.
* Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services) had met the 15% spending requirement for 2019 and was on track to meet it in 2020.
* Blind and Socially Savvy Strengths Services, a new curriculum, had been purchased to assist transition students with areas of self-advocacy, social skills, social networking, how to start a conversation, interviewing skills and appropriate dress.

Matt Daugherty reported:

* The South Carolina Office of the State Auditor (OSA) had agreed upon a State Agreed Upon Procedures Audit of Financial Activity for June 2019:
  + The OSA had compiled a list of procedures that were specified and agreed to by the management of the agency.
  + Procedures were related to systems, processes, and behaviors in the agency’s financial system, specifically the financial activity for the year ending June 30, 2019, and would apply in accordance with standards established by the Institute of Certified Accountants.
  + This followed the single statewide audit that had been conducted.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Executive Session

Chairperson Johnson stated the members would go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter, specifically, Darline Graham’s Performance Review.

Chairperson Johnson stated that the members were out of Executive Session and no action was taken. No vote. No quorum.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:43 pm. No vote was taken. No quorum.

Future Board Meeting Schedule:

August 18, 2020  
September 15, 2020

Signatures

Dr. Judy Johnson, Chairperson

Mary Sonksen, Secretary

Date