

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
**QUARTERLY MEETING**  
**JANUARY 8, 2016 – STATEWIDE POLYCOM**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present**

Russ Cusack  
Rodney Gillund  
Kevin McDonough  
Sheri Wilson

Tim Davenport  
Vickay Gross  
Gillian Plenty Chief

Kirsten Dvorak  
Deborah Jendro  
Darcy Severson

**Members Absent**

Christy Coughlin  
Marshall Longie

Harley Engelman  
Darren Moos

Joseph Hall  
Sherry Shirek

Chairperson Vickay Gross called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

**Agenda**

An agenda item was added to discuss a change in meeting date for September 2016.

**Action: A motion was made by Tim Davenport and seconded by Kirsten Dvorak to accept the agenda as amended. Motion carried.**

**Approval of September 2015 Minutes**

**Action: A motion was made by Rodney Gillund and seconded by Darcy Severson to accept the SRC quarterly minutes from its last meeting on September 15, 2015. Motion carried.**

**Unified State Plan – Robyn Throlson and Susan Gunsch**

As a result of WIOA, the VR State Plan is now a part of the Integrated State Plan with our core partners, Job Service and Adult Ed. The initial narrative includes: an analysis of Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities; State Strategic Vision and Goals; State Strategy; and a description of how the core partners will collaborate to meet these goals and provide services to meet the needs of our citizens. Each of the core programs are also required to include program-specific requirements. VR's State Plan is in this section.

Robyn reviewed the State's goals and priorities with the Council.

**Action: A motion was made by Rodney Gillund and seconded by Gillian Plenty Chief to approve the state plan goals as presented. Motion carried.**

**DVR FFY 2015 Statistics – Warren Granfor**

Warren provided statewide FFY 2015 performance goal statistics including trend lines for applicants, eligibles, and plans. All goals were exceeded and all trend lines are

going up which allows DVR to feel confident in increasing goals for 2016. DVR is on track to meet the FFY 2016 goals.

### **Expanded Supported Employment Project – Russ Cusack**

Russ Cusack provided an update on the ND Expanded Supported Employment Pilots & Technical Assistance/Training.

- DVR contracted with Minot State to provide project coordination for the training and technical assistance. The TA & Training is available to four provider organizations who were awarded dollars for the ND Expanded Supported Employment Pilot Project. Michele Burney is the project coordinator with Minot State.
- In the first week of December, Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) team provided the first training opportunity to the four provider agencies, VR staff and DD Program Managers.
  - Training focused on the history and values of supported employment, organizational refinement, and discovery and career planning.
  - WISE will provide a total of 5½ training days per year during the next three years.
  - In addition, they will provide up to 4 hours per month of individualized technical assistance per agency and will offer eight distance technical assistance webinars per year.
  - The WISE staff will travel to each of the four pilot sites two times per year to provide on-site analysis of current employment practices and technical assistance. (The on-site visits will occur in February 2016.)
- A second in-person training for all the pilot projects and program staff will occur in March 2016.
- Monthly project management meetings occur via web-ex to address any issues or concerns that pilots are experiencing, but also for an opportunity for agencies to learn from one another as they discuss their progress towards meeting the goals of the pilots.

### **Regional 1 Update – Andrea Meyer, Regional Administrator from Williston**

Andrea Meyer provided an update for the Williston Regional VR Office.

- All performance goals were met for FFY 2015.
- Williston has a considerable number of job openings and the number of referrals is ahead of where they should be for this time of the year.
- Williston is experiencing a downward trend including layoffs and a drop in revenue for the local service industry.
- Crime rate is increasing with more theft and drug related crimes.
- The housing market is turning around. There are numerous houses on the market but they are not selling and rent has dropped some, but not substantially.
- Andrea reported a trend towards corporate businesses and stated it is not as easy to speak directly to managers and directors. This has impacted VR's ability to place individuals.

### **Region 7 Update – Tom Schiwal, Regional Administrator from Bismarck**

- Regional performance goals for FFY 2016 are on target or better.
- Staff will be working to increase appropriate referrals to DVR by reaching out to clinics and hospitals, specifically targeting occupational and physical therapists, and optometrists.
- The Bismarck VR Office has a vacant counselor position and will have another vacancy the end of January.
- Counselors will be assigned to one or more schools and will be present on specific days of the week to provide transition services and establish relationships with students.

### **Tribal Updates**

Gillian Plenty Chief, Standing Rock Vocational Rehabilitation stated the shared caseload numbers are way down. Gillian is talking with Tom Schiwal, VR Regional Administrator, about how they can collaborate to increase the number of shared cases.

Gillian has one transition specialist working with special education departments in the schools to get students ready for college this fall. This individual covers all of the high schools on the reservations and is stretched thin between North and South Dakota.

Gillian would like to see the Tribal 121's get together on a quarterly basis like she does with South Dakota.

Donna Thomas, Turtle Mountain Vocational Rehabilitation discussed a few challenges she is facing, including how to address the high unemployment rate in Rolette County. Donna has an individual working ten hours per week with transition students. Donna reported having three dual caseloads with the regional VR Office in Devils Lake and all three cases are transition students. Donna inquired about updating the On Common Ground Brochure.

### **Ad Hoc Executive Committee – Harley Engelman**

No report.

### **AdHoc Business Awards Committee**

No report.

### **Membership/Public Relations Committee – Darcy Severson, Chair**

The Council needs to recruit a Business/Industry Representative to replace Scott Burlingame. Sheri Wilson, VR Counselor Representative, submitted a letter indicating her first term expires June 30, 2016, and she will not be seeking a second term. DVR will work with the SRC on this recruitment. The Committee plans to consider town hall meetings in 2016.

### **Planning/Evaluation Committee – Kirsten Dvorak, Chair**

Kirsten reported on the new VR Survey that is being sent out to clients.

**Resource Committee – Sheri Wilson & Tim Davenport, Co-Chairs**

Sheri reported the staff survey has been completed and survey results are being reviewed and an overall report will be shared. Specific questions can be directed to LouAnn Nider.

Next meeting April 21-22, 2016.

A motion was made by Tim Davenport and seconded by Rodney Gillund to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.