



# BOARD OF VISITORS

**THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND**

**P.O. BOX 2069**

**STAUNTON, VA 24402-2069**

**Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.  
Board Chairman**

VSDB BOV meeting  
December 20, 2013 11:00 am  
VSDB Main Hall Boardroom  
Meeting Minutes

Senator Hanger called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. welcoming board members and guests.

## **Roll call of members**

Members present: Senator Hanger, Senator Favola, Delegate Bell, Delegate Wilt, Virgil Cook, Donna Gateley, Jane McNeil, Alice Frick.

Members absent: Rachel Bavister, John Pleasants, Diane Sandidge

Senator Hanger declared a quorum.

Special guests: VDOE, Wanda Council on behalf of John Eisenberg, and Wendell Roberts, Assistant Attorney General.

Presenters: Karen Cole of Assura, and Trevor Piersol and Ellen Butchart of the Allegheny Mountain School.

## **Reading and approval of September 25, 213 minutes**

No revisions noted. Senator Favola moved that the minutes be accepted. The motion passed.

Dr. Armstrong requested a change in the agenda to allow the presenters from the Allegheny Mountain School to present first. The request was approved.

## **Allegheny Mountain School (AMS) presentation**

Trevor Piersol presented a PowerPoint on the project collaboration between VSDB and AMS. AMS is a project of The Highland Center, a non-profit organization whose mission is to assist communities in developing healthier and more secure food systems. AMS Fellows enter an 18 month fellowship program, six months are spent at the Highland Center receiving training and then they spend one year assigned to an outside organization. During 2013, VSDB hosted a fellow from AMS who collaborated with VSDB staff to develop the horticulture program at VSDB. This collaboration will be expanded into the VSDB Educational Farm. Mr. Piersol will be the farm project manager and will oversee the two additional fellows who will work to establish the farm. The farm will be located below the gym on the property used by the construction company during the renovation. The project will build on the current horticulture program and expand to build partnerships with organizations in the local and state community,

including local school divisions, the area food bank, and the Valley Conservation Council. Some long term goals include providing public programs and an Environment-based Learning Training Center for Virginia Educators. The horticulture project is supported by The Highland Center and a grant through the VSDB Foundation for the salary of the VSDB horticulture staff.

Senator Favola moved to endorse the VSDB Educational Farm. The motion passed.

### **Assura Presentation**

Karen Cole, CEO of Assura, presented a PowerPoint with information on developing a remediation plan in response to the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) audit. Assura is approved by VITA to provide services to state agencies under the VITA system. In order to be in compliance with VITA's regulatory requirements VSDB must perform a business impact analysis, a system sensitivity analysis and a risk assessment. The information from the analysis should then be combined into a remediation plan. The work required to complete this process is beyond the manpower of VSDB and should be contracted out. Ms. Cole provided a cost estimate to provide these services. To complete the three assessments will cost \$48,095.29; this is approximately 25% of the total expected costs. The design and implementation of a remediation plan will have additional fees. This is an unfunded mandate; therefore funds to cover the work will come from the VSDB general budget.

After further discussion, the board could not authorize contracting with an organization to address this issue at this time. They requested VSDB staff to prepare more information to be presented at the next board meeting. The board will provide a letter to APA with a copy to VITA indicating that they are addressing the issues reported in the audit.

Senator Favola moved to request VSDB staff to acquire more information to be presented at the next Board meeting and to draft a letter of intent for APA. The motion passed.

Senator Hanger reported that VSDB is not the only agency with this problem and that perhaps the state needs to address this issue as a whole.

The board requested a report from Doug Wright, VSDB IT, highlighting current security issues.

### **Reports**

#### Budget:

Janice Rankin informed the board that she reports to APA every quarter with updates on the steps VSDB is taking to address the items cited in the audit.

Currently VSDB is 5% over budget. This is typical at this time of year due to "front end" expenses. Nineteen positions are being held open due to budget shortages. Any unusual events will not be covered in the budget. One unusual event is an ongoing water leak at one of the new dorms; the estimated cost of repair is \$5,000 to \$10,000. VSDB is working with the contractor to arrange coverage of this cost.

Rental income is not included in this year's budget. VSDB did not receive any of the requested decision packages nor were the caboose bills adopted. One caboose bill was a request to restore the \$300,000 to the budget for the unrented buildings. VSDB will need additional funds to cover operating expenses for the current fiscal year. The board requested a set figure needed to cover operating expenses.

Alice Frick moved for the four legislators to move forward with a request for additional funds for operations. The motion passed.

#### Personnel:

Nate McLamb reported on the unique status of VSDB as an agency. When VSDB was removed from DOE to become an agency overhead funding was not provided to cover the transition and all expenses were absorbed by the general fund. The additional funds appropriated to cover the special needs program that was moved from the Hampton campus to the Staunton campus as part of the consolidation have now been removed. VSDB is having a hard time supporting the financial obligations of the special needs program. Currently applicants are on a waiting list for the special needs program due to lack of funding.

The board would like a report on the location of the students who are on the waiting list by district and their needs.

The board acknowledged that the state has saved 10 million dollars a year with the consolidation of the two campuses, there should be funds available to support the programs offered by the school.

VSDB will be hosting a stakeholders meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup> to receive input from school divisions on the type of services they need from VSDB.

Discussion on possible ways to increase enrollment at VSDB: Look at the possibility of accepting out of state students, finding ways to insure that parents are being informed of the services provided by VSDB, possibly find a way in which parents can have more of a say in where their child attends school.

Mr. McLamb presented information on 10 positions that need to be filled. The total cost of these positions is \$647,702.

#### School:

Pat Trice reported that school policies are being reviewed and those that need updating are being revised. Curriculum is being reviewed including summer programs, the ongoing five year plan for accreditation through the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD), and possibly applying for accreditation for the blind department.

Administrators are focusing on SOL testing, the Multi-disabled program and scheduling for next year. The Extra Mile Program (TEMP) has successfully completed its first week with three students.

School events – Homecoming was Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> with the crowning of the court and basketball games. The Girls Mason Dixon Basketball Tournament will be January 24 – 25, 2014. On Memorial Day VSDB will host a Renaissance Fair. More details on the fair will be provided at the next meeting.

#### Superintendent:

The board was shown a short video of the blind department winter concert and a news clip about a VSDB student. Dr. Armstrong presented a PowerPoint with information on the services provided for the special needs of some of the multi-disabled students and the costs associated with these services. VSDB students that have multiple disabilities increased from 73% on September 25, 2013 to 82% by December 12, 2013. On average, VSDB spends \$41,000 per year per student with multiple disabilities. Educational expenses are rising with the increase of multiple disabled students, but the budget continues to be cut making it difficult for VSDB to meet the requirements of the IEP for these students and stay within the limits of the budget. Dr. Armstrong provided a summary of her activities for September – December. Currently the school is negotiating a MOU with Mary Baldwin College to provide internship opportunities at VSDB.

#### **New Business**

##### Medicaid Fund:

Janice Rankin provided information on VSDB's Medicaid revenue and expenses. Billing has increased from previous years. Medicaid funds cover OT/PT and nursing. Actual funds are received approximately one year after the fiscal year they are billed for.

##### Agency/School status of VSDB:

Wendall Roberts presented a PowerPoint contrasting and comparing public schools and state agencies, particularly source of funding. VSDB is in a unique position where it is a school but not defined as a school division by the Constitution of Virginia. Local school division funding is approximately 50% local sources, 40% state sources, and 10% federal sources. VSDB funding is 88% state sources, 9% federal sources, and 3% special (other) sources. VSDB depends more on state funding than public school systems. Expenditures differ slightly with VSDB having additional expenses with the residential program and larger physical plant (maintenance, housekeeping, utilities, and public safety) expenses in conjunction with the residential requirements.

#### **Other business**

Senator Hanger commended VSDB staff for the great job they do in spite of the budget constraints.

VSDB is celebrating its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014. Events will be scheduled throughout the year. The board will be notified of events.

February 7, 2014 is the stakeholder meeting. (Time will be announced.)

No further business. Virgil Cook moved to adjourn. The motion passed.

March 20, 2014: Minutes approved by BOV with one change, Delegate Bell was listed twice and Delegate Wilt was not listed. Both were in attendance.