

**DBVI**  
**STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (SRC)**  
**Draft Meeting Minutes**  
**June 2, 2012**

**10:00 a.m.** Welcome and Call to Order – **Melanie Brunson**

**Introductions/ Representation**

**Members Present:** Melanie Brunson, Vienna, VA-(Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council/representative of disability advocacy groups); Michael G. Davis, Chesapeake, VA-(Vice Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council/former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Valerie Walker, Norfolk, VA-(representative of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of child with a disability); Marguerite Bardone, King George, VA-(representative of Business, Labor, and Industries); John Bailey-Fairfax, VA-(representative of Business, Labor, and Industries); James Taylor-Richmond, VA-(representative of Disability Advocacy Groups); Rick Holley, Hallwood, VA-(representative of Disability Advocacy Groups); William Alley, Richmond, VA-(representative of Business, Labor, and Industries); and Debbie Pfeiffer, Yorktown, VA-(Department of Education).

**Members Absent:** Doug Powell, Falls Church, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Claudie Grant, Jr., Colonial Heights, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); and Angie Matney, Fredericksburg, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services).

**Guests Present:** Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, VA-(representative from the Statewide Independent Living Council/SILC).

**DBVI Staff Present:** Susan Davis Payne-(Director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program); and Marcus L. Byrd II-(Technical Support Staff).

**DBVI Staff Absent:** Raymond Hopkins-(Commissioner); and Bob Burton-(Deputy Commissioner for Services)

**Adoption of 2 June 2012 Agenda-Action Item**

Susan Payne requested that the monthly Vocational Rehabilitation/M.A.D. training be added as an additional action item. Melanie Brunson entertained a motion to approve the 2 June 2012 agenda as corrected. Marguerite Bardone moved the approval of the 2 June, 2012 agenda as corrected. The motion was seconded by John Bailey and passed by unanimous voice vote

**Approval of 3 March 2012 Meeting Minutes-Action Item**

Melanie Brunson called for a motion to approve the 3 March 2012 SRC meeting minutes. Mrs. Brunson explained a request by Doug Powell to have a correction made. The correction being that Mr. Powell was referred to as the Vice Chair of the SRC in the introductions portion of the minutes. William Alley moved the approval of the 3 March, 2012 meeting minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by John Bailey and passed by unanimous voice vote

### **Comments from the Public**

Melanie Brunson called for comments from the public and repeated the request three times. No comments were made and the comment period was declared closed.

### **Commissioner's Report-Susan Payne**

The status of the highly anticipated State Rehabilitation Council board appointments was updated on 1 June 2012. The report submitted by the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office acknowledged the of appointments/reappointments for the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired/DBVI and the Department of Rehabilitative Services/DRS (SRC's) are indeed outstanding; however efforts are being made to resolve the issue. Specifically, the appointments/reappointment for DRS is completed pending the submission of documentation from the appointees to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office. The DBVI SRC currently has two seats that require documentation to be completed and returned to the Governor's office for approval. Ms. Payne encouraged individuals who requested and are currently awaiting appointment/reappointment contact the Secretary's office and inquire about actions needed in order to initiate or possibly expedite the appointment. Barring cancelation, a meeting with Governor McDonnell is scheduled to convene on 6 June to formalize pending appointments. Furthermore, Ms. Payne announced that we can anticipate a high number of SRC appointments being made within the next few weeks.

**Ken Jessup** explained that he received notice that the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities/VBPD was granted one appointment and the Statewide Independent Living Council/SILC received two ex-officio appointments. Those appointments were pressed released on 1 June 2012.

### **Deputy Commissioner's Report-Susan Payne**

A request was made by Mrs. Brunson to have any and all updates to the Vocational Rehabilitation policy manual located on the DBVI inter/intranet sites forwarded to all SRC members accordingly-**Action Taken**.

### **VR Program Update-Susan Davis Payne**

Making a Difference in People's Lives/ M.A.D. is a workgroup consisting of five DBVI regional managers and counselors have developed a mandatory 21 month training program for other VR managers and counselors to be conducted via Video Teleconference Communication which convenes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. The training focuses on the five components of the Vocational Rehabilitation process and other related topics by providing back to basic information modules. The training provides Certified Rehabilitation Credits/CRC designations for those whom need to maintain his or her yearly mandated certification hours. Specifically, the training focuses on the federal regulation, law, agency policy, and business practice to provide staff with a direct link as to how all coincide. The intent is for staff providing services to remain in compliance with both the regulation and the State Plan (comprehensive system of personnel development), in order to deliver services. In addition, information is provided to staff (30) days prior to training, and within that timeframe question/concerns are encouraged. DBVI staff is also provided with another opportunity a week prior to the meeting to ask questions or express concerns. In the event that any issues arise during the actual training session, a staff member is assigned to each remote site and is available to address questions in real time. The M.A.D. training date/topic agenda will be forwarded to all State Rehabilitation Counsel members-**Action Taken**.

Chair Melanie Brunson called for a motion to approve the agency reports, Debbie Pfeiffer provided the first and Michael Davis the second. The agency report passed by unanimous voice vote and was therefore adopted.

### **DBVI/DRS Liaison Report-Jim Taylor**

Jim Taylor referenced his report which was submitted to the SRC prior to this meeting and indicated that the Department of Rehabilitative services received additional general funds. Additionally, on 1 July 2012 the Department of Rehabilitative Services/DRS will officially become the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services/DARS. The next DRS-SRC meeting will take place on 11 June 2012 and Jim Taylor is scheduled to attend on behalf of the DBVI-SRC.

Richard Holley expressed his feelings that it would be advantageous for DBVI SRC members to attend SRC and public meetings conducted by the SILC and DRS and vice versa. Mrs. Brunson explained that a meeting has been requested by the SILC for a date yet to be announced this summer between DRS, DBVI, and the SILC (SRC's chair persons) to discuss joint ventures in the future. Mrs. Brunson also discussed various avenues to explore in an effort to disseminate information to consumers about upcoming meeting events, specifically using the National Federation of the Blind, American Council of the Blind, newsletters and radio.

Melanie Brunson explained that the two largest blind functions in Virginia are the NFB and ACB annual public conventions. Susan Payne explained that at the NFB convention, the time allotted for public comment is usually at the very end of the day when most folks are ready to go home. Marguerite Bardone suggested that during these conventions of possibly having a separate room established from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to afford individuals sufficient time to make public comment. Melanie Brunson explained that she would be willing to ask convention organizers for the NFB and ACB to consider allowing the DBVI-SRC to have an open house in an adjoining room during the events. This will ultimately allow individuals attending the conventions ample opportunity to make public comment throughout the day.

Susan Payne elaborated on the potential marketing, and education opportunity the open house would provide. The DBVI-SRC expressed interest and will pursue an opportunity to conduct an open house at each of the consumer organization conventions-**Action Taken**.

Due to the inability for some individuals with disabilities to travel and attend various public meeting events and provide comment, the DBVI-SRC is interested in allowing letters and teleconference calls as well. Susan Payne explained that the DBVI's website page is under construction, and that more updated information will be included once complete. In addition, the DBVI is currently in the process of developing a Facebook page to provide outreach information to the public, Susan Payne and Brendon Jewell will spearhead the project. Michael Davis volunteered to consult with Susan Payne to help develop a Facebook page specifically for the DBVI SRC in terms of sharing information and content-**Action Taken**.

### **CSAVR Updates**

In April 2012 the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation/CSAVR, National Council of State Agencies for the Blind/NCSAB, and National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils/NCSRC conducted their annual spring conventions in Bethesda, Maryland. The State of the Science Conference took place within the series of conferences as well. In November 2012 the CSAVR fall session will convene in San Diego, CA.

Melanie Brunson explained that during the CSAVR and NCSAB a great deal of discussion took place in regards to legislation. The rehabilitation act is overdue in terms of reauthorization, which should take place every five

years; the latest update took place in 1998. The Senate submitted a draft bill to update the act and a hearing to discuss has taken place, however the House has not taken action. The reauthorization will most likely not take effect until the elections in November and the new House appointed.

Currently the individual in charge of the Federal Rehabilitation Program under RSA is a Presidential appointee. The administration and members of congress would like to change the profile of the appointee and actually have the position appointed by the Secretary of Education. The concern with this potential change stems from the fact that the Department of Education is primarily focused on education and not so much on rehabilitation. In addition, other concerns center around the fact that by demoting the profile of the individual responsible for the largest administrator of disability employment program services could potentially have a negative impact on individuals with disabilities.

The Federal Government has an interest in improving transition services for individuals with disabilities, particularly youth making the move from school to work. The Federal Government has proposed that a certain percentage of funds be set aside primarily for youth services; despite no increase in overall funds. The major concern in states such as Virginia is that older individuals with disabilities will see funds used to provide services for them decimated. More adults than youth with disabilities are served in the state of Virginia. As mentioned before, it is unlikely that any action on this bill will take place before the end of this Congress.

**Debbie Pfeiffer** inquired if there is or have been any collaboration between the DBVI and the Veterans Administration in Richmond to assist veterans that have served in Iraq or Afghanistan that suffered vision injuries while deployed. Susan Payne explained that the DBVI does indeed serve veterans concurrently however she is unaware of any established collaborations between the two. The council agreed to investigate any and or all partnerships that could possibly be established between the DBVI and the Veteran Affairs Administration-

**Action Taken.**

### **Workgroup Reports**

**Marketing & Public Relations:** Michael Davis elaborated on the possibility of Facebook being used as a marketing tool for the DBVI-SRC. Additionally, the social media tool could be used to share vital information about the council and inspirational post with the public.

Ken Jessup explained that he writes articles for a magazine called Virginia, and would like to write a 500 word article about the DBVI-SRC. The council agreed that this would be outstanding; Susan Payne and Melanie Brunson will assist with the process this upcoming August.

**Transition Committee:** Nothing to report.

**Annual Report:** Nothing to report.

**State Plan:** Nothing to report.

**Legislative:** Nothing to report.

**CSNA Consumer/Satisfaction Surveys:** Nothing to report.

Susan Payne ordered and distributed DBVI-SRC business cards to council members. The cards do not contain any names, or personnel phone numbers; however per the request of the council the cards will be embossed and an email contact added during the set of cards printed- **Action Taken.**

### **Old Business and New Business**

Susan Payne explained the current status of the State Plan which is due on 29 June 2012. The figures of data from program managers within the agency in regards to evaluation and reports/progress related to strategies, priorities, goals and plans has yet to be submitted. The majority of the literature has been written minus the aforementioned information. Marguerite Bardone submitted a motion to empower the State Plan workgroup on behalf of the SRC to approve or disapprove the final State Plan report, Richard Holley 2<sup>nd</sup> which was passed by unanimous voice vote. Susan will submit the draft plan to the committee by 15 June, in which they will return it NLT 22 June for submission to RSA-**Action Taken**.

James Taylor explained that he would be willing to extract pertinent information from attachments within the State Plan which requires SRC members complete certain task deemed mandatory by RSA throughout the year. The report will serve as a work-plan to help assist the council with those required duties. The council agreed that this would be helpful and Mr. Taylor will take the lead on this assignment-**Action Taken**.

The results of the comprehensive needs assessment which is being conducted by Mississippi State University will be completed by 30 September 2012. The report will be added to the December SRC meeting as a significant action item for discussion/action.

### **SRC Member and Member Organization Update:**

**Michael Davis:** Nothing to report.

**Valarie Walker:** Nothing to report.

**John Bailey:** Nothing to report.

**William Alley:** serving as president of the Volunteer Council, the Mechanicsville Lions Club submitted a sizeable donation to the council that was used to purchase furniture for the building. An additional donation was also submitted to help plant trees around the building to upgrade the overall landscape. Mr. Alley also explained that the Lions Club he serves with made back pack donation to the learning center located on the DBVI campus in which students can use to carry books and other school materials.

**Rick Holley:** suggested that the Lion's Club could potentially be a great resource to use as means of communicating upcoming public meetings.

**Ken Jessup:** explained that once a month in Virginia Beach, the AMC Theater hosts a descriptive audio video in which family friendly movies are shown. Also, Mr. Jessup and Michael Davis are members of the Virginia Beach Lions Club which is the only fully blind and vision impaired club in the area.

**Marguerite Bardone:** elaborated on a new development of sunglasses for people who are blind or vision impaired that operate similar to sonar. Secondly, there has been a surge of Orientation and Mobility instructors traveling to Germany to train individuals in need of services.

**Jim Taylor:** Nothing to report.

**Debbie Pfeiffer:** explained that on June 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> a workshop in Richmond will take place involving, the Partnership for People with Disabilities, Virginia Project for Children and Adults with deaf blindness and the Department Of Education. The aforementioned agencies also provide classes through Utah State University for individuals that work with kids that are deaf -blind. Also, the newly appointed assistant superintendent of public education has been appointed who resides over all special education and student services and will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Susan Payne:** Nothing to report

**Melanie Brunson:** explained that the Virginia Assistive Technology Council has been very involved with a bill that would allow students receiving services to keep the equipment from their school if and or when they transfer to another school. The legislation passed during the General Assembly session, and is now Commonwealth law.

The NFB and ACB will hold their annual conferences in July.

**Date for Next Meeting/Adjournment**

**The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m., the next State Rehabilitation Council Meeting will convene on 6 October 2012, 397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond VA 23227 @ 10:00 a.m.**