

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETING MINUTES

June 11th AND June 12th, 2009

Best Western Ramkota Convention Center, Aberdeen, SD

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	Monte Tschetter Grady Kickul Beth Haug Craig Eschenbaum	Dan Rounds Cindy Koupal Chris Olson	Kathy Hassebrook Joe Rehurek Lyle Cook
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MEMBERS ABSENT:	Mary I'atala James Hayes Elaine Roberts	Lyle Cook Robert Kean Melissa Flor
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OTHERS PRESENT:	Bernie Grimme Christina Grimme Kim Crossan	Rich Eschenbaum Colette Wagoner, Staff Faith Ellis, Staff
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CALL TO ORDER: Monte Tschetter, Chairperson called the Board meeting to order at 4:30 pm following the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Luncheon and the Dr. Richard Pimentel training session.

WELCOME: Monte thanked everyone for his/her extra time and coming to Aberdeen today for this great event. Introductions were done around the room. Grady introduced Kim Crossan, with the Aberdeen DRS office.

OPENING ACTIONS: A quick reminder was given to follow the standard meeting protocol. Monte confirmed that everyone had a chance to review the agenda and asked if there were any additions at this time. Grady asked to add to the agenda the funding application submitted by Ryan Green for the Sioux Falls ADA Celebration; and Kathy asked if she could have a few minutes for an update on ERN. **Motion to approve the agenda as amended, Made (M), Seconded (S) and Carried (C).**

It was pointed out that the Aberdeen map previously mailed to the Board members had the meeting location for the following morning marked incorrectly; this was reviewed on newer city maps from the motel front desk.

Monte confirmed that all members had received the meeting minutes from the BVR March Meeting 11th, in Pierre. Monte asked if anyone had any changes or additions. Dan brought forward edits on pages 2 and 5. Staff noted his changes. **Motion to approve the March 11th meeting minutes as changed (M), (S) and (C).**

Next, the minutes from the BVR Executive Committee Conference call held May 28th, 2009, were briefly reviewed for possible additions or changes. **Motion to approve the minutes as written, (M), (S).** Grady outlined Ryan Green's funding proposal (see attached) that the Executive Committee reviewed. The request was for financial support of the ADA Anniversary Celebration to be held July 23rd in Sioux Falls. Grady informed members that if they approve the Executive Committee's minutes, that they would also be approving the \$1,000 funding request. **(C).**

TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: At this time, Monte opened the floor for public comment. Board staff announced that the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired agreed to provide \$5,000 in funding for 2009 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Members expressed appreciation for their generous support and asked staff, to please send a Thank You letter to them on the Board's behalf.

Next, Board staff stated that Shelly Pfaff, as Freedom To Work (FTW) Staff, had asked if the Board would consider writing a letter of support to submit with their FTW grant application. The general consensus was that yes, that would be fine, and asked Staff to take care of that.

DIALOGUE & DEBRIEFING OF YLF/PIMENTEL TRAINING:

Kathy Hassebrook expressed her sincere thanks to everyone for attending today's YLF Luncheon and for attending the Pimentel training

that was designed for human resource managers and employers. She felt this was a huge success. Today there were 216 people at the luncheon. She had already received numerous glowing comments from the other HR people in attendance, regarding Pimentel's message of how hard it is to understand how to help our returning veterans. Kathy gave a special thanks to Dan Rounds and Kim Crossan for all the hard work and time committed to YLF and the Employer Resource Network (ERN); many have appreciated it.

Grady also commented that the entire YLF week had been a huge success like always. The young people are energetic and now more ready than before to face some of the challenges ahead of them. Beth agreed that YLF is an extremely important, yet fun event, and she thought the entire luncheon ran smoothly. Cindy also added her thanks and praise for the YLF luncheon, said that a lot of people must have worked very hard and it went wonderfully. Dan added that he too, had heard directly from some of the HR persons that this topic of returning veterans really hit home and was quite the eye opener. Grady brought up that Dr. Pimentel mentioned being in the process of creating and polishing a whole new program designed to train employers and Human Resource personnel on how to better understand returning veterans and their needs and how to best serve them, with integration into the workplace being the key issue. Grady asked Bernie to be certain the State of SD gets a copy of the program from Richard Pimentel just as soon as it is released to the public. Grady stated he feels many SD men and women soldiers will be returning and it will have an impact on our workforce. Chris Olson mentioned that colleges and universities could utilize these training models also, with the number of students who also serve in the military. Grady thought that could work. He stressed this will be an important topic that the Board needs to stay proactively involved in.

DIALOGUE GOVERNOR'S AWARDS – PROCESS & LUNCHEON:

Grady reminded members that due to a blizzard in March, the Governor's Awards Luncheon was cancelled in an effort to keep travelers safely off the roads. A much smaller luncheon was held for

those who already traveled into Pierre the day before, in addition to the members of the BVR, the Board of SBVI, and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) who made it to Pierre. The joint meeting of the BVR, B/SBVI and SILC was held following the luncheon, however the numbers were low. Separate meetings for each of the entities were held the next day, again, with quite low attendance. It was an unfortunate thing, and it has yet to be resolved of how and when to bring the award recipients together with the Governor to receive their accolades and plaques. Grady explained that he has been in contact with the Office of the Governor to coordinate a date that works for the Governor and the recipients. Discussion was held regarding other ideas or options on how to proceed with the awards process (i.e., utilize the Fall Conference held in Huron, Oct. 13-15). Other ideas included changing the award title to eliminate the recipient's expectations of having the Governor present. It's understood that award winners can have hurt feelings if the Governor is not available. Other ideas were to have the recipients come to Pierre for a much smaller gathering with the Governor, on his available time schedule versus a large luncheon on a rigid schedule. The issue of travel is also a serious consideration for these events. Nothing was decided at this point. Grady offered to work with the Governor's office to schedule a date and time to bring in the recipients. Further discussion was delayed until morning.

Monte called the meeting to a close for the evening.

FRIDAY, JUNE 12TH, 2009: At 8:30 AM, Monte called the meeting to order. He expressed his wish that everyone had a good night in Aberdeen, and once more everyone was thanked for his or her time.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORTS:

- **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS** – Grady started by introducing Kim Crossan, from the Aberdeen DRS office, and thanked him for his additional hard work coordinating the YLF luncheon and ERN

training session. Kathy added her thanks to Kim as well, stating that it could not have happened without his extra help.

Grady continued by noting how time flies and that Monte's term is coming to an end on the Board. He thanked Monte for his dedicated commitment, and his quiet, calm manner that kept us on task and always moving forward. On behalf of the Board, Grady awarded Monte a plaque as a token of everyone's appreciation for his hard work and extra time.

Next, Grady announced that Monte has been appointed by the Governor to the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Grady complimented Monte and his willingness to continue serving South Dakotans with disabilities.

Grady reported that Monte brought to his attention a national initiative in the Social Security Administration with hiring additional staff to help with the workload, and recruiting individuals with disabilities. Pam Schwann, in Administration with the Huron Social Security office, is seeking to hire people with disabilities, thus Monte provided the Division as a contact and resource. To date the Division has turned in six resumes to her for hiring consideration.

Grady explained that the Business Leadership Network (BLN) in Sioux Falls is nine years old now, and that Mike Frost, the Executive Director, is no longer with this project. The Division has had a contract with Synergy, for the BLN for the last nine years. Grady and Bernie met with the BLN Steering Committee members from Sioux Falls and decided that they need to take a closer look at Sioux Falls and the needs of this community. The Division wants to continue with BLN and will be making recommendations to the Board on how to do that. The Division is planning on taking their time and listening to the recommendations of the Steering Committee and doing this right, and will keep the Board informed of the progress. Similar to ERN, we need to find a perfect match to

run BLN, a champion of sorts, who can take it by the reins and keep it strong.

- **AMERICAN RECOVERY & REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA)** – Grady said that this huge undertaking has consumed a vast majority of time at DRS recently. There was approximately \$540 million nationally given by the President’s stimulus package, with \$1.8 million coming to the Department of Human Services. He explained that the two Divisions received a total of \$1,800,000, and two years to spend this, which is over and above the amount normally received. Staff has been working on ideas to properly spend the stimulus funding without causing future headaches. He provided a handout, entitled, “List of Stimulus Funding Ideas for SD DRS”. With the number of people with disabilities in our state becoming unemployed who are now coming to VR for assistance, there will be a priority to helping upgrade people’s skills. Case services numbers are up from just 7% to 15%. By September, the Division must report to the federal government where and how the first installment payment received of \$720,000 was spent. These funds must be obligated by September 2011.

- **DRS BUDGET UPDATES** – Grady reported that by the end of the fiscal year, June 30th, DRS will have spent all of their budget, and they’re proud to report there are no waiting lists for any of the programs, even with the revenue shortfall. The Division will have approximately \$20 million for next year. He reminded us that the danger of the new stimulus money is that they are gone as soon as you get them. They cannot be expected to be around long term, it’s one-time money. He reminded members that the IL program lost \$390,000 in state funds; however, stimulus funding will be directed to this program. There are looming questions of what will happen in two years, which need to be explored. Also the neuromuscular program funding was cut, but the inventory is in tact.

- **BOARD/COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS** – Grady announced that an appointment was made to the Board, and that person is Matt Cain, the Executive Director at Prairie Freedom Center for IL, Sioux Falls. Matt brings plenty of experience and a “hard work ethic”. He will become our BVR representative who serves on the SILC. We’ll be welcoming Matt at our next meeting.

- **FOLLOW-UP/CHAIRS OF THE THREE BOARDS/COUNCILS** – Grady talked about the attempt to host a joint meeting in Pierre of the BVR, SILC and the B/SBVI, in conjunction with the Governor’s Awards Luncheon. Although low on numbers, it was quite successful. The feedbacks from all three groups was very positive, and all three basically are saying, yes, let’s continue getting the groups together. The idea was proposed to have the three Chairpersons host a joint conference call on a regular basis. Those persons are Ryan Green, Chair of SILC; Dave Miller, Chair of SBVI; and whomever we name today as the Chair of our BVR. The idea was also discussed to host a joint meeting of these three groups on the Luncheon date of YLF next summer, like we are today. The consensus from all was that this was a very valuable idea and the group approved. Grady asked Board staff to arrange the first conference call in the near future with the three Chairpersons.

- **CONTINUED DIALOGUE ON GOVERNOR’S AWARDS LUNCHEON PROCESS** - Grady said that based on yesterday’s initial conversation, he will try to arrange a date for the current group of award recipients to come to Pierre, meet with the Governor on his schedule and have a photo opportunity. It was proposed that a tour of the Capitol building be offered, and host a much smaller luncheon afterwards. Another idea discussed was hosting an awards luncheon involving the three boards/councils just discussed. Grady and Colette will keep the Board posted.

- **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) STRATEGIC PLAN - REHABILITATION SERVICES SECTION** - Grady and

Bernie gave a handout outlining the DRS/SBVI portion (5 pgs) of the larger DHS Strategic Plan (55 pgs total). They explained that if members are interested in reading the entire DHS plan it is available on their website. Grady reviewed the four guiding principles:

1. fiscal responsibility,
2. ethical actions and decision making,
3. culturally responsive services; and
4. no wrong door.

We have four main goals; they are lofty, yet they are attainable. They focus on person-centered services, children and family services, multiple disabilities or disorders, and quality assurance. This handout outlines actions being taken to reach the goals and accomplishments made to date. For full details, please see the handout.

FOLLOW-UP ON FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR END REPORT - This is to continue with the handout and details that Bernie provided at the March 11th meeting. At the time, there were some specific questions unanswered that he can now clarify. On page 1, in the pie chart showing where referrals come from, under the category of “Other” that showed 21%. He clarified that this category included referrals from employers, family and friends, ILC’s, the Internet, or other consumers and this will be clearer in the future.

Next Bernie provided a handout on the Summary of Consumer Satisfaction Survey, which is a requirement of the Rehabilitation Act. He reviewed the compiled results, which were basically satisfactory. It reviews three target areas of consumer satisfaction:

1. Satisfaction of Informed Choices;
2. Satisfaction with Services; and
3. Satisfaction of Employment Outcomes.

The first two of the three key indicators mentioned have marks between “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”, nothing lower than that. And the third

indicator on employment outcomes, scores between “Agree” and “Neutral”, which is again not too bad. It was inquired whether these surveys leave room for consumers to write general comments. Bernie explained that no, currently it is done on a numbering system to answer instead; however, this could be looked at by the Consumer Services Committee.

STATE PLAN SUBMISSION PROCESS – Bernie started with the next handout and explained how the Division obtains public input on the State Plan document. The Division and Board utilized a different approach in 2008 to gather public comment in developing the new State Plan; plus a handful of other times when other sources allowed input. The Board and Division have hosted meetings, attended other events and gained comment from case file reviews, surveys, etc.

Bernie explained that this entire State Plan is due to Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) by June 30th, 2009 electronically. Current copies and drafts are available now on the web if interested. Bernie reviewed the six attachments that are required to be updated annually and to accompany the state plan submission. He briefly reviewed each of these pointing out a few highlights.

Grady wanted to point out specifically, that in the handout marked, Attachment 4.11(e)(2): on page 12, in the table of indicators to be met; we know already that as a state, we will not hit one of the primary indicators, where as successful outcomes will be down considerably this year, however it will climb back up in a year or two. The Division will watch this and it will most likely turn around as the recession lightens.

Grady offered a huge Thank You to Bernie and staff for all the hard work on this “living document” that we work off all year. We’re very pleased with it again this year and have already received a preliminary verbal approval at this point, even though there will be some minor adjustments at RSA’s request.

PROJECT UPDATES:

- Workforce Development Council (Council) – Grady explained the Council had met in May. He said the Department of Labor (DOL) is feverishly working on plans focusing on how to spend the ARRA Stimulus money they'll be getting. This money is equal to an entire year's budget for them. Some key focus areas are jobs for youth, such as intern positions; and for other displaced employees. DOL is having preliminary discussions with the Department of Education on utilizing the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), which is an assessment tool to test a person's critical areas of employment readiness skills, including soft communication skills as well as academic and technical skills. These assessments are in a standardized testing format similar to ACT tests. They are scored or graded on a three-tier system, and employees can use them to show perspective employers when job hunting. Employers can use these certificates as a way to gauge an applicant's readiness to do the job at hand. The Division can utilize these tools to assess where people need help, determine their training needs, and help them get better jobs. Grady reported that the numbers they're working with are staggering, in all of 2008, DOL reported just 2,200 total layoffs in SD; and to date, our state has experienced over 7,500 in the first quarter of 2009 alone. Thanks to all this, the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund is being depleted rapidly. DOL hopes to have the new National Career Readiness Certificate assessments rolled out for public use within one, maybe two years. Joe asked, when taking these assessments, is a person's disability taken into consideration when grading or scoring them? Grady said that yes, since DRS is going to be one of DOL's biggest clients using this tool, that yes, they're building that into consideration.

- **Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)** – Grady mentioned how on the IL front, the new process of how IL centers are reimbursed from the state is going better. It's only been a few weeks, changes are being implemented and blocks are being worked out. He said that the SILC will meet in Fort Pierre next week, June 16th-17th.

➤ **Future's Initiative Project** – It was explained that this is a core group of five DRS employees who applied and were accepted into the program where they work on special projects. There are two staff from the Yankton office, including Joe Rehurek, two people from Sioux Falls, and one in Aberdeen. These five staff are on a three-year cycle, then new applicants, maybe only 2-3 at a time, will be rotated in. This current group has been working on revamping brochures, revising policies and trainings, revising the service descriptions' policy, assisted with the Dr. Richard Pimentel trainings, reviewed the World of Work assessments, revised the IL assessment, and presented at the recent CIL Staff Training held in Chamberlain. A member asked how projects were selected and Joe responded that selections were based on their own interests and strengths, and how well the project idea tied in with the Division's goals. The staff at the state office provides final approval. Future's members submit a written project plan, including timelines, goals, how to assess it, and a plan for reviewing the outcomes. Joe said he has really enjoyed being a part of this group. It's been a very informative, learning process, not to mention lots of fun getting to know staff from across the state. He said that as VR counselors, it has given them a huge sense of accomplishment and team camaraderie. Plus, because these projects are coming directly from the people in the trenches the things they're working on directly impacts those they are serving.

PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS: Grady explained that the Executive Committee had met and is bringing forward the following proposed slate of officers for the Board's consideration:

Chairperson - Beth Haug;
Vice Chairperson - Dan Rounds; and as
Member At Large – Elaine Roberts.

Motion to nominate Beth Haug as Chairperson of the Board, (M), (S). Grady called for any additional nominations for Chair. Per Robert's

Rules of Orders, he called for any additional nominations a second time, and again a third time. Upon hearing no other nominations, nominations were closed and a vote was taken. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to nominate Dan Rounds for Vice Chairperson (M), (S).

Grady called for any additional nominations. He called for any additional nominations a second time, and third time. Upon hearing no other nominations, nominations ceased, and it was held to a vote, **Motion Carried.**

Motion to nominate Elaine Roberts as Member At Large, (M), (S).

Grady called for any additional nominations. He called for any additional nominations a second time, and third time. Upon hearing none, nominations ceased, and it was held to a vote. **Motion Carried.**

Grady expressed his thanks to those who have served and for their dedication to the Board and welcomed the new officers to their posts.

Monte, as the new past Chair, had some business that he had to leave for, and the gavel was officially passed to Beth Haug. One last, collective thank you from the Board was given to Monte for his hard work and his friendship.

OTHER BUSINESS: Kathy provided an ERN update, starting with a huge thank you to all for attending the YLF luncheon and ERN training yesterday. She's very proud that it all went so well, and the training was highly received by the other area HR people who attended. The \$1,000 gift as part of the Pinnacle Award is already earmarked for the October ERN event and will be spent wisely. Kathy added that she really hopes the Board will not lose focus of the ERN project and its progress. She's officially proposing that ERN be a standing item on all meeting agendas. She also feels more needs to be done in different communities, to keep it sustained in its own regard. She talked about keeping the website up to date and getting youth involved. Another idea she proposed is to have it assigned as a Future's Initiative Project. Another member suggested using the Navigator position through DOL as an ERN contact. Grady agreed these are good ideas to consider, and that we

need to somehow maintain the work that ERN has accomplished and document it in a written plan. Yesterday's training presentation by Dr. Pimentel only drives home the fact that we, as VR counselors and such, need to be much more tightly connected with the employer side of issues, and ERN will only help that cause. Dan talked about bringing together people, including agencies, for this common goal. Grady state the Division will make this commitment but it will take all of us to decide how to move forward, it's an investment in the future. Perhaps it needs to be a combination of ERN and BLN as a starting point.

Bernie handed out flyers on the SD RehabACTion Fall Conference, which will be at the Crossroads Hotel Convention Center, in Huron, October 13-15th. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. The keynote speaker will be Geri Jewell. Her presentation will be on Valuing Diversity and Celebrating Abilities. For more information visit www.SDRehabACTion.org

CLOSING ACTIONS:

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: Grady mentioned adding ERN as an item to all future agendas. He also reminded Bernie that we should stay abreast of Pimentel's program on Returning Vets to the Workplace, which should be a train-the-trainer type program that we need to incorporate into VR staff trainings.

Dan brought up a previous discussion of having Dr. Cooch present again, and he thinks that we need to push that out to the December meeting because Dr. Cooch will not have all the survey details analyzed and ready by the September meeting.

It was brought up to add the Governor's Awards Luncheon and Awards process to the next agenda regarding the status of things, possible changes, if any, for the future.

BLN was another topic proposed for the next meeting agenda, but this could be delayed until Sioux Falls Steering Committee has a clearer vision for the future. Dan brought up how the state DOE and DOL now

have a new online assessment program for students called, Career Cruising. He thinks it would be great to have a live demo of that product to help understand how counselors are using it and how Vocational Rehabilitation could benefit from it. Grady said he'd bring it up at the next meeting with DOL.

NEXT MEETING: After some discussion, it was agreed that the Board should try to meet in conjunction with the Council on Developmental Disabilities on Sept. 30th and October 1st, in Fort Pierre. Staff will work on arrangements.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn the meeting – (S) (C). Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. by our new acting Chair, Beth Haug. She thanked them for their vote of confidence in her and for attending this week.