

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
HOLIDAY INN, FARGO ND  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present**

Russ Cusack	Tim Davenport	Kirsten Dvorak
Harley Engelman	Rodney Gillund	Vickay Gross
Deborah Jendro	Darcy Severson	Sherry Shirek
Sheri Wilson		

**Members Absent**

Pat Anderson	Scott Burlingame	Christy Coughlin
Marshall Longie	Kevin McDonough	Darren Moos
Gillian Plenty Chief	Kelly Smeltzer	

Chairman Harley Engelman called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken and a quorum was NOT present. The agenda will be followed, however we will have discussion only until such time additional members are available to meet a quorum.

Chairman Harley Engelman informed the Council members Scott Burlingame and Kelly Smeltzer will have completed their second appointment on the Council prior to the next SRC meeting. This will also be Chairman Harley's last meeting as Chair and Vickay Gross will be taking over as Chair.

**Old Business:**

Chairman Harley Engelman constituted a committee to revisit the criteria for the business awards. The committee will work with VR to look at current criteria and make recommendations for change and the potential of the SRC taking the process over. This ad hoc committee is made up of Darcy Severson, Rodney Gillund, and Kirsten Dvorak. Members should connect with Patty Wanner and consult with LouAnn Nider.

This is Patty's last meeting as Liaison to the SRC. Helen Baumgartner will be taking over as SRC Liaison.

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – Russ Cusack**

Russ Cusack provided a brief overview of the history of the state plan. In the past, DVR has worked with the SRC on the state plan and in the future DVR is required to work with core partners (Job Service ND, Adult Basic Education, and TANF) in writing a 5 year state plan. The State Workforce Board will assign a state planning sub-committee. Russ proposed the SRC Planning and Evaluation Committee work with the sub-committee of the State Workforce Board. A new state plan must be submitted by March 2016. DVR will be holding public forums the beginning of November to receive

employer and consumer feedback. This feedback will be incorporated in the goals and objectives of the DVR state plan as well as the combined state plan. The SRC Planning and Evaluation Committee will give input on the plan as it is being developed. The SRC members will not write the plan but will provide input and guidance on the draft.

DVR will be reporting many more data elements to RSA than has been done in the past. DVR is working with core partners on an IT project that will analyze the data elements the core programs have in common. A system will be developed to capture and store these data elements to avoid duplication in the gathering of this data. The information will be verified rather than gathered again.

Rod Gillund inquired if there are questions that are unique to DVR. Russ indicated yes, each core program has questions that are unique and there are those that are common across programs. The definitions across the programs are different. Job Service is receiving some grant funds to analyze this across the board. Rod also inquired about the use of the data that is going to be collected. Russ stated the data will be used to conduct research studies.

Sherry Shirek inquired about what would happen here in ND if she went to Job Service. Russ shared information on the programs Job Service has to offer and talked about the partnership between DVR and Job Service.

DVR is not receiving any additional funds but have been directed to spend 15% of federal grant to serve students age 14-21 while in school. Job Service workforce system will spend up to 75% of their funds for out of school youth. Job Service did not receive any additional funds either.

### **Budget Update – Russ Cusack**

In comparison to surrounding states, DVR is doing quite well budgetary. DVR has projected the budget out for the remainder of this federal fiscal year 15 and the next federal fiscal year 2016 to begin October 1, 2015. The agency has adequate funds to serve all consumers.

Vickay Gross noted when making decisions, it is important to look at employment first initiatives. Russ provided information on the RFP to expand Supported Employment. The project will identify individuals in day supports to move them into competitive integrated employment. DVR has committed funds to four providers to include technical assistance. The total project will be around \$800,000 for three years. The move to assist individuals in sheltered workshops and day supports is being lead and paid for by DVR. DVS is working to develop evidence based models and will need to work with Developmental Disabilities (DD) to modify their plan and policies. Darcy Severson stated she looks at this as a pilot project for DVR to have data to know what is going to be needed in the future as far as interventions, policy change, etc.

Sherry Shirek inquired who sets criteria for supports needed in integrated employment? Russ stated DVR pays for initial job coach training and historically this has been

transferred to DD or Behavior Health Division for extended services. Natural supports can be developed.

### **ND State Provisional Hiring Initiative**

Chairman Harley Engelman provided a handout with a model and timeline for ND State Government to become a model for hiring people with disabilities. Fourteen plus states are involved with VR in some form of a hiring initiative. This initiative is a starting point and a base foundation to build off of. Russ Cusack stated a benefit is this would reduce the time involved in the hiring process which can be lengthy.

Harley spoke to the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and provided an overview of the initiative. Feedback from the Committee was very favorable.

Darcy Severson inquired about job carving opportunities. Chairman Harley feels this plan is a good starting point and that job carving opportunities could be looked at down the road.

Harley requested members review the draft and provide comments in a timely manner.

### **Tribal Updates**

No updates available.

### **National Statler Center – Employment Training Opportunities – Elizabeth Schmidt (Admissions Coordinator)**

Elizabeth Schmidt provided history of the National Statler Center. Statler Center is national rehabilitation program developed in 1999 and runs three transition programs for students who are blind, visually impaired, physically disabled, and learning disabled. They serve over 2,000 people per year from birth to sunset. The National Statler Center has become a vendor in the state of ND and is able to accept referrals. Elizabeth provided information on the admission process, requirements, and classes they offer.

**Quorum Present:** At 11:15 a.m., Deborah Jendro arrived. Chairman Harley Engelman requested the Council act on any business requiring a vote since a quorum is now present.

### **Agenda**

**Action:** A motion was made by Tim Davenport and seconded by Darcy Severson to accept the agenda. Motion carried.

### **Approval of July Minutes**

**Action:** A motion was made by Rodney Gillund and seconded by Vickay Gross to accept the SRC quarterly minutes from its last meeting on July 23-24, 2015. Motion carried.

### **Chair Elect Nominations and Voting**

Chairman Harley Engelman called for additional nominations for chair elect. No further nominations received. Darcy Severson had been nominated previously and remains the only nomination. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting in favor of Darcy.

### **Approval of Meeting Dates:**

January 8, 2016

April 21-22, 2016

July 21-22, 2016

Members discussed having the fall meeting conjunction with the 2016 Governor's Workforce and HR Conference on September 20 or going back to having it with the Annual VR Training Conference in October.

**Action: A motion was made by Rodney Gillund and seconded by Kirsten Dvorak to hold the fall meeting in conjunction with the 2016 Governor's Workforce and HR Conference in Bismarck in September. Motion carried.**

**Action: A motion was made by Rodney Gillund and seconded by Vickay Gross to accept all of the meeting dates as presented including the decision to have the fall meeting on September 20 per motion above. Motion carried.**

### **Approval of the Hiring Initiative Plan and Timeline**

**Action: A motion was made by Rodney Gillund and seconded by Vickay Gross to support moving forward the ND Provisional Hiring Program as presented by Chairman Harley Engelman.**

**Discussion: Russ Cusack recommended on item 4, that the letter will be signed by VR Director, not the Regional Administrator.**

**Rod modified the motion to accept with the change of DVR Regional Administrator being modified to read DVR Director. Rod and Vickay accept the amendment to the motion. Motion carried.**

### **Resource Committee – Sheri Wilson, Co-Chair**

The Resource Committee is attempting to get a baseline understanding of why individuals are terminating employment with the division. The turnover rate continues to be high. The employment termination questionnaire with DHS is not currently mandatory. A survey was developed in conjunction with Maria Gokim, Decision Support Services. The Committee is working to make this mandatory and to develop a letter to accompany the survey. The survey needs to be approved by Russ Cusack and will have to be presented to an Institutional Review Board before it can be implemented. If ready, would like to distribute this survey to all staff at the Annual VR Training. It is

recommended this survey be conducted once per year. Chairman Harley recommends reinforcing why this is being done when it is presented to staff.

Sheri is seeking Council input and recommendation for use.

**Action: A motion was made by Rodney Gillund and seconded by Darcy Severson to accept and implement the cover letter and the survey. Motion carried.**

### **Committee Breakouts**

The number in attendance was so few that we did not have individual breakouts.

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

Nothing to report.

### **Membership/Public Relations Committee – Vickay Gross, Chair**

Vickay discussed the town hall meeting proposal and further stated she does not feel there is adequate time to put this in place by October. Russ Cusack raised questions that need to be answered prior to this being pursued, specifically what are the expectations of DVR and will staff be expected to be available?

The meeting is intended to provide information to the public and to be broad reaching. It would not be very labor intensive and would be televised to potentially reach a broader audience. Vickay indicated a panel of experts would be established and a moderator would be available to screen calls. Calls are anonymous to create a safe environment.

Russ likes the concept of information sharing within the community. Russ would like to see something more targeted to drive referrals to DVR. Two areas DVR needs to reach are business and the medical community. Russ indicated DVR will provide staff for the panel.

Vickay will explore optional dates and sites for Bismarck and/or Fargo and will bring details back to Russ.

Darcy Severson will take over as the Chair of this committee due to Vickay moving into the Council Chair position.

Chairman Harley Engelman recommended a private sector employer to replace Scott Burlingame as one of four business/industry representatives.

### **Region 4 and 6 – Linda Kinzler, Regional Administrator from Grand Forks & Jamestown**

Grand Forks Regional VR Office Update

- The Grand Forks VR office has 7 counselors with an average caseload of 43.

- Grand Forks has one vision rehabilitation specialist who has served 96 individuals with a goal of 60 for the year.
- The average number of days in application status has dropped to 35 from 52 based on some strategic decisions made by staff.
- Grand Forks has seen over building of apartment housing but rent prices have not dropped.
- Linda provided a handout of VR performance statistics from the AWARE case management system.

#### Jamestown Regional VR Office Update

- The Jamestown VR office has 4 counselors with a combined case load of 215; majority in Barnes and Stutsman counties.
- Jamestown has one vision rehabilitation specialist who has served 95 individuals with a goal of 100 for the year.
- The average number of days in application status is 37.
- Jamestown has reached all performance goals by May of this year.
- Staff are building relationships with community providers and schools.
- Staff are looking to provide additional services in the classroom with teachers. This falls under the pre-employment transition services provision of WIOA.
- A large fertilizer plant that was projected to be built in Spiritwood has been withdrawn.
- Apartments have been overbuilt in Jamestown.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 8, 2016 via Statewide Polycom.

Meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.