

**MINUTES**  
**DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
**VA Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired**  
**Headquarters Building**  
**397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227**

**December 13, 2014**

**SRC Attendees**

Rebecca Bridges, Vice-Chair, SRC, represents Business, Labor and Industry; Ray Hopkins, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member; Elizabeth Horn, Fairfax, represents the federally mandated Client Assistance Program (CAP); Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, represents State Independent Living Council; Ann Olliff, Richmond, represents current or former recipients of services; Judy Swystun, Hampton Roads, represents Community Rehabilitation Provider; Valerie Walker, Newport News, represents Business, Labor and Industry; Wanda Council, Newport News, VA, represents the Virginia Department of Education; Isaac Crisp, VR Counselor, Richmond Regional Office, DBVI;

**Members Absent**

John Bailey, Fairfax, Chairman SRC, represents Business, Labor and Industry; Nichole Drummond, Springfield, represents Virginia's Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center.

**Members of the Public**

Samantha Hollins, represents State Rehab Council- DARS; Dr. Richard Mitchell, Richmond, Deputy Commissioner, DBVI.

**DBVI Staff to the SRC**

Susan Davis Payne, VR Director, Staff Liaison to SRC; Jessica Collette, Administrative Assistant, DBVI.

**Welcome and Call to Order**

Vice-Chair, Rebecca Bridges welcomed all in attendance and thanked all attendees for arriving early for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

**Introductions**

The attendees introduced themselves.

**Working Lunch**

**Adoption of Agenda - Action Item**

Judy Swystun moved for adoption. Ken Jessup seconded the motion.

**Approval of September 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes - Action Item**

No discussion. Judy Swystun motioned for approval. Valerie Walker seconded.

**Commissioner's Report – Raymond E Hopkins**

Not included on report given to Council: October 15<sup>th</sup> (White Cane Day) drew many events this year to draw attention from the public to this day. Many offices participated in Open Houses; Fairfax Regional Office was able to execute a WOW (Walk Our Way) walk. Some participants even walked with sleep shades on. We have documentation of referrals being made from these events.

DBVI has sent out letters to SSI recipients that are blind, but have not been in contact with our agency before. We have reached out and received referrals from this mailing as well. The initial mailing was over 2,000 letters. The second mailing has gone out as well.

DBVI has created new displays to be used at events where the agency is represented. Each regional office has a set of three panels.

DBVI has hired a new Business Enterprise Manager, Xavier Trimiew. His first day was December 15<sup>th</sup>. He comes to us with experience from the Department of Corrections as well as Enterprise Rental company.

DBVI will have one piece of legislation moving forward this legislative session. We are looking to amend the Code for the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). This will effect when there is not a blind individual eligible to run a vending facility, the priority goes to the BEP to run the facility. As SRC members, you will be kept up to date as the legislation moves forward. Recently, we have encountered difficulty from Norfolk State University. The University has written into their budget that the President's salary is partly dependent on the commission from vending sales. Ms. Bridges suggested moving forward to send a list of talking points and list of names of who the SRC members could approach for those visual impaired Virginians.

In the Commissioner's report, the numbers were verified of the budget cuts, \$75,000 across the board cuts and then an additional \$746,000 targeted cuts. The targeted cuts were identified of funds the agency had on hand and the major cuts will impact Virginia Industries of the Blind (VIB). The Enterprise fund had over \$8M in reserve.

Rebecca posed the question about what percentage had DBVI been setting aside for the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In the past, there has not been a set amount. Through the transition time, we are looking at how to ensure we will be able to use 15% of VR federal funds.

Susan Payne will advise the Council about the WIOA regulations and send members more information.

**Deputy Commissioner's Report – Rick L. Mitchell**

Regional Offices are almost fully staffed. There are only 3 vacancies statewide, all VR counselors. Staunton Regional Office has one opening and will proceed with second interviews next week. Norfolk Regional Office has two openings. The jobs have closed and the office has a large pool to choice for interviews.

The VR Case Review Instrument has gone well. The next step was a Rehabilitation Teaching Review Instrument. This was started back in September or October.

The VR staff is currently involved in an ongoing Employment Outcomes training. The first session was completed in November. The second session was held this past week. Twenty-six DBVI staff and Regional Managers participated along with four DARS staff. The training gives tangible strategies to help counselors talk and approach job development for clients.

All Regional Offices received ethics training this past fall. Barbara McCarthy and Dr. Mitchell were able to travel to all regional offices speaking with staff on professional ethics.

The Learning Collaborative/ICI is a project taking place to look at the effectiveness of the Rehabilitation Center and how to measure its effectiveness. We are currently in the data gathering stage, but the consultants are reaching out to many different peoples group to get their feedback.

### **Comments from the Public**

No comments at this time.

### **The VR Program Update – Susan Payne**

Susan Payne clarified that the 149 successful closures reported in the Agency Report and the SRC Annual Report is a total number of employment outcomes. Regarding the Standards and Indicators report, does the agency have any action plans to ensure the percentage of successful closures? Yes, a performance measure has been added to vocational rehabilitation counselor employee work profiles and the Employment Outcomes training will help give confidence to staff as they conduct job development activities. Multiple questions were asked about the VR counselors and their positions.

Susan Payne explained that there different types of employment outcomes under the overarching category of competitive outcomes that include supported employment, self-employment, Randolph-Sheppard Food Management Program, unpaid family workers, and homemakers.

DBVI continues to have problem filling key seats on the SRC including seats representing individuals who are currently or have been former recipients of services. Yesterday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, DBVI received notification that the seat representing the State Workforce System had been officially filled.

### **DBVI/DARS Liaison Report – Ken Jessup**

Mr. Jessup reported that the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) will be developing and submitting the State Plan for Independent Living. Additionally, he noted that the DARS SRC has an internal committee and external committee structure. He also reported that the Virginia Rehabilitation Association put on a presentation at a recent SRC retreat. The SILC is preparing for the General Assembly by educating themselves on items that are relevant to SILC business. The next meeting for SILC is January; DARS SRC will meet again in March. The last meeting the Commissioner for DARS was unable to give a report due to illness.

As part of WIOA of 2014, the SILC and Centers for Independent Living have been moved to Health & Human Services from RSA. The Older Blind Grant Program will continue to be administered by RSA.

### **VATS Liaison Report- Elizabeth Horn**

DBVI has an agency seat on the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) council but the SRC does not. The SRC has a feeling that a blind individual needs to be involved within VATS. SRC members can request appointment as at large members. Members requested an email sending information on how to apply through the Virginia Assisted Technology System. Since Dr. Peggy Fields, Program Director for Rehabilitation Technology represents DBVI on the VATS Council , it would be beneficial to receive updates from her.

### **Marketing Work Group Report- Ken Jessup**

No meeting was conducted this past quarter. Conference Call hopefully will be scheduled in January. Wanda, Elizabeth and Ken make up this work group. Since DBVI has a marketing group, it would be beneficial for the SRC and DBVI to work together to ensure no duplication of work is existing. The Commissioner mentioned DBVI is looking at a full-time Communications Director for the Agency. *Note: If 3 or more council members are meeting, it needs to be posted on Town Hall.*

### **Employment Work Group Report- Rebecca Bridges**

This work group met last Tuesday with a productive meeting. The group determined that a one-page report of metrics representing the Agency's performance quarterly would be beneficial. This will allow for the council to have a clear look at where and what the Agency is accomplishing. A meeting between the work group, Dr. Mitchell and Susan for discussion about which metrics are used and information the Agency can pass along would assist the work group with more information. At the upcoming retreat, it might be beneficial to take time to look at what metrics would be beneficial to measure.

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

#### **Approval of 2014 Annual Report- Action Item**

The writing team (John & Judy) submitted the final draft of the Annual Report to the SRC for approval. One change was recommended to clarify that competitive employment outcomes includes several types of closures. Susan Payne revised the report to include the closure type information and updated the agency mission. No questions posed. Motion made to approve Annual Report. Judy moved for approval. Ken seconded.

### **CSAVR Report- Rebecca Bridges**

John attended the Fall 2014 NCSRC, CSAVR, and NCSAB meetings and information has been emailed to all council members. John included a manual from a Utah SRC. The manual lists the goals and information about the council. Rebecca proposed to develop our own. Rebecca posed to create a SRC Handbook Work Group to help create a rough draft that can be shared in the near future. Instead of creating a manual, maybe repackage the current information we already have access to. Susan will package the current information and send around for people to review before the next SRC meeting.

### **New Member Orientation Planning- Action Item**

In the past New Member Orientation was scheduled annually, however, it was recommended that DBVI provide orientation to individuals as they are appointed. Planning who will facilitate these trainings will need to be decided. Susan Payne will consolidate existing orientation materials to be considered by the SRC for a handbook and will provide new appointees with e-rehab information.

**SRC Retreat**

The SRC retreat will be held on March 13, 2015. Items that need to be discussed are: WIOA information, metrics of DBVI performance measures, what employment looks like, and refresher of Freedom of Information Act (FIOA).

Creation of Retreat Planning Committee: Judy Swystun, Rebecca Bridges, John Bailey  
Information is requested to be sent to council members regarding the metrics currently being used before the retreat. This will allow for a targeted discussion.

**Date for next meeting- March 14, 2015**

SRC meeting will begin at regular time, which is 10am start time.

**Adjournment**

Ken Jessup motioned to adjourn. Wanda Council seconded.