**Statutory Advisory Board (SAB)**

**December 5, 2023**

**Minutes**

SAB Attendees: Blair Wong, Brian MacDonald, and Kathy Petkauskos

MCB Staff Attendees: John Oliveira, Nathan Skrocki, Lucy Evangelidis, Loran Lang, and Evan Silver

Meeting Held via Zoom; Recordings made available to public on MCB YouTube channel

Public invited to participate through Q&A made at end of the meeting.

Commissioner Update: John Oliveira

Earmarks update: We have distributed half the funding to all but one of the organizations. There was a question asked regarding how many times someone can go back for training. MCB has no cap, but the consumer should contact the vendor. The earmark should be enough to cover the demand for training.

The Caroll Center has opened a technology question line. You can also reach out to MABVI if you have any questions.

Dashboard update. Nate Skrocki is leading this project, and it is currently in the contracts stage. It will be out for bid soon.

Media campaign has ended. Results continue to be evaluated.

Strategic Mapping update. There was a final presentation meeting last week and a hand off meeting tomorrow. Agencies are moving into the implementation stage.

Brochure project lead by Mike Saccone, Communications Director. MCB has not had an updated brochure since two Commissioners ago. It will be available electronically and for staff to hand out during service visits. Staff are getting more requests for in-person services.

There has been continued positive feedback from the White Cane Day Event.

Planning has started for the Pre-Employment Transition Services Conference. Committee is being formed and agenda is coming together.

Budget Update. The governor signed the budget which includes pay raises that started in July. We are closing our Federal FY22 grant and will move onto FY23 grant.

MCB Office Update. Lease at our current Boston Office will end at the end of 2024. RFR went out for office space that is available. They will receive proposals. We have asked for space near the State House and Ashburton as well as public transportation.

Meeting with the lieutenant governor. Talked about the programs and services offered by MCB.

Commissioner Oliveira attended the Carroll Center for the Blind Technology Fair.

Minutes

Blair motions to accept the minutes from the November meeting. Minutes accepted.

Dashboard Update: Nathan Skrocki

Not a lot of changes from the last few months.

1,675 total registrations for the year. No registrations in process.

848 SR (social rehabilitation) children, 2,085 SR adults, and 1,130 in SR DBES (Deaf Blind Extended Support).

732 open VR (vocational rehabilitation) adults, 203 PreETS, and 15 transition youth.

107 closed SR children and 2,055 closed SR adults.

57 successful VR closures and 44 unsuccessful VR closures. This is for the fiscal year.

Close to 4,000 referrals for support services this year.

7,507 certificates of blindness, 1,026 IDs, 467 EDPs, and 60 handicap placards.

Kathy asks if the new Dashboard will be external facing or internal? Nate said it will be external and the information from this spreadsheet along with additional information will be shown. They are still figuring out which information is possible to share in real time. The RFR will go through COMMBUYS.

Blair asks if the MCB ID is accepted at town halls to get a copy of your birth certificate? Nate said to let him know which town and he can call them to find out. He thinks they should be accepted.

Blair suggests that the ID policy be uploaded to our website.

Blair asks if it’s possible for consumers to get their new blind access Charlie Cards at community transit centers like Union Station in Worcester instead of having to travel to North Station. Nate said he will look into it.

Blair asks about the strategic plan and what the timeline is. Commissioner Oliveira says that the strategic mapping is at least 3 to maybe 5 years. They are having a hand off meeting tomorrow where he will learn more about how to carry it out.

Kathy asks if the survey results are ready. Commissioner Oliveira says we are still waiting for approval.

Blair asks if SAB members can attend and contribute ideas for events like the job fair. Commissioner Oliveira says we can share the schedule for meetings if anyone on the SAB is interested.

Questions from the Public

Debbie M asks if there will be a QR code for the brochure for events or community service events? Commissioner Oliveira will check with Mike Saccone to see if that is possible.

David Kingsbury says he agrees with Blair on the importance of getting input from the blindness community regarding the strategic plan. He hopes it is a serious exercise and thinks a more participatory approach from stakeholders would be good. Commissioner Oliveira believes this is a very serious exercise. There have been quarterly meetings where agencies provide feedback and updates. The Secretary wants agencies to collaborate.

Jane Perry asks when the new phone system will be integrated. Will it be speaking, or do you have to touch a keypad? Commissioner Oliveira says the phone system will be used by 15,000-20,000 employees so it is not designed specifically for MCB. MCB has not seen the features that are available yet. It is taking a while to deploy. It is estimated that it will be up and running by the middle of next year.

Sandra Burgess says she has been trying to call the Springfield Office and has not heard back. She has also tried calling the regional director. Commissioner Oliveira says he will reach out to the Springfield Office, and she should expect a call back soon.

Meeting adjourned.