

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired  
Rehabilitation Council  
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, Virginia  
Approved Minutes, Quarterly Meeting  
September 13, 2008**

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

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

**Staff Present:** Ray Hopkins, Commissioner; Bob Burton, Deputy Commissioner for Services; Susan Payne, VR Program Director; Jim Taylor, Chief Deputy Commissioner

**Guests Present:** Ms. Burton, Driver; Ms. Boyd, Driver; Kathy Maybee, Liaison for DRS SRC and Representative for Mr. Ames

**Call to Order:** Ms. Beattie called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Adoption of Agenda:** A motion was made by Ms. Brunson, seconded by Ms. Daniel, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the agenda be adopted as amended removing the optional tour of the dormitory due to agency not having access to the building.

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

**Comments from the Public:** There were no comments from the public. In response to Ms. Brunson's question, Mr. Taylor stated that Council meetings were published in the Virginia Register and the Newsletter.

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

- Announced that this is an exciting time, time of challenge and a great opportunity for him.
- It is also a great opportunity for the DBVI SRC as not many SRCs across the State that would be able to claim among its membership a former commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), an executive director of a major consumer organization, and others with great experience in rehabilitation in leadership roles at the state and national levels. DBVI enjoys such a good relationship because of the strong leadership in the SRC. He acknowledged the decisions of past commissioners to work with the SRC rather than against. He is looking forward to working with Ms. Beattie and congratulated her on an award she received earlier this summer from ACB.

**DBVI and SRC Relationship**

- Mr. Hopkins gave his perception of how things should work with the SRC.

- There are things that the Law mandates that SRC must do and should engage in and this may not always make rehabilitation programs happy because they are assessing agency programs. DBVI will ensure that SRC has access to information that allows the SRC to do their jobs, including surveys and the State Plan. It is really about how we engage and move forward and he hopes that we will have a relationship where information flows freely. He wants DBVI to be as transparent as possible, but we are a part of the executive branch and there are some things we cannot discuss until the Governor gives us the okay. SRC would not want to just be reacting to what DBVI drafts; the SRC may address issues or items and DBVI will be receptive. Regarding policy revisions, etc., SRC will help DBVI to shape what policies should be in place. It is hoped that SRC will give input that helps shape what DBVI will do in terms of staff development. Some of these issues are policies which deal with training and some are combinations. It is DBVI's hope that the SRC input will help discern what direction in which to go. He hopes there will be dialogue with SRC at the table literally and figuratively. Not all programs are funded by VR but all of them impact the success of VR services. DBVI wants to be respectful and responsive to individuals who receive services and can't have too much input in how to provide services. He hopes to be able to interact regularly with Chairman Beattie to keep the SRC informed. If there are ways to improve communication, DBVI would like to know.
- Announced that Mr. Taylor is retiring on December 1, and Ms. Payne will serve as liaison to the SRC.

### **Budget Update**

- There is a budget crisis in Virginia government. On September 2, the Governor advised that all executive branch agencies were expected to develop budget reduction plans for five percent, ten percent, and 15 percent. The intent is that there will be a new budget revenue forecast in October. The Governor will make a decision of what reductions will go into effect after the receipt of that forecast. September 26 is the date that reduction plans are due to the Department of Planning and Budget. DBVI has no fat to trim. Cuts of this magnitude cannot be made without cutting services. We hope that these cuts will come from somewhere else. We hope that cuts won't affect federal funds. If we have to take cuts, we want to do it in a manner not to impact on our federal grants. VR and the Older Blind Grant are the two federal grants. But, we have been reminded that everything is on the table, even federally funded programs. We cannot tell you where the DBVI cuts will come from. We hope that the Health and Human Services will recognize the magnitude of previous cuts and will not take funds from DBVI.
- Dorm Update - Dorms will be turned over to DBVI within the next week and the grand reopening is scheduled on October 17. There are no formal SRC activities planned that day, but DBVI hopes SRC members will participate. Secretary Tavenner will participate and the Governor may participate as well.
- Needs assessment – Accessibility – Mr. Hopkins has requested Mr. Taylor to head an “information accessibility” work group. This work group will review DBVI's current accessibility practices and policies on things that affect employees and individuals receiving services. He will address how a person who is not a client can access information in accessible formats and receive reasonable formats. We don't expect to have everything done before Mr. Taylor leaves in December, but we hope to have his recommendations.

We hope to not just meet the letter of the Law but also the spirit. Information is the key to sound decision making and choice. Mr. Powell and Ms. Bardone will also be working on this work group along with other DBVI staff.

- Comments from Powell – SRC has a committee that is looking at accessibility and looks forward to working with Mr. Taylor. He asked: “Is DBVI not planning to have the duties of the chief deputy commissioner to be the same and will the Governor be hiring someone in that position”? We are not filling any positions anytime soon; DBVI is not in a position to hire. The Governor is not inclined to fill positions like this unless there is a compelling reason. This gives the commissioner the opportunity to be more involved in activities that Mr. Taylor has been responsible for. There is no formal decision about how the duties will be performed.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### **Transportation** – Ms. Maybee for Mr. Ames

- Mr. Ames had contacted the Ride Share and Van Pool agencies in Central Virginia. Ride Finders coordinated by GRTC explained that their services are available to individuals with disabilities seeking to ride to and from work or other sites. The cost to ride depends whether they enter a car or van pool. The greater the number of people in the pool the less cost to the driver. Both, the car and van pools have designated drivers which are often the car or several of the van riders alternate driving the van. The vans meet at pre-designated areas, whereas the car poolers usually provide door-to-door service. There was an assurance that individuals with disabilities are welcome to use both services. Employers can also initiate and provide support to van and car services and ride finders has a program to assist employers in setting up both. Ridesharing agencies exist across Virginia, however, more exist in the northern corridor. It is more cost efficient than private transportation. To find a ride share or Van Pool opportunity go to [VDOT.gov](http://VDOT.gov) website and search Ride Share, then pick a ride share agency in your region or locale. This is not the ultimate solution for transportation, but it does have the potential to provide a significant number of individuals with a reliable and cost effective alternative to specialized or higher cost private transportation. Ms. Beattie reported that there are other programs in other regions in Virginia. Mr. Kasey reported that a Regional Planning Council in Fredericksburg is applying for a Pilot Program Grant. If received, the grant would fund the hiring of a mobility manager who will be an expert in all public transportation and will have some funds for rides for folks who might fall through the cracks. There is a primary focus on people with disabilities, aging, and the mental health community which is a grant through the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). Mr. Taylor stated that there are two main pots of money available through the New Freedom Initiatives, and this grant comes from public comment for DRPT.

### **Transition** – Ms. Moore

In her absence, Ms. Moore forwarded a copy to share with members prior to the meeting of The Virginia Transition Forum 2009 form that students should use if they would like to attend the Youth Summit on March 16 - 18. Their parents/guardians are encouraged to attend the Forum, and

this year they will also hold a Parent Summit. There will be sponsorship funds to cover travel, food, and lodging.

Mr. Taylor and Ms. Payne outlined the program. Ms. Metcalf participated with the summit last year because she was an employer of one of the students. Ms. Payne reported on the DBVI transition summer activities and the 2009 Transition Forum. Summer Transition Programs: College Assessment classes include Educational Resources, Communication Skills, Keyboarding, Computer Skills, Orientation and Mobility, College Logistics, and Notetaking. Students ranged in age from 17 to 42 with most students in their late teens, and they are held from July 7 - 18. The goal for the weekend included seven adolescents and their parents or guardians. Students ranged in age from 16 – 18. Mr. Hopkins will review how the programs work to consider ways to provide programs in the future. Mr. Powell will work toward being a part of next year's planning.

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

She reviewed highlights of the DRS minutes from August 11. She reported that Governor Kaine has made it clear that there will be six Governor Model One-Stop Centers in Virginia before he leaves office. The first is to open in Charlottesville with the others five located across the State. The Governor's model is fully integrated with providers such as DRS, Veterans Administration, etc. Offices are close together rather than using the current Silo model which exists throughout the State. The confusion currently is that in each locality it is managed by different agencies. She announced that there is a Wounded Warrior Forum scheduled at WWRC for November 6 - 7. At DRS there are 918 people on the waiting list. She will send information to be shared with members to Ms. Carneal for distribution. You can access DRS's website at [vdrs.org](http://vdrs.org). Ms. Maybee and Mr. DeBoer will share the liaison role for DRS's representative to the Council.

#### **DBVI Mentoring Work Group – SRC Representatives – Ms. Matney, Mr. Powell, Ms. Macon, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Sorey, and Ms. Lindsey**

- The workgroup drafted a mentoring project called “Who Wants To Be A Winner” to be initiated as a pilot in the Richmond area, and it was reviewed during the SRC meeting. A copy had been forwarded to members prior to the meeting. The basic idea is to have eight students, each with a mentor, participate in a year-long pilot program in the Richmond area. Mentees will be students at VRCBVI, schools, and universities. Mentors will be former VRCBVI students, individuals identified by ACB, NFB, and VR staff. Ideas include four events on weekends on a quarterly basis. Housing is provided at the dorm if space is available. Program will be meetings, seminars, and team activities in orientation and mobility, RT, and evening activities. Other ideas are half days on a quarterly basis. Matching students to mentors will be done by the VRCBVI director and deputy commissioner based on characteristics of mentor and mentee. Ms. Macon stated concerns about the word characteristics and likes the word suitability better. She also expressed concern about matching of students to mentors and wants a member of the SRC in addition to the deputy commissioner and VRCBVI director and wants to include interest and skills for mentors. Mr. Powell and Mr. Sorey directed a questionnaire for mentors. Questions in the questionnaire include: Why do you want to be a mentor? Times you are available to be a mentor? Regarding program structure, Ms. Brunson commented that interest in participating as a mentor should be included. She suggested that in addition to

being helpful and fun, the program should focus on formal activities and have students help determine what they want to learn and participate in. More definition is needed. There was a long discussion of ideas for the mentoring program. There is more work to be done by the committee and more justification for budget purposes. Consider goal setting by the mentors. The mentoring work group will include the suggestions and send out another draft for members' review.

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

The following vacancies are not currently being recruited due to budget restrictions: Fairfax has an education coordinator position, an O & M Specialist and a Rehab Teacher; Norfolk has an orientation and mobility specialist position; Richmond has a rehabilitation teacher and an office services specialist; Roanoke has a Rehab Teacher position. There is a possibility of three VR counselors retiring within the next six months. At VRCBVI we have one new orientation and mobility specialist beginning on September 25th; re-advertising for one orientation and mobility specialist; licensed practical nurse position has just closed; vocational evaluator has just closed; executive secretary will be interviewing next week; and a Braille instructor and an assistant director will be posted soon.

The AWARE system will be implemented on October 1 as planned.

It appears that the Roanoke regional office will move to a new office sometime in the spring of 2009.

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

##### **State Plan Update for FY 2009**

DBVI was requested by RSA to revise five sections of the 2009 State Plan; revisions submitted on August 22, 2008. Requests included:

4.2(c) – Input of state Rehabilitation Council. RSA requested that DBVI provide substantive progress based on action taken by DBVI to address the recommendations made by the SRC in the prior year. DBVI revised to provide update on progress made by the SRC that is unique to this reporting cycle.

4.8(b)(2) – Coordination with Education Officials. RSA requested that DBVI describe the plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with DOE to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services. Additionally DBVI was requested to provide information regarding the formal interagency agreement with DOE with respect to consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies, transition planning by DBVI and education agencies, roles and responsibilities of DBVI and DOE, including fiscal responsibilities, procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities. DBVI revised the section to address all of these requests.

4.10 – Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. RSA requested that DBVI revise this attachment to reflect projections of number of individuals to be served and the number of personnel who are expected to retire or leave the field, to list institutions of higher education in Virginia that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals by type of program, the number of students

enrolled at these institutions broken down by type of program, and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from those institutions and their certification or licensure.

4.11(c)(3) – Order of Selection. RSA requested that DBVI revise the section to provide more information about the three priority categories regarding how DBVI identified services and outcome goals, and the time within which goals may be achieved in each category. DBVI revised to state that all categories are open for service at this time.

4.11(d) – States Strategies to Achieve Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities. RSA requested that DBVI highlight what strategies will be used to accomplish its goals. DBVI revised to reflect that strategies and measurements that will be used to accomplish seven goals and priorities as well as goals identified in the innovation and expansion activities.

### **Update of VR Outcomes through August of FY 2008**

Total served was 1,222.

Average caseload was 64.

Total individuals who have achieved a successful rehabilitation outcome were 151.

Total number of individuals in training during this time was 438.

### **90-day IPE development**

DBVI instituted the 90-day deadline for IPE development on July 10, 2008. Chapter III of the VR Policies and Procedures Manual was revised to reflect the deadline. The development of IPEs for individuals whose cases are currently determined eligible but do not have a plan will be completed by December 31, 2008.

### **Fall 2008 Public Meetings**

October 15 – Roanoke with RAVE

October 16 – 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. - Bristol conference call meeting

October 21 – 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. - Norfolk regional office

October 24 – 5:00 – 6:00 pm - Fredericksburg in conjunction with NFB State convention

October 28 – 3:15 - 4:15 p.m. - VRCBVI

November 22 – 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. - Arlington in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic American Council of the blind Affiliate Convention

December 3 – 5:15 – 6:15 p.m. - Richmond - Workshop on Blindness

### **2009 Transition Conference and Public Meeting**

- It will be held on March 16 - 18 at the Norfolk Marriott Waterside. DBVI will submit at least one proposal for presentation. VR counselors will be encouraged to attend.
- The Virginia Transition Forum's Youth and Family Committee has requested nominations from members of individuals for sponsorship in the Second Annual Self-Determination Youth Summit and the Transition Forum.
- DBVI has the opportunity to participate in a public meeting with DRS. SRC decided they would like to participate. Ms. Payne will coordinate with DRS in order to conduct a joint public meeting at the 2009 Transition Forum for public meeting.

### **Satisfaction Survey**

The survey results were sent to SRC members prior to the meeting. She opened the floor to entertain questions.

### **Standards and Indicators Quarterly Update**

She explained the standards and indicators. SRC members requested the agency to provide more information about closure earnings; i.e., wage ranges, number of individuals below ten percent and above 90% of averages, etc. It was suggested that the jobs that consumers obtained be listed on the website – not names but jobs people were performing. She will send standards and indicators information to SRC members in a version that's easy to read and understand.

### **Annual Report for FFY 2008**

Mr. Taylor will develop the Annual Report again this year. Statistics will come from the agency's STARBASE reports. When developing the Annual Report, the chair will be given an opportunity to provide input regarding SRC activities. A public relations and outreach committee will be appointed. Ms. Matney, Ms. Bardone, and Ms. Franklin expressed an interest in serving on that committee.

### **Upcoming VR Staff Meeting**

It will be held from 1:00 p.m. on November 12 through 12:00 p.m. on November 14 at the LRC. The meeting will include VR counselors, some VRCBVI staff, and regional managers. The draft agenda includes:

- The ADA – Overview of the five titles with focus on Employment Title and distribution of ADA publications to be provided in electronic form and note books for each office. This topic is one of the areas highlighted in the VR Training Grant. Conducted by Candice Jordon, VR counselor in Fairfax.
- Functional Implications of Eye Disease. Each office will receive an anatomical eye model. Conducted by Marge Owens – Low Vision program director. This topic was highlighted in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment.
- Report from the National Employment Conference – Candice Jordon and Eddie Culp – VR counselors from Fairfax and Norfolk, respectively.
- Interest Inventories and Self-Directed Search – Presenters TBA. Topic highlighted in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment.
- Mentoring Pilot Program at VRCBVI – planning still in early stages, presenters TBA.
- DBVI Alternative Formats Agency Policy – planning still in early stages.
- SRC Responsibilities and Role in VR – Presenter, Susan Payne in conjunction with others TBD.
- Timeliness of Services – Presenter, Susan Payne.
- Partnerships and Resources at One-Stop Centers – Presenters, Susan Payne and others TBD.
- AWARE Questions and Answers.
- Back to Basics in Job Seeking Skills and Job Placement and Development – Presenters, Susan Payne and others TBD.

### **Update – Jim Taylor**

Thanked members for allowing him to participate and work with the Council over the past several years.

### **Report on Status of Appointments to the SRC**

Appointments generally are decided upon by the December meeting. Generally, members up for reappointment are allowed to remain on the Council.

### **GRTC Bus Service to the Azalea Complex**

Reported that he had been assured by Henrico County that the bus service is in their budget through next spring (2009). SRC and DBVI will need to continue to keep pressure on Henrico County to make sure that funding stays in place.

### **Accessibility Group**

Mr. Taylor will coordinate a group to establish an accessibility policy for DBVI. Ms. Bardone will participate because of her experience with the special media. Mr. Powell will also serve on the workgroup. The group will keep the SRC posted of actions taken.

### **Other Information**

Ms. Beattie stated that the SRC needs to stay on top of progress being made toward accomplishing the goals of the State Plan. Ms. Bardone reported that she has been taking the SRC training and using the website and stated that the training is very fascinating and user friendly. The training can be accessed at [www.erehab.org](http://www.erehab.org). Ms. Matney stated that she also has used parts of the training, and the text version is good at explaining pictures. Mr. Powell has also taken the text version. Members decided to participate in training together. Mr. Powell suggested that the lunch hour be used to do the training together. Staff will follow-up to determine how to make training possible at the December meeting.

Ms. Beattie reported on two SRC meeting opportunities: 1) CSAVR combined and general agencies; and 2) National Coalition of State VR Agencies (steering committee), a two-day meeting in the fall in advance of CSAVR. She will attend NCSAB without sponsorship from the Commonwealth. If SRC is interested, Ms. Beattie will send information about SRC for Blindness agencies. The theme for NCSAB this year is “Specialized Services Working Together to Preserve and Improve Them.”

Ms. Beattie reported on the following legislation: The SRC is authorized under the Rehabilitation Act, Title IV of Work Force Investment Act. It has not been reauthorized. The issues of concern are that NISH is quarreling with the Randolph Sheppard Act about Military Dining contracts. They want the Randolph Sheppard program to be opened to individuals with disabilities other than blindness. Definition of blindness and severe disabilities are two bills (Enzi bill and JWAD). Requested DBVI to get the electronic copy of the two bills and forward to members. Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Hopkins can provide more detail; Ms. Brunson will send a copy of the Enzi bill to Ms. Payne. Categorical specialized services to the blind are in jeopardy. Ms. Garner (assistant to Senator Kennedy) wants unlimited VR funds for supported employment. Ms. Beattie will keep members advised of the situation.



Ms. Beattie encouraged members to attend the VRCBVI Open House on October 17.

**Working lunch – meeting continues - 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. Adams stated how much she has enjoyed working with Mr. Taylor. VOPA is developing a Voting Guide Fact Sheet for accessibility and rights and provides resources to register complaints. DBVI provides voter registrations.

Ms. Matney expressed her appreciation for Mr. Taylor's service to DBVI. She is interested in forming a work group to focus on public awareness and outreach. Mr. Taylor commented that awareness and outreach are in the State Plan.

Ms. Bardone is interested in participating in the State Plan development next year. DBVI needs to follow-through. She also expressed her appreciation for Mr. Taylor's service.

Mr. Franklin also expressed his appreciation for Mr. Taylor's service.

Mr. Michael Burton expressed his appreciation for Mr. Taylor's service.

Mr. Kasey announced an opportunity for parents of blind children to be held on September 27, 2008, in Arlington. In October the 50<sup>th</sup> convention of NFB is to be held in Fredericksburg. Mr. Kasey will send an electronic copy of the October 24 - 26 NFB State Conference Announcement to members.

Ms. Phillips expressed her appreciation for Mr. Taylor's service. Thanks from the consumer side of services.

Ms. Brunson expressed her appreciation for Mr. Taylor's service and his way of making the new guys on the block feel comfortable. The ACB office is moving to Arlington, Virginia by January 1, 2009. The Open House will occur in February. They will be getting a new phone service with expanded options for individuals who speak Spanish.

Mr. Powell expressed his appreciation for Mr. Taylor's service and his willingness to be open to change. The Mid-Atlantic American Council of the Blind Affiliate Convention public meeting is scheduled for November 21 – 23 at Holiday Inn/Rosslyn at Key Bridge. Registration forms will be available in the next week or two.

Mr. Kasey announced that the 2008 Convention of the NFB of Virginia would be held October 24 – 26 at the Fredericksburg Hospitality Hotel and Conference Center.

**Other Business:** None

**Adjournment:** There being no other business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m. The next meeting will be held at the DBVI Headquarters Conference Room I/II, 397 Azalea Avenue, on Saturday, December 13, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. Ms. Payne will send an e-mail poll of 9:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 10:00 a.m. for the starting time.

**Tour of the New VRCBVI Dorm – Optional** – cancelled as the agency did not have access to the dorm building.