

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired  
Rehabilitation Council  
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, Virginia  
Approved Minutes, Quarterly Meeting  
June 7, 2008**

**Members Present:** Marguerite Bardone, Pat Beattie, Melanie Brunson, Michael Burton, Frances Daniel, Benjamin Franklin, Michael Kasey, Hortense Macon, Angela Matney, Robin Metcalf, Marianne Moore, Jay Overbey, Sherri Phillips, Doug Powell

**Members Absent:** Faye Adams, Pierre Ames, Mary Chappell, Guillermo Meneses, Nancy Quisenberry, Fred Schroeder, Celestine Walker

**Staff Present:** Joe Bowman, Commissioner; Joan Carneal, SRC Staff Support; Susan Payne, VR Program Director; Jim Taylor, Chief Deputy Commissioner

**Guests Present:** Ms. Burton, Driver; Ms. Boyd, Driver

**Call to Order:** Ms. Beattie called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

**Adoption of Agenda:** A motion was made by Ms. Daniel, seconded by Mr. Powell, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the agenda be adopted as presented.

**Action on Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** A motion was made by Ms. Beattie, seconded and passed by unanimous voice vote that the minutes be adopted as distributed.

**Comments from the Public:** There were no comments from the public.

**Commissioner's Report – Mr. Bowman**

- Thanked members for taking their time out on a Saturday to attend the meeting and partnering with the agency in providing valuable input to help improve our services.
- Stated that it was very good to see Ms. Beattie again and was happy that she was doing so well after her recent illness.
- Discussed the agency as a whole as outlined below:

- LRC – will only produce textbooks for students, not braille. One subregional library in Newport News is closing due to budgetary restraints which will add to the volume being served out of the Richmond location.
- ES program - served 2,242 annually
- LV program - 89% of consumers reported they benefited from services
- VR program - agency goal is for 70% of individuals with an individualized plan for employment (IPE) to achieve their employment goal; we are very close to that target
- Older Blind Grant - 85% is the agency goal for all individuals served in that program to achieve their goal, and again we are very close to achieving that goal
- RS program - measured average income over a three-year cycle is \$44,794 annually for 2007.
- VIB – has two plants but employees are moving in the direction of based supply stores which is anticipated continued growth. There could be problems in filling positions in the two plants in the future.
- Announced that Ray Hopkins had been appointed by the Governor to replace him beginning July 1. Members had received the Governor’s announcement via email prior to the meeting. Stated that Mr. Hopkins had met with the management team on May 30 and that it had been a very positive meeting.
- Reported that the renovation at the Center was moving according to its schedule and that students should be living on campus or very close to moving in by the September meeting.
- Stated that over the past 34 years, of which the last six and one-half years have been serving as commissioner, and that he has received a lot of support from staff which made his job much easier. Especially thanked Mr. Taylor and Mr. Burton for all their mentoring over the past 34 years. Encouraged members to keep up the very important idea of the mentoring program for blind and vision impaired individuals.

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

#### **Transportation – Mr. Ames**

Mr. Ames was not present to give an official report. Mr. Kasey discussed meetings that he had attended for the Fredericksburg Regional Transportation Planning Committee who are on target with putting together a Human Services Transportation Plan. They are using consultants. There will be grants available and they will be applying for them where you would have a transportation coordinator

who will handle personal individual transportation needs for disabled individuals. There could be a voucher system used and most of the drivers would be volunteer drivers. Ms. Daniel reported that she had attended a GTRC transportation meeting and discussed issues with GTRC regarding bus service to DBVI from the regular bus stop on Chamberlayne Avenue. Ms. Metcalf reported that GTRC was in the process of massive consolidation due to budgetary problems. Mr. Overbey reported that Ms. Broady-Myers was a member of the GTRC Board which meant that the blind consumer issues were being addressed on a personal basis. After much discussion, Mr. Powell made a motion that a workgroup be formed, consisting of Ms. Bardone, Ms. Macon, Mr. Taylor, Ms. Daniel, and Ms. Ames to strategize what needs to be done, how to get it done, and the workgroup is empowered by the SRC to proceed with action to help ensure continuation of the bus service from Chamberlayne Avenue to DBVI. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote. Ms. Daniel discussed that DBVI does not get a lot of press and is known to be very silent; therefore, blind consumers are sometimes overlooked. Ms. Beattie requested Ms. Metcalf to facilitate how this Council could get a Legislative Committee together, which DRS have already in place. Ms. Bardone discussed that she has never seen a blind or low vision group at the General Assembly stating their issues and concerns but has seen all the other disability groups represented.

### **Transition – Ms. Moore**

#### **AIM - VA Overview**

VDOE, through George Mason University's (GMU) "Accessible Instructional Materials – VA" library, is developing an alternative system of providing accessible educational media under standards set by NIMAS to not only students who meet the federal requirements for print disabilities, but also for children eligible for accessing educational media under individual IEPs, as required under Part B of IDEA and Virginia law. AIM-VA, in conjunction with partnering agencies, will provide required accessible educational materials to students with an IEP at no cost to Local Education Agencies in a timely fashion.

#### **DBVI and AIM-VA**

DBVI and AIM-VA have created a collaborative partnership to offer greater access to instructional materials. The Library and Resource Center is a component of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). Resource Center services are provided to local school divisions to support education of visually impaired and blind children. A variety of Resource Center services are provided to blind and visually impaired children and

vision professionals in the Commonwealth. The Center houses an inventory of adaptive equipment that is distributed to blind and visually impaired infants, children and youth throughout the state. Inventory items range from technology, such as braille note-takers and software to folding canes and braille paper. The Resource Center also provides braille textbooks and novels for use by blind and visually impaired students in their local school districts. Textbooks are produced in the appropriate medium or purchased from another state and loaned for the school year. Services also include braille transcription and reproduction of special materials, and the provision of resource and reference services for instructional materials. Materials are loaned to Virginia's blind and visually impaired students and educators for as long as they are needed. To order materials produced by DBVI and the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), please search the AIM-VA database or complete the "Book Request" form when no records are found. Our Librarian will conduct a search for you and immediately request materials from DBVI on your behalf. If you are familiar with DBVI and the NLS, please provide the following information needed for orders: Title, ISBN Number, and Publisher. Orders for materials produced by DBVI and NLS must be completed through the Digital Rights manager appointed by the LEA superintendent or administrator. For more information visit their Web site at [www.aimva.org](http://www.aimva.org).

- Data Collection for Indicators
- No determination letter from OSEP - Virginia met the requirements. This is an "A" by OSEP standards.
- Planning the Forum – This year there were 1,200 folks in attendance. Will plan to have training for parents in the 2008 session. Mr. Powell suggested perhaps the Council could be involved in the Forum next year. Ms. Beattie suggested that Ms. Moore send the 2007 agenda to Mr. Powell and herself to review.

#### **Coordination with DRS SRC – Ms. Metcalf**

- Distributed copies of the draft minutes from the last DRS SRC meeting. They can be accessed electronically at [www.va.src.org](http://www.va.src.org). Read items from the minutes that were of interest to members. The next DRS SRC meeting is scheduled for August 11 in Richmond. Invited anyone to join the meeting if interested.

#### **Update on Regional Offices - Mr. Taylor for Mr. Burton**

With our budget reduction plan (1.5% of our general funds) submitted to the Secretary's office, we are now in a position to fill a couple of outstanding vacancies that have remained open until we felt sure that our funding was secure.

- The Bristol regional office continues to be fully staffed.
- The Roanoke regional office has one RT position which is currently being recruited.
- The Staunton regional office continues to be fully staffed.
- The Fairfax regional office has hired a new VR counselor, Ms. Pam Pendleton. Pam is a certified rehabilitation counselor. She has over ten years of experience in vocational rehabilitation and case management. Besides her VR background, she has been a crisis counselor, special education teacher, and program director for a group home. We have also hired Mr. Brad Miles to fill the rehab engineer position created by the departure of Korey Singleton. Brad received his MBA from Olivet Nazarene University in Illinois and his BS Degree in Computer Science from Buena Vista University in Iowa. Brad has nearly a decade of experience in assistive technology integration and support with the US Department of Education. He has designed and set up various solutions in his positions as senior systems engineer, assistive technology subject matter specialist, task project manager, network engineer, and adaptive technology engineer. He has worked closely with Section 508 training and has a working knowledge of Section 504 and ADA.
- The Richmond regional office continues to be fully staffed. We did have a rehab teacher who retired but management agreed that the current staffing level of RTs was sufficient to provide appropriate services to the current caseloads.
- The Norfolk regional office has re-advertised for its vacant O&M position.
- Interviews were held with applicants for the deafblind program director position, but with the budget restraints, we were waiting to fill the position until we had a better handle on our budget situation. We formally offered the position to the individual who was selected this past Wednesday and the candidate will notify us of her decision next week.
- VRCBVI has a VR counselor and vocational evaluator position open and interviews for these are scheduled next week. There are also two O&M positions open, and we are recruiting for those. We will also be recruiting for the assistant director of instruction.
- The Staunton regional office which had been housed in an old VSDB dorm was required to move due to the consolidation of the two schools for the deaf

and blind. The agency was able to secure space that had become vacant in the Fishersville VEC office and the move was completed on May 29.

- The Division of Real Estate Services is in the process of negotiating a contract that will include space for the Roanoke regional office along with other state agencies. Once signed we are looking at a seven-to-nine month timeframe before the move can take place.
- AWARE, the new caseload management program, is rapidly moving forward. A pilot program was run in April and May in the Roanoke regional office and VRCBVI and the results of this have been very favorable. The staff indicated that they were pleased with all that the new system has to offer in the way of case management. We are now scheduled to have a “train-the-trainers” session the week of June 16 and training for the rest of the field staff will occur toward the end of September. We will go to full production on October 1.

#### **VR Program Update - Ms. Payne**

- **State Plan Development for FY 2009**

An informal subcommittee that assisted in review and editing of the State plan included Ms. Phillips, Ms. Bardone, Ms. Brunson, and Ms. Matney who gave very helpful comments and editing suggestions all of which were accepted. There were no substantial changes in content. It is ready for submission based on approval from the Council. A motion was made that the State plan be submitted as written to RSA by July 1, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote.

- **VR Outcomes for FY 2008**

- Total referrals – 420 with average of 22 per VR counselor
- Total of 1,107 served with an average of 58 individuals per caseload
- Total employed – 90; 70 of whom are in competitive positions, five who are self-employed, four who are homemakers, four are in supported-employment (still competitively employed)
- Average earnings at case opening was \$220; average earnings at \$442
- Average age of customers being closed 43
- Average cost of \$11,538
- Percentage of individuals served who have significant disabilities is 98.9
- Total individuals employed October 2007 through May 2008 is 90

- **90-Day IPE Development**

No progress to report.

- **Fall 2008 Public Comments and Responses**

- One is scheduled for October 15 in Roanoke.
- There are two meetings to be scheduled in conjunction with consumer organizations conferences.
- The meeting in Bristol will be via teleconference as in the past.

- **Consumer Satisfaction Survey**

Nancy Quisenberry worked with John Granger, who conducts the evaluations, utilizing input from the SRC to revise the satisfaction survey form to reflect:

- Accessibility to printed material
- Satisfaction with services specific to rehabilitation center, training in braille, computer with speech/and or screen enhancement software
- Orientation and mobility
- Leisure time/recreation skills
- Homemaking skills to live independently
- Evaluation to determine employment goal
- Mr. Powell suggested that a question regarding how well you have adjusted to your vision loss should be included.

- **Standards and Indicators Quarterly Update**

- These are based on a two-year cycle.
- Consists of seven elements.
- Will send members a copy of the cheat sheet, and it looks like the agency will pass all but one of the elements but will report the results after October 1.

**Update** – Jim Taylor

**SRC Appointments**

- Categories with vacancies:
  - There is one vacant position in the business, industry, and labor category (employer)
  - Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor--ex-officio, non-voting member
  - Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group
  - Current or former applicant for or recipient of vocational rehabilitation services
  - Representative from the Independent Living Council

- Representative from the Virginia State Workforce Council
- Members who are eligible and interested in reappointment were requested to send their resume to him by July 1. Members can send the information directly to the Secretary of the Commonwealth but the agency prefers to send in one packet with recommendations.

### **Update/Discussion SRC Budget and Activities**

- This item was put on the agenda to remind members that funding is available for new innovative ideas for the upcoming year.

### **Mentoring Activity**

- There will be a meeting with Ms. Lindsey to discuss plans to incorporate a mentoring program at the Center to serve as a pilot program and then would set them up at the regional offices. A couple of SRC members will be requested to serve on an agency workgroup to help initiate this project.
- There are mentoring activities already in place at several of the regional offices, but have plans to formalize the program.
- The key to success with this program is working very closely with consumer organizations.

### **Report/Discussion – Ms. Beattie**

#### **The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC)**

- Discussed what specialized services that are involved with the blind community versus other disabled individuals.
- Discussed the Veterans Administration specialized services for the blind and vision impaired individuals.
- Discussed Medicare and low vision care on the National level.
- Discussed the online training for new SRC members and the inaccessibility of this training.
- Mr. Powell and Ms. Beattie has expressed their concerns to the NCSRC but has not heard any response.

#### **NCSAB National Network on Blindness Services, Boards and Commissions**

- Interesting to see how different SRCs conduct meetings and practices nationally.
- Ms. Brunson stated that it was great to compare notes and see that there was a lot of variation around the country.



### **Role of the SRC (Involvement and Collaboration)**

- Mr. Powell discussed a concern that the current agency case management system (STARBASE) is not capable of producing accessible copies of the IPE. He said it is essential that accessible consumer copies of the IPE are produced by the new AWARE system that the agency is going full production on scheduled for October 1.
- Ms. Beattie suggested that members review the VR Policies and Procedures Manual which can be accessed at [www.vdbvi.org](http://www.vdbvi.org) and click on the Policy and Procedures Manual icon. This would enable members to have more insight as to requirements set for the agency and consumer.
- Ms. Beattie requested to have the State VR Regulations sent to members for their review.
- Ms. Beattie stated that the Council has become a lot more involved in recent years in helping to develop the State plan but would like to see them get more involved in other areas of procedures.
- Ms. Beattie suggested that members have more involvement in joint SRC/staff committees and work more closely together. Would like to see members attend some of the VR staff training.
- Ms. Beattie stated that there would be an Open House for the new dorm and that she had been contacted by Melody Lindsey about a SRC member being involved in planning that event. SRC members will be invited to attend the event.

### **Opportunity for Members to Take a Couple of Minutes to Provide an Update on Organizations Represented or Other Activities of Interest to the Council (Optional):**

- Ms. Brunson announced that there is a public hearing scheduled for June 23 by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding quiet cars that members may be interested in attending. She will send this announcement to Ms. Carneal to distribute to members the first of next week.
- Mr. Overbey reported that he was appointed treasurer for the Volunteer Council at the Center, and they had approved \$8,500 for the purchase of adaptive equipment.
- Mr. Kasey stated that HR5734 was the House Resolution for quiet car and encouraged members to contact their congressmen with their concerns.

Announced that NFB was scheduled to conduct their 50<sup>th</sup> convention on October 24.

- Ms. Matney expressed a concern that HR5734 which is not only a hazard for blind and low vision individuals but also for small children and other folks who are not paying attention to their surroundings.
- Mr. Powell discussed an upcoming regional convention where a session called College of Techniques Available would be presented. He will keep the Council informed.

**Other Business:** None

**Adjournment:** There being no other business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held at the DBVI Headquarters Conference Room I/II, 397 Azalea Avenue, on Saturday, September 13, 2008, at 10:00 a.m.