

Draft Minutes
SD Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired
Best Western Ramkota
920 West Sioux Avenue, Pierre, SD
Friday, June 16, 2017

Members Present: Dr. Lynda O-Connor-Ohayon (Chair), Eric Rippentrop, Cole Uecker, Gaye Mattke, Connie Sullivan, Cheri Knispel, Patrick Czerny, Roberta Ecoffey, Bruce Micheel, Tana Buresch, Alan Vandenburg, Catherine Greseth, Marcia Hultman

Members Absent: Julie Briggs, Kay Miller, Koni Sims

Others Present: Ronda Williams, Sandy Neyhart, Nancy Hoyme – Staff and Lyle Cook (visitor).

Approval of Agenda: Agenda reviewed, Motion to approve by Catherine Greseth, seconded by Cole Uecker. Motion Passed.

Approval of Minutes from March Board Meeting: Motion to approve by Patrick Czerny, seconded by Eric Rippentrop. Motion Passed.

Public Comments: No public comments.

Membership Update: No new appointments have been made to replace members whose terms expire at the end of June 2017 (Bruce Micheel, Julie Briggs). Dr. O-Connor announced her resignation from the Board due to her decision to relocate to Iowa. Discussion ensued regarding Dr. Greenfield having been identified in the past as being willing to be nominated to serve on the Board. Gaye will look to make sure he fits into the requirements to replace Dr. O-Connor as a board member. Eric Rippentrop made a motion to nominate Dr. Greenfield if he meets the criteria and agrees to serve on the Board, Cheri Knispel seconded the motion. Motion Passed.

Board Member Updates

- **Eric Rippentrop**-finishing school soon and has another year on the Board.
- **Pat Czerny**-updated on Medicaid recycling program with DSS, started last year. Piloted in Sioux Falls and had their first equipment drive and 13 pieces like new ready to go to Medicaid recipients. They are working with durable medical equipment (DME) providers, encouraging them to use the program, which can provide equipment to Medicaid waiver recipients

to help with low cost used equipment, hospital beds, wheelchairs, walkers, etc. Working on rules of who to serve and how to serve them. Priority of the program is to save Medicaid dollars in South Dakota, protect the environment (recycle and reuse), and serve those who may not otherwise be served. They purchased a machine to wash and sterilize equipment, using ultraviolet rays. The address is 3411 S. Center Ave. in Sioux Falls to drop off and pick up of equipment. They have a site coordinator and support staff who are previous VR clients. The name of the program is Medical Equipment Recycle and Reuse (MERR). Website: www.sd.at4all.com They intend to work with centers for independent living to make some equipment available and spoke with Marla Bull Bear of Native American Advocacy Project about this. This idea started with a 2011 workgroup with DRS, DakotaLink, and Durable Medical Equipment providers. DakotaLink is working to get a low interest loan program started in South Dakota. They applied for a grant and hope to get awarded almost \$700,000 for AT low interest loans.

- **Bruce Micheel**- Has served two three-year terms as a member of the Board.
- **Alan Vandenburg** - Attended part of transition week for SBVI students. Alan stated that was one of better transition weeks we've had so far, which included 11 participants.
- **Connie Sullivan** – The Braille and Talking Book Summer Reading Program has 64 kids participating this year. 44 students participated in the Winter Reading Program, and in May they held their first adult book discussion with 20 people participating by phone.
- **Lyle Cook**- Lyle joined the board meeting as a visitor. He explained that the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal VR services are arranging a higher ed. program similar to Catch the Wave Wednesday, Sept. 20 at College Center in Eagle Butte. Lyle extended an invitation to SBVI to attend. They also have a disability walk event as part of NDEAM in October, but moved it to the last week of August to coincide with the Tribal Labor Day Fair activities. SBVI has been part of this since it started. Date to be announced. Lyle is working on a save the date flyer for both of these events. A new Tribal VR program has been funded for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, the Director is Burdette Clifford. South Dakota has 5 tribal VR programs. Lyle offered other agency representatives the use of their office as well as other tribal VR programs and asked for a map of service

contact coverage for CAP and Parent Connection so each office can know who to contact if they should need the service.

- **Roberta Ecoffey**- Reported on the Listening Session held in Kyle and the opportunity to speak on KILI radio. Her staff (Jeanine and Heath) did a good job talking about their programs and she wants to get state VR on the KILI talk show. SBVI worked previously with Lyle to have a Public Service Announcement in Lakota which could be re-released to more radio stations. SBVI will work with the Tribal VR programs to accomplish this. Gaye will talk to the DHS Communications Officer to explore options for paying for some radio ad time. Roberta also reported that she met with Burdette Clifford a few weeks ago and spent time assisting him by sharing sample job descriptions, VR policies, etc. She expressed gratitude for Rebecca, the new SBVI Counselor, for her work on the reservation. Roberta is going to Tulsa for CANAR. One of their VR consumers was hired to cater the recent for the Listening Session in Kyle. She has also catered for other meetings. Roberta was appreciative of this and noted the caterer is doing well with her business.
- **Cole Uecker**-Very busy, advancing some of the new initiatives they are working on which includes updating offices with technology the upgrades will help to work more collaboratively between offices. Their name is changing from South Dakota Advocacy Services to Disability Rights South Dakota. The domain name for their website will be www.drSDLaw.org. The website is not up and running yet, but they feel this name is more descriptive than SD Advocacy Services. They are reassessing what they do and started a new monitoring process with Community Support Providers. They feel this approach is more proactive as they monitor individuals and staff. A new activity promoted by CAP will be "iTransitions" which is a website developed by Kansas for transition age students age 14-graduation. Starts with a short QA, then provides a summary and referrals to agencies based on their responses. Lyle inquired if this could be a presentation at Eagle Butte's event Pursuing Higher Ed program. Cole confirmed this would be an advantage as student's can take this to their IEP to empower them to drive the process. The results focus on employment, post-secondary education and independent living.
- **Tana Buresch** –Shared that the new Director of Parent Connection is Karla Miller who has been there since August 2016. They are trying to regionalize the state and become more available. The wrote a small grant

to offer transition services using Person Centered Thinking tools to conduct assessment with 10-11 facilitators. The assessment is free to schools and families, and facilitators will travel to conduct the assessments. Lori Kwasniewski of the SD Rehab Center for the Blind participated in the training as a facilitator, and is a good resource for transition students with vision loss.

- **Catherine Greseth**-Taught a 2 hour class on disability to professional women and will present to the Rapid City Council on June 30. She is also working with Tourism to promote employment for people with disabilities. She brings an employer every month to DRS and SBVI meetings to encourage interaction and communication about potential employees that would fit the openings they have in their business. Good Samaritan shared employment opportunities during a recent meeting. She currently is the Chair of the Mayor's Committee and is working with them to identify and publicize accessible locations in Rapid City, in conjunction with Chad at Western Resources for Independent Living. The resource guide will specifically identify disability friendly businesses. In addition, Catherine is very involved with Project SEARCH, Disability Employment Initiatives and the Chamber workforce committee.
- **Cheri Knispel**-Attended National Federal of the Blind State convention, the local chapter has meetings once per month.
- **Lynda O-Connor-Ohayon**-In process of retiring and moving out of state to Iowa, so this is her last meeting.
- **Marcia Hultman**-Husband retired and youngest son recently graduated from high school.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Activities: Secretary Hultman highlighted some of the essential services the public can take advantage of, many specific to recruitment and retention. She discussed the enhanced SDWORKS jobs database, Dakota Roots efforts, apprenticeship and training opportunities, soft skills workshops, and more. Her PowerPoint presentation will be distributed with minutes.

Division Program Updates

- **Business Enterprise Program (BEP):** The coffee shop was closed in the Kneip building due to resignation of the vendor. Vending in state government buildings continued until a replacement was found. Sheila Powers, has taken over the vending operation effective May 17th, this

route includes 38 machines. EROS Data cafeteria is managed as a satellite site by Celeste Voigt, who is a vendor at the Aberdeen federal building. The EROS cafeteria reopened on March 7. There were some challenges hiring staff for EROS. Yankton and Huron vendors are doing well.

- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program:** SBVI has been prioritizing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) changes in the VRFACES case management system. We are now reporting on new shared WIOA requirements with Department of Labor on open and closed VR cases on a quarterly basis instead of once annually. Where VR previously reported one time annually on closed cases for 215 data elements, starting July 1, VR will report quarterly for 393 data elements, and will also be reporting on closed cases for up to 18 months after closure. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) will be measuring employment rate 2nd and 4th quarter after exit, as well as educational and skill credential attainment, measurable skills gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. Four current data pages have changes in the case management system, and we also added three new data pages that will need to be updated quarterly. New changes go into effect July 1, training will be provided to each district office in June, using the VRFACES test site to review and practice. VR is trying to automate as much as possible through data sharing agreements, but will also rely on counselors and support staff to update additional information each quarter.

South Dakota needs to spend 15% of their federal VR allotment on Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). This 15% includes DRS and SBVI funds, as it is tracked by state, so both divisions. We recently changed to 100% time study for VR Counselors who provide those services to students in order to count more of the time spent with students as opposed to the random time study that wasn't capturing all time spent delivering Pre-ETS.

VR annual case file review was conducted at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) April 25-27 with all VR Counselors, Gaye, and Ronda participating in the review. Staff reviewed 100 open and closed VR cases, using paper files and the VRFACES case management system. Review results were relatively positive, and some improvements have been made from previous years, but we also identified areas of training needs that will occur within the next year. For the next annual case file review, SBVI will likely move the review to a more central location in Pierre.

- **Independent Living:** The Independent Living Older Blind program received approval for 10 CCTV's for the CCTV Lease/Loan Program, and then in May received approval for an additional 10 units, for a total of 225 CCTV units for the program. The new digital CCTV's have better clarity and are lighter/less bulky than older models. The Assistive Technology Access Project (ATAP) helps provide access to training on using iPhones, iPads or other technology with vision loss. SBVI does not have a budget for the ATAP but codes costs for DakotaLink to provide the training based on a numbers of factors. About 10 people have been referred to the program since it was reinstated. We may promote the ATAP more in the future, but for now we are getting enough referrals. Outreach from staff includes networking at events in their community. The listening session in Kyle was an example of this and was a very positive event.
- **South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC):** 29 students have attended so far this year, it is expected there will be a higher number of students participating in training this summer. Dawn Backer and Sandy Neyhart provided outreach at the SD Optometric Society annual convention in Chamberlain. Dawn presented by Dakota Digital Network to North Dakota VR Counselors about SDRC. Jen Geffre and Bob Smith, Orientation & Mobility Specialists, provided training to 100 bus drivers in Sioux Falls to help with sited guide, how to instruct passengers with vision loss, give directions, etc. Transition week has 11 students participating in training this week at SDRC.

Board Priorities/Planning

- **Public Forums:** A public forum was held in conjunction with National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of South Dakota. Over 30 people attended and discussed a variety of topics including their personal stories and the impact of SBVI services. Several SBVI Board members were in attendance. An event was held in Kyle in collaboration with SD Advocacy Services and the Pine Ridge Native American VR Program on June 2nd, over 75 people attended. Live interviews were broadcast on KILI radio with information about programs and services. SBVI and DRS contributed through Rehab Action funds for catering from a local person who is a former VR client.

The SD Association of the Blind has mentioned that they do not plan to have a convention but are interested in hosting a public forum this fall. We should know more about this event by the next Board meeting.

- **Governor's Awards for Employment of People with Disabilities:** Eric Rippentrop is the Board representative on the Governor's Awards committee. He clarified categories for each award and shared that the committee received a lot of good nominations. Eric will report back when he has more information.
- **National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM):** All proposals were submitted and funds approved. Plans are being made for events in October in 13 communities with a total budget of \$18,760. The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation approved up to \$13,000 to support events. The Board of SBVI has contributed from \$2,000-\$4,000 to sponsor events. The Statewide Independent Living Council approved up to \$3,000. Catherine Greseth made a motion to approve up to \$4,000 toward sponsorship of NDEAM events, Connie Sullivan seconded. Motion passed.
- **Youth Leadership Forum (YLF):** 42 students attended YLF in Aberdeen this year. SBVI and DRS helped serve pizza and beverages in the park and attended the YLF luncheon and recognition event.
- **Other Activities/Sponsorships:** A White Cane Walk is scheduled for October 14, coordinated by Rose Moehring. She is requesting funds from the SBVI Board. Gaye said it would be appropriate for the Board to assist with costs associated with promoting the white cane law and interpreter costs. Connie Sullivan made a motion to support up to \$500, Catherine Greseth seconded. Motion Passed. Roberta mentioned/requested assistance getting training of transit drivers and local law enforcement on how to work with people with disabilities in her area. Gaye will assist with finding contacts for that.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Activities: Catherine Greseth and Sandy Neyhart are members of the SILC. Sandy shared information from the SILC meeting held on June 13th. The Division of Rehabilitation Services presented on Board of Vocational Rehabilitation activities, services provided by Centers for Independent Living, and independent living case file reviews. SBVI presented on SBVI Board initiatives and the older blind program. Connor Donahoe, Office of Emergency Management, presented at the SILC with recommendations made to prepare yourself personally and in your community for an emergency as opposed to hoping for assistance from FEMA. While FEMA is available to provide assistance, the process is difficult and lengthy. This discussion prompted Roberta Ecoffey to report on training recently offered

to Tribal programs to be prepared for an active shooter and steps to develop plans for safety. Roberta Ecoffey offered to email Gaye information about trainers and an action plan they developed for their office. Jack Dokken and Lisa Donner with the Department of Transportation focused on transit services in their presentation at the SILC. They offered to distribute information about transportation plans developed by local transit companies in order for community members to offer input and participate during the public comment periods. The next SILC meeting is scheduled for Sept. 19th.

Election of Officers: The Executive Committee is the nominating committee to bring forward recommendations for Board officers. This allows the opportunity to visit with potential nominees prior to the meeting. Catherine Greseth, Lynda O-Connor-Ohayon and Bruce Micheel are the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee recommended Catherine Greseth for Chair; Koni Sims was recommended to be Vice Chair; Kay Miller agreed to be nominated as the Member at Large. No other nominations were brought forth. During discussion, Connie Sullivan commented that she agreed with selection of the nominees. Bruce Micheel motioned to accept nominations as presented and cease nominations; Cheri Knispel seconded. Motion to elect those nominated passed unanimously.

Director's Report

Program Guide Defining Students: Gaye described a program guide that was distributed on June 1st to provide guidance for determining whether someone is considered a student with a disability based on Codified Federal Regulation. Since the program guide was not a policy change, but technical assistance it was not necessary to get board approval prior to releasing.

DHS Government Operations and Audit Committee (GOAC) Review:

The Department of Human Services was scheduled to present to the legislative GOAC committee for the committee's performance management review of state agencies in July. The DHS review was postponed until August due to a schedule conflict. The committee has requested that DHS submit a report of measureable outcomes prior to the meeting.

SBVI All Staff Training: An annual meeting and staff training have been scheduled at SDRC on August 7-9. Leacey Brown, Gerontologist from the SDSU extension office will be providing training on empowering adults to learn technology. Other training topics include pre-biopic driving and accessing aps for people who are blind or visually impaired. Pat Czerny stated that he would like to present on new goggles that assist people with

low vision to see long distance. Tana Buresch requested he bring those to the next SBVI Board meeting.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WIOA Partners: DRS and SBVI Directors and Assistant Directors met with managers from the Department of Labor and Regulation to discuss an MOU required to address infrastructure costs. A draft agreement has been shared with DHS Budget and Finance staff and the Secretariat for review and comment prior to finalizing.

Fall Conference: The annual fall conference is scheduled for Oct. 2-4 in Pierre at the Ramkota Inn. Building Bridges is the theme. Information about the conference will be shared with Board Members. SBVI Board members are welcome to attend.

Board Member Recognition: Gaye acknowledged Bruce Micheel and Dr. Lynda O'Connor for their service on the Board of SBVI. Julie Briggs was also acknowledged but was not in attendance at the meeting.

Next Meeting – Cheri Knispel made a motion to approve Sept. 22nd for the next meeting in Pierre, Connie Sullivan seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting Adjourned

Minutes prepared by Ronda Williams, Assistant Director