

Virginia State Rehabilitation Council
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2006

The quarterly meeting of the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on May 8, 2006, at the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), Roanoke, Virginia.

Members Present: Chet Avery, Karen Baugh, Kenneth Holloway, Marianne Moore, Hiawatha Nicely, Michael Organ, James Rothrock, Philip Sieck, Samuel Simon, Ed Turner, Roy Ward, Florence Watt

Members Absent: Daniel DeBoer, Race Drake, Frances Lewis, Dana Nelson, Cherie Takemoto, William Hall

Others Present: John Phelps, Field Rehabilitation Services Director; Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Barbara Tyson, Staff Support; Vanessa Rakestraw, Policy Analyst; Mary Lutkenhaus, Policy Analyst; Mike Barcus, Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Rehabilitation Science and Engineering, Larry Overbay, Southwest Regional Manager, Margaret Gillispie, Blue Ridge Regional Manager, Toni Hamilton, Roanoke Office Manager, Wanda Bailey, Roanoke Administrator

Call to Order: Council Chairperson Samuel Simon called the meeting to order at 11:09 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Roy Ward, seconded by Chet Avery, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2006 meeting as distributed.

Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Simon welcomed the vocational rehabilitation staff of the Roanoke Field Office. Toni Hamilton, Human Services Manager for the Roanoke Field Office, and the Roanoke staff provided information on their job responsibilities.

Matters of Public Comment

There were no comments from the public. Chet Avery expressed concern about the accessibility of the Hotel Roanoke. Marianne Moore mentioned that the Transition Forum Conference was held recently at the hotel and there were no complaints regarding accessibility from the participants. The members acknowledged that the hotel probably is not as accessible as it could be.

Chairperson's Report

Mr. Simon stated that he received some positive letters from members of the General Assembly in response to the SRC's letter requesting the members to continue to support

budget amendments regarding services to Virginians with disabilities as they continue their budget negotiations.

It was decided that the August 14 meeting will be held in Richmond with the November 13 meeting to be held at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC).

Hiawatha Nicely, Vice Chairperson, and Sam Simon will serve as the Nominating Committee for the selection of a new SRC Vice-Chair. Nominations will be discussed at the August SRC meeting.

Commissioner's Report

The 2006 Virginia Public Service Week was observed May 1-7. This year's theme was "Proudly Serving Virginians". Michelle Wells, vocational rehabilitation counselor in Roanoke, and Rick Sizemore, Deputy Director at WWRC, were Employee Ambassadors at the Governor's Award Ceremony. At the event, the Governor told Mr. Sizemore about his tour of WWRC with his sons and acknowledged the good work of WWRC in serving individuals with disabilities.

WWRC is exploring a long-term plan for a lease initiative involving some of the land at the Center. Senator Hanger and Delegate Landes are involved in these discussions.

DRS has hired Harry Weinstock, former Executive Director of the Virginia Brain Injury Association, to work on a plan to increase job opportunities for persons with disabilities through state government procurement with the Employment Services Organizations.

The Commissioner advised the Council members on the management controls utilized by the State to ensure that the agency runs effectively and efficiently. This included a review of the 2005 audit by the Commonwealth's Auditor of Public Accounts and Governor's Management Scorecard, which tracks the agency's compliance with purchasing, human resources, technology and strategic planning requirements.

The Order of Selection waiting list now consists of 245 persons with non-significant disabilities.

The Commissioner will be convening a meeting in the Fall of the leaders of the agency's various boards and councils to provide them an opportunity for networking and to look at the feasibility of conducting a joint needs assessment of Virginians with disabilities.

Council Roundtable Reports

Virginia Workforce Council

Hiawatha Nicely reported that the Governor will meet with the Virginia Workforce Council on May 10 to share his vision and direction for workforce development in Virginia. A Blue Ribbon Commission, appointed by the Virginia Workforce Council, has issued a report noting areas of high and low employment in the State and the areas

that need employees and the training needs. The Council will find ways to address the findings in this report. Danny LeBlanc has been appointed by Governor Kaine to head up the Workforce Council.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Philip Sieck reported that the SILC Annual Report has been posted to the website; the goals in this report parallel those of the vocational rehabilitation program. SILC members continue to be involved with the Olmstead initiative and ensuring accessibility at One-Stop Centers. The Community Action Specialists have been providing important services and will be funded for another year by the SILC and the Centers for Independent Living. He reminded members that on August 28-30, 2006, there will be an Independent Living Conference held at the Hotel Roanoke.

Virginia Assistive Technology Council

Chet Avery reported that the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Advisory Council will meet on June 28 in Blacksburg to identify the current status of recycling centers for assistive technology and the need for volunteers to gather, refurbish, and distribute items to individuals in need.

Mr. Simon will research other agencies that might be willing to help with this endeavor.

Other SRC Members

Mr. Simon reported that he and Mr. Nicely attended a one-day meeting for SRC Chairs and Vice Chairs to develop an agenda for SRC training for the coming year as well as a model on-line orientation program for new SRC members. They both came away from the meeting feeling that Virginia has a model working relationship between the SRC and DRS.

Marianne Moore reported that Dr. Billy Cannaday has been appointed by Governor Kaine as the new Superintendent of Education.

Working Lunch: Discussion with Roanoke Job Club

Mark Akers, Program Support Technician Senior, Rochelle Betsch, Placement Counselor, Patty Stadler, Program Support Technician Senior, and Mary Wells Garland, Vocational Evaluator, briefed the SRC on the Roanoke Field Office's Job Club. Darren Jones, a former vocational rehabilitation consumer, reported on his participation in the job club and how this participation helped him to find employment with the Roanoke County. Each presenter received a Recognition Certificate from the SRC to acknowledge their commitment to the job club.

Committee Reports

External Affairs

The committee developed the following recommendations to enhance public participation in the State Plan public hearing: (1) partner with other entities (Disability Services Boards, Centers for Independent Living) to bring more individuals to the hearings, (2) send a notice to vocational rehabilitation consumers in the specific geographic area where the hearing will be held; (3) contact the Senators and Delegates from the four regions and see if it would be possible to hold our public hearings at one of their public forums or invite them to attend, (4) change the public hearing dates to March so that participants can react to a draft of the State Plan (5) use print and public service announcements for advertising (6) set up an internet Blog to receive comments; and (6) appear on radio “talk shows” to announce public hearings and receive input.

Dr. Steve West of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Rehabilitation Engineering and Science, briefed the Committee on his preliminary findings from the triennial needs assessment.

The following SRC members’ terms will end in September 2006: Race Drake, Kenneth Holloway, Frances Lewis, Philip Sieck, and Samuel Simon. Notification has been received from Frances Lewis that she will not seek reappointment. Kenneth Holloway, Philip Sieck, and Samuel Simon expressed a desire to be considered for another term.

Internal Affairs Committee

The Committee approved the SRC Resource Plan with an understanding that additional funds could be allocated at a later date to support the attendance of new members at training seminars and for public hearing advertising.

The Committee completed its work on the development of the State Plan attachments. The Committee and the full Council agreed on the following additional comments to be included in Attachment 4.2(c):

- (1) Continue to expand outreach to, and meet the needs of, people with disabilities who have limited English proficiency.
- (2) Because DRS consistently exceeds the RSA performance targets listed in Attachment 4.12(c), DRS should establish its own higher targets that are based on anticipated performance.
- (3) The SRC supports the agency’s plans to improve transition services. DRS should continue to improve collaboration with other agencies serving youth who are hard to serve (juvenile justice, high school drop outs, and limited English proficiency) and should examine youth who are closed in Status 28 to determine if they could qualify for additional transition services in the schools or from DRS.
- (4) Explore utilizing the Internet to receive public comments.
- (5) DRS should engage the SRC in a process to examine the future role of WWRC.

John Phelps distributed copies of the Field Rehabilitation Services Division Performance Measures for Federal Fiscal Year 2006, Month ending April 2006.

Old Business

No Report

New Business

Mike Barcus, Virginia Commonwealth University Center (VCU) for Rehabilitation Science and Engineering (CERSE), briefed the Council on CERSE's cooperative relationship with DRS and their mission. CERSE is a consortium coordinated by the VCU Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation to foster interdisciplinary rehabilitation research and training. CERSE is working with VCU and DRS to build collaboration for the Core Veterans; this Core is designed to research unique rehabilitation needs of individuals who sacrificed some measure of functional ability in the service of their country. The six program cores are Rehabilitation of Neurological Illness and Injury, Engineering, Vocational Rehabilitation, Exercise Science & Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation, Children and Disability, and Veterans.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.