

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Rehabilitation Council
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, Virginia
Approved Minutes, Quarterly Meeting
June 12, 2010**

Members Present: Faye Adams, William Alley, Anna Burns, Richard Gonzalez, Richard Holley, Martha Macias, Hortense Macon, Angela Matney, Sherrie Phillips, Doug Powell, Karen Trump

Members Absent: Marguerite Bardone, Melanie Brunson, Michael Burton, Catherine Burzio, Frances Daniel, Benjamin Franklin, Claudie Grant, Michael Kasey, Raymond Kenney

Staff Present: Bob Burton, Deputy Commissioner for Services; Joan Carneal, Support Staff; Madhur Gupta, VR Compliance and Consumer Satisfaction Analyst; Susan Payne, VR Program Director

Guests Present: Linda Boyd, Driver; Danny DeBoer, DRS SRC; Pam Holley, Driver

Call to Order: Doug Powell called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Adoption of Agenda: Doug Powell identified two items to be added to the agenda which included call for new members for the SRC and the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils. A motion was made by Sherrie Phillips, seconded by Faye Adams, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the agenda be adopted as amended.

Action on Minutes of the Previous Meeting: A motion was made by Rick Gonzalez, seconded by Sherrie Phillips, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the minutes be adopted as distributed.

Comments from the Public: There were no comments from the public.

Commissioner's Report – Bob Burton

Budget Update

In the current budget FY 2010, DBVI carried over a surplus of general funds in the amount of \$220,000 from FY 2009. These funds will revert to the State. In FY 2011 there will be a \$450,000 reduction in state general funds and this will be supplanted by the Virginia Industries for the Blind to cover basic administrative expenses that can be charged to them. VRCBVI state general funds were reduced 15% (approximately \$24,600 out of a base budget of \$164,000 of their general funds which will be supplanted by VR funds).

Accessibility Policy Update

Peggy Fields has been identified as the contact to address accessibility issues for the agency. The DBVI Accessible Information Policy has been posted to the DBVI website. Joan Carneal will email that policy to members on Monday.

Update on Regional Offices – Bob Burton

There have been no changes in the Bristol regional office. The Fairfax regional office has one VR counselor left vacant with Candace Jordan resigning on May 24. We will be interviewing for that position. There have been no changes in the Norfolk regional office. The Richmond regional office has one new rehabilitation teacher, Robin Hoerber, who began on June 10. She is a former consumer and totally blind. This office has had a major staff turnover within the last six months with three new VR counselors. The Roanoke regional office has one regional manager position and the announcement will close on June 25, and three RT positions all retirements. We are currently recruiting for these positions. The Staunton regional office has interviewed for a VR counselor and is ready to make an offer.

VRCBVI made an offer to a VR evaluator which was declined. There are three O&M specialist positions vacant. We will conduct the second interview for an O&M specialist on June 23. Interviews were held for the vacant Braille instructor position this past week.

Headquarters is currently recruiting for the deputy commissioner for enterprises for VIB.

Bob Berrang, former general manager, will be greatly missed. During his tenure, the Industries went from six million dollars in sales to 26 million dollars in sales

with the expansion of self-service supply stores at military facilities around the Commonwealth.

Standards and Indicators Quarterly Report

- There are 50 closed cases with employment outcomes this quarter and there were 63 in the previous year. The numbers are usually low in the first two quarters.
- Of the closed cases that received services, the percentage with an employment outcome is currently at 44%. The federal minimum standard is 68.9%.
- Of the closed cases with an employment outcome, the percentage that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage is 90%. The federal minimum standard is 35.4%.
- Of the closed cases with an employment outcome, the percentage that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage and have significant disabilities is 100%. The federal minimum standard is 89%.
- Ratio of average state wages of all workers in the state to the average wage of closed cases with employment outcome that have wages greater than or equal to minimum wage, is 0.68%. The federal minimum standard is 0.59%.
- Difference between the percentage of closed cases with employment outcomes that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage that are self support at application and the percentage of closed cases with employment outcomes that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage that are self support at closure is 55.6%. The federal minimum standard is 30.4%.
- Ratio of minority service rate to non-minority service rate is 0.991%. The federal minimum standard is .80%. Rick Holley inquired as to the breakdown of minorities. Susan Payne stated that we were serving minorities at a rate equal to the percentage of a specific group in the overall population for those at the transition age; however, we are below in the adult population. Susan Payne stated this issue would be addressed in the comprehensive needs assessment.

Renovation of the Center

The move of VRCBVI staff to other buildings on the campus was scheduled for April but was postponed indefinitely. The recreation building was one of the main places to house staff during renovations, but it is in need of a roof replacement prior to having staff relocate. We are ready to put out contracts for the roofing job, and it will probably be the spring of 2011 before the move will occur.

VR Program Update – Susan Payne

1. State Plan Update

The State plan for FY 2011 has been developed with the assistance of the SRC writing team consisting of Marguerite Bardone, Rick Gonzalez, and Doug Powell. There was one Attachment 4.11(a) Comprehensive Needs Assessment which requires additional information and the plan will be ready for submission.

- **Attachment 4.11(a) Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs**

Preliminary review and analysis of data collected in year one will be available on June 28. This information will be added into Attachment 4.11(a) prior to submission before June 30. Rick Gonzalez will send a brief paragraph referencing Attachment 4.11(e)(2), Section VII Public Relations and Outreach. Susan Payne will then create a strategy and measure related to that information received in Attachment 4.11(d).

- Angie Matney made a motion that the State plan be accepted after the insertion of VEC information provided from Rick Gonzalez as written and submitted to RSA before June 30, 2010. It was seconded by Sherrie Phillips and passed by unanimous vote to approve the State plan with those insertions.

2. Update on VR Outcomes

There were 70 individuals who achieved employment outcomes during the first two quarters of FFY 2010. Thirty-eight of those individuals are working more than 28 hours weekly. The average hourly wage at application was \$7.60 with the average weekly earnings being \$355.69. The average hourly wage at closure was \$13.03 with the average weekly earnings being \$409.66. The average age of individuals who went to work was 46. The average number of hours worked per week at closure was 30. Of the 70 individuals who accomplished their employment goal, 56 went to work in competitive settings; seven were self-employed; and two were licensed vendors through the Business Enterprise Program. The average cost of services to individuals who achieved their employment goal was \$9,575.44.

3. **Hearing Officer Contracts**

Advertising began on May 25 in the Virginia Business Opportunities (required for contracts under \$50,000). It will also be advertised on the DRS website, in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, and to the three current hearing officers. The sealed bids will be received by Mary Lutkenhaus at DRS and opened on July 12. Melanie Brunson and Raymond Kenney are on the ad hoc work group and will meet once between July 14 and August 2 in Richmond. If Raymond Kenney is unable to participate due to health issues, Angie Matney volunteered to serve on that ad hoc work group. Their focus will include:

- Reviewing the hourly rate bid, résumé, and writing samples before the meeting. Susan Payne will provide the bid evaluation sheet.
- Meeting with Susan Payne to finalize the work groups' recommendations.
- Presenting the work groups' recommended bids to the DRS and DVBI State Rehabilitation Councils and call for a Council vote (The DBVI Council will vote on September 11, and DRS Council will vote on August 9.)

4. **Orientation of New Members**

A review and discussion of erehab training modules on the State plan was scheduled at 8:30 a.m. for new members and open to all interested members. With no participation, it was decided that it would be a more viable training to be reviewed at members' leisure. A friendly reminder will be sent monthly to SRC members to review the erehab training modules located at www.erehab.org. On Friday, September 17 another one-day orientation for new members will be held which will include tours of the LRC, the Richmond Industries for the Blind, and the Randolph-Sheppard Program training facility.

5. **Success Stories** - Martha Macias

The case was referred in August 2008. The consumer's diagnosis was cone rod dystrophy with an onset at 15 years of age. She had moved to Portsmouth, Virginia in July of 2008. She had recently had a major loss of vision going from 20/300 to light perception in the right eye and 20/800 in the left.

A great deal of counseling and guidance took place early on in this case as she had gone through a great deal of trauma over the past five years. She had dealt with a personal assault in which her guide dog was killed and had a great deal of residual effects from this traumatic event. At the same time, she was dealing with her adjustment to blindness that began to happen rather quickly in 2007 with a progression that took her vision from 20/300 to light perception in less than a year. Shortly after the case was opened, she had an opportunity to take a job working for Access Solutions located in Wichita, Kansas. She received adaptive technology training, mostly through tandem training that was made possible with JAWS. She went from using ZoomText magnification software to learning JAWS for the job. The primary functions of the job were mainly to research and prepare comprehensive reports that outline ADA access compliance for small businesses and large corporations throughout the country. She recently finished a large project with Greyhound, for example. This was an interesting case from a holistic perspective due to the fact that most of the C and G and training components took place on the phone as she moved out of state to take this job. Some of the adaptive technology that she uses to perform the primary functions of her job are a scanning software called Eye Pal that allows her to take pictures of text images, scan them onto a computer, and have the text read to her. This technology eliminates the need for a flat bed scanner, and it allows her to be more portable/mobile. She also learned to use a Victor Stream that will allow her to record lectures in meetings and take important notes in order to prepare her reports. She also received training on how to navigate the Internet to do legal ADA compliance research and training in Word 2007 and Web Mail. Presently she is working 25 hours at \$10 per hour and hopes to increase those hours by next year.

6. 2010 Transition Forum

DBVI conducted three training sessions at the 2010 Transition Forum. Commissioner Hopkins made opening remarks. Staff from all regional offices participated in the Transition Forum except Norfolk.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey – Madhur Gupta

Discussed some issues with the existing VR Consumer Satisfaction Survey, such as ambiguity of questions and related response errors, inadequate answer choices, lack of data critical for the improvement of the VR program and services, and recommended a corrective action plan for the development of a more meaningful and comprehensive survey instrument. The goal is to develop an action plan for the

use of survey results. Please refer to Madhur Gupta's report attached. Council members were very much in favor of developing separate surveys for the VR program and the Center. Members agreed that the surveys needed to be comprehensive and separate. Doug Powell suggested that the agency consider surveying all existing consumers on an annual basis. DBVI will discuss and consider what personnel resources it would take to undertake this project. At the present time, the VR unit does not have resources to accomplish this task. It will be taken into consideration to make electronic options or to have regional office staff assist with this project.

Sherrie Phillips discussed the confidentiality of the survey and how answers may influence a consumer who has been closed and may have a need to be reopened.

Karen Trump will email the DOE post-secondary survey to Madhur Gupta for informational purposes. She also discussed the importance of tracking cases for one to five years after closure. The Center administrators are already considering doing a three-to- six month follow-up survey. Again, it is a problem with staff resources to perform this project.

Martha Macias explained that the agency is paying thousands of dollars for consumers, who have completed the training at the Center, to attend centers in other states. She inquired as to "What could we have done differently at the Center to keep consumers from having to attend these other centers"?

Another suggestion to include in the survey was "How long after you received your assistive technology equipment was it before you received training on that equipment and how satisfied were you with the training"?

Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA): Federal Requirement

DBVI is developing the CNA over a three-year period as discussed at the March meeting. The first year will be focused on developing a State Profile of known data identifying individuals who we currently serve, those that we don't serve, or those that are underserved. It is something like defining the universe. The second year will be focused on developing and implementing surveys, conduct focus groups, define issues, goals, and strategies. The third year will be focused on updating and incorporating the information into the State plan. This assessment will address how legislators and other state agencies are informed of various activities. On the next agenda, we will include a discussion regarding working in coordination with others for the development of entities in legislative issues of interest to the SRC. Susan

Payne will send focused questions to members to guide this discussion at the next meeting. Hortense Macon expressed an interest in working on this subcommittee.

Subcommittee Reports:

Transportation – Bill Alley

Bill Alley did not have a report. Susan Payne discussed a meeting with Neil Sherman with the Department of Rail and Public Transportation who serves on the Interagency Transportation Council on Friday, and they will be working on grants that address the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities and for the elderly population. Rick Holley volunteered to serve on this subcommittee.

Transition – Karen Trump

- The 2010 Virginia Transition Forum held March 15 - 17 at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center was a huge success and well attended.
- The I'm Determined project has created a DVD illustrating students from the deaf department and the blind department at the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton presenting at their IEP meetings. Copies will be available at the meeting. Please visit the I'm Determined website at <https://php.radford.edu/~imdetermined/> to learn more about their activities.
- In August, 2010 the VDOE and the DBVI will co-sponsor training on the Woodcock Johnson® Tests of Achievement - III, Braille Adaption (WJIII ACH). The training will be provided by the American Printing House for the Blind.
- The site contact for the VDOE transition priority project is <http://transition.ttacconnect.org/>. Please visit this site to learn more about our activities.
- The Tri-State Transition Slide Guide, a joint effort between the Delaware Department of Education, The Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Virginia Department of Education is completed and being disseminated around the state. The guide was developed using federal grant funds. Copies will be available for the team at the meeting. Topics include self-determination, postsecondary education and training, employment, and independent living.
- Rick Holley volunteered to serve on this subcommittee. He will be assisting Karen Trump with reports.

Coordination with DRS SRC – Danny DeBoer

Danny DeBoer highlighted points of interest to the Council from the DRS SRC last meeting. Please refer to them on their website at www.va-src.org.

Pilot Mentoring Program – Doug Powell

This program is still struggling to find a new approach to move this project forward. The Norfolk regional office staff is working toward implementing this program without the one-year long commitment. The subcommittee is trying to develop a system at the regional office level to make this a resource for blind and visually impaired individuals. Danny DeBoer requested that Joan Carneal email him this information next week.

Informed Choice – Susan Payne

There has been no activity regarding this issue. Angie Matney and Doug Powell will convene their first report in September.

VATS Council Report – Martha Macias

- Martha Macias participated in the VATS meeting via conference call on June 9 and stated that it was focused on assistive technology. Martha encouraged members to participate as it was a very interesting and informative meeting.
- Joan Carneal will request a copy of the low interest loan programs and the NewWell Loan Program from Robert Krollman at DRS. She will forward that information to the SRC when received.

Job Outreach – Rick Gonzalez

Requests that the SRC identify needs related to locating business for the project he is working on. Susan Payne will work with Rick on this project.

SRC Appointments for 2011 – Doug Powell

Doug Powell encouraged members to submit names of individuals who are interested in serving on the SRC to Susan Payne. The names will be submitted to the Governor's office in the fall of 2010.

The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) – Doug Powell

Doug Powell stated that this was a very passionate subject for the late Pat Beattie, and that he has participated in the Council over the past several years. He expressed a concern that the by-laws are being developed and you must be a member to vote. His major concern is that the voting is done on a yes/no basis and does not allow for

input. He requested a volunteer to serve as the DBVI representative when he is not available. Rick Holley inquired as to travel time involved. After discussion, Rick Holley volunteered to serve in this capacity. Doug Powell will send Rick Holley ideas regarding the by-laws.

Working Lunch with SRC Member and Member Organization Update

Faye Adams stated that the VOPA publication “Fact Sheet” has been corrected to reflect that DBVI assists with voter registration, and the name of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation has been updated to the Department for Behavioral Health Developmental Services. She also stated that the Fact Sheet was available in alternative formats upon request.

Rick Holley discussed a presentation he had given at his granddaughter’s first grade class using sleep shades and long white canes.

Martha Macias announced a job training being held in Norfolk for employers on blind sensitivity in the working environment. Anna Burns expressed her appreciation for this training for her staff on the local level.

Bill Alley announced that July 27 was the Center’s night out at the Diamond. He is presently selling tickets for the game. Ray Hopkins will be throwing out the first ball. A former student will be singing the National Anthem, and Mascot Nutz the Squirrel will be wearing a blindfold and carrying a cane. Melody Roane will be speaking at the event.

Anna Burns stated that Hired Hands would be participating in the Summer Work/Training program this year, and that they are very excited about providing this experience to DBVI consumers.

Doug Powell reported on his tri-marathon experiences.

Rick Holley inquired if LRC was picking up the slack left with budget cuts made in the sub-regional libraries. Susan Payne will request that Barbara McCarthy send Rick a report regarding this issue.

Adjournment: There being no other business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Assembly Room, 401 Azalea Avenue, on Saturday, September 18, 2010, at 10:00 a.m.