

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BOARD)
MARCH 22-23, 2007
BEST WESTERN RAMKOTA – RAPID CITY

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jessie Easton, Kathleen Hassebrook, Beth Haug, Brady Kerkman, Grady Kickul, Thomas Kober, Dan Rounds, Shelly Schock, Kati Seymour, Larry Tolzin and Monte Tschetter. MEMBERS ABSENT: Melissa Flor, Mary l'atala, Ron Ronshaugen and Kati Seymour. OTHERS PRESENT: Bernie Grimme, Sheryl Logan, Shelly Pfaff, Colette Wagoner and Lorie Jirschele. Interpreters were Julie Paluch and Katie Peterson.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Chairperson Tom Kober brought the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. (MT). He welcomed all in attendance and asked everyone to introduce him/herself. OPENING ACTIONS: REMINDER OF MEETING PROTOCOL – Tom reviewed meeting protocol and asked everyone to raise their hands high when voting or waiting to be recognized. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Grady asked that he might postpone discussion on Order of Selection until after the 3:00 p.m. break. Tomorrow, additional public comments will follow discussion on nominations, stipends and terms of Board members. Staff asked for discussion time for the evening's public meeting to be held at Behavior Management Services. **MOTION MADE (M) TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA AS REVISED, SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).** APPROVAL OF MINUTES – BVR DECEMBER 11-12, 2006 MINUTES – **MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 11-12, 2006 BVR MEETING MINUTES – MSC.** EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MARCH 2ND MINUTES – **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 2ND, 2007 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES – MSC.**

TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: Staff passed around a thank you note received from Kathy Hassebrook regarding the Aberdeen employer seminar and the public meeting. Kathy added that she appreciated the new member training given on March 15th and thanked members for funding the employment seminar. Tom thanked

Monte Tschetter for filling in for him at the Governor's Awards Luncheon. Staff announced that they had received Lynn Boettcher Fjellanger's resignation from the Board as a result of her leaving her position with SD Parent Connection. Copies of Lynn's letter were made available to anyone interested, along with registration forms for Mike Walling's Employment & Benefits Training being held across the State in April.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Shelly Pfaff, Executive Director of the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities (Coalition) explained what the Coalition has been tracking during the 82nd legislative session. She indicated that 72 different bills had been tracked resulting in 28 being signed by the Governor, 32 deferred to the 41st day, 10 tabled and 2 failed. Shelly said that the legislative process was something that she truly believed in and felt that all South Dakotans should be involved with. She described a recent meeting with Senator Bob Gray who expressed surprise in the variety of bills that the Coalition monitored; he thought they only tracked bills dealing with disability. Shelly noted that the bills featured on the Coalition's list serve dealt with issues that affect all people i.e., minimum wage, health insurance and Medicaid. She described how the email alert format had changed this year allowing viewers to see the many stages to the legislative process. Some bills were specific to persons with disabilities and pertained to such issues as cochlear implants, people first language, Medicaid for children, "disabled" hunters, tax refunds for persons with disabilities and the elderly and mileage allowances for transport of children in special education. Of special interest was HB 1312 or the "People First Language" bill, which came to prove the power of the individual. Shelly noted that a Coalition member first approached a legislator for sponsorship of the bill. The legislator agreed on the condition that he would do so after he was re-elected. When he won re-election, the bill moved forward. Shelly stated that Ryan Green also worked on the bill. After it was drafted, it was circulated to a variety of disability organizations for their input. Shelly stated that the process was a learning experience; it became evident that the disability community did not always speak with one

voice or agree to the proper language to be used. The bill was then brought before committee where there were numerous proponent testimonies and no opponent testimony. However, much to many people's disappointment, the bill was deferred to the 41st day. Shelly said that the result went along party lines and her sense was that the majority of committee members did not believe the content of the bill needed to be legislated. She added that a positive result came out of the process; House Concurrent Resolution 1007 passed both houses with every legislator with the exception of one voting for the resolution. The entire process brought a lot of reaction from across the State in the form of letters to the editor etc. A handout outlining Concurrent Resolution 1007 was circulated to members (see attached). Shelly indicated that as she read different bills this session, she identified language that could be offensive to some people. She said that we must keep watch in the future and let our feelings be known, as the resolution is not binding. Shelly asked that anyone who wished to be part of the e-mail listserve, to please let the Coalition know. She said that the Coalition encourages people to be a part of the process; we give our power away sometimes and it is the "peoples' process". She continued that we elect legislators to represent us so we should be participating. Shelly said that it was her pleasure to be with the Board and that if she could be of any assistance, to please let her know. Grady thanked Shelly for the regular legislative updates and stated that he turns to them often during session. He noted that people do not need to belong to the Coalition to receive this valuable service, but that they do welcome the support of new members. Grady stated that he listened to the testimony on HB 1312 and that it was outstanding. When it was deferred to the 41st day, many people were surprised. Grady stated that it was a good learning experience; it does not always go the way you think it should/will. He added that the Governor vetoed five bills, so they would wait and see if the legislators override any of the vetoes when they come back to Pierre. Shelly Schock noted that when she receives the Coalition updates, she sends them onto her e-mail bank. Shelly Pfaff answered that was what the Coalition wanted to hear.

ORDER OF SELECTION – CONTINUED DISCUSSION: Bernie Grimme distributed an Order of Selection Update – March 19, 2007 (see attached). Grady reported that the Division and the Board have struggled with the idea of implementing an Order of Selection (OOS) over the past few years. He stated that this had become one of the “necessary evils” of the public service delivery system due to inadequate funding. He continued that demands for services far outreach the resources available. Grady stated that they had worked hard to put together an OOS option in the State Plan, provided extensive training to DRS employees to implement OOS on October 1, 2006. Consumers in categories 2 & 3 were placed on waiting lists. Since then, there has been the opportunity to review DRS resources. Grady indicated that on April 1st, they would open up services to the 50 category 2 consumers who have been waiting the longest. Bernie indicated that they would be using this type of chart to review OOS at future meetings. He stated that 704 people were made eligible for services in the last six months with the majority in the most significant disability category. He explained that the percentages of people in each category were very close to what DRS had estimated. As of yet, there have been no classification appeals filed. DRS does a 90-day telephone follow-up with those who are placed on the OOS waiting list. He added that in February, DRS completed case file reviews on one-third of the newly eligible consumers. Bernie added one question that was always asked: “was the priority category correct”. He said that these case file reviews offered some quality assurance to the process, and as a result, further training on category determination would be offered to staff. Kathy asked what services these consumers were looking for and if there were other sources from which to provide those services. Bernie answered that many consumers indicate what field they wish to work in and what specific services they would need to accomplish their goal. He added that consumers were provided referral resource information. Kathy asked if this method was working. Bernie answered that DRS does not capture information from outside services. Kathy stressed that because of the waiting list; people who need services might not be receiving them. She added that DRS should develop partnerships

with outside agencies/organizations to provide alternative services. Her fear was that some people might get frustrated with waiting for services and give up. Grady noted that as the process evolved, they would be in a position to capture some of this information; DRS will begin to find out what happens to these people in the future. He agreed that it was critically important to find ways in which to deal with those on the waiting list in the meantime. Dan indicated that other states are in the same process and he wondered if they would be able to provide feedback to SD. Grady stated that other states waited too long to start an OOS, and now they are so far behind that they will never catch up. He gave the example of Washington State that has over 10,000 persons on its waiting list for services. Grady noted that SD wishes to have minimum negative impact on its citizens who wait for vocational rehabilitation services. Further discussion ensued on the following topics:

- Development of a questionnaire for counselor use
- Can service costs per client be limited
- Forecasting of case services budget
- Applications for services and expenditures per person below last year's levels
- Examples of individuals' disabilities that fit into category 3
- Alcohol/drug use as part of a disability

Grady stressed that when OOS was implemented, DRS had significant concerns, but Board members were filling a critical role by helping to make the best of an unpleasant situation. Bernie added that he would draft questions for those consumers who are just coming off the waiting list to receive services, and that he would bring them to a future meeting.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT: FFY2006 YEAR END REPORT – Copies of the FFY 2006 Year End Report were distributed (see attached) and Bernie reviewed some of its sections. Monte noted that time spent from application to eligibility has dropped 25% in two years, a good trend. Grady said that he would be satisfied with a

30-31 day turnaround, and that consumers were entitled to a quick eligibility process. Bernie added that when people apply for services, they are often applying for SSI at the same time. Grady referred to page 10 of the report indicating that these were the referral agencies that they share with consumers on the waiting list. Referring to page 15, Grady stated that they support raising the minimum wage to \$7.25, but that an increase would add over \$100,000 to the total wages and benefits paid by the Projects Skills Project. Bernie spoke to the responses to the consumer satisfaction survey questions that were developed by the Consumer Services Committee and the fact that DRS has not seen any significant changes from year to year, with the exception of lower satisfaction with earning levels. Anyone with questions about the FFY 2006 Year End Report was asked to contact Bernie or Grady. OFFICE RESTRUCTURING – A document entitled “Office Restructuring Effective March 24, 2007” was distributed (see attached). Bernie reviewed the content of the handout. Grady said that the office restructuring mainly had a supervisory impact and that it was not changing territories nor making people change to different counselors. DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS – Grady asked the Executive Committee to do something for Lynn Boettcher Fjellanger to commemorate her years of service on the Board. He then welcomed Rapid City DRS District Supervisor Sheryl Logan. Grady read excerpts from the March 7th “Capital Journal” article entitled “Budget Reflects Slowdown in Federal Aid”. He said that state agencies are seeing a slowdown in the streams of federal funding for their programs, and he stressed the importance of discussion of funding cuts. Grady stated that VR had not been insulated from these cuts i.e., cost of living adjustment (COLA) has been eliminated from the next fiscal year budget. The Department of Labor (DOL) has been forced to close almost all of the Career Learning Centers in SD, and the remaining will be substantially smaller. SD is in a “Medicaid crunch”; the State’s responsibility has become overwhelming. Grady stated that in order to provide the same level of care to the same number of people, an additional \$18,000,000 from the SD general fund would be required. He indicated that these issues have become divisive between providers and agencies. Grady stressed that we

cannot let this happen in SD; we have to collaborate and cooperate like never before. He used the Employer Resource Network in Aberdeen as an example of creativity in coming up with new solutions that do not cost a lot. He urged the Board to become proactive, to find other ways in which to serve VR consumers. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES (MAWD) – Grady reported the Division, working with Black Hills Special Services Cooperative (BHSSC) and South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities (Coalition) on the Freedom to Work Project has amended the State Plan to include MAWD. He noted that eight working individuals are currently receiving MAWD benefits. Grady said that they have only been advertising MAWD by word of mouth, but that they planned on doing a rollout of the program with brochures etc. They are purposely bringing the program along at a slow pace to make sure that it is right. DRS BUDGET UPDATE – Grady reported that there were three months left in FY 2007. Funding has not been keeping pace with demands, but they will come in on budget. He stated that as of July 1st, \$55,000 would be made available for provider inflation, \$125,000 to serve five additional consumers on the Assisted Daily Living Services Waiver (ADLS) and \$120,000 for case services increases. The total SFY 2008 budget for rehabilitation services will be \$21,000,000. Grady said that we cannot expect more from the State, but we must hold on and continue to provide services. REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (RSA) ONSITE VISIT – Grady reported that a five-person team from RSA would be in SD for five days in June. Sue Rankin-White, our RSA Liaison will be one of the team. In preparation for the review, stakeholders including representatives from the Board, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), centers for independent living (CILs) and the Coalition participated on a conference call with RSA. Grady indicated that there is a three-year review cycle and that SD is included in year one. Western Resources for disABLED Independence (WRDI), the CIL in Rapid City will receive an onsite review June 18-20. IL SPECIALIST UPDATE – Grady stated that IL Program Specialist Greg Brandner left his position. Grady said that he was appreciative of Greg's many years of service, and he was pleased to announce that Denise White

has been hired to take this position. Denise, a registered nurse comes from the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Grady noted that Denise has specialized in Medicaid and Medicaid waivers and has worked with provider agencies for a number of years.

FREEDOM TO WORK (FTW) PROJECT UPDATE: Grady reported that the Freedom to Work Project Leadership Council (LC) has been re-funded for an additional four years by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This will bring in approximately \$500,000 each year to work for systems change within the state Medicaid program. Grady noted that FTW seeks to overcome barriers to employment for persons with disabilities, the most significant of which is a lack of healthcare coverage. He stated that funding for the project is contingent on reaching yearly benchmarks. At the last LC meeting in February, they discussed a variety of issues including strategic planning and setting a course for the future. Grady spoke of the Employer Resource Network (ERN) that has been developed in Aberdeen. Kathy Hassebrook and Dan Rounds have been instrumental in getting ERN off the ground. On March 15th, an employer seminar and public meeting was held in Aberdeen in conjunction with Aberdeen's Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) group. He added that Tim Gard, a polished humorist with a positive message for persons with disabilities was the keynote speaker. Grady said that he and Dan had met with Steve Stewart to discuss the WorkWorld (WW) software noting that the WW project had taken a negative turn when the Social Security Administration withdrew its funding on a national level. He stated that without this funding, there had not been much activity. The decision was then made to contact Virginia Commonwealth University to let them know that SD would be discontinuing the WW contract, but software updates would still be available on an individual basis. Grady stated that the majority of consumers preferred to work with a benefits specialist or case manager, but this was not to say that WW could not be resurrected in the future.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (WDC) UPDATE: Grady reported that the last WDC meeting was held on January 18th in Pierre. Much of the discussion centered on the de-funding of SD Career Learning Centers (CLC). He noted that at least six CLC executive directors had left their positions already and funding for the centers ends in June. Grady indicated that a few of the centers might be able to keep their doors open by dramatically reducing their level of services. He mentioned that the Board partners with the WDC on the State Unified Plan. Under the Workforce Investment Act, the WDC plan is due May 1st and the Board's VR plan must also be submitted at that time. Grady announced that the next WDC meeting would be on April 5th in Pierre, and that he had been assigned to the committee reviewing their plans. The questions arose as to whether WDC meetings were open to the public and if they would have any comments about technical schools and who governs them. Grady answered that these meetings were indeed open to the public; the April 5th meeting would be held in conference room 3 of the Kneip Building at 10:00 a.m. He also stated that technical schools were governed under the Department of Education and that no one representing those schools was a member of the WDC.

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC) UPDATE: Grady reported that the SILC met earlier that week in Pierre. The most pressing issue was that of funding of services for the coming year. He stated that they had been struggling with a new funding formula for the Centers for Independent Living (CILs). . The Funding Sub-committee made its recommendations, but they will only affect new funds coming into the system. Their biggest fear was of two centers gaining substantial funding with the other two losing. Grady said that they received significant backlash about the funding formula from constituency from two of the centers. It has been difficult and divisive at times he stated, but now it has all been settled; SILC members have come together to support the formula. Grady stated that IL is seriously under funded and that the solution would have to come from the federal government. He noted that SD receives \$300,000 in federal aid for IL, and that SD has to provide a 10%

match in funds. However, SD's IL budget is \$1.1 million, so the State obligates substantially more in matching funds than is obligated by law and these dollars come out of the State's general fund. Grady noted that the annual CIL staff training would be held April 10-12 at Cedar Shore Resort in Chamberlain. The next meeting of the SILC is May 31st and June 1st in Pierre.

EVENING FOCUS GROUP: Staff passed out an outline for the evening meeting at Behavior Management Systems (BMS) (see attached). Members were told about monthly BMS consumer employment support meetings and that tonight they would be asked to join in the dialogue. Discussion would be later documented for the State Plan. Details of the evening meeting were then discussed. Grady stated that currently one out of every three VR closures in SD is a person with mental illness. About 15 years ago, very few persons with this type of disability were employed because generally, they require a lot of support. Grady added that peer support groups like the one this evening have helped greatly.

The meeting recessed at 4:00 p.m. MT.

The meeting reconvened on Friday, March 23rd at 8:35 a.m. MT.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Tom welcomed everyone in attendance and asked them to introduce themselves. MEETING PROTOCOL REMINDER – Tom reviewed meeting protocol.

TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: Dan distributed announcements for the 2007 RehabACTion Fall Conference (see attached). He noted that Richard Pimentel would be the keynote speaker and that a documentary movie about Pimentel's life entitled "The Music Within" had been produced.

BVR COMMITTEE REPORTS: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Staff indicated that since the December meeting, one consumer was supported in attending the Fall Conference in Spearfish with strategic

planning funds. Two consumers have applied for support in attending the Mid-Winter Conference and both were accepted. One consumer's request to attend a Special Education Conference was denied because it was not employment related. Staff indicated that as part of consumer stipend requests, they are required to submit follow-up reports on their training. Copies of reports submitted by Rose Clifford and Catherine Alexandra were distributed (see attached).

CONSUMER SERVICES COMMITTEE – UPDATE ON GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (STATE PLAN ATTACHMENT) – Brady reported that the Consumer Services Committee (CSC) had met at the end of January to work on State Plan related items - Goals and Strategies. Copies of the document were distributed (see attached). He stated that in the future, Board activities would also be included. Brady asked members to review the document and to let the Committee know if there should be any additions or corrections. Bernie noted that CSC members held multiple meetings on this project and used a variety of informational sources including public meetings, the last Mid-Winter Conference, case file reviews and the past State Plan. Bernie then reviewed some of the points contained in the document. He stated that the CSC might consider this as a yearly process, and that they have done some really good work on it. Brady added that the Committee welcomed any comments or questions and asked Board members to be in contact with Bernie or CSC members. Grady said that he would like to recognize before the Board the work this Committee has done. He stated that the many changes within RSA had been frustrating. DRS has been extremely concerned because RSA had informed states that past procedures on state plans were incorrect, but had no formal guidance on the matter. He indicated that the strengths and weaknesses analysis (SWAT) was excellent and the goals were clear and concise. They targeted the priorities that must be addressed in the next five years and came up with measurable areas where we can demonstrate improvement. Grady believed RSA could use this document as a template. He tried to contact Sue Rankin-White about the Committee's results, but could not reach her because of her schedule. He said that he would try to keep her informed in the future. Grady asked CSC members to look

at one more item, the Mission Statement. He said that the Statement was dated and could use a new look for the future, but at the same time remain concise and reflect what DRS is charged to do. PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEE – OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED 2007 NDEAM ACTIVITIES – Larry reported that the DRS District Offices had submitted proposals for funding for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). A summary of the NDEAM proposals and the Committee’s recommendations was distributed and reviewed (see attached). Staff requested that the Board take action on the recommendations. Discussion ensued. One member asked how funding support for each community was determined. Larry answered that committee members go over each community’s proposal and then come up with their recommendations. Brady asked if funding is out of the District Offices and Grady answered that no, it was not; they feel it is better operating as a whole. He stated that DRS also looks at the proposals and that some communities provide cost sharing for the events. Tom asked for action to be taken on the recommendations for NDEAM. Staff indicated that the Executive Committee gave their guidance on total dollars allotted in the amount of \$12,000, that in the past the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (BSBVI) supported this event and that DRS would continue to make up the difference between the \$12,000 and the recommended funding of \$13,262.50. Grady added that supporting NDEAM is one of the single wisest things the Board has done.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE NDEAM FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS – MSC.

Grady asked members to participate in any nearby NDEAM activities because their attendance means a lot to the sponsoring communities. REPORT ON GOVERNOR’S AWARDS LUNCHEON – Staff noted that they were still waiting for a few Governor’s Awards Luncheon payments and bills. The Board obligated up to \$1,500 and BSBVI donated \$500 toward the luncheon. Two hundred two tickets were sold and all but one of the winners were present. Sheryl Logan, DRS District Supervisor in Rapid City accepted the award on behalf of the Belle Fourche Pizza Hut. Monte said that this was the second or third time that he had attended the awards and he found each one a heartwarming experience. All had

been well attended and the winners were very appreciative. Dan said he was impressed that the Mayor of Mitchell was there. Grady indicated that the Governor was unable to attend so Secretary of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Jerry Hofer presented the awards in the Governor's stead. Grady added that Secretary Hofer would make every effort to attend the next Board meeting and that he had met with the SILC this week in Pierre. Grady acknowledged South Dakota Advocacy Services and the Client Assistance Program who made several nominations for the awards and did area press releases. He stated that he looked forward to the Awards again next year.

STATE PLAN SUBMISSION PROCESS: A document entitled "2008 State Plan Public Meetings – Division of Rehabilitation Services" was distributed (see attached). Bernie reported that RSA had made changes in the instructions for the State Plan and that DRS only received these changes a month ago, which put them a little behind. Though the changes are not significant, both the preprint and the attachments are being redone. He stated that the preprint repeats the Act or the regulations and occasionally gives options like OOS. None of the options have changed in the preprint, but the order of items will change. Bernie indicated that the 14 attachments would all have to be redone (renumbered). He said that SD is in the process of updating their web page software, but after that is finished, a draft of the State Plan will be added. Bernie handed out two documents: "Preprint of the State Plan" and "Draft State Plan Attachments" (see attached). Grady noted that SD had been trying for some time to start a graduate program in VR for some time and finally got one established. Recently, DRS has hired one of the first graduates of the VR masters program. He stated that this would raise the level of competition for job openings in the State and also increase the quality of personnel within the department. Grady suggested that it might be beneficial to have two instructors come and speak about the VR masters program. Bernie added that the Division has done a lot of collaboration with SD State University on program and that they might expand text within the State Plan to cover this. Bernie then reviewed

some of the State Plan Attachments. He said that more work needed to be done on the attachments i.e., Statewide Needs Assessment and comments from the two public meetings. Further discussion ensued on the State Plan process. Grady stated that the draft State Plan and later the finalized State Plan must be presented to the WDC. He said that this has been a difficult process; they are in their fourth year of extension of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). If Congress moved more quickly and passed WIA and the Rehabilitation Act, we would be forced to submit a whole, new document by October 1st. Grady described the State Plan as the charter and guarantee that DRS must go by; it is the ultimate protection of our funding. Dr. Easton asked if there was a chance the government might change this protection. Grady answered yes, block granting of funds had been added to the Act, which to date has not been passed. Bernie added that the Preprint mirrors the Act/regulations, much of which is there for the protection of rehabilitation services. Bernie asked that if anyone had questions to please e-mail him.

Staff asked that CSC members gather at the end of the Board meeting to schedule their next meeting. Dan asked if committees could have the opportunity to meet for a few moments before their reports during regular meetings.

DIALOGUE ON PUBLIC MEETINGS (ABERDEEN & RAPID CITY):

ABERDEEN - Kathy reported that the employer seminar/public meeting luncheon held in Aberdeen was a fantastic homerun and that she appreciated the funding. Marketing efforts were successful, and there was a huge turnout (130) with the majority of attendees staying for the luncheon. Kathy recommended simplifying the process in the future by having only one facilitator/note taker at each table. She stated that there was some confusion with the different colors of the questions. She said that perhaps they could focus on two questions: what are we doing right and what do we need to do better. Four major businesses were included in the vendor booths and Kathy stated that this was an effective way to show partnership. The HR

group appreciated the opportunity to showcase their businesses, and the event provided an opportunity to show what we can do for them. Katy stated that the whole event proved to be very worthwhile and that it would be effective to get this going in other communities. Grady added that he could not agree more and that this was a very exciting event. He said that attendees were interested in talking about the economic and job climate in the Aberdeen area. He stated that the discussion also focused on transportation and housing because of the large meat packing plant coming to their area. Grady wanted employers to know that those in the public sector are there to help in any way they can and that DRS wants to design its programs to meet their needs. He indicated that the partnership between employers and ERN was developing very well. He thanked Kathy, Dan and Kim Crossan for all their hard work. Dan reiterated that he gets paid to do this, but that Kathy does it on her own time and that Kim goes over and beyond his duties. He also stated that staff of the Board and FTW worked on various aspects of the event. Dan indicated that the process must be documented so that we can identify how we can do better. He thanked SD RehabACTion for acting as fiscal agent for the event. Dan said that three consumers have found employment as a result of ERN and that it has opened many other doors. Kathy added that many employers have never interviewed or hired people with disabilities because of; this process is breaking down barriers. Dan mentioned that BSBVI donated \$500 towards the Aberdeen event. Grady commended BSBVI for their partnership with these types of valuable events. **MOTION TO PUBLICLY THANK THE BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED FOR THEIR PARTNERING AND MANY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OVER THE YEARS – MSC.** The motion passed unanimously. RAPID CITY – Dan stated that Teryl Pickard from Behavior Management Services (BMS) did a great job coordinating last night's event with the Board and that there were many personal stories shared. Members shared some of the dialogue from their tables:

- A Native American youth told about his four brothers who had committed suicide and how he himself had tried to kill himself twice. The young man is now a cook at the Mall.
- An individual originally from California who had been incarcerated twice – once for auto theft and again for making threats on the President. The Ohio prison system had heard of BMS and that is how he got to SD. He was very appreciative of the services he was receiving and he was trying to find work.
- A gentleman who had been with the program since 2000, but had learned the skills necessary to be employed and was now ready to give up his space at BMS for another person who needed it.
- Two young men who identified themselves by their disabilities; one was starting a 6-month job and the other was interviewing. The second man expressed dependency on BMS for structure in his life.
- All consumers at one table were employed – office worker, Goodwill Store employee, apartment building cleaning, painter for a construction crew and maintenance worker. All enjoyed their jobs and were excited to be employed.
- At one table, they discussed what employment meant to them – self-esteem, security, and a paycheck. One person indicated how difficult it was to go from working hard at a job to not working at all because of health issues.

Grady noted that last night's meeting really hit home on how important employment was to these consumers. Dan asked if the Board could send a thank you to BMS for hosting the public meeting last night. Tom stated that many of the consumers were surprised that so many Board members from across the State came to their support meeting. Staff indicated that comments from the public meeting would be

compiled and then forwarded to members for their additions and edits. Bernie added that the pre-employment class offered to consumers by BMS has proved to be very beneficial, and that the course has been difficult to replicate at other Mental Health Centers. Colette noted that she and Brooke Lusk had discussed the possibility of holding a Board meeting and public meeting in conjunction with the PLANS group. Beth asked that a thank you also be sent to the person who spearheaded the People's First Language Bill. **MOTION TO SEND A SUPPORT LETTER TO JENNEIL WATKINS FOR HER WORK ON HB1312 – MSC.**

STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Grady stated that every 3-5 years, approximately \$50,000 was spent to gather information from South Dakotans with Disabilities. However, how to fully utilize the information is a struggle. He referenced the document compiled by the CSC listing strengths and weaknesses of DRS (see attached). He said that DRS and the Board look for ways of gathering information on a continual basis as one means.

EMPLOYER RESOURCE NETWORK (ERN) – FOLLOW-UP PRESENTATION: Dan offered a PowerPoint presentation on ERN, a joint project of the Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association (AAHRA), DRS and the FTW Project. He said that this first attempt/rough draft could eventually be used on a state or even national level. He indicated that it was written in language that people involved with rehabilitation would understand. Kathy indicated that she would develop a presentation for employers and human resource managers using a similar approach. Dan outlined the following points in his ERN presentation:

- Mission
- Purpose
- Short-term Outcomes
- ERN Activities
- Provider Resource Meetings
- Employer Information Including Applicant Profiles

- AAHRA Business Meetings
- Sharing Resources/Information
- Benefits
- With Repetition We Gain

Kathy noted that by the year 2014, huge numbers of people (baby boomers) would be leaving their employment; we need to address future labor needs and supports today. She stated that in each community the needs would be different. Grady stated that the future success of employing South Dakotans equals a diverse workforce, and each community has to tailor this to the needs of its own area. People with disabilities comprise a “diversity niche”. Kathy added that sometimes your efforts touch peoples’ hearts and sometimes their minds. She stressed the need for education on how many people could have disabilities in the future. She stated that in the future, ERN is looking toward job shadowing and hoping for a student chapter. Grady congratulated Dan on his effective PowerPoint, which he said captured the idea of ERN well. He stated that this was not about money, but about available resources. The question was raised as to what Aberdeen employer has shown the most interest. Kathy answered that Avera Hospital truly believes in supporting persons with disabilities to become employed. Dan added that because of ERN’s presence, employers are asking more key questions including how to meet accommodation needs. Larry noted that if the first placement with an employer were successful, they would keep coming back. Grady added that offering employers support later also breeds more success.

OTHER BUSINESS: Staff indicated that some Board and SILC member terms would expire as of July 1st. Melissa Flor from the Office of Special Education was designated to take Julie Carpenter’s place, until appointed and Lynn Boettcher Fjellanger has resigned. Nomination packets will be sent out statewide in early April with a return deadline of April 30th. Grady noted that Lynn’s position was that of representative of Parent Connection, Mary of the Native American 121 Programs, Beth of business and labor and Kati as a

person with a disability who has received VR services. He asked if Mary, Beth and Kati all decided to run again, whose position would have to be filled. Staff indicated that the position held by Parent Connection's designated representative would have to be filled. Grady expressed concern that Kati and Mary were unable to attend meetings on a regular basis. He stated that Kati was still recovering from a serious car accident. Grady indicated that protocol requires the Chair to contact these members to see if they would like to serve another term on the Board and if they would be willing to make the commitment to attend meetings. He added that if one or more decide not to continue, we would then have to solicit for nominations. Beth announced that she would be willing to serve if reappointed. Staff agreed to contact Mary and Kati to find out if they would be willing to serve again, if reappointed. Brady indicated that he knew of several people who might be qualified to serve. Grady stated that he would work with staff to make sure that those who nominate others to the Board would guarantee that their nominees would attend the quarterly meetings. Dan announced that Melissa Flor had a baby girl about two weeks ago. Grady offered his congratulations and said that certainly was a legitimate reason for not attending.

CLOSING ACTIONS: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – The Executive Committee will bring a proposed slate of officers – Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Member at Large to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: **MOTION TO ADJOURN – MSC.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m. MT.