# **Minutes**

# **Iowa Commission for the BlindDecember 6, 2022**

1. Call to order and determination of quorum. The quarterly meeting of the Iowa Commission for the Blind was called to order at 12:00 p.m., by Ryan Brems, with the following members present Ryan Brems, acting chair. No quorum as Commissioner Sandi Ryan passed away, this will be an informational meeting. Others in attendance: Emily Wharton, Janice Eggers, Sarah Willeford, Kim Walford, Keri Osterhaus, Katy Olsen, Helen Mejia, Connie Mendenhall, Caroline Barrett (AAG), Shawn Mayo, Carrie Chapman, and Lisa Schneider.
2. Update from November 18th Sandi Ryan passed away from cancer. She was a fierce advocate and volunteer at IDB. The impact she has had on the agency and us can not be calculated. She had given advise to a friend saying that there are others who can carry on. At the September Meeting we announce that Geneva Jacobsen, had resigned. Commissioner Ryan had reached out to the Governor’s Office to have a replacement named. We are still waiting for appointments to be made. Did anticipate that this meeting might be informational. We went ahead and prepared for a quarterly meeting as usual. Commissioner Brems shared he is very impressed at how much IDB accomplishes. Skilled, talented, and passionate staff we have here.
3. Public Comment – Kim Walford it is a privilege to work here at the Department and with Emily Wharton. Sarah Willeford spoke and stated we are lucky to have Emily as our Director. She allows us to work outside the box and are able to accomplish so much. Shawn Mayo, know the impact IDB has had on other states. Iowa is known nationally for the agency for the blind. This agency has such an impact on people, keeping up with the times, and the changes of moving forward. Would there be any use with the organizations for the blind be able to help with getting commissioners assigned? Commissioner Brems, have people apply to become a commissioner, stay passionate about this. Emily can not and will not tell the consumer groups what to do. Do however agree with Commissioner Brems regarding applying for the vacant commission board positions.
4. Approval of the consent agenda as presented. Item tabled until next meeting.
5. Approval of September 20, 2022 board minutes. Item tabled until next meeting.
6. Agency Director Report - Ms. Wharton shared:
   1. Updates on a couple of items. Connie Mendenhall has been hired to be our CIO. Great ideas, energy and getting the information for IDB out there with radio spots. Day at the Capitol, February 20th from 9-1.
   2. Update on the DE Contract.
   3. Budget ASK for FY24 and beyond.
   4. Budget meeting with Department Directors with the Governors Office to be scheduled for next week.
   5. Sarah Willeford shared updates with the Athena software implementation and how this has streamlined the processes for materials for blind and large print students in Iowa.
7. Commission Brem’s term as a commissioner will be up this Spring. Have a special meeting when a new commissioner is appointed.
8. Adjournment – Mr. Brems moved the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ryan Brems, Acting Chair

Commission for the Blind

Janice EggersSecretary to the Commission/ Executive Secretary

Department for the Blind

/jce