

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Meeting Minutes
Herschler Bldg., Conference Room B 63 – Cheyenne, Wyoming
February 5 & 6, 2008

State Rehabilitation Council Members present:

Lee Beidleman	Lisa Osvold
Dorothy Cronin	Mark Pixley
Jim McIntosh, Ex-Officio	Bob Rowan
Laura McKinney	Diether van Houten
Ray Metcalf	

Council Members Absent:

Shannon Bodin	Debbie Terech
Terri Dawson	Joe Thomas
Kristi Mogen	Donna Thompson
Becky Taggart	

Others Present:

Kirk McKinney, DVR	Susan Hagan, DVR
Steve Miedziak, DVR	Norma Whitney, DVR
Brian Hickman, DVR	Mike Aurand, BIAW

Tuesday, February 5, 2008:

Welcome and Introductions

Vice-Chairperson Lee Beidleman called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Herschler Building, Conference Room B 63, Cheyenne, Wyoming. Ray Metcalf, new council member, and Norma Whitney, DVR were introduced.

Area Manager Consultant Report – Norma Whitney

DVR Area 01 Area Consultant Norma Whitney has been with DVR since May '07. Area 01 has three offices; Cheyenne, Torrington, and Laramie. In the Cheyenne office there are two new Counselors, one counselor was promoted, and one left. Shaye Moon came to Cheyenne from Montana, and Robyn Thorne came to Cheyenne from Arkansas, she worked as a Rehab Counselor with Transition Students in Oklahoma. Robyn has her MRC and CRC.

Carl Gonzales is currently working on his Masters through Utah State University online. Shaye Moon and Crystal Troutman have applied to Wisconsin Stout University and hope to start classes in the fall toward their Master's.

Norma indicated that the Transition Program is going very well. Clay Dokken, Transition Consultant, has helped develop relationships between the school districts and VR with monthly meetings being held. Students which had previously not been referred to VR offices are now being referred. Robyn Thorne will be working with the Transition Students in Cheyenne, as well as in Laramie.

Norma sits on the Steering Committee of the Cheyenne Business Leadership Network (CBLN). Marla Lewis, Director-CBLN, meets with the Cheyenne office twice per month to update counselors on employers and business that she had contacted and educated on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. Monthly meetings are held with business people and VR brings a client, with their resume. The client gets an opportunity to talk about themselves, and what kind of job they are looking for. The client's resume is distributed and if the business people have a position open, or know of another business needing an employee, they can contact the Counselor.

The relationship with Employment Services and DVR is quite good, and the two offices work well together. The two offices have been doing some cross-training so they can each be more aware of what the capabilities of each office are.

Approval of November 2007 Meeting Minutes

A Motion was made to accept the minutes from the November 13 & 14, 2007 SRC meeting. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Administrator's Update – Jim McIntosh

Federal: Reauthorization of WIA and the Rehabilitation Act, still no information on this and there will probably not be anything new on this issue until after the November Presidential elections. VR has been included in a Fiscal Package and is fully funded through the remainder of the fiscal year. This funding is based on 2006.

HR 2175 – ADA Restoration Act is being looked at for re-writing portions of this Bill to encompass more than a select group. The Bill prohibits discrimination based on the basis of disability. The wording is to be cleaned up to address both of the issues; it amends the definition of 'disability' so that people who Congress originally intended to protect from discrimination are covered under ADA. Jim will forward this information to anyone interested in reading it.

Jim also has some information on the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils which can be discussed during that topic tomorrow morning.

Departmental: Not a lot going on for VR with the upcoming Legislative Session as it is a Budget Session. One exception to the Standard Budget and that was minor. Kym Freeman, Assistant Administrator/Fiscal Services, needed to adjust the funding pattern so her time will be paid from one fund rather than several. Joint Appropriation Committee (JAC) approved this without comment so VR should go through the Legislature pretty clean. The Department, as a whole, especially Business and Training Opportunity (BTO) has a lot of money on the table. BTO has a Training Fund, was developed to help new employers coming into the State get established, train staff, etc. The role of this fund needs to be clarified so that it incorporates new businesses not established businesses. This could be the only controversy for the Department's legislation.

The Department is stable – Joan Evans, Director, is an excellent representative for the Department, and is trying to get information regarding the Department out statewide as well as nationwide.

Projections – President’s recommendation for FY 2009, we are currently in FY 2008. For 2009 the President has proposed that the VR State Grants remain as they are which is good. The Client Assistance Program Grant is to maintain current funding. PAR is recommended to maintain current levels as well. Independent Living (IL) and Centers for Independent Living (CIL) should be funded at the same level. These are all the President’s recommendations. The President usually wants to eliminate the Supported Employment Grant, which is a 100% federal grant to help with supported employment. The Grant is \$300,000 per year, but the President didn’t mention this in his recommendations to it should be safe.

Division: Diether van Houten, VR Counselor in Sheridan, is going to retire May 31, 2008, and this vacancy will need to be filled. The work that Diether has done with Transition is tremendous and he will be missed. Janet Hoyt, VR Counselor in Casper, has recently left; when hired, the new counselor will be a Transition Counselor. Jim would like to form a group for the Transition Counselors to establish best practices statewide. No policy needs to be made but the group needs to get together as a support for one another. A seamless system for students to transition from school to work is the intent.

Inge Huband has been hired to work as a Small Business Consultant, replacing Marion Cotterman. Inge worked at the Small Business Development Center at LCCC, and worked with Marion in the past so she understands Small Business Development. She has a basic understanding of how VR approaches small business. Staff for the Division is stable.

The Division is concerned about the returning veterans with ABI/TBI, PTSD, or physical injuries. We want to be prepared to help these veterans.

The State Plan Hearing is on May 27, 2008. There will be a video conference as well as a phone number for participants to call in. If we have individuals in SRC that would like to facilitate a video conference site, this might allow for more sites for people to attend. Currently there are 5 sites: Casper, Cheyenne, Riverton, Cody, and Sheridan.

Lisa Osvold led the charge to get more people to the Information Session. All active clients in Cheyenne had an invitation mailed to them.

Fiscal Report/SRC Budget Information – Roxanne Parsonneault

RSA would like the Council to be more fiscally responsible for their budget, so Roxanne Parsonneault, DVR Financial/Statistical Specialist 3, presented information regarding the SRC Budget. Budgets are based on the federal fiscal year which runs from October 1 through September 30. The state’s fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. VR funding is 78.7% federal funds and 21.3% state general matching funds. In previous years the amount budgeted for SRC was \$20,000 but that amount was not enough to meet the needs of the Council so this year’s budget was increased to \$30,000. This money is distributed into a line item budget. Line items were looked at to explain what is paid for out of which line item. Details on indirect costs were outlined. Indirect costs are an agreement between the state and federal government as a means for the state to recover costs to administer the grant award.

CAP Report – Lee Beidleman

Lee Beidleman, Councilmember, reported that he has two open cases for VR clients; one person wants to change their IPE. Several other cases Lee has are for IL. For P & A overall has several things in litigation but nothing for VR; most of this is with education.

SILC – Dorothy Cronin

Councilmember Dorothy Cronin reports that both IL centers were represented on SILC until recently when the center director for Wyoming Services for Independent Living (WSIL) in the western portion of the state, was voted off of the council. SILC would like representation from the both sides of the state; someone on the council to represent WSIL and western Wyoming. Dorothy Cronin spoke with the Board President for the IL Center to try to get representation. She hasn't received anything in writing yet.

SILC is still waiting for a copy of the review that RSA conducted on the WSIL, in order to take action. Dorothy brought some issues to the attention of the WSIL Board President, which he and the other board members were not aware of.

The WSIL Board did write a letter to Dorothy stating that she had violated their confidentiality by sharing information with the SRC about what the outcome was from the survey. Dorothy did not share any information about clients, client files, or their client's confidentiality. Their financial records and business practices aren't confidential in nature. Dorothy and SILC both disagree that she violated confidentiality.

SILC is trying to make some changes and work with WSIL, but keep hitting road blocks so progress is slow.

Project BRAIN – Dorothy Cronin

The Community Resources Team leaders are receiving training at the conference in March on Support Group Management Skills. New leaders have stepped in so training will be beneficial. A new support group has started in Wheatland; and plans to start support groups in Evanston, and Afton are in the works.

The Community Resource Director, Jack Nokes, had been out of the office with medical issues but is back working part-time. He will be back on the road working with the support group leaders, and is developing material for handouts to be distributed at hospitals.

Communications Network - the newsletter reaches almost 1,800 people, they have more than 800 people receive postcard reminders about the support group meetings each month, and last year attendance at support group meetings exceeded 1,400 people.

A catalogue on training materials is being printed, but the information is also available on the BIAW website. Resources available in Wyoming are also available on the website.

The ABI Task Force hired a consultant to work with them on a trust fund and received very helpful information. Dorothy and Jack spoke with a financial consultant about whether a foundation or a trust fund would better suit the purposes of the Project. As a non-profit, BIAW could expand and incorporate a foundation under its existing 501 ©3, and not start a new one. They are exploring this issue.

Client Transition Report – Donna Thompson

Councilmember Donna Thompson was unable to attend meeting but provided a report on current WDE activities. The State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Reports have been filed and will be reviewed for approval by the Office of Special Education Programs; when approved the results will be available on their website.

Focus Monitoring of four districts this school year regarding Indicator #13 show improvement by age 16. Most IEP's reviewed show involvement with DVR, MentorAbility or other special providers.

A Leadership Symposium for special education professionals is scheduled for July 28 through August 1, 2008 in Lander, Wyoming, and is being sponsored by WDE Special Education Unit and the Council for Exceptional Children.

Lee Beidleman expanded on Donna's report. Wyoming Department of Education Transition Council has good representation from VR. Ted Knowles, VR Counselor from Riverton, had been on the Council for some time, and now Clay Dokken, Transition Consultant, is on the Council; Lee is also on the Transition Council.

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils

This item is on the Agenda for tomorrow but Lee mentioned that this might be requiring the Council to vote on it so Lee asked Jim McIntosh to provide some information on this group. The NCSRC seems to be designed more for SRC and VR relationships that are in more adversarial roles. Wyoming SRC and VR have a very good working relationship so the NCSRC might not necessarily be beneficial. Montana has decided to wait on becoming a member of the NCSRC. April 19 – 23, 2008, the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Spring Conference in Bethesda, MD, has two full days of information for SRC members regarding NCSRC. Councilmember Mark Pixley agreed to go to the CSAVR Spring Conference to represent Wyoming SRC.

Brian Hickman – DVR Training Officer

Brian is the DVR Liaison for SRC and is a contact point for the council in Central Office.

Brian invited the SRC to attend the In-service training scheduled May 12 – 16, 2008, in Riverton, Wyoming at the Holiday Inn. One of the presenters scheduled was a VR client and now has her own successful business.

The Employer Award will hopefully be presented to Allstate Thursday morning at 11:00 a.m. This will be followed up on tomorrow morning.

Committee Breakouts

Executive: An application to the council has been received from Marion Cotterman, recently retired VR employee, who has a family member with a disability. Marion is also a small business owner and would be an excellent addition to the council. **A Motion was made that this application be forwarded to the Governor for appointment. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.**

Review: The timeline for the State Plan was given to the committee. A working Draft of the Plan will be sent to the Review Committee members the first week in March. Laura McKinney, Committee Chair, will be in contact with the committee member the third week in March, and comments will be due by the end of March. The Plan comes before the Council at the May meeting.

Communications: More planning for the Employer Award is needed. Invitations were sent to all of the active clients in the Cheyenne area, so a better turnout is hoped for, however, if the turnout is low the continuation of the session would need to be discussed by the Council. Working on the Team Charter is scheduled for the May SRC Meeting.

The three committees were explained to Ray Metcalf, and with a limited representation of the committees, Ray decided to wait until the next meeting to commit to a committee.

Brain Injury Association of Wyoming Training

Mike Aurand, Statewide ABI Educator, provided training on Traumatic Brain Injuries and Acquired Brain Injuries.

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils

It was discussed that representation at the Spring CSAVR Conference in Bethesda, MD is needed to gather information for the Council to decide if the Coalition is something Wyoming SRC would like to join.

A motion was made to have Mark Pixley attend the CSAVR Spring Conference. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.

Kirk McKinney – DVR Assistant Administrator of Field Services

Kirk presented Policy and Procedure changes to the Council for approval. The two changes are: 1) Regarding pre-payment of tuition for a client. DVR prefers not to pay tuition in advance due to the possibility of the client dropping out and not being able to recover the funds. More private and vocational schools require pre-payment so this change is to deal with those exceptions. 2) A policy regarding transferring transition cases. It is similar to transfer of any case, but adding extra best practice guidelines for counselors and assistants so that transition for the client, who is relocating, has their VR case stay in tact and should smooth the process for the client. These two changes were discussed at the Management Team Meeting and the Area Managers didn't have any problem with the changes. If the SRC agree to these changes, they will be implemented into the VR Policy and Procedures. **A motion was made to accept the changes into VR Policy and Procedures. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Business Cards

During the break, Councilmember Lisa Osvold, asked to have training for the next meeting discussed, and whether or not the Council would like to have business cards made for members as part of her Communication Committee responsibilities. What the cards should look like was discussed and decided. The cards will have the State Seal and DWS Seal; with the member's name, city of residence, email address, and phone number. Susan Hagan, VR

Executive Assistant, will ask DVR Fiscal Section to get estimates for printing the cards. **A motion was made to bet business cards for all members. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.**

Training for the next meeting was discussed. The next meeting will be May 20 & 21, 2008, in Cody, Wyoming. The topic will be on Seriously and Persistently Mental Ill (SPMI), Jim will contact the Area Manager to get presenter for the meeting.

Invitations will be sent out to the clients in the Cody area for the Information Session in May.

Fact sheets - The Communication Committee will get back to the council on the development of these sheets.

Contact Reports. Keeping track of the contacts that each SRC member is making was discussed. Most members are making contacts regarding the Council but are not tracking this activity. Referrals are being made to VR and a stronger network, not only with DVR, but also with partnering agencies could be the benefit to contacts made by SRC members.

Information Session

Five people attended the Session last night with various comments. A client, who was concerned with the lack of information regarding other agencies that might be able to help him; the networking of DVR with DFS, SSA, or ES was discussed. Another client was concerned that his counselor was too young, and how to faze out of his SSDI benefits, and keep his medical insurance. Dorothy will contact this client with information to contact Joe Schaffner, Centrum. The client did say that he had not requested a new counselor, and would like to do that. Having to change counselors slows up the Rehab process for the client. Another comment from a client was that he wasn't having any progress with his case. A new applicant came to the Session to get information and find out about the VR process. Another client was quite vocal and has worked with VR for 31 years, and doesn't think that anyone should be involved with DVR. His IPE, currently in place, will be completed. Another client felt not valued by DVR. She would prefer to have contact made by email and would like personal contact. She will need to let her counselor know of her preferences. The law is clear and the client needs to take the lead and not rely on someone to do the work for them. Helping clients to become more independent and take responsibility for themselves, in addition to gaining employment and staying motivated was also discussed.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

Laura McKinney discussed the Bills coming through the Legislature, and if you have an opportunity talk to Legislators about these 3 Bills. Laura didn't have the Bill Numbers but did outline the information.

Language in State Statutes about how people with disabilities are referred. The language would change from people with mental illness to people with psychiatric disabilities; from mental retarded to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Some of the Legislators that are

supporting this bill are Cale Case from Lander, Massey out of Laramie, and Esquibel from Cheyenne.

Jim McIntosh reports that this is Senate Bill 38, and changing definitions will conflict with federal law, and how it defines things. State Statute and Federal Law will not be in concert anymore. A concern is what will DVR do when a psychologist gives DVR a DSM4 diagnostics that are no longer accepted by the State of Wyoming? DSM5 will have the diagnostics that Wyoming is putting place. There is a national movement to change the language in the federal laws but this could take quite a bit of time; maybe in 2009.

Select Committee on Developmental Programs is sponsoring a Bill on the Wyoming State Training School. This is a Bill to change the name of the State Training School to the Wyoming Developmental Center, and other language is being changed as well.

Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) did approve eliminating the ABI Waiver Waiting List. It had fewer than 10 people on it but the funding was approved to eliminate the list. Also, on all of the waivers to make sure that there is a biannual cost of living increase so they don't have to go back to the legislature every year.

ABI/DD Adult Children Waiver which the Federal Medicaid is mandating that set rates be applied to all programs. This will increase funding to the ABI Waiver so the services would pay better, but the Legislature will have to approve a \$7.5 million increase across the board for the 3 Waivers in order to implement this. House Bill 52

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: May 20 & 21, 2007
Riviera Lodge
Saratoga, Wyoming