

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired  
Rehabilitation Council  
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, Virginia  
Minutes, Quarterly Meeting  
September 15, 2007**

**Members Present:** Faye Adams, Patricia Beattie, Mary Tatum Chappell (via teleconference), Christine Cutchins, Frances Daniel, Michael Kasey, Hortense Macon, Marianne Moore, Doug Powell, Celestine Walker (via teleconference)

**Members Absent:** Pierre Ames, Chancy Fleet, Guillermo Meneses, Robin Metcalf, Jay Overbey, Sherri Phillips, Mary Powell, Nancy Quisenberry, Fred Schroeder, Dave Thompson

**Staff Present:** Bob Burton, Deputy Commissioner for Service; Joan Carneal, SRC Staff Support; Susan Payne, VR Program Director; Jim Taylor, Chief Deputy Commissioner

**Guests Present:** Ms. Brunson, Executive Director of ACB, Mr. Cutchins, driver; driver for Doug Powell

**Call to Order:** Council chairperson Ms. Beattie called the meeting to order at 10:00 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. Macon, seconded by Ms. Daniel, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the minutes be adopted as presented.

**Commissioner's Report:** Mr. Taylor gave the following report in the absence of Mr. Bowman:

- Mr. Bowman regretted not attending the meeting but had out-of-town obligations.
- **State Budget:** To address the impact of lower than projected revenues the Governor has directed all state agencies to develop five percent reduction plans in their operating budgets. To reduce expenditures now and going forward, no new employees may be hired without Secretarial approval, effectively immediately. All contracted personnel or contracts for consultants require Secretarial approval. Further, all out-of-state travel is restricted until further notice. DBVI's five percent budget reduction plan has been submitted for consideration by the administration; however, the plan is not available to the public at this time. When the Governor's office releases the plan, we will share it with you. We expect to avoid reductions in current levels of services.

- **Strategic Plan:**
  - Current DBVI strategic plan is available on the DBVI Web site at [www.vdbvi.org](http://www.vdbvi.org).
  - Staff is currently reviewing and updating the plan, and it should be completed by this fall.
  - We will advise you when the plan revisions are complete.
- **Senate Draft of the Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act:**
  - The draft bill maintains the RSA commissioner's position as a Presidential appointment with Senate confirmation; however, the commissioner will be directly responsible to the assistant secretary of education (OSERS).
  - Literary skills are added as a VR service.
  - Customized employment is added for supported employment.
  - Defines student with a disability - generally 16 to 22 years of age.
  - Order of selection: students with disabilities who are on Social Security benefits now are in the top category with MSD.
  - State plan must include assurances regarding coordination with the AT and Ticket to Work programs.
  - Must provide client with listing of community resources to assist in development of IPE.
  - Must provide clients on Social Security with information on Medicaid benefits, others with benefits planning information, and Ticket to Work program information.
  - IPE must be developed within 90 days following eligibility determination.
  - Included in IPE services are mentoring services and AT recycling services.
  - SRC: adds head of AT Act program as a required member.
  - RSA would also be empowered to direct a State whose performance is below established standards and which is not improving under a program improvement plan, to make revisions to its plan, including allocating higher State resources for services if the State is low in spending on such services in comparison with "comparable agencies in other States."
  - This document will be forwarded to members next week for their review.
  - Ms. Payne will review the definition for blind and vision impaired transition students.

## **Subcommittee Reports:**

**Transportation** – Ms. Cutchins gave the following report:

- Thank members for their interaction over the past six years and stated that she has learned a great deal of valuable information while serving her term.
- Transportation is on the top of everyone's list whether it's pertaining to improving the mainline bus service, light rail, paratransit or building new roads. One of the key questions being asked is how to get the people out of their cars and onto

public transportation. This could hurt or help people with disabilities. There will never be an easy fix. Consumers, city, state and federal officials should be willing to work together. Transportation is the key for total independence for seniors, people who can't or don't want to drive, and especially for people with disabilities.

- City officials are being ask about transportation issues by their citizens (especially in my area) when new roads or neighborhood projects are being developed. The citizens are requesting plenty of sidewalks with curbs cuts, accessible bus stops, shelters, and bike paths to be included. This is one way the city can address transportation.
- Consumers, especially with disabilities, should be willing to learn how to be part of the solution and not the problem. There are many ways to learn how to address issues on transportation, such as being more involved in their community, by attending workshops and training on the ADA laws especially on transportation, joining their mayor's committee for people with disabilities, being a member of their local transit authority board, learn what their local planning district council is about, etc. These organizations have good accessible Web sites.
- A state agency like DBVI should think about having a basic training course on the ADA laws, especially on transportation for the consumer and transitional students who attend the center. The transitional students should really learn the ADA laws because they won't be able to live, work or go to school where they would like. Of course this is going to be based on the individual. This could be a small way for the agency to be part of the solution.
- Listed below are some Web sites and suggestions.
  - [www.adainfo.org](http://www.adainfo.org)
  - [www.adabasics.org](http://www.adabasics.org)
  - [easterseal.org](http://easterseal.org)
  - Finding out the Web sites for your local transit authority and the planning district council.

**Transition:** Ms. Payne shared the following information:

- The Transition program at the Center was a great success this year.
- A summer work program allowed students to actually work and earn real money during the last two weeks of the program, which enabled them to use the skills they had received over the first two weeks. Some students worked for a stipend from the agency of \$4.00 per hour while others worked for private and state organizations.
- One student's work experience may be leading to a permanent placement.
- An invitation was sent out to field staff inviting them to participate in this program and we had a great response. A number of our staff came and stayed in the dorms and help teach classes.

- Ms. Daniel reported on one student who worked for Mrs. Marshall's during this work experience and stated it was a very positive experience.
- Plans are already being made for next year's program since students expressed such enthusiasm over this year's program.
- Transition Grant Awarded: Collaboration with Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia which includes education and VR agencies have received a transition grant for a total of \$110,000. Thirty thousand dollars toward purchase services from National Technical Centers, \$30,000 toward interstate sharing, and \$15,000 toward Virginia specific issues.

**Proposed Subcommittee on Consumer Satisfaction Surveys:** Ms. Moore gave the following report:

- Ms. Moore had served on the DRS consumer satisfaction subcommittee and in receiving their results, it appears that they have some different questions from the one conducted by DBVI, which raised some concern about the language used in the DBVI survey. The Council had addressed the question regarding receiving information in accessible format. Mr. Taylor stated that changes had been made to reflect suggestions from the June 9 meeting regarding specific language used and the accessible format issue. He will forward a copy of the current survey to members for their review.
- Mr. Taylor stated that it was a great idea to review and improve the instrument but wanted members to understand that the current cycle has already started. Mr. Taylor suggested that any changes/suggestions become effective on July 1, 2008.
- It was suggested that it may be helpful to review the satisfaction survey used by DBVI and review what requirements other agencies and RSA have for information gathered for consumer satisfaction.
- Ms. Beattie, Ms. Macon and Ms. Payne volunteered to work on that subcommittee.
- Mr. Powell requested that the agency include a five-year baseline on the summary report, which would give a better comparison of information collected.
- Ms. Payne suggested that Mr. Granger work with the subcommittee as he currently conducts the collection of information for the surveys.

**Proposed Subcommittee on Information for New Consumers:** Mr. Powell made a motion to develop a subcommittee to review how and what type of information is shared with new consumers. Ms. Payne volunteered to work on this subcommittee.

The SRC is interested in having a representative on the agency's marketing committee. It was recommended that Doug Powell serve in that capacity since he expressed an interest in marketing/outreach activities. When it is necessary for him to attend meetings, his travel will be covered by the agency since he will be on official SRC business.

**Proposed Subcommittee on Consumer Informed Choice:** Ms. Beattie suggested that the Council form a subcommittee to review policy on consumer informed choice issues. Ms. Payne volunteered to serve on this subcommittee as she is currently in the process of addressing this issue.

**Election of Chairperson for FY 2008:** Ms. Beattie turned the meeting over to Ms. Cutchins who opened the floor to nominations for the 2008 chairperson position. She nominated Ms. Beattie to serve a second year as chairperson. Hearing no other nominations, Ms. Daniel moved that nominations be closed and that Ms. Beattie serve as chairman for the Council another year, Ms. Adams seconded, and it was passed by unanimous vote that Ms. Beattie serve as chairperson for the 2008 term. Ms. Beattie thanked everyone for their vote of confidence.

**Comments from the Public:** Ms. Brunson made comment on items which are very important to her personally:

- Would like to encourage DBVI to provide Saturday assistive technology classes in localities outside Richmond (especially Northern Virginia) at least once or twice per year. She is the executive director of the American Council of the Blind and knows that constituents would especially like this training.
- Expressed a concern that blind and vision impaired consumers who are 55 or older who need to have technology training for personal reasons, such as emailing family and friends and text messaging. Stated that as the executive director of ACB she would be more than willing to work with the agency in developing a plan to accommodate this population.

**Tabled Item from Last Meeting – Coordination with DRS SRC:** Ms. Beattie reviewed what had been discussed in the last two meetings and opened the floor to discussion.

- After discussion of issues brought up the last two meetings, Mr. Powell made a motion that DBVI establish an official liaison to attend DRS SRC meetings with funding for attending those meetings from the agency. It was seconded by Ms. Daniel, and the vote carried with one vote in objection from Mr. Kasey.
- Ms. Moore stated that all meetings due to the State's current budget was held in the Richmond area except for the one held at WWRC in November.

**Regional Office Update:** Mr. Burton gave the following report:

- Bristol has a new rehabilitation teacher, Theresa Jameson, who was formerly employed by the agency and beginning in November will have a new O&M specialist, John Hall, who was also a former employee of the agency.
- Meg Walker an O&M instructor who previously worked in Missouri was hired in the Roanoke regional office in July.
- One RT position has been open in the Staunton regional office since February.

- Candice Jordon was hired in the VR position at the Fairfax regional office. She obtained her Masters' of Rehabilitation Counseling degree from Bowling Green State University in Ohio.
- Nancy Quisenberry transferred from the Norfolk regional office to the Richmond regional office as the transition counselor. We are now recruiting to fill the two VR counselor positions in the Norfolk regional office. Mr. Sorey will be conducting second interviews next week for two VR counselor positions and hopefully will be able to hire one or two of those individuals. The Norfolk regional office moved on September 4 to 6325 North Center Dr. James Building, Suite 131 in Norfolk. Most of the staff is not yet able to occupy the space because the new furniture has not been delivered. They are working remotely and telecommuting.
- The Roanoke regional office will be relocating as early as next April. The Staunton regional office will be relocating by May 31, 2008.
- The deafblind program director position is vacant at HQ as Ms. Olson accepted an RT position in Arizona. A specific hiring request for this position has been granted.
- There will be significant changes at the Center as Ms. Kinder, assistant director for instruction, who has worked for the Center for 36 years is retiring on January 1. Mr. Bowman and Ms. Lindsey will be reviewing the duties for this position and may redefine responsibilities before recruiting. Ms. Iskow, O&M specialist, who has worked for one year at the Center will be leaving to accept a position at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The agency will request that these positions be exempted from the hiring freeze. The VRCBVI positions and other positions that are funded with federal dollars are more likely to receive approval to recruit.
- The dorm rooms have been demolished and hopefully construction will begin on the new dorm soon. Virginia Power will be installing new circuits and construction will follow. Hopefully, the new dorm will be completed by May. Students are being housed at the Extended Stay America. Rooms are located on one wing of the second floor and have kitchenettes, which allow some students to use their independent living skills. One room has been designated as the dorm office. A transportation contract has been granted for transporting students to and from the Center. Because we have assigned rooms, members will be eligible to stay overnight when planning to attend the Council meeting if rooms are available on that date. Members are to contact Ms. Carneal one week before the meeting to allow time to verify that rooms are available.
- The hiring freeze has affected all but one of the newly granted RT positions granted in the Governor's budget. That employee was hired prior to the hiring freeze.

**Program Update:** Ms. Payne gave the following report:

**State Plan for FY 2008:**

The plan was submitted to RSA in June and the preliminary review has been received. The agency was requested to make minor clarifications on four items. These clarifications were submitted to RSA in August. Ms. Beattie requested that

the attachments which needed modifying be forwarded to her. Mr. Kasey expressed an interest in reviewing them as well. Mr. Taylor will forward these attachments to both members.

**Update on VR Outcomes for FY 2007:**

- Average hourly wages combined: \$11.48 ranging from \$6.25 (Randolph-Sheppard) to \$12.47 (competitive)
- Average weekly wages: \$367
- Average earnings at application: \$173; at closure \$352
- Average purchase case services per consumer: \$8,110
- Average caseload size: 61
- Number of individuals served: 1,162
- Mr. Burton reported that closures are ahead of last year with 147 at the present time with anticipated total of 187.

**Satisfaction Surveys for SFY 2007:** Stated that copies of the 2007 Satisfactory Survey Summary Report had been forwarded to members prior to the meeting. This issue was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**Public Meetings for Fall 2007:**

- Comments received from students during the informal meeting conducted during the transition program over the summer will be included in this year's summary of public comments.
- October 17 – Roanoke - 7:00 pm – RAVE –
- October 24 – Bristol – 2:30 pm – conference call
- November 2 – Virginia Beach – 5:00 pm – at the Wyndham Hotel 5700 Atlantic Ave. Va. Beach, VA in conjunction with the NFB state meeting
- November 3 – Arlington - 4:15 to 5:00 pm – at the Holiday Inn, Rosslyn at Key Bridge 1900 N. Ft. Myer Drive in conjunction with the ACB state meeting
- November 6 – Richmond – 4:00 pm – VRCBVI

**Report on Summer Transition Programs:** Ms. Payne gave the following report:

- Adolescent Evaluation 6/18-22/07 – 1
- Computer Exploration 6/25-29/07 - 8
- College Assessment 7/09-20/07 – 6
- Transition from School to Work 7/23-8/17/07 – 21

**Annual Report for FY 2007:** Ms. Payne gave a brief overview of information included in the Annual Report. She asked if members wanted the Annual Report drafted and forwarded to them prior to the December meeting in order for members

to give suggestions/input during that meeting as it had been done in the past. The Council agreed that the Annual Report should be prepared as it has in the past. Mr. Taylor stated that the report is due to the Governor's office and RSA by December 31.

**Report on Fair Hearing:** There was one fair hearing this quarter and the final decision was in favor of the agency. The redacted fair hearing will be forward to members for their review.

### **Update from Jim Taylor:**

#### **Workforce Program Evaluation in Virginia:**

- I mentioned last December that the nine workforce training programs in Virginia were being evaluated (one of them being DBVI). W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research is doing the evaluation. In the spring we sent Upjohn information on cases closed during SFY 2006 after IPE development. Upjohn is now performing additional work for the Governor's office in regard to study on "net impact". After a lot of discussion it was decided that DBVI and DRS for this portion of the study would send status 08, 03 and status 38 SFY 2006 closures (those individuals closed before receiving a service under an IPE). It was decided if a comparison had to be made, using those would be superior to comparing to a job service group.

#### **The Post-Vocational Rehabilitation Experiences Study (PVRES):**

- Persons have been selected to participate in the Post Vocational Rehabilitation Experiences Study (PVRES). This national study will follow a sample of 8,000 former consumers of vocational rehabilitation services over a 3-year period to learn about their employment experiences, earnings, benefits, additional services, and integration into the community. The study is being conducted by Westat of Rockville, Maryland, for the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Education.
- Three individuals closed rehabilitated during FFY 2006 were selected from DBVI. DBVI is to submit the information by September 20.
- The consumers will be interviewed between October 2007 and March 2008.

**Participation in Meetings via Telephone:** Mr. Taylor reported that a meeting of a public body which has been appointed by the Governor, participation for that meeting via teleconference was for monitoring purposes only per instructions from the Attorney General's office.

**Lunch:** The Council took a 10 minute break for lunch.



**SRC Activities with RSA, CSAVR, and NCSAB:** Ms. Beattie gave the following report:

- She will try to participate in the CSAVR conference with is specific to blind Councils and Boards since the agency's staff cannot attend due to budget restraints.
- Anyone interested in participating in the generic and specific SRC meetings, please contact Ms. Beattie.
- It is very important that we can get from participation with our SRC to review practices, procedures and activities of how other SRCs are interacting with their state agencies. When the Governor appointed members, he charged them with the responsibility and role of reviewing, evaluating, and advising the agency on the VR services provided.

**DRS SRC Meeting August 13:** Ms. Beattie discussed that the DRS SRC had subcommittees met with DRS staff prior to the regular scheduled meeting and that one member would give an official report to the full Council during the regular meeting. Ms. Payne stated that DRS also met during the week to allow staff availability for that participation. Ms. Moore discussed her participation on the consumer satisfaction survey subcommittee earlier in the meeting.

**Common Agenda Regarding Disability for Virginia State Legislature – DBVI SRC Representation on DRS Committee:** Ms. Beattie inquired if the Council could work with DRS on legislative issues that were of interest to both agencies and could that be the appointed DRS SRC or was it necessary to appoint another representative to carry that responsibility. Mr. Taylor responded that since we have officially appointed to have a DRS SRC liaison that the liaison could bring a report to the Council on any issues of interest to both agencies.

**Proposed Re-authorization of the Rehabilitation Act:** This item was discussed in the commissioner's report.

**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. Beattie requested each member to give a brief update on any issues they would like to address at this time.
- Ms. Adams stated that at this time she did not have any pressing issues as she has been handling some personal business for the past two weeks, but encouraged members to visit the VOPA website at [www.vopa.state.va.us](http://www.vopa.state.va.us) periodically as it obtained important information regarding their services.
- Ms. Moore reported that DOE was in the process of data collection of students for graduation, drop outs, post high school outcomes, etc. and it has been very time consuming. She also stated that DOE would like to have been a State agency to participate in hiring one of the summer work students, but it was impossible to

process the paperwork in time this year. However, she hopes they may be able to participate next year. Upon Ms. Beattie's request, she will send a summary of the NIMAC report to Ms. Carneal to forward to members for their review.

- Ms. Brunson discussed the issue of funding for the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped's plan to convert the Talking Books program to a digital format, which this Council wrote a letter of support.
- Ms. Macon stated that she was still having trouble with all the acronyms being used during the reports at the meetings. She also volunteered to serve on the Consumer Satisfaction Survey subcommittee.
- Mr. Powell announced that the Mid-Atlantic ACB Affiliate Convention is the first attempt to gather together people who are blind and visually impaired from Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC and will be held on November 2 – 4 at the Holiday Inn, Rosslyn at Key Bridge, located at 1900 N. Ft. Myer Drive in Arlington. To get more information visit the Web site at [www.acb.org/olddominion](http://www.acb.org/olddominion).
- Ms. Kasey reported that the NFB Chapter of Fredericksburg was also sponsoring a convention from November 2 – 4 at the Wyndham Hotel in Virginia Beach. The agenda has not been finalized but is focusing on getting the information out to doctors and service providers via brochures, pamphlets, etc. To get more information visit the Web site at [www.nfbv.org](http://www.nfbv.org).
- The SRC had already approved having a liaison to the DRS SRC, but tabled the item regarding who would be the liaison.

**Other Business:** There was no other business brought before the Council.

**Adjournment:** There being no other business to come before the Council, it was moved by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mr. Kasey, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the meeting be adjourned at 12:50 p.m. The next meeting will be held at the DBVI Headquarters Conference Room I/II, 397 Azalea Avenue, on Saturday, December 1, 2007, at 10:00 a.m.