

Virginia State Rehabilitation Council
Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2009

A meeting of the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on May 11, 2009 at the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present: Karen Baugh, Charles Benagh, Sandra Cook, Stephanie Colorado, Daniel DeBoer, Charles Downs, Matthew Deans, Donna Kay Graff, Robin Metcalf, Shannon McManus Jones, Sarah Liddle, Kathleen Maybee, James Rothrock, Samuel Simon, Cherie Takemoto, Florence Watt

Members Absent: Gregory Coleman, Kenneth Holloway, Marianne Moore

Others Present: Jack Hayek, Director of Employment Services Organizations, Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Scott Fraley, Policy Analyst; Vanessa Rakestraw, Policy Analyst; Rick Sizemore, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) Director; Bernadette Mayhall & Cat Clough, Interpreters; Barbara Tyson, Staff Support; Ernie Steidle, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer; Sharon Russo, WWRC Physical Therapy Director; Barbie Ostrander, WWRC Medical Services Director; Amy Miller, Lead Counselor; Victor Morzark, WWRC Manager; Lynn Harris, Manager; Nancy Worley Martin, Lead Counselor; Margaret Gillispie, Regional Director; Dorianne Mills, Manager; Bonnie Hawley, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; Douglas James, Regional Director, George Drummond, Manager; Dale Batten, Regional Director, Bob Canaday, Regional Director, Roy Ward, Presenter; Eleanor Fields, Personal Assistant

Call to Order: Council Chairperson Cherie Takemoto called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Chuck Benagh, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2009 meeting as distributed.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no comments from the public.

Chairperson's Report: Ms. Takemoto stated that, because Matthew Deans is now a DRS employee, he is no longer eligible to serve as the SRC Vice-Chair. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to elect Florence Watt to succeed Mr. Deans as Vice-Chair for the remainder of Federal Fiscal Year 2009.

Ms. Takemoto asked Sam Simon and Sandra Cook to serve as the Nominating Committee for the election of the SRC Chair and Vice-Chair for 2010. Nominations will be considered at the August SRC meeting. Ms. Takemoto also asked Mr. Simon to identify an individual to nominate to succeed him on the SRC.

On April 19-23, 2009, Mr. Deans and Ms. Takemoto attended the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Conference held in Bethesda, Maryland.

Ms. Takemoto provided a Power Point presentation on information shared at the conference, which included the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) possibilities and provided the website www.recovery.gov to obtain more information.

Commissioner's Report: Commissioner Rothrock announced that Robbie Watts, Director of Disability Determination Services, has retired from DRS and accepted employment with the Social Security Administration in the Hearings and Appeals Division. In addition, Jack Hayek, Director of Employment Services and Special Programs, will be retiring effective September 1, 2009. Mr. Hayek was introduced to the SRC members and thanked for his many years of service.

Commissioner Rothrock distributed copies of the *Lowdown SCAN* Sports page which highlights Matthew Deans "wheeling and dealing with the Richmond RimRiders", a wheelchair-basketball program organized by the local nonprofit Sportable.

DRS received its first allotment of ARRA funds for the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. With the receipt of these funds, DRS opened up the Most Significantly Disabled Priority Category effective May 1. In addition, the Request for Proposals has been released for grants to Employment Services Organizations to create jobs for our VR consumers. Sandra Cook will be serving on the RFP review committee. Additional plans for the ARRA funds include: (1) hiring temporary VR staff to help serve the additional individuals with most significant disabilities who newly enter the VR program; (2) creating 30 new slots for the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center; (3) hiring a contract position to assist with the agency's training and outreach initiatives to serve individuals with Limited English Proficiency; (4) creating new positions to enhance our computer technology services for VR clients; (5) funding some of the Disability Services Boards to enhance hiring of VR consumers in local government; and (6) updating our vocational evaluation software and equipment. Through ARRA funding, Disability Determination Services will be hiring 65 new analysts to process their claims. In addition, there will be \$350,000 in ARRA funding to support the Statewide Independent Living Plan and we are waiting on guidance from the Rehabilitation Services Administration for the \$1.7 million for the federally funded Centers for Independent Living. Sam Simon expressed interest in having the ARRA funds utilized to support telework for individuals with disabilities and asked about job opportunities for our clients with the Census Bureau. Commissioner Rothrock will talk with the Regional Directors about current telework opportunities for our consumers and stated that our Business Development Managers will be working on Census Bureau job opportunities.

Commissioner Rothrock will send the SRC members a copy of the Ticket to Work Progress Report.

The SRC thanked Commissioner Rothrock for sending them the weekly VR success stories and asked if these stories could be placed on the DRS website for public review. Commissioner Rothrock agreed to look into this.

Working Lunch – SRC Awards Ceremony

The SRC presented five DRS employees with the 2009 SRC Roy J. Ward Employee Leadership Recognition Award. Awards were presented to George Drummond, Bonnie Hawley, Nancy Worley Martin, Amy Miller and Sharon Russo.

DRS Program Reports

Field Rehabilitation Services

Commissioner Rothrock reviewed the Field Rehabilitation Services Division Performance Measure Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2009 as of September 30, 2009. Because of order of selection and the economic situation which is affecting hiring, many of the performance measures are down as compared to the same time last year. However, hourly earnings remain strong.

WWRC

Rick Sizemore referred to the previously distributed *WWRC Blueprint for Direction* and announced that the Life Skills Program will be expanded from 36 to 72 clients.

On June 24, 2009, WWRC will have a Grand Opening of the newly renovated Medical Rehabilitation Residential Facility that will be named Rothrock Hall in honor of Commissioner Rothrock and his many years of service to WWRC. Invitations will be sent to SRC members.

Amy Blalock has been hired as the new WWRC Admissions Director and is working closely with counselors to notify them of openings for VR clients.

Budget

Dr. Steidle reported on the status of the budget for State Fiscal Year 2009. As of March 2009, the agency had expended 24% of the budget, which is on target for the year.

Council Roundtable Reports

Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired Report (DBVI): Robin Metcalf reported that the last DBVI SRC meeting was devoted primarily to a discussion on the use of the ARRA funds.

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC): Cherie Takemoto distributed two informational bulletins regarding transition services: “Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services: Supporting Transition Aged Youth with Disabilities” and “Virginia Department of Rehabilitation Services: How it Works” written by Erica Lovelace, DRS Education Services Manager.

Virginia Assistive Technology Systems (VATS) Advisory Council: Mr. Simon reported that the next meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2009 at DRS Headquarters. With Mr. Simon's SRC term ending September 30, 2009, Chuck Benagh agreed to succeed Mr. Simon on this Council.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC): Sarah Liddle reported that the SILC met on April 23, 2009 at the Eastern Shore Community College in Melfa, Virginia. The overriding topic was the continued development of the upcoming Statewide Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) due to the Rehabilitation Services Administration in 2010. Procedures and guidelines continue to be formulated to ensure the input or public comment from individuals, state agencies, and organizations affected by the SPIL priorities. As of October 30, 2009 there will be three vacancies on the Council due to completion of terms. Individuals interested in being considered for a SILC appointment are encouraged to contact either Mary-Margaret Cash, interim staff to the SILC, or the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The next SILC meeting is scheduled to be held on July 22 & 23, 2009 in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Mental Health Planning Council: Florence Watt and Kathy Maybee attended this meeting at the Southside Training Center. During the meeting, there was discussion about the Wounded Warrior Program, legislation passed during the 2009 General Assembly, and revisions to the Public Participation regulations of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services.

Committee Reports

Internal Affairs Committee

Karen Baugh, Chair, reported that the Committee reviewed draft Attachments for the 2010 State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment.

For Attachment 4.2(c), the Committee recommended that the second SRC recommendation state: "The SRC supports the agency's plan to improve transition services by collaborating with other agencies serving youth who are hard to serve (juvenile justice, high school dropouts, foster care, and limited English proficiency) and should examine open cases and cases closed unsuccessfully (in status 28) to get a better picture of this population."

The Committee also recommended that the fourth SRC recommendation in Attachment 4.2 (c) be changed to read: "The SRC would like to continue to be apprised and consulted regarding the agency's need to remain in order of selection in FY 2010. The SRC supports the agency's plan to work towards once again being able to serve all eligible individuals with disabilities."

For Attachment 4.11(c)(1), the SRC suggested that an indicator be added to Goal 3 on the plans to create new Employment Networks under the Ticket to Work Partnership Plus Program.

It was suggested that the name for the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services be changed to Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), as this will be the agency's new name effective July 1, 2009.

For the next meeting of the Committee, DRS will provide information on the rehabilitation rate of students in transition, specifically the number of students who are not successfully rehabilitated, the reasons for this, and whether the students have dropped out of high school.

External Affairs Committee

Danny DeBoer, Chair, reported that Erica Lovelace, DRS Education Services Manager, discussed transition services provided by DRS. Ms. Lovelace explained that DRS has a cooperative agreement with the public school divisions in Virginia that describes the responsibilities of DRS and the division as it pertains to transition services. DRS is conducting outreach and career exploration, including summer activities or summer jobs, to improve high school outcomes. Employers are often more interested in the students acquiring "soft skills" rather than specific job skills. Transition coordinators, special education teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, and principals can make referrals to DRS. The DRS Counselor becomes a part of the student's Individualized Employment Plan team. Ms. Lovelace indicated that twice a year she sends electronic communications out to the Special Education Directors and the Superintendents of the schools to inform them of the transition services provided by DRS. She informed the Committee members that they could assist with DRS transition services by talking with principals, middle school children, and parents about DRS services.

Kathy Maybee will be talking further with Ms. Lovelace about what the SRC can do to work with DRS to further enhance transition services.

The Committee postponed until the next meeting discussions concerning the SRC Mission and Vision statements and the development of SRC Meeting Public Comment Guidelines.

Unfinished Business

Ms. Takemoto asked that Transition Services be placed on the August agenda under Unfinished Business. Each Committee needs to report on their research outcome.

New Business

None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. The next meeting will be held on August 10, 2009 at the DRS Headquarters in Richmond. The November 16-17 meeting and retreat will be held at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center.