New Mexico Commission for the Blind

MINUTES (Draft)

Regular Meeting Held Virtually

April 22, 2022 – 10:00 AM

1. Call to Order

Chairman Schreiber called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM.

2. Roll Call

Chairman Schreiber took roll, and Art Schreiber, Urja Lansing, and Robert Reidy were present.

3. Introduction of Guests and Staff

Staff included Greg Trapp, Executive Director; Jim Salas, Deputy Director for Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living; Patricia Savage, Executive Secretary; Kelly Burma, Skills Center Coordinator and SRC Liaison; Kevin Romero, Deputy Director for Finance and Administration; Audrey Trujillo, Information Technology Manager; Lucy Mallahan, Special Projects Manager in Alamogordo; and Jedi Moerke, Acting Director of the Orientation Center in Alamogordo. John Kreienkamp, Assistant Attorney General, joined the meeting later.

4. Approval of changes to the order of the agenda and deletion of Agenda items

Mr. Trapp requested that the Report on Apartment Construction at the Orientation Center item be moved so that Ms. Mallahan may be present. Ms. Lansing moved to approve the revised agenda, and Dr. Reidy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the agenda as revised was approved with Ms. Lansing, Dr. Reidy, and Chairman Schreiber all voting yes.

5. Approval of Minutes for the Meeting of February 2, 2022

Ms. Lansing motioned to approve the February 2, 2022 minutes, and Dr. Reidy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the minutes were approved with Ms. Lansing, Dr. Reidy, and Chairman Schreiber all voting yes.

6. Chairman’s Report, Arthur A. Schreiber

Chairman Schreiber said he had nothing to report.

7. Director’s Report, Greg Trapp

a. Major Trends and Developments, Greg Trapp

Mr. Trapp welcomed Patricia Savage as his new Executive Secretary and thanked her for doing a great job. Mr. Trapp thanked Lucy Mallahan for her fantastic work as the Director of the Orientation Center in Alamogordo for the past 10 years. He said he looks forward to the work she will do as the Project Manager, which includes overseeing construction projects and building management at the Orientation Center. Mr. Trapp thanked Jedi Moerke for their great assistance as an Orientation Ability Instructor, and for stepping up as the Acting Director of the Orientation Center. Mr. Trapp said the agency is recruiting for a new Director of the Orientation Center in Alamogordo. He said the advertisement has been published nationally and he is hoping for a good group of applicants. Mre. Moerke thanked Mr. Trapp for the opportunity to serve and says they are learning a lot.

Mr. Trapp said the Commission is currently in the process of negotiating new performance measures as a part of the State Plan. He said there are additional performance measures that must be negotiated in consultation with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. He said the Rehabilitation Services Administration is using a new Statistical Adjustment Model for this process. He said the Commission and DVR should be having their meeting with the Rehabilitation Services Administration on April 28 or 29. Mr. Trapp said Mr. Salas has been doing a fantastic job with respect to the negotiation of the performance measures.

Mr. Salas described the five performance measures, saying the first measure is Employment in the first quarter after exit, measuring what the retention rate is for the consumer after they exit the program and after their case is closed; the second is Employment in the fourth quarter after exit, measuring the retention rate a year after exiting the program; the third measure is earnings that the consumer has in the second quarter after exit; the fourth measure is Measurable Skill Gain that looks at consumers that are enrolled in some kind of educational or training program and measures whether they achieve some sort of gain during that program such as a high schooler going from freshman to sophomore. Mr. Salas said the fifth performance measure is Credential Attainment, which is a higher level of Measurable Skill Gain such as a high schooler achieving a high school diploma or a college student achieving a degree.

Mr. Trapp said the agency will need to be monitoring and following up with consumers to properly report the performance measures, and that it is going to be a lot of work. Mr. Trapp said he appreciates the job that Mr. Salas and Ms. Villavicencio are doing with the performance measures. Mr. Trapp said he believes that the Commission will exceed all of the performance measures achieved by DVR, and that the Commission can accept the measures that will work for DVR.

Mr. Trapp said there was discussion at the last meeting about Independent Living issues related to the portion of individuals served who are from minority backgrounds. He said the agency has been looking more closely at that issue, and that one of the factors is that the Older Blind program statistics have been included in the overall numbers. He said that the minority representation requirement looks at the Part B Independent Living Program which includes persons of any age, whereas the Older Blind Program only covers persons who are 55 and older. Mr. Trapp said when looking at the Older Blind demographics, Macular Degeneration tends to have a higher incidence amongst people from Northern European backgrounds. He said New Mexico is also a retirement destination. Mr. Trapp said he believes including the Older Blind numbers as a part of the Part B Independent Living report inflates the number of people who are from a non-minority background. He said this makes it look as though the Part B Independent Living Program is serving a higher number of individuals from non-minority backgrounds. Mr. Trapp said people from Hispanic or Native American backgrounds have a higher incidence of Diabetes, Diabetic Retinopathy and Glaucoma, so the agency also has to take that into consideration. Mr. Trapp said that for future years the Older Blind numbers will not be included in the Part B report, which he believes will help produce the most accurate report possible.

Mr. Trapp said the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Conference has just concluded, which he said was very beneficial. He said in May the Commission will have a large contingency attending the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind virtual conference. He said the fact that it is virtual gives the opportunity to have additional staff attend, which he thinks is really valuable. Mr. Trapp said he believes the fiscal part of the NCSAB conference is especially valuable. Mr. Trapp said the agency has invited the Commissioners and SRC members to attend some or all of the conference.

b. Administration and Finance, Kevin Romero

Mr. Romero said the agency has begun the process of having employees return to the office, based on the current COVID status of the county where the office is located. He said the agency is ensuring compliance with CDC guidelines.

Mr. Romero said the agency is doing an IT equipment refresh, and that the agency will also replace infrastructure equipment to make sure the Commission continues to operate effectively and efficiently. Mr. Romero said the Santa Fe office is working with GSB Facilities Management to address identified projects in both the Alamogordo and Albuquerque offices. He said he met with facilities management, and have a plan on how to work in conjunction with facilities management to ensure that the projects get the best funding available. He said the purpose Is to mitigate the chance of having issues like this past summer, where a couple of air conditioning units went out and the agency had to rush to get them replaced. He said the agency is putting the air conditioners on a replacement schedule.

Mr. Romero gave a brief update on the Commission’s FY22 budget, saying as of yesterday, the Commission has expended $11,250,000 and has encumbrances totaling $460,400. He said the remaining operating balance between April 22 and June 30 is $3,565,400, or roughly 23.32 percent of the budget. He said budget predictions were run yesterday, and the agency is projected to end the fiscal year having expended $13,853,000 or roughly 91 percent of the current budget.

Mr. Romero said the Commission has received notice that the Office of the State Auditor will be performing the Commission’s audit for State FY22. He said the agency has worked with the Office of the State Auditor for a number of years and has a really good relationship with the State Auditor’s office.

Mr. Romero said the Human Resource Department currently has 22 vacant positions, with 10 of the positions Exempt Other and the remaining 12 Classified. Overall, the Commission has a 24.44 percent vacancy rate, roughly a little less than a quarter of the allotted positions are vacant. He said the Classified vacancy rate is 18.9 percent, and the Exempt Other vacancy rate is 36.74 percent. He said the agency continues to actively recruit, and is currently actively recruiting to fill eight positions. Once these eight positions are filled, the vacancy rate would be lowered to 15.5 percent.

Mr. Romero said the per diem rates have changed as of July 1. He said by May 1 of every year DFA is required to notify agencies of the upcoming fiscal year’s per diem rate. Mr. Romero said for FY23, the in-state travel rate went from $151 per night to $155 per night; for the county of Santa Fe the in-state travel rate went from $194 per night to $202 per night; and for out-of-state travel the rate went from $151 per night to $155 per night. He said meal reimbursements were adjusted up from $55 per day to $59 per day. He said partial day per diem rates occur when an employee, Commissioner or SRC member travels physically back from a meeting or from official business, and have also been adjusted.

Mr. Romero concluded by talking about GASB 87, saying it affects Leases and how they are identified and reported on financial statements reported in the annual audit. He said GASB 87 was delayed about 18 months due to COVID, but the implementation occurs now for FY22. He said the agency is awaiting DFA guidance on how the statewide implementation is going to take effect. He said GASB 87 directs how leases are identified, and that it is not based on dollar amount anymore. Mr. Romero believes after reviewing current leases and expenses, he does not see a significant impact or negative outcome. He said it does give the agency the opportunity to review our leases to ensure that they are correctly reflected.

Mr. Trapp said he had a follow up from the last Commission meeting in regard to his own salary. He said at the last meeting it was decided to wait to see what the legislature did with salaries, and if the recommendation for his own salary needed to be adjusted. Mr. Trapp said the legislative recommendations apply to Governor’s exempt employees, and that it is quite appropriate. He said Commission employees who are non-probationary received a 3 percent increase, starting with this last pay period. Commission employees will receive an additional 4 percent increase, on the first full pay period in July. He said there is a lot of complexity related to it, but the bottom line is that as Executive Director he has received a salary increase of 7 percent, which he believes is appropriate and in-line with the salary increases received by other Commission employees and avoids compaction issues. He said the Commission does not need to make any different recommendation for himself as Executive Director. Mr. Trapp said the agency continues to work with SPO to make sure that employees are appropriately compensated.

Dr. Reidy said employers have had a difficult time trying to fill vacancies due to salaries, and he is not sure what can be done. He asks that everyone think of ways to approach the Legislative Finance Committee about this issue. Mr. Trapp responded to Dr. Reidy, saying he is absolutely correct. Mr. Trapp said the classified vacancy rate is now at 18.9 percent, which is actually a very good vacancy rate when you look at overall state employment. Mr. Trapp said the Commission just received approval for a 2 percent salary increase for vocational rehabilitation counselors, which will become effective on April 30. He said the vocational rehabilitation counselors will also be eligible for a 1.5 percent frontline worker increase. He said the additional 4 percent is going to be on top of the 3 percent, the 2 percent, and the frontline worker pay increase. Mr. Trapp said the agency is also working with SPO on the salaries the blindness skills instructors receive. He said those are very critical, and the agency wants to make sure that it is offering competitive salaries there as well.

c. Independent Living and Vocational Rehabilitation, Jim Salas

Mr. Salas said the agency has a vocational rehabilitation counselor position vacant in Albuquerque. He said the agency has moved the Las Vegas office to Santa Fe, and has hired Nathan Reiman for the vocational rehabilitation counselor position in Santa Fe. Mr. Salas said the agency has a vacancy in the Santa Fe office and a vacancy in Albuquerque office for a blindness skills instructor. Mr. Salas said he and Mr. Haro are reviewing applications for the BSI position in Roswell and just got approval to schedule interviews. He said the Las Cruces office BSI position has been filled by Maya Alvarado, and she will be working with Barbara Kane who is a veteran BSI at the Las Cruces office. Mr. Salas has been reviewing some applications for the assistive technology supervisor position and he will be talking to Mr. Trapp about scheduling interviews in the next week or so. Mr. Salas said the Independent Living Program staff have been back out in the field since last July.

Mr. Salas reported on the Students in Transition to Employment Program for this summer, saying the agency has four flavors of STEP this year. The first being the Hybrid Program, which is work and online training in Albuquerque; the second being the Community Placements, around the State of New Mexico; the third being a 100 percent virtual Training Only Program this year for some of the students who are not really interested in getting out into the workforce yet due to COVID sensitivity; and the fourth being the Step Into College Program, a one month program, focusing on skills and information that college students need to be successful in post-secondary education programs. He said the wage that is going to be paid to the STEP students is the Santa Fe living wage of $12.95 per hour.

Mr. Salas said the employment numbers for state FY22 year to date are 11 in integrated settings, one self-employment, for a total of 12. He said the average wage was $20.82 per hour. He said the federal FY22 year to date is a total of six in integrated settings, with an average wage of $22.75 per hour. Mr. Salas said a total of 16 consumers were in employment status. Ms. Mitchell said three of the consumers in employment status should be closed by June.

Mr. Salas said he wanted to address the earlier discussion about the representation of Minorities in the agency data. He said the 704 Part B Report includes people under 55 years of age, and he said there were 60 people that were part of the 704 Report. Looking at the representation of the different groups, he said the Commission served seven persons in the category of American Indian/Alaskan Native, which equals 11.7 percent of the total of 60. In New Mexico, the representation of persons who are American Indian/Alaskan Native is 8.9 percent, so the representation is a little bit over in terms of representation. He said there was one person served who was in the category of Asian, which equals 1.7 percent of the 60 total, which is exactly right on the mark for New Mexico. He said that two persons were served who were in the category of Black, which equals 3.3 percent of the 60 total, which is a little over the 1.8 percent of persons who are Black in New Mexico. He said one person was served who was in the category of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, which equals 1.7 percent, which is over the 0.05 percent for New Mexico. He said that there were four persons in the category of Two or More Races, which equals 6.7 percent, which is higher than the 2.8 percent for New Mexico. He said that there was one consumer in the category of Race/Ethnicity Unknown, which equals 1.7 percent of the total of 60, but that this was not a category in the 704 Report. Mr. Salas said 19 persons were served who were in the category of White, which equals 31.7 percent, which is under the 36.5 percent of persons who are White in New Mexico. This gives a ratio of 86.5 White Consumers to White Population. Mr. Salas said there were 25 persons served in the category of Hispanic, which equals 41.7 percent, which is under the 47.7 percent of persons who are Hispanic in New Mexico. This gives a ratio of 87.5 Hispanic Consumers to Hispanic Population. Mr. Salas said the reason this is important is because if you include the older blind numbers of approximately 315 in the Part B IL Report, with the majority of those Older Blind individuals being white who have macular degeneration, the result is that the numbers tend to skew Hispanic and American Indian representation to a much lower level. He said American Indian and Hispanic representation was way under if the older blind numbers were included. He said that is why Mr. Trapp wanted to look at strictly the IL consumers, and by doing that we do have a much better representation in the terms of race and ethnicity measures.

d. Orientation Center, Jedi Moerke

Mre. Moerke introduced themselves as the Acting Director of the Orientation Center, pending the hiring of a permanent Director.

Mre. Moerke said the Orientation Center has 10 students in total; two staff trainees, three in-person students, and five virtual students. They said two of the virtual students may join for in-person learning in July. The Center has been focusing on developing the STEP into College curriculum. The Center is devising curricula in Braille, cane travel, home management, and personal management. The Center has additional classes in speaking, which covers interviews and class presentations. The Center also has some STEAM curriculum content, meaning Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. The Center is also planning physical recreation activities that are customarily done during STEP, including to help students get an idea of how they would take physical education courses on college campus.

Ms. Lansing asked if the Philosophy seminars are new, and Mre. Moerke responded said the Center has referred to them as seminar, business of blindness seminar or BOB for short.

e. Skills Center, Kelly Burma

Ms. Burma said the Skills Center is currently serving nine students. She said six of the students are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services, and the other three are adult consumers. She said the Center will be adding one more adult and a couple more students who are eligible for Pre-ETS in the coming weeks. The Center is gearing up to go back to a modified structure of STEP in which there are two days of training. Ms. Burma said the Center plans to start supporting teachers by offering an NCUEB workshop and test in the coming year. Ms. Burma said the Center will be serving a couple of students through the Technology for Children Program in the southeastern part of the State and have served about eight students so far this year.

8. Unfinished Business

a. Report on Apartment Construction at the Orientation Center, Lucy Mallahan

Mr. Trapp complimented Ms. Mallahan on her 10 years working with the Orientation Center and thanked her for the great job she has done as the Director of the Orientation Center. He said that he is happy that she will continue working with the Commission and the Orientation Center in her new capacity.

Ms. Mallahan thanked Mr. Trapp and said it has always been a pleasure to be a part of the Commission.

Ms. Mallahan said she was in a meeting this morning with the new project manager and other contractors, where she was able to do a walk-through of the apartment building and given a new completion date of August 3. She said she is hoping students will be able to move in by the middle of August. She said there were delays due to COVID. The Orientation Center also now has approval from the Facilities Management Division to fund concrete work in the patio area outside of the dorm. She said a mulberry tree will also be removed and a new sidewalk will also be poured in front of the dorm. She said the wheelchair ramp leading up to the dorm will be reconfigured. Ms. Mallahan said the apartment building is substantially completed, and has a roof and by the end of today the drywall will be up. She said that they will be having weekly meetings from here on out on Fridays, and she will walk the site as a part of that meeting to make sure everything is going in as it should be.

Mr. Schreiber thanked Ms. Mallahan for everything she has done and continues to do for the Commission.

Mr. Trapp mentioned the idea Mr. Schreiber had for a time capsule, saying it will be discussed during the May 6 State Rehab Council meeting. Ms. Mallahan agreed that it is a great idea.

9. New Business

a. Approval of State Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget, Kevin Romero

Mr. Romero said this is the first time he has ever seen an agency get exactly the budget that was requested. He said the Commission for the Blind was appropriated $16,373,200, and that included within the General Appropriation Act were compensation increases between FY22 and FY23 as discussed previously. Mr. Romero said the increase accounted for in the FY23 Operating Budget is a 4 percent pay increase that takes effect the first full pay period in July. He said the Department of Finance and Administration has estimated the cost of the compensation increases for the Commission to be $434,500. Mr. Romero said the proposed Operating Budget is $16,807,700, of which $2,303,600 is in general funds, $393,300 is from transfers, $5,907,600 is from federal revenues, $8,053,200 is from other revenues primarily the Business Enterprise Program and $150,000 is from fund balances that the Commission currently has. Of the $16,807,700 the funds would be expended under the following categories for FY23; $6,231,900 for personnel services and employee benefits which include salaries, insurance costs and all other employee benefits; $159,300 for contractual services; $10,309,400 for other costs to include a $2.3 million increase due to the Kirtland Air Force Base agreement; $107,100 for other financing which includes transfers to DVR for the Independent Living Program as well as the funding in which we provide DVR $100,000 in General Funds for $200,000 of their Program Income. This transfer process benefits both agencies and helps the state leverage additional federal funds. Mr. Romero said the current FTE count for FY23 is 90.5 FTE.

Mr. Romero discussed the compensation increase, saying the State of New Mexico only funds a portion of the salary increase and the rest of the increase must be funded by other sources. He said $132,300 is being provided by the state for the FY23 compensation increase. He said the expectation is that the Commission would fund The remaining $292,300 through federal grants. Mr. Romero said the agency grants are restricted, and the majority of our funds are to be used only for the benefit of vocational rehabilitation consumers.

Mr. Romero concluded his summary of the proposed FY23 Operating Budget, saying there is a Certification page that needs to be signed by Commissioner Schreiber and Mr. Trapp and returned by the middle of next week since the operating budget must be submitted no later than 5 PM on May 2. Mr. Romero requested there be an allowance in the motion to approve for any technical changes.

Ms. Lansing motioned to approve the State Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget, the signatures to be either electronic or in-person, with the agency authorized to make any needed technical changes. Dr. Reidy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the Operating Budget was approved with Ms. Lansing, Dr. Reidy, and Chairman Schreiber all voting yes.

b. Approval of EXOT Salary Increase Procedure, Greg Trapp and Kevin Romero

Mr. Trapp said EXOT stands for Exempt Other or Executive Other. He said the agency wants to make sure that employees are compensated appropriately, regardless of their classification. He said Mr. Romero will review our brief policy.

Mr. Romero read the proposed policy for review, revision, and approval:

The Commission recognizes the important function that EXOT employees perform in the Agency and want to ensure appropriate compensation. In most instances, it will be appropriate to apply the salary increase approved by the legislature to EXOT employees, however, there may be instances when it may be appropriate to adjust a salary increase in unusual or unique circumstances related to EXOT employees accordingly. The Commission authorizes the Executive Director to use his judgment with respect to the specific determination of salary increases.

Ms. Lansing motioned to approve the EXOT salary policy, and Dr. Reidy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with Ms. Lansing, Dr. Reidy, and Chairman Schreiber all voting yes.

c. Approval of Revised Allowable Cost Policy and Procedure, Gregg Trapp and Kevin Romero

Mr. Trapp said this item had not been revisited since last June. He said this revision is based on recent monitoring from the Rehabilitation Services Administration and new interpretation regarding supported employment from RSA.

Mr. Trapp said the agency is proposing to add language in Section one, to specify that supported employment funds can only be used when the individual has obtained an employment outcome and prior to case closure. Technically, we can have a supported employment case open, even after closure, but prior to the submission of the federal report. Mr. Trapp requested authority to modify that proposed language to better fit the exact guidance from RSA. Under Section two, replace a reference to a policy directive with the more recent DCL 2020. Regarding period of performance, change “carry forward” to “carry over.” Under Section five, Agency Purchases, add a new paragraph K that reflects the Nebraska monitoring. This language requires the detail needed to meet the requirements of our various federal reports, including the RSA 17, RSA 911, and the SF 425. The language also specifies that the contract track how much is spent on each consumer. The language also talks about internal controls and contract monitoring and how the agency will review invoices to make sure that they are accurate and complete, and it specifies who will do that monitoring. Under Section 10, Reports and Internal Controls, add a new paragraph F that says the agency will maintain procedures to ensure that services are accurately coded, tracked, and reported. Under Section 12, add the new Stevens Amendment language for FY22. Change examples to be in the current federal fiscal year.

Ms. Lansing asked about the language in Section 16 discussing Covid, Ukraine War and Cyber-attacks, and Mr. Trapp answered yes and referenced the Ukraine war and a potential list of threats and possible Cyber-attacks. He said that we do face a number of threats. When we last met, we did not have a major war in Europe and now we have a major war in Europe with threats of Cyber-attacks.

Ms. Burma noted that Mr. John Kreienkamp has joined the meeting at 11:50 AM.

Ms. Lansing motioned to approve the revisions to the Allowable Cost Policy and Procedures as presented, and Dr. Reidy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved with Ms. Lansing, Dr. Reidy, and Chairman Schreiber all voting yes.

d. Discussion of Proposed Changes to the Manual of Operating Procedures, Jim Salas and Daphne Mitchell

Mr. Salas asked Ms. Mitchell to speak on MOP Chapters 11 and 12. Ms. Mitchell said Chapter 11 focuses on transition services. She said the proposed change will add information about the provision and availability of Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Ms. Mitchell said Chapter 12 focuses on Post-Employment Services and needs a complete overhaul. She said on March 11, RSA released an updated interpretation of when Post-Employment Services can be provided. She said agencies have been providing Post-Employment Services after the case was closed. In the frequently asked questions document that RSA released, RSA is now saying that Post-Employment Services must be delivered after someone secures employment, but before the case is closed. Consumers can come back for services if they need help to maintain, regain or advance in employment, but the agency now has to open a new case. When a consumer exits the VR program, they receive a Common Unique Identifier. When a case is closed, they are considered exited from the VR program and the record is closed. In order to reinitiate services, we have to reinitiate that Common Unique Identifier.

Ms. Burma asked if a case is re-opened does it receive a new Common Unique Identifier Number or does it actually re-initiate the same Common Unique Identifier Number. Ms. Mitchell responded, based on logic, it would be the same Common Unique Identifier Number. However, once a case is closed, it is exited from the system. An example is if the consumer is still receiving services from one of the other partners, their Common Unique Identifier Number for those programs is still active and it’s the same number, but for the VR program it’s been exited from the system.

Mr. Trapp said the Commission will be having public meetings on the changes to the MOP on Monday, April 25. He said the State Rehab Council will meet on May 6 and will be voting to approve the changes to the MOP. Mr. Trapp said the Commission is required to consult with the Council anytime the agency makes substantive changes to policies and procedures, and that we are also required to have public meetings.

Ms. Lansing asked Ms. Mitchell if a consumer would have to reapply if their case was closed and they needed service to advance, and Ms. Mitchell answered yes. Ms. Lansing asked if that meant that the consumer could lose the advancement, and Ms. Mitchel said unfortunately yes, and that’s why it seems to lack logic. Ms. Lansing asked if the agency could disagree with the FAQ, and Ms. Mitchel answered no.

Mr. Salas said the agency is trying to create an expedited process for re-application, re-eligibility, and creating a new IPE.

Ms. Mitchell said the agency has to monitor wages for consumers who are closed for 18 months after they exit the program. She said the VR counselors and Ms. Villavicencio are contacting those consumers to check on their wages and if they have gained any other skills or certifications, including quarterly calls for 18 months. Mr. Salas said quarterly calls to consumers can provide key details and determine whether some kind of intervention is necessary to help keep that consumer employed.

Ms. Lansing thanked Mr. Salas and Ms. Mitchell for being on top of things and continuing to serve consumers and expediting the process.

Mr. Trapp said there is another option that applies to agencies under an Order of Selection, which can allow for services for persons who are at risk of losing their jobs to retain employment, but the only services that can be provided are those that are necessary for those individuals to retain their job. He said it is something we can look into, but the approach we need to take at this time is to expedite the application process for prior consumers.

10. Commission Open Discussion

Mr. Trapp welcomed Ms. Savage and asked if she had any comments or reactions to her first meeting with the Commission.

Ms. Savage thanked everyone for welcoming her to the Commission and said she finds everything very interesting and is definitely learning a lot and looking forward to meeting everyone in-person soon.

11. Comments from the Audience

John Kreienkamp said he had no updates for the Commission.

Mr. Romero talked about transitioning per diem requests from himself to Ms. Savage.

12. Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be either hybrid or virtual in Albuquerque, depending on the pandemic, and will be held starting at 9:00 AM on August 23, 2022.

Mr. Trapp also suggested that they have a Special Meeting, possibly in Alamogordo, in conjunction with the apartment complex opening and will schedule that once they know more.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:19 PM.

Approved and Electronically Signed this 23rd Day of August 2022

Arthur Schreiber, Chairman

New Mexico Commission for the Blind