

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETING MINUTES

8:00 AM, March 11th, 2009

Best Western Ramkota Hotel, Pierre, SD

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	Monte Tschetter Grady Kickul Elaine Roberts Craig Eschenbaum	Dan Rounds Cindy Koupal Lyle Cook	Melissa Flor Robert Kean
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MEMBERS ABSENT:	Mary I'atala James Hayes Kathy Hassebrook	Chris Olson Beth Haug
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OTHERS PRESENT:	Bernie Grimme Colette Wagoner	Rich Eschenbaum Faith Ellis
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CALL TO ORDER: Monte Tschetter, Chairperson called the Board meeting to order at 8:00 am.

WELCOME: Monte again welcomed the group back, thanking them for braving the weather today and making it here. Brief introductions were shared around the room. A quick reminder was given to follow the standard meeting protocol.

OPENING ACTIONS: Monte confirmed that everyone had a chance to review the agenda and if there were any additions they would like added at this time. Upon hearing none, **A motion was made to approve the agenda, Made (M), Seconded (S) and Carried (C).**

When asked about approving the previous meeting minutes dated November 13-14, 2008, Dan Rounds did have a few things.

1) On page 2, under the paragraph starting "Debriefing of Public", please change "supportive employment" to "supported employment" in both spots shown; 2) on the top of page 3, about the Project Search, it needs softened to read that this is being "explored" and not read that it has been started; and 3) on page 7, under FTW, change the line, "grant under the

Bush administration” to say “ Federal initiative”. Members discussed and agreed with these changes. **A motion was made to approve the Board meeting minutes as amended from November 13th & 14th, 2008, (M), (S) and (C).**

Next, the minutes from the Executive Committee Conference call held February 23rd, 2009, were briefly reviewed for possible additions or changes. **Motion was made to approve the minutes as written, (M), (S) and (C).**

TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS: Monte invited public comment at this time. Upon hearing none, Colette shared a Thank You card that the Board received from Kathy Hassebrook for the mum plant sent to her honoring the Aberdeen ERN Pinnacle Award and her extra work.

Colette reminded members of the need to finalize the notes written from the joint meeting with South Dakota Association of Community Based Services (SDACBS) held in November. If you have any edits or additions, please share them with staff. The finalized notes will be forwarded to Tom Scheinost. Staff was asked to draft a letter to be sent to the SDACBS complimenting them on their work on the successful passage of Senate Bill 46, which changed the name of the adjustment training centers to community support providers.

Grady shared that he was very pleased with yesterday’s joint meeting of the three boards and councils. He said the comments he heard were positive, that they felt this worked out good, and they feel we should be meeting jointly more often.

Still under open public comment, Robert announced that Partners in Policymaking will be held in Sioux Falls, April 17th and 18th, at the Ramada Inn on Russell Ave. He pointed out there will be an hour, or hour and a half, of open public comment. He encouraged everyone to attend; it’s always very worthy, usually 300 people in attendance at the banquet. If interested contact Sandy Stocklin Hook at his office in Pierre. Colette urged members to let staff know if they are interested in attending and

staff can help with details. And as staff, Colette asked the Board if they felt they would want her to attend this year? Elaine said she would be going because it's in Sioux Falls. Colette then mentioned that Beth Haug typically attends as a partner's graduate. Dan said that he would be interested in going because he'll already be in Yankton on April 17th for the Mike Walling Benefits Training.

Colette announced that the FTW Mike Walling Benefits Training schedule has been finalized for April, and it is:

April 13th – Monday in Rapid City, Howard Johnson,
April 14th – Tuesday in Spearfish, Holiday Inn Convention Center,
April 15th – Wednesday in Mobridge, Grand River Casino,
April 16th – Thursday in Mitchell, Highland Conference Center, and
April 17th – Friday in Yankton, Minervas Convention Center at Kelly Inn

Flyers and registration forms on the trainings will be going out in the mail, hopefully yet this week, or early next week, to over 1,700 people. If you're interested in more details, please call staff.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- **Director's Comments** - Grady agreed with Robert that Partners in Policymaking is worth your time and encouraged members to attend. He stated that Partners has lead people to serve in leadership or advocacy roles, including the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Yesterday's weather was unfortunate, Grady said, and he assured members he struggled with the decision to cancel the Governor's Awards Luncheon. But the right choice, the tough choice, had to be made for the safety of all involved. He thanked everyone again for their commitment to attend in spite of the bad weather. He will be working on some other arrangements to have the recipients come into Pierre, perhaps meet at the Governor's office and hold a small event to present the plaques, have a meet and greet with the Governor, and honor them in some manner. He'll let us know as it

unfolds. Grady suggested there be discussion regarding the Governor's Awards process and luncheon and asked that it put on the next meeting's agenda.

Regarding yesterday's joint meeting of the three boards – BVR, SBVI, and SILC, Grady said he felt that the feedback received from the group was quite positive. The consensus seemed to be that these three groups should do this more often. He feels that the three chairpersons need to have a follow-up meeting and talk about coming together again in the future.

Grady reminded members that DHS Secretary Jerry Hofer mentioned the Department's Strategic Plan, and Grady had a handout that showed the DRS and SBVI portions. He reminded members that DHS is huge, and that basically, DRS is a small portion of the total. He showed how DRS has adopted some of the language that DHS uses, even though it's not commonly used VR language.

Elaine mentioned that she sees in this plan where it shows DRS providing transition services for the students who are blind and visually impaired but not much is shown for providing services for the students who are deaf or hard of hearing. And she asked who is serving this segment of the population?

Grady assured her it's in there, however not visibly spelled out as clearly. He says the deaf community is a unique culture in itself, services are provided to students who are deaf or hard of hearing impaired either through the School for the Deaf or they are served in regular schools throughout the state.

Elaine stressed there seems to be a huge difference in the school administration of the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the administration at the School for the Deaf – and why is that? Why can't services be much more similar and equal, seems like we're missing them.

Dan added there are always students who are deaf or hard of hearing who attend the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). Bernie inserted there are students who are deaf or hearing impaired who also participate in the Project Skills program; plus the Transition Services Liaison Project (TSLP) reaches out to provide services to this group of students. Melissa said that when the Office of Special Education had Dr. Greg Cooch report on their indicators, he reported the students who are deaf or hearing impaired have higher employment if they have utilized some of the programs mentioned. Grady stressed that DRS is more than willing to work hard with the deaf community to learn what the needs are and how to best serve students who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Next Grady shared with members a newspaper article he had been given out of the Aberdeen American News about Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association receiving the Pinnacle Award. It pointed out that this is truly a prestigious award and congratulations again to Kathy and the others for their efforts.

- **DRS Budget Update** – Grady reported that the DRS budget is sitting fine for 2009. Currently the budget in the area of client services is under budget, but the number of applicants requesting services is rising rapidly and this will eventually impact the client services budget as caseloads increase. If the Division goes over budget, then the Order of Selection will be implemented. The 2010 proposed budget has some real issues as we all know, and it has been changing daily, and the events of this week could impact it greatly. The Division did not request an inflationary increase and there was a reduction in general funds for Independent Living of over \$300,000, of which \$95,000 was for CSD. The Division is committed to working with the Centers for Independent Living and CSD on this. There was also a reduction in the Neuromuscular Program of \$96,000, which will impact the delivery, set-up and training of durable medical equipment for individuals in the state. This leaves a large inventory

on hand at 4 sites across the state to include items such as scooters, hospital beds, swings, Hoyer lifts, etc.

- **The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program-** was another item slated for a proposed cut of approximately \$158,000. Grady believes this program will be restored because the language of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus package states that if a state wants increased federal dollars through the stimulus package then we must be providing the same Medicaid services as were being offered as of July '08.
- **BVR Appointments** – There will be one vacancy on the Board come July 1st. Monte will be “termining off” the Board as of June 30th. Nomination forms have been disseminated and are due by Friday, March 27th. Please use your networks of colleagues and friends and think of folks to nominate. Please share the forms with others and encourage them to make nominations. The vacancy is in the “Business, Industry and Labor” category. The Board is required to have a majority of it’s membership be persons with disabilities, thus nominations of individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, or mental disabilities are encouraged.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL UPDATE – Grady said the Council last met on January 8th. The interesting piece he gleaned was that in 2007 there were 800 “layoffs” in all of SD. In just this last quarter ending December 2008, there were 1,500. So that’s almost double in just one quarter’s numbers. He stated that the Council is collaborating with the Department of Labor and the Department of Education to work on transition programs, shared projects, and improved services by sharing resources. Their next meeting will be here in Pierre on April 2nd.

BREAK

Bernie passed around a hand out regarding the numerous site locations available to attend a Video Conference Training on Ticket To Work, Service Descriptions, and IL Assessment and Services. This video

training will be held on Monday, March 16th, and you're welcome to attend to learn more. If interested call the facilitator listed for the site you want to attend.

FFY 2008 YEAR END REPORT – Bernie provided copies of the FFY 2008 Year End Report booklet for review. He highlighted some key data issues to help members understand these outcomes and trends. He spoke of national downward economic trends that will affect DRS less here in SD, but will have some impact; and the affects will be a bit slower, down the road. The Division is currently seeing increases in new applicants, approximately 6% already.

On page 1, in the top pie chart showing 'Source of Referrals', the second largest shown is "Other" at 21%. Bernie explained that the Division would like to have this broken out in more detail to provide a better explanation of who is making referrals. Referrals have had almost a 5% increase in the last five months, and within the last two months, it's already been a 9% increase.

Three areas that SD is higher than the national average are serving individuals in the areas of: Transition Cases, Supported Employment, and SSA Cases. Historically, when overall increases occur, the age group of 25 – 45 tends to have the largest increase. SD is already higher than most other states in serving Transition cases, and that's good, because it's such a critical period to help students.

SD is also much higher in the percent of Supported Employment Cases closed successfully. South Dakota is about 21% and the National average is just under 10%. The percent of individuals served who are Social Security beneficiaries served is also higher in SD (32% versus the National average closer to 28%). Serving a higher percentage of individuals who are in supported employment or on benefits results in lower average earnings.

Bernie explained the Benefit Cost Ratio on page 7, which shows that for every \$1 DRS spends, the consumer will experience an increase in

earnings of \$12.40. Pages 27 and 28 explain the federal program evaluation standards in detail. SD is poised to hit most of them again this year; the Division may not meet all the standards but should meet the minimum requirements.

Dan said this is helpful to see where exactly to make the effort, who needs services, and where the gaps are. Melissa agreed, and suggested comparing this data to the Office of Special Education's survey to see if they're showing the same trends or gaps.

Staff will ensure the absent BVR members receive a copy of today's handout, including the FFY Year End Report. It was agreed to add this as a line item on the next agenda simply as a follow-up for further questions. Bernie added to please feel free to call or email him anytime with any questions or concerns regarding these figures and how they are derived.

STATE PLAN SUBMISSION PROCESS – Bernie moved to his next handout, which was an outline of the State Plan document and the process of gathering public comment. Basically the State Plan is just that, a report showing what the Division has done and then showing future activities. The first section simply mirrors the Rehabilitation Act. There are 15 attachments, which provide a historical picture of the past year, future projections, and the goals and strategies. Bernie reviewed the timeline involved and how it is nearing completion. Again, staff will provide copies to the absent members, plus this information is available for review on the web at <http://dhs.sd.gov/drs/>

PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEE – A handout was circulated providing an overview of the proposed 2009 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) events. The events were reviewed along with the budget from the 12 communities around the state. The committee has reviewed these in detail and made recommendations on approving the budgets. Only one community was not fully funded as requested, and that was due to lack of detailed planning spelled out in their request. Follow-up was made asking for more information regarding the Rapid City event. Most of the communities are attempting to beef up

their programs. In response to this, several communities are pooling resources and sharing a speaker, so they are getting more creative. Members are encouraged to be involved and attend an NDEAM event in their area come October. Craig expressed concern regarding the Aberdeen dates, which conflict with the Fall Conference in Huron. It was discussed that perhaps the events might have a tiny bit of flexibility, but each community sets their own date.

A member moved that the Board allocate up to \$12,000 financial support of the 2009 NDEAM activities similar to financial support in the past. Discussion continued on the Boards financial support and the difference in meeting the full expense and the Division agreed to make up the difference. Plus, members were reminded that the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired has provided financial support in the past and they will be asked again. **Motion was made to approve said allocation of up to \$12,000, (M), (S) and (C).**

EMPLOYER RESOURCE NETWORK UPDATE – Dan Rounds told us that Dan Simon, Statewide Diversity Chairperson, is working hard in the Sioux Falls area to meet with HR and/or SHRM groups to create an ERN chapter. Dan R. explained that every SHRM chapter is a little different from town to town, and leadership changes all the time, so it is challenging to maintain or create an ERN. With the large Richard Pimentel presentation coming to Sioux Falls in June, Dan S. is challenging all HR groups to come get involved and learn more about why employing people with disabilities can be a win-win solution.

The Brookings ERN is trying to grow, they already want their own logos and contact details on their own brochure, so that's a good sign. Similarly, Watertown and Yankton are trying to grow an ERN chapter. Dan explained that FTW grant money for ERN runs another 2 and a half years, and the difficulty will be finding people to keep the initiative growing and moving forward.

Staff asked Dan to share with members information on Richard Pimentel. Dan told the group that Richard Pimentel is a Vietnam Veteran, who has

advocated for people with disabilities and was one of the original writers of the ADA. A movie has been made portraying his life's story, called, "The Music Within". (*Reminder BVR has a couple copies to check out, ask the staff.*) Pimentel tours the country as a professional speaker, giving trainings and seminars. It's been arranged that he is coming to SD for YLF and we've created smaller events to fill the week since he's already here. Those other opportunities are:

- Monday, June 8th, Pimentel flies into Sioux Falls;
- Tuesday, June 9th, he presents in Yankton;
- Wednesday, June 10th, he presents in Brookings;
- Thursday, June 11th, he presents at Youth Leadership Forum Luncheon, and at an afternoon session for Employers regarding returning veteran's issues; and
- Friday, June 12th, he presents in Sioux Falls

Staff was asked to arrange for members to attend the Thursday YLF luncheon and then, the Pimentel afternoon presentation. The Board will meet later that afternoon, in addition to meeting the next morning, Friday, June 12th, 8 am – 12 pm. Staff will forward details as they are worked out.

OTHER BUSINESS: Cindy asked staff to send her the Pimentel movie.

CLOSING ACTIONS:

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Melissa asked if members wanted to bring in Dr. Greg Cooch again to speak about the survey results of students following high school graduation and to tie that in with some of the trends Bernie was discussing today. Keep for future meeting.
2. The Governor's Awards Luncheon should be on the next meeting agenda.
3. Grady is hoping to have set up a meeting with the three chairs of the boards/councils that met yesterday, so either will have met by then and will have a report on the next meeting's agenda, or it will still be in progress.
4. Further review and discussion on the DHS Strategic Plan and DRS portion should be on the next agenda.

5. Follow-up review of the Year End Report and discuss any questions that members may have had after further reading might need discussed again; and
6. Dan asked about a previous request to have staff from the Department of Labor come and talk with the Board and to keep this in front of the Board for a future meeting.

NEXT MEETING: As stated previously, the next meeting is set Thursday, June 11th, in conjunction with the YLF luncheon and Pimentel presentation, at the Aberdeen Ramkota. The Board will meet again for the second half of the meeting, Friday, 8 – 12, June 12th at the Holiday Inn Express. Sleeping rooms have already been reserved and staff will be mailing details as the date approaches.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn the meeting – MSC. Meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m. Monte thanked everyone for his or her time and wished them all safe travels home.