

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETING MINUTES

March 9th - 10th, 2010

Cedar Shore Resort, Oacoma, SD

Members present: Beth Haug, Grady Kickul, Joe Rehurek, Robert Kean, Chris Olson, Lyle Cook, Kathy Hassebrook, Elaine Roberts, Cindy Koupal, and Craig Eschenbaum. **Members absent:** Mary I'atala, James Hayes, Dan Rounds, Matt Cain, and Melissa Flor. **Others present:** Bernie Grimme, Colette Wagoner, Faith Ellis, and Rich Eschenbaum.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: At 1:15 pm Beth Haug, BVR Chairperson, called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and thanked them for traveling in. Introductions were made around the room. She asked members to keep in mind the importance of meeting protocol, which was disseminated with the draft meeting agenda. Grady asked Colette to confirm if there was a quorum, which there was, and to identify those missing.

It was confirmed that everyone had a draft agenda for review. Beth asked if anyone had any changes or additions to the proposed draft agenda, and there were none. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA AS PROPOSED, MADE (M), SECONDED (S), AND CARRIED (C).**

Beth asked if everyone had received a copy of the December meeting minutes, and if anyone had any changes. They confirmed they had them, and no one had changes. **MOTION TO APPROVE DECEMBER 16TH AND 17TH, 2009 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN - MSC.**

Next Beth called for the same regarding the meeting minutes from the BVR Executive Committee Conference Call held Feb. 22nd, 2010. Grady pointed out that these minutes include the Committee's recommendation, that the Board financially support the 2010 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) proposals in the amount of \$12,000. Thus, approving these Executive Committee minutes will confirm these NDEAM requests. The proposals total over \$15,000. In the past, the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (BSBVI) has donated funds to these events and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has provided financial assistance for the remaining balance.

Kathy questioned if we ask groups that are submitting NDEAM proposals if they try to incorporate other groups, especially more employers, to make them broader and more inclusive. She also raised the question of why we only do this

one month out of the year and why aren't we trying to put employees and employers together all year long?

Discussion continued and a number of ideas were suggested. People agreed that there are other groups in communities that should be actively participating in these events. Yet we walk a fine line with events becoming so large we can't afford to fund them all or possibly diluting the message. It was pointed out in the exact title of National Disability Employment Awareness MONTH; the entire month of October is dedicated on a national level and not something we can change at the state level. Another member noted that in the month of October there are numerous "national" designated themes to honor different activities that could easily partner with us, for example - Physical Therapy Month, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Healthy Lung Month, National Chiropractic Month – and the list could go on. Kathy stressed that SHRM groups around the state are prime candidates for getting more involved with disability employment awareness and NDEAM.

Beth redirected the group to understanding that approving these Executive Committee minutes would be approving the NDEAM proposals with BVR financial support up to \$12,000; knowing historically that BSBVI provides some support and DRS agrees to fund any remaining balance.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 22ND, 2010, WHICH IN TURN APPROVES THE \$12,000 TO SUPPORT THE 2010 OCTOBER NDEAM - MSC.

TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: Elaine shared three handouts. (See attached)

1. SD Parent Connection's latest spring newsletter called, "Circuit".
2. Lighting The Way Conference brochure, a conference about autism spectrum disorders.
3. Webinar flyers: First one is entitled, "What's Health Got to Do With Transition?" to be held on Tuesday, March 23rd, 3:30 – 5:00 pm CST. Targeting educators, parents and youth. Presenters are Patti Hackett, Ceci Shapland, and Mallory Cyr.
The next one is on April 6th, 7:00 – 9:00 pm CST, and it's targeting parents and youth. Elaine thanked the group for their time.

Robert Kean provided everyone a pen set, with the catch phrase, "*Before you Label People, Look at their Contents!*" compliments of SD Advocacy Services. Beth called for any other Public Comment and upon hearing none she turned it over to Grady.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A) Director's Comments: First Grady explained that due to the Legislative schedule he will only be available at today's portion of the meeting and will be unavailable tomorrow. He apologized, but assured the group Bernie would cover his agenda items and address any questions.

B) DRS Budget Update: Grady said as we know, legislative session has been extra tough this year, and it is close to winding down. The Joint Appropriations Committee meets tomorrow, and that is why he has to return to Pierre, and the budget cutting process will begin in earnest. He explained the Governor's recommended budget included a Cost of Living Allowance; 3% increase in vocational rehabilitation services; rate increases in the Assisted Daily Living Services Program, and an increase in personnel services for Disability Determination Services (DDS).

But recently, in an attempt to balance the state budgets, legislators have proposed almost \$43 million in cuts, including a 2% across-the-board cut for all state agencies except K12 funding and Medicaid. Other proposed cuts include eliminating the teen drug court program and the Intensive Meth Treatment program and also cutting \$2.3 million from the Tobacco Prevention Programs.

Grady shared that legislators are stressing it is time to stop dipping into reserves, and we have to cut expenses. He added there would be lots of interesting debate and that no one has any idea yet where everything will land. Grady reported that these proposed cuts affect DRS minimally, but the initial recommended proposed increases will not be happening. It will however make some adjustments of funding travel and capital outlay, but again, fortunately most of the programs should remain intact. It is too early to call, but Grady feels it's safe to say that DRS programs shouldn't be cut but will be very well debated. Just yesterday, he said, revenue projections came in less than expected so no new help there.

C) Update on DHS Legislative Bills: Grady presented an overview of the four bills DHS had proposed which have passed and been signed by the Governor. They were:

1. Senate Bill (SB) 27 - An Act to authorize the SD Building Authority and DHS to build a dietary building at the Human Services Center.
2. SB 39 - An Act to continue the minimum monthly fee charged for care at the Human Services Center in Yankton. It will be raised from \$400 to \$600 per patient per month.
3. House Bill (HB) 1028 - An Act to revise certain requirements for provisional certification of interpreters for the deaf and revise certain

authority to promulgate rules concerning certified interpreters for the deaf.

4. HB 1029 - An Act to authorize the Board of Social Worker Examiners to deny, suspend, or revoke applications for licensure of licenses under certain circumstances and repeal certain physical examination provisions.

Grady added that although not proposed by DHS specifically, there were four other bills of interest they were monitoring closely, these were:

1. HB 1083, which was to reallocate almost \$500,000 in funds from the Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) fund and approve them for expenses at the underground science lab at Homestake – this bill did fail.
2. HB 1275 was to extend the age up to 21 for children to receive cochlear implants; this did pass and has been signed by the Governor.
3. SB 66 that was regarding the property tax and sales tax relief for certain populations, it's one that is expected and passed every year. It did pass again and was signed by the Governor.
4. SB 121 to require the Department of Education (DOE) to establish certain programs for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, it was passed, being delayed one year and becoming effective July 1, 2011.

Robert added that SB 27 was a prime example of how the current Legislature is conducting business by requiring they be kept abreast on their progress, needing to see proof that things are progressing, watching everything in detail. Grady said there is the ability to sit and listen or tune in and listen remotely online to committee testimony received, and it's quite easy to log on from any computer and stay informed to changing details.

D) American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Update: Grady reminded members that VR received \$1.4 million in ARRA funds on February 17, 2009, and to date:

- DRS has served 362 people with disabilities with approximately \$914,000 in authorized services, \$400,000 of which has already been paid out;
- Of those 362 individuals, 144 were placed in employment;
- Of those 144, 107 had their cases successfully closed.
- \$100,000 has been designated to update and/or expand the videoconferencing equipment to link all twelve of the VR offices.

Within a couple months, all the ARRA monies will be authorized and will be helping to put more people with disabilities into employment. Grady added the ARRA money is helping to preserve their regular funds from depleting too soon

so they do not have to move to an Order of Selection. The next federal report is due April 10th, and as a reminder, these reports are available at www.federalreporting.gov

E) Draft/Final Policies: Bernie has been working on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Division, SBVI and Division of Mental Health. The draft is now being reviewed by Terry Dosch, Director of the Council of Mental Health Centers, and the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (BSBVI) review and approval. A copy was shared with the Board at the last meeting. This is also available for review by anyone on the DRS website.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA): It was explained that the State Plan has attachments utilizing information gained from a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. As previously reported, DRS is contracting with a couple of gentlemen, Joe Mathews and Robert Jahner, from the University of Northern CO, Ft. Collins, to be assisting with the survey and data analysis. In the past, this had been contracted with USD in Vermillion. Bernie added that around the late 2000's, the approach shifted to using information already available. In 2009, RSA issued guidance on CSNA, which allowed use of existing data, i.e., public meetings, labor data, case file reviews, and consumer satisfaction survey information. This will be labor intensive for Mathews and Jahner, but they have the staff to do it properly. Their contract is in place, and they're working on several surveys already. The Division will look at conducting a survey of VR counselors and survey unsuccessfully closed cases. Details will be shared as they become available. The Needs Assessment will be completed by May or June 2011, and the State Plan will be finalized accordingly prior to the July 1st submittal date.

Grady added a thank you to the Consumer Services Committee which had helped change the overall direction of the needs assessment survey and developed strategies, actions and goals in the State Plan. This will be addressed again at the joint meeting June 22nd and 23rd. The three chairs will become the Executive Committee to assist the development of the CSNA and we're excited to have these two gentlemen present at the June meeting.

Joint Meeting of BVR, BSBVI and SILC and Joint Nomination Process: Grady explained that the Governor's Office has requested that the BVR, BSBVI and SILC initiate their annual nomination solicitation process started earlier. SILC and BVR Staff has assembled and mailed in one packet all three different, color-coded sets of the nomination forms. Included were details on the essential duties, values and/or qualifications desired, and time and travel commitments. These were mailed to a broad range of over 500 people and organizations

across the state. Nominations are due Friday, March 26th. Everyone is encouraged to give this thoughtful consideration and please nominate someone who could help fill these vacancies. This Board will be losing five people either by terming off or resigning, and all vacancies should be filled by people with disabilities. Please spread the word to others and help recruit nominees.

Beth referred the group to a handout outlining the notes of the last meeting of the three chairpersons. Involved were Beth, BVR Chair; Dave Miller, BSBVI Chair; Linda Biffert, SILC Chair; Grady Kickul, DRS Director; Gaye Mattke, SBVI Director; Colette Wagoner, BVR Staff; and Shelly Pfaff, SILC Staff.

Beth said she feels these are very informative conference calls. There is a passion for coming together and sharing how we can work together and make strides in assisting people with disabilities. The notes from the February 22nd Joint Conference call had a section on page two, entitled, "Employment Initiatives" and Grady stated that he would like to have Dan Rounds and Ronda Williams, from his office, present that section at the Joint June meeting.

BREAK

Governor's Awards Nominations Update: Grady turned to Colette for the update. She explained that several members in their role as reviewers had meet to review the nominations. It's never an easy task with the number of nominees for each category. The reviewers' recommendations for winners were forwarded to Grady for review, next to Secretary Hofer, and then the Governor's Office for final approval. Timing and scheduling will be similar to last year, trying to host the Awards Ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda and obtaining the Governor for the presentation of the awards. Once the details are worked out, this information will be shared. Grady added, if you're available, you're all invited to attend.

Beth asked how the number of nominations compared to previous years. Colette reported because the categories had changed it's hard to compare apples to apples. But the new category, Transition, had numerous nominations, which was a positive sign of creating this new category. Overall, the numbers were similar to last year.

Grady extended a big thank you to the reviewers who committed their time to reviewing these nominations. It is a lot of work to review the number of nominees and the quality of each, so thanks again.

Freedom To Work (FTW) Project Update: As a standing agenda item, Grady reminded members how at a previous meeting Brooke Lusk, FTW, had

presented on the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) program. A newer project, Project SEARCH, is going well. The Division secured additional funding on January 1st, and it will be used to conduct trainings on Project SEARCH and for the Mental Health Center staff. Bernie will provide a more detailed report on Project SEARCH tomorrow.

The Division and FTW Project will be conducting a training July 12th – 13th, in Chamberlain for the Mental Health Center staff to promote better service coordination between VR providers and the mental health service delivery. There are discrepancies in how things are handled and the hope is to address issues at this training. The main presenter will be Doug Crandle on employment services. The agenda will concentrate on what can each group do for each other, what can VR pay for utilizing the Ticket to Work program, i.e., medication assistance to keep individuals working. Mileage stipends will be provided to staff of the mental health centers.

Grady explained that the largest category of VR cases are individuals with mental health issues, approximately one third of the caseload. There's a shift in theory, that work is beneficial, work is therapeutic for people with mental health issues, and both mental health centers and VR providers encourage people to work, and we need to work together to properly get this message across as a unified front. Grady concluded by reporting the next FTW meeting will be April 1st, in Ft. Pierre.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) UPDATE: Grady reported that the SILC will be meeting next week, March 18th - 19th in Fort Pierre. The Division was authorized \$242,000 through ARRA. The funds designated to Part B for IL has gone fairly smoothly. Unfortunately, the Part C funds, funding coming directly from the federal government to the CILs has been delayed due to some needed changes within the amendments which are part of the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). DRS and RSA both accept some responsibility for the miscommunications that occurred delaying the process. Then due to the blizzard in Washington, DC additional delays occurred. The four CILs are one year behind in receiving ARRA monies. A question was asked whether there was anything the Board could do to assist with this situation, and the reply was no, that the SPIL amendment is currently at the Office of Budget and Finance and the Division is hoping to hear news any day now.

Grady added that SILC members are also looking forward to the joint June meeting in Pierre and the opportunity to collaborate together.

Statewide Workforce Development Council Update: Grady reported that as the Director of DRS, he serves on this council. They will meet next on April 1st

and he will be presenting the State Plans for both SBVI and VR services for the Council to review and provide input. These State Plans are attachments to the Department of Labor's, which is submitted under the Workforce Investment Act.

Department of Labor staff is focusing on the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) testing that is starting to happen around the state, more will be presented later today.

DOL has been under immense pressure with the high unemployment that has resulted from the poor economy. Unemployment benefit extensions have been put in place and this has been very draining on our state's unemployment reserve funds. These reserves have never been dipped into before as much as they've had to recently.

Futures Initiative Update: Grady turned to Joe Rehurek to provide this update. Joe explained this program started in 2008 within VR, where a small initial group of five employees were given an opportunity to grow and increase leadership skills by taking on additional projects above and beyond their normal job description. Joe was one of the first five, along with Ann Fortin, Melanie Boetel, Vicki Nelson, and Jennifer Trenhille. In 2009, three new persons applied and were accepted to the group (Kim Christensen, Doris Lamb, and Laura Ackerman). This fall, new applications will be accepted for the next round of participants. Joe explained that each person develops a written leadership plan and they select, with assistance from DRS, specific projects they would like to work on, which are related to VR goals and activities. Bernie reviewed numerous projects the Futures Initiative participants have successfully done or are doing.

One member asked how could we learn more about the project details. Bernie explained that some of the projects are simply internal, but that others could certainly be shared. For example, Ann Fortin is currently conducting training via videoconferencing on Career Cruising (an interest assessment). The Division has scheduled the 2nd Monday of every month for staff training sessions. BVR members are welcome to attend these types of trainings if they wish.

Grady explained that the counselors involved provide a summary report, these could be compiled and shared with the Board, and perhaps compile an annual report and have it available on the web.

Next Bernie explained how the SD Futures Initiative group met with the ND Futures group. Joe added that SD members have continued to thrive and develop yet their counterparts in ND seem to have become a bit stagnant, therefore they really enjoy meeting with us.

Members complimented this program saying it took much foresight to see the benefits and plan this out. It really appears to be working; it is always good to have “young blood” coming up the ranks, who are qualified, ready and willing to step up when called upon in the future.

Business Resource Network (BRN) Update: Grady said DRS recently held a videoconference meeting with the BRN Steering Committee in Sioux Falls. They explained that they did not get their 501(c)3 non-profit paperwork finalized as previously reported because they were waiting to see if the Division approves their concept. They provided a brief proposal on what they could provide, covered some of the services and objectives, and how they would market it. DRS is studying this and will need to respond within 2 – 4 weeks. The Division will have to consider issuing a Request for Proposal and open it up. We are all hoping to broaden the overall scope and reach of this program to include employers, providers, VR counselors, SHRM and other employment providers. Grady said DRS will carefully consider their proposal and respond to the BRN Steering Committee. Kathy expressed concerns that history has shown that it is hard to do all those things and be self-sustaining. She suggested DRS put language in the response that asks them to make this program a stand-alone model to easily share that can be packaged or modeled in other communities. Others agreed that spelling out those requirements or goals in the response would be wise, possibly even with suggested timelines. Grady thanked the group for all the ideas and said DRS will take them into consideration.

He also reminded the group that he is unable to attend the second half of the BVR meeting the next morning due to conflicts with Session, but that he confidently put Bernie in charge of covering his agenda items.

4:00 PM - Adjourned for the day.

8:15 AM, Wed. March 10th, 2010 Reconvened with Welcome & Introductions

Public Awareness Committee: Staff reported that members of the Public Awareness Committee met to review ten proposals requesting funds for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) events. Staff noted that these communities are sharing their resources, especially in terms of obtaining national speakers and utilizing them in more than one community. For example, Brookings, Madison, Sioux Falls and Mitchell will cost share a speaker, John Robinson, author of both the book and the documentary, “Get Off Your Knees” (for more details see www.getoffyourknees.org). Sioux Falls is having a Chamber Host Mixer at Home Federal and again, having John Robinson speak.

Rapid City is trying something different this year and conducting their NDEAM promotions at a grass-roots level, in person, door to door. Sisseton is conducting their NDEAM event in conjunction with a youth transition forum; and in Yankton, their NDEAM event will be a full two-day training in partnership with the Chamber, Yankton Area Mental Health Wellness Center, and the area SHRM group. Staff also noted that the total dollars requested for NDEAM events is \$15,825, but that historically the Board has provided up to \$12,000, with financial assistance from BSBVI and DRS.

Kathy stressed again that these are perfect opportunities to do even more. We should encourage these events to become more diversified, to think diversity with disability as one component of that whole. She realizes this will take an entire shift in the current thought process, and we can aim in this direction. She suggested we plan next year to put language in the proposal process that encourages communities to bring more parties to the table.

Elaine agreed, sharing that the Sioux Falls ADA Anniversary Celebration has had good attendance, but basically people with disabilities. So it doesn't seem to be reaching others yet and this event should involve the entire community. She added that with the diversified population skyrocketing in the Sioux Falls area, the overall topic of diversity is very pertinent right now.

Craig mentioned that two years ago the Aberdeen event had a speaker from the Sioux Falls Cultural Center and he was great. It wasn't about disability, he spoke about race and diversity issues and it had a large attendance. The event provided you with lunch, and included the NDEAM award presentations – so it worked great to combine the training and luncheon to draw a larger crowd.

Lyle pointed out that the month of October is designated for numerous other organizations; for example, National Hunger Awareness Month, Self-Improvement Month, and Breast Cancer Awareness Month. He added that maybe some thought could be given to partnering with other groups that celebrate those topics.

After further discussion, Kathy voluntarily offered to help on the Public Awareness Committee and assist in rewriting the NDEAM Requests for Funding proposal forms.

MOTION MADE TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE AND APPROVE ALL TEN NDEAM PROPOSALS, TOTALING \$15,825.00; KNOWING THAT BVR HAS APPROVED ONLY \$12,000 IN

FINANCIAL SUPPORT, WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COME FROM THE DIVISION AND POSSIBLY THE BSBVI – MSC.

Public Listening Session in Eagle Butte – Staff reported that the Board has been invited to join with the Division of SBVI and Board of SBVI and possibly the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) in conducting a Public Listening Session, complete with a luncheon, in Eagle Butte, Thursday, April 22nd. Lyle explained that he feels it would be beneficial for groups to get more information from people living in his area. This stemmed from an incident while searching the four CILs websites and each has a territory covered listed by counties, and his county is not on any list. It's a similar problem for other native counties in our state. Lyle explained the benefits of people meeting with representatives from agencies to hear about available services. These informal gatherings seem to work well. Lyle explained further that it would be an informal gathering, with each agency having a table, and each getting a chance to address the group and give a brief program overview. People can go to a certain table to meet with whom they were interested in learning more about. We could provide sign up sheets for people to provide contact details to mail them further details on programs. Lyle told us that he is hoping to provide transportation assistance for people living in the surrounding area, and those costs are something they may need help with. Eric Weiss, with SBVI had agreed to pay for the meal, but there was no dollar amount attached to that offer.

Staff reported that the Board has provided financial assistance towards a meal in the past and suggested the Board could split costs with BSBVI. Staff added that this type of event would count as a public comment gathering as required in the State Plan.

Robert suggested maybe the Board offer to cover transportation costs like Lyle mentioned, possibly providing a mileage stipend to individuals. Bernie said that would generate a lot of work for board staff and offered the idea of paying a set amount directly to Lyle's organization or some other local transportation company to handle it at the local level.

Robert said that if Lyle is spearheading this event at his own grass-roots level, then he personally feels confident it will go smoothly. Lyle thanked him for the vote of confidence and committed himself to doing the best he could to promote this event in his area and making it a productive event for all.

MOTION WAS MADE TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THIS PUBLIC LISTENING EVENT IN EAGLE BUTTE APRIL 22ND, 2010 WITH SOME FUNDING DIRECTED TOWARD TRANSPORTATION – MSC.

Staff reminded BVR members that if they would like to be involved with this event, BVR would cover travel costs. Colette will be attending as BVR Staff, and Shelly Pfaff will attend probably as SILC Staff. Bernie added that they will be sending staff, along with a VR counselor, perhaps two.

State Plan Submission Process – Bernie gave the group a handout entitled, 2011 State Plan Public Meetings. He explained that the State Plan Preprint has 15 attachments, six of which are updated annually. This handout reviews in detail what those attachments are. As mentioned earlier, the Division and Board have to host public comment gathering events around the state. Bernie reviewed the handout and directed members to the 2010 timeline schedule on the last page, and mentioned that he now will be adding the Eagle Butte Public Listening Event to this list. Bernie told members if they had any questions they would like covered in more detail to please call him. He reported that the State Plan Preprint and Attachments can be viewed at www.dhs.sd.gov/drs

PROJECT SEARCH: In Dan's absence, Bernie reported on his behalf. He shared several fliers on the Project SEARCH Model. This is a unique transition internship, a school-to-work experience where high school seniors with significant disabilities are placed in real-life work environments. It involves on-the-job training, intense classroom instruction, career exploration and independent living skills training. The parties involved in both Aberdeen and Sioux Falls have been working hard to finalize the details and have held meetings. They brought a speaker from the Ohio program to present at both locations and help them learn how to best run this program. They are now holding their first public informational meetings. On March 23rd, a Project SEARCH Open House will be held at the Avera McKennan Education Center in Sioux Falls; and on March 25th, at Avera St. Luke's in Aberdeen. All parents, teachers, and potential students who are interested in applying for to the 2010-2011 Project SEARCH school year should be encouraged to attend. Robert asked if these high schools students are still allowed time off of their Project SEARCH job for other extra curricular activities. Craig explained that yes, they're given the time off for such activities. He added that the VR team in Aberdeen has been meeting regularly with the school board and hospital staff on this and there will be a lot of support put into place for students while employed. DOL is helping too and will be responsible for some of the transportation stipends provided to students. Bernie said Dan and others are excited to see this grow.

New-Tec Update - Kathy stepped in for Dan on this report. She explained that this is the new job-training group located within the One Stop Career Center in Aberdeen. This is being run by Rich Vincent and Bob Compton, who was

previously with SHRM, and is designed to provide short-term training to assist job seekers in meeting their skill building needs on computer programs such as QuickBooks and Excel. They're partnering with Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI) in Watertown and Presentation College in Aberdeen to provide hands-on and on-the-job training. Currently they're forming a committee to investigate creating a vocational trade program. They've hired a consultant to do a feasibility study, which will take six months to finalize.

BREAK

National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) Update: Bernie started with the brief overview that this is a credential based assessment or test to show employers that a prospective employee has the basic set of workplace skills required in today's workforce, especially concentrating on soft skills. The three main subject areas are: Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information. Job seekers take the test and receive their results in color-coded certificates, bronze, silver, gold and platinum. These certificates provide proof of an individual's skill level.

So in conjunction with DOL, DRS has gone to all five district offices and presented trainings to VR counselors, plus conducted training presentations to service providers in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Yankton. We're promoting to employers also and stressing these certificates concentrate on soft skills and that will help them immensely as they grow in popularity. Authorizations are being made to Career Learning Centers to conduct the assessments for the certificates, which of course we need before employers start asking to see them.

EMPLOYER RESOURCE NETWORK (ERN) UPDATE: Kathy provided a quick refresher that ERN is about bringing together employers, HR, and people with disabilities who are job hunting, to the same table and getting them talking and working together towards the common goal of gainful employment. Kathy mentioned again they have the personal endorsement of Terry Redlin, well-known SD artist who is a past recipient of VR services. Colorful brochures featuring his art have already been gaining them some recognition.

Kathy continued by saying she strongly feels to succeed, projects such as ERN and BRN need to have tangible products in hand, meaning usable items that can be in a "tool kit" of sorts, including brochures, samples, success stories, fact sheets, procedure manuals, timelines, etc. to share with area employers and job seekers, or other groups in towns who want to emulate the ERN model.

OTHER BUSINESS: Staff reported that Terry Dosch, Director of the SD Council of Mental Health Directors, was contacted and they would be interested in a meeting jointly to learn more about each other's organizations. They meet in Pierre on September 9th and 10th, or they meet later on November 4th and 5th, which could be timed with one of the Boards quarterly meetings. It was discussed and decided to try to schedule the Board meeting on Thursday, September 9th and Friday, September 10th and try to coordinate some type of reception for Thursday evening.

MOTION TO HAVE STAFF MOVE FORWARD WITH MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO HOST A MEETING WITH THE SD COUNCIL OF MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS – TO COINCIDE WITH THE BOARD'S SEPTEMBER MEETING – MSC.

The question was raised, when are all the board/council nominations due? All nominations for BVR, BSBVI, or SILC are due Friday, March 26th. On the Board, we'll be losing approximately five people: James Hayes; Mary l'Atala; Chris Olson, Beth Haug; and Lyle Cook – whom we hope will be re-appointed. So based on the requirements for the Board make-up, the majority of vacancies will be required to be filled by people with disabilities. If you know someone who meets the criteria, please chat with them and encourage their nomination.

CLOSING ACTIONS:

- Future Agenda Items: Project SEARCH, ERN and New Tech will remain as standing agenda items.
- Schedule the Next Meeting: Joint Meeting with BSBVI and SILC, June 22 and 23 in Pierre. Tentative schedule for the Joint June Meeting to be held at the Best Western Ramkota Convention Center, in Pierre:
 - Tues, June 22nd: 12 noon – 5 pm Joint Meeting for all three groups – BVR, BSBVI, and SILC.
 - 5:00 – 7:30 PM, continue with input discussion on Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.
 - Wed, June 23rd: 8:00 am – 2:30 pm BVR and SILC meet independently.

Beth thanked everyone for his or her valuable time and wished them safe travels.

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:55 AM – MSC.