



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

December 8, 2011

Meeting Minutes

Senator Hanger opened the meeting and welcomed Board members and guests.

Members present: Donna Gateley, Diane Sandidge, John Pleasants, Rachel Bavister, Alice Frick, Delegate Bell, Senator Hanger, Jane McNeil (Judy Wyatt represented Delegate Landes but cannot vote)

Members absent: Virgil Cook

A quorum is present; the meeting is called to order.

Approval of September meeting minutes:

The Energy Services Companies (ESCO) energy audit at VSDB was clarified. The energy audit that SIEMENS is conducting is the first step in looking into State mandated energy savings. The audit will be paid for out of maintenance reserve funds and will not come from the schools general funds. The audit will provide a baseline of the current energy use of all facilities on campus. After the report is provided, VSDB decides which, if any, of the recommendations are followed.

The Board will be updated as the project continues.

No further discussion. John Pleasants MOVED to accept the minutes as written. The motion was SECONDED. The motion carried by voice vote.

School News: Jack Johnson

Brittany Bomboy and Scarlet Racey presented reports from the Blind Department, and Devyn Johnson and Khai Llewellyn presented reports from the Deaf Department. Both departments are busy with school, sports and extracurricular activities. The current condition of the computers creates issues in both departments, but the students are making the best with what is available. They are excited and concerned with the consolidation of the two departments into one building, but they are optimistic.

Mary Murray gave her report on the Dorms at this time. The furniture has been delivered and arranged in the blind dorm. Staff will have the opportunity to orient students to the new dorm before winter break. The residential staff, lead by Diane Bryant, will be working on Independent Life Skills with all ages of students. The dorm has ongoing opportunities for the students from both departments to mingle. The dorms themselves will remain separate due to the different needs of blind and deaf students, but the social time and activities have been designed to provide the opportunity for the students to get to know each other and to learn about the different disabilities of the students.

VSDB Foundation: Nancy Armstrong

The Foundation met on November 8th, five members were present. The Foundation Board currently is J. Paul Walla (Chair), an attorney from Northern Virginia; Judge Harrison May (Vice-Chair) of Staunton; Marianne Horinko of Chantilly, Virginia; Senator Hanger; Nancy Armstrong; and Janice Rankin. The Board will be expanding with representatives from both the deaf and blind alumni, along with other citizens. There is currently approximately \$3.2 million in the Foundation. The school did request money to buy computers; the Board requested more information before making a decision. The Foundation Board will begin to plan fundraising opportunities for the school that will allow it to enhance the school's programs. The next meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2011.

Technology Plan: Doug Wright and Karen Stinson

A technology plan was presented to the Board, (Document available upon request) that laid out the current state of the school's technology and what is needed to get the school back to pre-VITA status. The total cost of recreating the IT system is approximately \$350,000. Dell offers a four year lease-to-purchase option that will allow the school to finance the purchase. The school is asking the Foundation to provide the funding to purchase the new equipment. The plan for the future is to include "thin clients" (monitor and keyboard that connect directly to a server, common term is the "cloud".) for the students to have access to the same material from either the school or the dorm.

John Pleasants MOVED that the Board support the school's request to the Foundation to provide emergency funding for the technology plan. Senator Hanger stressed that it is still the Commonwealth's responsibility to fund the technology that is needed by the students. The Board supporting the request to the Foundation for the current emergency funding of technology should not be construed as removing the responsibility from the Commonwealth to provide this service. The motion was SECONDED. The motion carried by voice vote. The Board affirms that it is still the Commonwealth's responsibility to provide funding for VSDB technology.

Construction update: Nancy Armstrong

The Bureau of Capital Outlay Management (BCOM) conducted the inspection of the new blind dorm. Very few items were noted for the "punch list". Furniture has been delivered and tours will be available after the meeting. The education building is progressing on schedule and should be complete in the spring of 2012. The school will open in the new building for the 2012-2013 school year. A time capsule will be laid in the main entrance to be opened in 25 years. All other construction is progressing on schedule as well. The walkway from Kiser Dorm up to the Infirmary is now open for the students. A dedication will be planned for the education building.

School Reports:

Personnel-Nathan McLamb, Human Resource Director

Mr. McLamb reminded the Board that Conflict of Interest training is due for all citizen members. This training is due every two years. If you need help accessing the Knowledge Center to take the training please contact Susan Cupp at 540-332-9265. Information was presented on current vacancies. Some positions are being kept vacant to help meet budget cuts.

Budget-Janice Rankin, Director of Operations

The school is running 4% over budget and has consistently been 3-4% over budget each month. Current numbers were discussed. The annual plan will be presented at the next Board meeting for review and approval.

Residential Program-Mary Murray, Director of Student Services

The residential report was given at the beginning of the meeting.

Student Health-Amy Huffer, Director of Student Health

Nancy Armstrong gave the report for Ms. Huffer. Students and staff had the opportunity to receive flu shots. Additional staff has been hired. The students' physical and mental health is top priority to the staff in the infirmary, and they work closely with the behavior team to insure the students' needs are met. The school has recently received a Child Assault Prevention (CAP) grant that will fund an educational outreach to the deaf community through several Virginia schools to increase awareness and help prevent assaults on deaf children. The CAP program is being headed by Rebecca Plesko, former Director of Clinical Services for the school.

Deaf and Blind Departments-Jack Johnson, Principal

Mr. Johnson presented enrollment information to the Board. As of December 8, 2011 the school has 111 students enrolled. More than 50% of students enrolled in the school were placed in middle or high school. Language development is one of the major concerns with the deaf students who are allowed to "fail" in the public school before they are referred to VSDB. Seventy-five percent of the students that started at VSDB in PK have a higher reading level than the students who came after middle school. The school continues to reach out to parents and the public school systems through conferences, the Parent/Infant program and regional meetings. With the Foundation now able to work there is hope that the school will soon be able to advertise.

The school has been nominated for a Pearson¹ School Interoperability Framework (SIF) Excellence Award². Karen Stinson has been invited by Pearson to attend the 2012 SIF Association Annual Meeting in San Diego, California. Pearson is covering the whole trip for Ms. Stinson.

¹ "Pearson is the world's leading education company, providing educational materials, technologies, assessments and related services to teachers and students of all ages." (www.pearson.com)

² Pearson and SIF

Since 1997, Pearson, government agencies, state departments of educations and other industry leaders have worked together to develop the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF). SIF is a neutral consortium (SIF Association) that develops standards that allow districts to select and integrate various best-of-breed applications into a single enterprise-level system. SIF ensures that your instructional and administrative software applications can share information seamlessly across multiple applications.

SIF simplifies data exchange among all types of instructional and administrative applications. Student Information Systems (SIS) software, transportation and food service software, library automation systems, learning management systems, assessment management, state reporting and directory management systems can seamlessly interoperate with the use of SIF. The key benefit being that districts gain immediate access to all their data, including information stored in different systems. This means districts can make important decisions based on real-time data. (www.pearsonschoolsystems.com)

Enrollment Update-Cyndy Ward, Clinical Services Director

Ms. Ward presented a history of applications and enrollment numbers from the past years. School year 2008/09 had 24 applications with 20 new students enrolled, 2009/10 had 26 applications with 20 new students enrolled, 2012/11 had 31 applications with 25 new students enrolled, to date in 2011/12 we have had 23 applications with 20 new students enrolled. The majority of applicants are high school. The school continues to look at ways to increase the public awareness of our programs.

Diversity Report-Cyndy Ward

The diversity committee is currently sending out and receiving a survey for both the staff and the students to find out concerns and ideas on the move into the new educational building. They are planning team building activities that will strengthen relationships. They are working with the students on a symbol to represent the new education building.

Naming of education building and blind dorm:

The Executive Committee did not have the opportunity to meet to make a recommendation for the new buildings. All Board members were given a copy of the nominations and the naming of the new buildings was tabled until the next Board meeting.

Update on current business:

Code changes for leasing of vacant buildings

No bill was pre-filled to address the code change to allow VSDB to keep income from rented buildings in the local budget. The Department of Planning and Budget will include language in their budget proposal that will address this issue. John Pleasants MOVED that the Executive Committee have the authority to rent vacant buildings between regular meetings of the Board. The motion was SECONDED. The motion carried by voice vote.

Public Comment:

Jack Johnson addressed the Board on behalf of the teaching staff. They would like to be able to attend board meetings, but cannot take off from class to attend a day time meeting. The Board discussed the possibility scheduling the summer meeting so that the teaching staff would be able to attend.

The Deaf History Museum committee has Christmas ornaments available for purchase. They are three dimensional replicas of Main Hall. They are \$20.00 and can be bought from a committee member.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2012 at 10:00 am

Meeting was adjourned.