

Nebraska Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired  
Public Meeting  
Saturday, May 2, 2015  
Hampton Inn, 200 Platte Oasis Parkway  
North Platte, NE

APPROVED MINUTES

Mike Hansen, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. The meeting began with introductions.

Commissioners present: Mike Hansen, Chairperson, Designee of the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska, Lincoln; Robert Newman, Vice Chairperson, Omaha; Jim Jirak, Designee of the American Council of the Blind of Nebraska, Omaha; and Becky Rieken, Executive Secretary, South Sioux City. Julie Johnson, York, was absent due to a family emergency.

Commission staff present: Dr. Pearl Van Zandt, Executive Director; Kathy Stephens, Administrative Assistant, Lincoln; Bob Deaton, Deputy Director, Lincoln; Carlos Servan, Deputy Director, Lincoln; Sarah Stewart, North Platte District Supervisor and Bill Brown, Business Manager, Lincoln.

Public Present: There was no public present.

It was noted that public comments are welcome during the scheduled Public Comment Periods regarding the agenda items or other relevant issues. Bill Brown recorded the meeting and the recordings are available on the website. Lunch will be on your own.

A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act was available. The Act was available in both print and Braille format. The Notice of the Meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star, the State Government Calendar, NCBVI Website, NFB Newsline® and Radio Talking Book. The Notice was also sent to ACBN, NFBN, and the NCBVI List Serve.

Approval of the February 7th public meeting minutes

Commissioner Jirak moved to approve the Minutes of the February 7, 2015 Commission Meeting. Commissioner Newman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and it was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Commissioners' Reports

Chairperson Hansen reported that he worked on finalizing the process for the new evaluation procedure for the Executive Director. A new tool was developed

several years ago by Commissioners Jirak and Walla. The tool has now been formalized and it is being used this year.

Commissioner Newman reported that he has kept busy reading emails and reports that are sent out by the Commission staff.

Commissioner Newman, along with Commissioners Johnson and Rieken, attended the State Staff meeting in April 2015. Commissioner Newman stated that he enjoyed the meeting as the topics were very upbeat.

Commissioner Newman attended the Spring NCSAB (National Council of State Agencies for the Blind) Conference in Bethesda, MD. He enjoyed the opportunity.

Commissioner Jirak stated that he and Mark Bulger had the privilege to attend the Legislative seminar in Washington, DC last February. This was an opportunity to meet with public officials to discuss legislative matters of the blind and visually impaired.

On March 2 the ACBN had their annual senator's luncheon. Commissioner Jirak thanked Director Van Zandt for her presence at the luncheon.

In April, ACBN had their State Convention in Omaha.

Commissioner Jirak and Mark Bulger spoke to clients attending the Center about ACB. Katie Fredrick, who is from Ohio, also came a week later and toured the Center with Commissioner Jirak to get an idea of how the Nebraska Center operates.

Commissioner Rieken noted that she also attended the State Staff Meeting in Grand Island. She stated that the meeting was a lot of fun and a lot of great information and training was provided. Commissioner Rieken had the opportunity to meet and visit with the two new staff members.

Chairperson Hansen reported that he and some others converged on a Unicameral Committee Hearing earlier this year where the Unicameral reviewed NCBVI's budget and Budget Request for additional funding for a new staff person that the agency feels is necessary due to the changes in WIOA and the Rehab Act. During the hearing it appeared that NCBVI's requests were received favorably.

#### Report from the Executive Director

##### Summary of activities and efforts since February 2015:

Lincoln Relocation: extensive work was done to explore the bids submitted, including working with an architect about designing space. Effective April 9, we rejected all bids. The process will begin again in a few months. It is not

uncommon for this to occur; different properties may emerge in the next phase of seeking bids.

Continuing to develop effectiveness through the Leadership Team, with regular weekly meetings and impromptu meetings throughout the week as needed.

Researching Database Systems to narrow our search.

Friends of the Commission meetings - provided information to aid them in a project to fund a program for transition-aged consumers.

Attend Mayor's Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee monthly meetings.

Attended WIOA and RSA webinars; now attending regular WIOA Core Partners meetings with State of Nebraska Departments of Labor, Education, etc.

Presented at the Unicameral Appropriations Committee; provided information to Senators and Budget Analysts before and since the Committee Hearing. We do have verbal knowledge that the Committee has approved our request, but now it needs to be approved by the full Legislature and the Governor.

Attended NBE Vendors Committee Quarterly Meeting.

Attended Supervisors Meetings.

Explored Succession Planning and related training opportunities with state personnel and a member of the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI) Faculty.

Spring State Staff Meeting was held April 14 – 16 in Grand Island. Excellent training was provided on Head Injuries, dealing with difficult people, reporting abuse and neglect, the new Braille system (United English Braille – UEB), agency business practices, behavioral health issues, reports from staff members on projects or trainings attended, and general discussion about web presence, social media, electronic data systems, marketing and other topics.

Worked on ways to keep consumers and staff current on changes being made in our approaches in the Center and Field, to help increase usage of the Center so that more clients will benefit from the intensive services provided.

Connie Daly is working with a company to do video promotions. I reviewed and gave feedback. We have three videos about employed blind persons posted to YouTube.

Worked on reclassification requests for several positions, some are still in the works.

Held final meeting of the Leadership Team with Organizational Consultant; continuing new approaches to management for improved communication and effectiveness.

With many staff, attended webinar on generational differences in the workplace.

Attended the Legislative Breakfast with NFBN and Legislative Luncheon with ACBN

Worked with Nebraska Statewide Independent Living (IL) Council on Panhandle IL Services, seeking to improve services provided in western Nebraska.

Worked with Assistive Technology Project (ATP), Wes Majerus and Nancy Coffman on enhancing collaboration between ATP and NCBVI

Attended Nebraska Department of Education Transition Advisory Council meeting

Attended Kim Schnitzer, Staff Trainee's Commencement meal and Graduation

Attended and presented at the American Council of the Blind of Nebraska State Convention in Omaha.

Attend the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) Spring Conference in Bethesda MD, April 21 through 24

#### Field Services

By the end of second quarter Federal Fiscal Year 2015 (January 1 through March 31, 2015), we served 608 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients in all statuses. Seventeen (17) were closed having achieved their employment goals. Twenty one (21) were closed without achieving employment (refusing further services, unable to locate, and other reasons).

In the Independent Living (IL) track, 475 clients were served, in all statuses; 187 were closed successfully, 26 were closed without achieving their goals (withdrew, moved, deceased, and other reasons).

#### Bob Deaton

Planned State Staff Meeting and is doing follow-up from the various speakers  
Professional development plans for counselors in the Lincoln and Omaha districts are completed  
Progress towards establishing a reading library on the W drive continues

#### Nebraska Center for the Blind

Dates: 2/7/2015-5/2/2015

1 New Client

1 New Staff Trainee

6 Three Day Stays

1 Client from out West came for one day to the center to work on Cane Travel and Shop, and 1 client from Omaha came for 2 days to work on parenting skills with Cindy as a part of the Center helping to support field staff in preparing clients to come to the center for training.

South Carolina Center Supervisor came for sleep shade training for one week  
The Bryan Nursing students are also coming to the center throughout the semester.

Tours: Play Creative, Platte Valley Christian School (23 staff and students), Golden Plains School (35 staff and students), Katie Frederick (ACBN Convention Representative), Nebraska Workforce Development, and 3 Clients.

Activities: YMCA, Bread Braiding, Golden Corral buffet, Special Olympics, Grooming, Hearing for NCBVI Budget Increase, St. Pat's Luncheon, CAP, Grilling, Dying Easter Eggs, and ACBN Convention.

Center Staff participated in Winnerfest, One Touch Certification, Generational Differences Webinar, Abisee and Nanopac demonstrations, UEB Training (Sahar), Jeff went out west to assist the North Platte District in teaching cane travel to clients, and State Staff Meeting.

Center Supervisor is participating in NRLI (National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute), has spoken to Winnerfest and all NCBVI districts on Center changes and updates, has spoken to the Omaha Council of the Blind, NFBN-Omaha, and ACBN Convention on Center changes and updates, working on developing a partnership with Nebraska Workforce Development for Vocational Seminar, working with Dr. Bell on developing a new tracking system through survey monkey, and is the lead for the College Workshop in August.

The Center brochure is almost finished and has a few more changes to go.

The Center is still in the process of hiring a new communications instructor.

The updated professional appearance in the Center is almost fully complete and only has one more area to go.

### Field Services by District

#### Lincoln District by Connie Daly

4/13/2015

This quarter my team provided ESP-N training to 4 clients. This is an intensive job seeking skills workshop. Thank you to the Omaha district for allowing us to use Ashley and Tim. One Omaha client attended. We had training from the Abilities Fund. Our team is very excited to be working with this group. We had five clients come for the initial seminar.

We had three clients do a three day stay in the center. There was a start date set for one client in August.

We had clients get jobs at Hy-vee, Baker's Grocery store, Fargo Assembly, Pizza Hut and Work Service Inc. We helped clients maintain their positions at Apogee and North Park Elementary School.

#### Omaha District Highlights May 2015 by Nancy Flearl

The entire staff participated in a webinar on generational workforce and how we can best understand and work together using our individual strengths. I also shared some information I got from NRLI on this topic in December.

We also had training from the Abilities Fund for self-employment. Along that line some of us participated in a webinar from Social Security on work from home opportunities. There is a virtual job fair on work from home and several clients are going to participate. We are reviewing caseloads and clients will participate in an orientation meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup> from 10-2:30.

Tim & Ashley attended the Project Search meeting in March at Embassy Suites LaVista. Staff have been busily connecting with the Project Search committees in our area. Kathy with Nebraska Medicine, Ashley with Valmont, Tim with Embassy Suites downtown, Kelly with Pay Pal, and I have attended the Embassy Suites, LaVista and will be handing that over to Kim.

Kathy attended the Spring Fling in Nebraska City to learn more about UEB and to network with vision teachers.

Tim and Kathy worked Winnerfest with Kelly and other staff lending support in preparation of this program.

Kelly is working with students to make sure they are getting the WAGES applications in and looking forward to the details for Project Independence.

Elaine and Kelly are busily working with clients interested in attending the Center, attending IEP's and working our tabs/jr. tabs group. Tabs will be doing volunteer work in May, keeping Omaha beautiful and helping clean up downtown Omaha.

We are going to meet with vision teachers in our territory to discuss pre-employment transition services. Discussion continues on how we can be working even closer and the age required for referral.

We have been attending functions at Chamber, lunch time meetings, coffee in the morning, etc. Some HRAM (Human Resource Association of the Midlands meetings).

We have had a client complete her OT degree and get a job in Lincoln with Tabitha.

A client that will be working on Offutt at the ENVISION Store.

A transition student who is graduating from school and is deaf blind has been offered a part-time job with Best Western, Admission Counselor with ITT Tech.

People have been attending a lot of interviews over the past few weeks.

Cheryl is working with UNO interpreting program to have a site for students to do their practicum. She has continued to serve on the interpreter licensing committee, PIA empowerment network (these are community resources that provide services to senior citizens). Cheryl is also working with a team to coordinate the Group Teaching that will be held in Lincoln, May 3-7<sup>th</sup>.

I did attend the leadership training in San Diego and am implementing so many of the skills gained there. The field as a whole is struggling with people retiring and maintaining staff and quality services. We spent a portion of our time on employee engagement and retention.

Kathy Brown Hollins is working with members of OAB on One Touch. She is doing this on her own time. She also works with them on yoga. They are going to start meeting weekly.

I will be attending the ACBN state convention.

Ashley is working on the employment committee and a team that is reviewing all our publications and media.

Larry took part in CSUN in San Diego in March, he helped plan some tech activities for Winnerfest and is working with the tech team on preparation for the College Workshop in August. He is busy working with Kathy and Kelly with transition students to have the technology they need. He became grandfather on March 13<sup>th</sup>. He also participated in Do It conference on technology and education on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

Kim Schnitzer completed her center training on April 10<sup>th</sup> and joined us in Omaha on April 13<sup>th</sup>. YEAH!!! We are fully staffed for the first time in over a year. Kim brings some wonderful experience working with individuals with criminal back grounds, motivational interviewing, and substance abuse. We have had a couple of clients terminated due to chemical dependency issues.

Monique has been working with clients on some resume development, setting up a new system for checking out our cars and coordinating drivers.

I say the same thing every quarter. I am privileged to work with a remarkable team.

#### North Platte District by Sarah Stewart

The last quarter has flown by! We continue to do our best to provide quality services to our clients despite the shortage of staff in our district. We'd like to thank everyone for their continued support and assistance to us. In February, Jeff Altman spent a week in our district meeting with clients to work on cane travel.

Thanks to Jeff for his willingness to come help and Carol Jenkins for helping coordinate this effort. We'd also like to thank John Schmitt and Connie Daly for helping out with referrals in the Valentine area. It's been great to have such support from everyone in the agency.

I again want to recognize the efforts of NP District staff. They've been working hard and covering a lot of ground. It's been challenging but they have had a great attitude and work as a team to make sure clients are getting what they need. We were glad to have Cristal Dimas return from maternity leave in March. Fritz Nuffer is expected to begin working in the North Platte office after he completes center training on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

We had our staff training with Abilities Fund in North Platte on February 25<sup>th</sup>. This will be a fantastic resource to help clients explore and achieve successful self-employment. We are scheduled to have the first client training on May 19<sup>th</sup> in North Platte. We also had BEP training with Carlos, Don Ward and Jan Stokebrand at our March District meeting in North Platte.

Deanna Jesse is on the Home Teaching Plus committee. Home Teaching Plus will be in Lincoln May 3-7. It sounds like it will be a great statewide training. Jan Brandt has been invited to speak at the WinAhead Conference for disability coordinators in higher education on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. Angie Hoff continues to serve on the Panhandle Independent Living Services review council. I appreciate their extra work in these efforts in addition to serving clients.

The North Platte district had one client achieve their vocational goal as Business Operations Specialist.

#### Business Office - Bill Brown

Work on Building Proposals

Case Management systems including trip to Oklahoma VR agency

Attend Meetings discussing WIOA and its impact.

Work with Organizational Consultant on fine-tuning business office processes

Training on new Unified Grant Management proposals 2 CFR 200

Working on Copier Proposals for Lexmark Machines

Libera Demonstration with Case Management stuff

Budget Hearing and NCBVI Key Indicators information

#### Kathy Stephens – Administrative Assistant

Quarterly Highlights

- The Food Bank Drive has kicked off and is underway. Dottie and I attended the kick-off luncheon. The campaign runs April 6 – April 17. There is a food barrel in the Lincoln District Conference room. Monetary donations can be given directly to me and I will get them to Stacy Dvorak.
- Is on a committee to update the NCBVI website. Also working on this is Wes, Eric and Ashley. We will meet again on April 29 to discuss where



we will go from here. We want to go with Nebraska.gov's package 1 for the migration phase. This is a \$1,500 one-time fee with \$20 per month for maintenance.

- Has been working on many hotel reservations and travel arrangements. Upcoming events are State Staff meeting, NCSAB conference, ACBN Convention, and Commission Board meeting. Will be completing NFB Convention registrations before May 11.
- Working on scanning fixed assets. Will go to Omaha the end of May to scan Omaha items.
- Worked with Laurie Jacobsen to have old furniture in the client apartments sent off to State Surplus.
- Continues to work with Don Ward to have old vending machines sent off to State Surplus.

### Technology Program Board Highlights by Wes Majerus

#### **Case Management System**

Much has happened in terms of case management system analysis this quarter. We have worked with a small subcommittee comprised of some VR Counselors, the Case Management System administrator, Business Manager, and myself. At the request of this committee after visiting Missouri in December, we organized a trip to Oklahoma City to analyze an AWARE implementation. This was a beneficial trip as it allowed users to look at how the system is organized and to learn how screen access software works with the system in terms of navigation and working with the data on each of the pages. Users felt more comfortable with the system after this trip.

In early March, the Libera Company conducted a demo of the Libera System 7 case management platform. This platform, while web-based, has a much different look and feel to that of our current system and others that we have looked at. This is due to the use of a JAWS script and application-specific keystrokes. We have also asked developers at the OCIO to put together an estimate for developing additional functionality for our current case management system. Our decision-making process is ongoing.

#### **Accessibility**

Upon receiving a memo that the Performance Appraisal System has a new look for 2015, I was asked to examine the system. Compared to previous tests of the system, it appears that there are more accessibility defects inside the performance review. It is next to impossible to complete the review with screen access technology because the dropdown boxes for answering each question do not work correctly with JAWS. In fact, JAWS detects them as links and thus the user does not know how to interact with them.

The Workday system is used for completing the annual Open Enrollment process as well as a number of HR-related functions. I still serve on the Workday Accessibility Council. Through that context, I have learned that there are major

changes coming to the interface of the Workday system. I plan to test some of these changes as soon as the vendor allows access to them. We have decided to hold the vendor accountable for the Open Enrollment process this year. State Personnel will have an Options Guide in accessible format available on April 20. We have asked users of screen access technology to report any difficulties they have using the system to the Personnel Benefits Administrator, Dr. Van Zandt, and myself.

## Operations

I continue to assess technology needs around the state and fix problems encountered by staff. We have upgraded our wireless access points in the Lincoln office to provide more coverage on the first floor. We continue to troubleshoot bandwidth issues in our Omaha office and are hopeful that changes made by the OCIO in the Omaha State Office building will alleviate some of these concerns. We recently learned that Lincoln Public Schools will unveil a technology plan where a number of Chromebooks will be provided to students. The popularity of Chromebook devices in education was also confirmed by sessions at the California State University at Northridge Conference on Disability (CSUN) this year. We plan to purchase a Dell Chromebook for the Omaha Office with possibly more Chromebooks to follow.

The Technology Team met twice during the quarter. Topics included:

- A brief look at the free Window-Eyes Screen Reader
- Plans for technology discussions at the College Workshop in August of 2015.
- Work at the March 2015 Winnerfest.
- Use of new operating systems and versions of Microsoft Windows.
- Highlights from the CSUN Conference that occurred in San Diego March 2-7.

The Commission is also working on increasing its presence on Social Media. I have served on this committee and assisted in ensuring that State Social Media guidelines are followed and that the Agency has the right software and services for posts to be published. A branch of this committee is exploring the Commission's web site. We are planning to overhaul the current web site and move it to a Drupal-based content management system offered by Nebraska.gov. This will facilitate in-house modifications to the web site, better rendering on various device types and screen sizes, and roles-based updating and administration of our content. In recognizing that our web site is the Commission's "Digital Front Door" we believe it is important to overhaul the site to provide a relevant and professional-looking web presence. We will be studying the needs for the web site as an agency, and then working closely with Nebraska.gov on the design and deployment of the new site. Our goal is to be live with the new site by January of 2016.

## Nebraska Business Enterprises by Don Ward and Carlos Serván

The vendor who is running the Joint Forces Canteen in Lincoln has decided to give up that location. We will remain open until July.

Update on the I-80 rest area project. Don has delivered all of the new machines to the rest areas and is currently working on processing the old machines that were removed through surplus property.

We contracted with a business specialist to help our blind vendors grow their business. He started in January looking for new sites where we can put more machines. He initially reported back that he had four possible locations; however, they did not work out. We are sorry to report we did not renew his contract after no new locations were found in 90 days.

We are growing and looking for new people in Lincoln, Grand Island and Omaha. We have a new person in North Platte and are working on two new locations for him.

We also have a contract with Abilities Funds and they are working with the vendors on improving their businesses. They have met with three vendors to offer help so far.

Our National Guard contracts have both been renewed for Ashland and Hastings.

## Unfinished Business

### Budget and Biennium Update

Bill Brown reported that the Legislature is debating the Budget bill and we will need to wait to see what the Governor does after the debates.

Director Van Zandt stated that with the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), we need to track separately the Independent Living Funds and the Pre-employment Transition Services (PETS). Even though we do not yet have regulations that define who fits into this, we still need to track it separately. In that regard, Bill has set up coding for staff to report their time working in these areas. PETS is a part of the VR grant, however, with the new Workforce Act all VR agencies are required to spend at least 15% of their full VR grant on pre-employment transition.

## Newsline® Update

Nebraska NFB-Newsline®

April 27, 2015

Jamie K. Forbis, Outreach Coordinator

Welcome to spring and the arrival of a few new publications! In March two new Louisiana publications joined the NFB-Newsline® line up. The Acadiana Advocate and the New Orleans Advocate are owned by the same organization as the Baton Rouge Advocate which has been a part of the capital city and surrounding areas for more than 170 years. These two new publications can be found under option 5 off the main menu. Also added under the magazine section is the Guideposts. For 70 years Guideposts magazine has published true compelling stories of hope and inspiration. This magazine can be found by pressing option 7 off the main menu which brings me to the newest feature added to NFB-Newsline®. Magazines are now listed in alphabetical order to make finding magazines even easier. No longer will a subscriber need to know what category the magazine is listed under; they can just read through the alphabetical list and choose the magazine desired.

With the meeting being so early in the month I'm only able to give you stats from February and March. Next quarters report will include the stats from April. Only two new subscribers were added in February and March bringing the total of subscribers in Nebraska to 1,805.

In February subscribers spent a total of 15,796 of minutes on the phone reading content with the average call lasting 13.58 minutes. Out of those calls 35.46% of them were made through the local number. Subscribers also accessed content through the web 994 times, through the app 224 times and via the Victor Reader Stream 608 times. The content accessed through these methods were: Nebraska publications 2,209, the local channel 81, local weather and emergency alerts 125, National newspapers 526, breaking news online 954, magazines 49 and TV listings 467 times.

In March subscribers spent 16,233 minutes on the phone with the average call lasting 12.69 minutes. Once again 35.46% of the calls were made through the local number. Subscribers also accessed content through the web 874 times, through the app 194 times and via the Victor Reader Stream 689 times. The content read included Nebraska publications 2,357 times, the local channel 66, local weather and emergency alerts 116, national newspapers 574, magazines 76 and TV listings 491 times.

This concludes my quarterly report. As always if you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you and happy reading!

#### Client Assistance Program (CAP) Complaints or issues

There are no CAP cases to report. Victoria Rasmussen has been involved with Employment/Social Media Committee, Media Committee, attended State Staff, coordinated and attended ATP/NCBVI meeting, Tech Team Committee, and new staff training NCBVI employee and training with Center staff.

## Nebraska Business Enterprise (NBE) Update

Carlos Servan noted that his written NBE Report was included in the Executive Director's Report. In addition to that information, Carlos Servan stated that NBE has two new small vending facilities in Nebraska City. One is an apartment complex and the other is a body shop. In North Platte, NBE recently got a site for two vending machines.

Carlos Servan reported that while attending the NCSAB Conference he had the opportunity to speak with Susan Gashel who is an attorney who is very knowledgeable about the Randolph-Sheppard Act and all things related to our NBE Blind Vendors program. She was here a few years ago to provide training to our staff and Assistant Attorney General Jody Gittins. Susan will come again to spend some time with new vendors, staff, and also with our new Assistant Attorney General John Jelkin.

## New Business

### Discuss and Act on the approval of the Executive Director's time certification

Commissioner Rieken moved to continue with the current method being used for the Director to submit her Personnel Activity Report to the Board. The Director submits her Personnel Activity Report via email to the entire Board for their review and information. It is an automatic approval unless a question or concern is raised by a Commission Board member.

Commissioner Jirak seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all voted in favor of the motion.

### Discuss & Act on the Approval of Employee in-state and out-of-state Travel

State law requires all travel of staff of state agencies to be pre-approved. This includes travel in-state and out of state. Currently for out of state travel all staff must complete a form that says where they are going, why they are going there, the cost, how it will be funded, etc. and this must be pre-approved by their immediate supervisor and by the executive director. This is done by all staff for out of state travel.

Supervisors manage in state travel by getting itineraries from staff and reviewing them on an on-going basis. However, staff is not required to check with their supervisor every morning to get an okay for in-state travel as this would not be manageable. Discussion was held with Administrative Services to determine how the agency could comply with the law regarding in-state travel.

Administrative Services recommended that each year the Board of Commissioners would have a motion to pre-approve travel that is related to the purpose of the staff person's position.

Commissioner Rieken moved:

The Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired approves all employee in-state business travel and/or out of state business travel within 60 miles of the border of Nebraska in any adjoining state, which relates directly to the provision of services to a client, i.e. employer visit, medical appointment, service referral, employment interview, etc. All other out of state business travel is approved if granted approval by the Executive Director of the agency. This motion is in effect until the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners after April 1, 2016.

Commissioner Jirak seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners voted in favor of the motion.

### Discuss and Act on 2016 State Plan

Director Van Zandt reported that WIOA is the new Workforce and Voc. Rehab. Law. The regulations are still being developed, but the draft regulations are available. There is a period of 60 days for comment on the draft regulations before they are finalized. The law is now requiring that all states put forth State Plans that are unified (one plan that includes all parts of Workforce) or combined, where those different parts do have their own plan and they are stapled together. This is a Governor's call and it will also depend on how the regs. end up coming out.

The first one is due July 1, 2016. Normally, the 2016 State Plan is due July 1, 2015. This year, because of the status of the regulations, the Rehab Services Administration issued a notice of a waiver. Agencies are not required to develop a new State Plan because they want us all to work on developing the Unified or Combined Plans. We do, however, have a requirement to renew our certification regarding lobbying. We do one of these for the Vocational Rehabilitation grant and the Supported Employment grant.

The section of the new law, the Unified and/or Combined State Plans, is a major section of the new draft regulations. As part of NCSAB, Fred Schroeder is working with key people at NCSAB on different parts of the new regs. Director Van Zandt reported that she is the lead on the Unified/Combined State Plan and she is working with Fred Schroeder. Director Van Zandt is gathering information from other directors around the country and their designees to put together comments.

Commissioner Jirak moved to approve the Executive Director's resubmittal of the 2015 State Plan as the 2016 State Plan. Commissioner Newman seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners voted in favor of the motion.

Finalize location and Focus Topic for August Meeting - Focus Topic: Center Policies, Programs, Staffing Tweaks and Interactions with the Field.

The August 1, 2015 meeting will be held in Lincoln at a location to be determined. The Focus Topic will be The Nebraska Center for the Blind Update.

Public Comment

Sarah Stewart commented that she feels that there are some positive changes happening in the Center. She appreciates the efforts of the Center supervisor and staff.

Break – A break was taken at 10:20 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:43 a.m.

Executive Session for Executive Director Evaluation

Commissioner Hansen moved to go into Executive Session at 10:45 a.m. to conduct the evaluation of the Executive Director.

(Ref. Open Meeting Act; 84-1410. Closed session; (d) Evaluation of the job performance of a person when necessary to prevent needless injury to the reputation of a person and if such person has not requested a public meeting.)

Commissioner Newman seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners voted in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Jirak moved to come out of Executive Session at 11:59 a.m.

Commissioner Newman seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners voted in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Newman moved to retain Dr. Pearl Van Zandt as the Executive Director of the Commission for another year with a 5% raise effective July 1, 2015. Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and all voted in favor of the motion.

Discuss and Act on the approval of Executive Director's National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) treasurer position

Director Van Zandt announced that she will not be seeking an additional term as the Treasurer for NCSAB. Her current term will expire at the end of 2015. Director Van Zandt stated that she will continue to serve on the Executive Committee of NCSAB.

Discuss and Act on the approval of the Executive Director's participation on the National Blindness Professional Certification Board, (NBPCB.)

Commissioner Jirak moved to approve Executive Director Van Zandt's participation in the National Blind Professionals Certification Board for the current term. This is to be approved on a year by year basis. Commissioner Newman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and all commissioners were in favor of the motion.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Final Announcements

The August 1, 2015 meeting will be held in Lincoln at a location to be determined. The Focus Topic will be The Nebraska Center for the Blind Update.

Adjourn

The May 2, 2015 Commission Board Meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

If you have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda of the August 1, 2015 Commission Board meeting, please email it to the NCBVI Commission Board at [ncbvi.commission-board@nebraska.gov](mailto:ncbvi.commission-board@nebraska.gov).

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Stephens, Administrative Assistant  
NCBVI

Mike Hansen, Chairperson  
NCBVI Board of Commissioners