

**Board of Vocational Rehabilitation**  
**June 6 – 7, 2018**  
**Ramkota of Aberdeen**

**Members Present:** Eric Weiss, Cole Uecker, Beth Schiltz, Lisa Sanderson, Kendra Gottsleben, Kim Hoberg, Colleen Moran, Brad Konechne, Patty Kuglitsch, Bill McEntaffer and Peter Bullene; **Members Excused Absence:** Chuck Quinn, Jolleen Laverdure, Kristi Eisenbraun and Joe Vetch; **Others present:** Bernie Grimme, DRS Assistant Director; Shelly Pfaff, BVR Staff and Interpreters – Ann Munce and Andrea Heupel.

**OPENING ACTIONS:** Patty, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:10 pm. She invited all to introduce themselves.

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED – MADE (M), SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).** REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MARCH MINUTES – Patty asked if there were any changes to the draft minutes. Hearing none – **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH MINUTES AS MAILED – MSC.** REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MAY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES – Patty asked for any changes. Hearing none – **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MAY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES – MSC.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Bernie shared registration and agenda information for the Fall Conference scheduled for October in Aberdeen. He provided an overview of the conference format and key presenters. He also encouraged Board members to attend, if interested in doing so. He encouraged Board members to work with BVR and DRS staff to get registered and secure lodging accommodations, if planning on participating.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Patty asked if anyone present wished to make public comments at this time. Seeing and hearing none – she moved on with the agenda.

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM (YLF):** At this time Dan Rounds, Director of the Transition Services Liaison Project, upon an invitation from Eric, shared information about the current event, its history and its impact on the lives of some who have participated in it in past years. Dan said that this year's delegates were presently at various agencies within the community volunteering. This is one aspect of the week-long leadership development focus carried out during YLF. Other sessions focus on topics, such as learning about their own and others disabilities, learning about self-advocacy and impacting public policy, learning about the services available to support persons with disabilities going after and accomplishing their life goals, and much more. YLF was initially started in California, and in the late 1990s, Dick Hicks learned

about it and advocated that it be developed and implemented in South Dakota. It was initially held on the campus of the University of South Dakota, then moved to the University of Sioux Falls, Augustana University, and now has been at Northern State University for several years. The first YLF was held in 1998, so this year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event in South Dakota. Youth apply to participate in YLF, and in the first year there were 26 youth delegates. This year there were over 90 applicants, and there are 42 youth delegates participating. Each year has a theme, and this year's theme is "In it to Win it!" Dan shared that the vision is for participants to evolve from delegates to assistant team leaders, to team leaders, to mentors and then on to other leadership opportunities within and outside the disability community. He shared that three current BVR members are former YLF delegates who followed that path, and he invited each of them to speak to their experience and how they have seen the vent evolve over the years. Dan thanked the Board for their support of this event, and he spoke to the other partners – private and public – who make it possible to host the event. Patty thanked Dan for his time, and several Board members will be attending the YLF luncheon as a conclusion to their meeting.

**Division Director's Report:** Eric started by thanking Board members for their commitment to and involvement with the board and its work. **BVR NOMINATIONS PROCESS UPDATE** – Eric explained that there is presently one pending vacancy that will need to be filled, which is the result of Chuck not wishing to be re-appointed to a second term. Four nominations have been forwarded to the Governor for his consideration and action. We anticipate hearing something next month, if timing follows that of previous years. The year 2020 will bring the potential for a majority of re-appointments and/or appointments. Some dialogue followed about this and how the terms might once again be staggered to ensure such a large number does not occur in any one year. **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GRANT** – Eric reminded members that he had reported at an earlier meeting that the word was these grants were not going to be refunded; yet no official word had been received on their status. He reported now that they have been funded. The South Dakota grant had been one grant of \$300,000 in past years. This year it is two grants in the amount of \$150,000. One is totally comprised of federal funds. The second is a 90% federal funds and 10% state funds and it is focused on youth with disabilities. The hope is these funds will continue to flow beyond this year. **STATE PLAN SUBMISSION** – Eric reviewed how due to the short notice between a need to update the state plan and when it was due, this process had to flow differently than previously. It was submitted, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration had a few comments, which have been addressed. The update has been approved as of April. **GOVERNOR'S AWARDS UPDATE** – Eric said that BVR staff will be talking more about this later in the agenda. At this time, he just explained that it will most likely go back to being held in the Capitol Rotunda, and he encouraged Board members to participate in the event, once

we know who the recipients and when the event is going to be held. **ORDER OF SELECTION** – Eric reported that 37 out of 79 vocational rehabilitation agencies are on an Order of Selection. He explained what this means in terms of delivery of services and the lasting impact it can have for years to follow. In our region, Wyoming and South Dakota are the only states not presently on an Order of Selection. **WINTAC TRAINING** – Eric shared that May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) provided training related to new performance measures and “customized employment.” The center is an organization that provides training and TA to vocational rehabilitation agencies to meet WIOA requirements. He provided a basic definition of “customized employment,” and spoke of how this is the very beginning of dialogue and action as South Dakota explores how it will work to implement this into the delivery of services who will benefit from this approach to reaching their employment goals. **PROCESS OF APPROVING PRIVATE PROVIDERS** – Eric reported that due to a ruling/decision by IRS, DRS is no longer able to do business with providers that are not established as independent contractors. DRS is changing their business practices, and have issued a request for proposals that providers will need to respond to if they wish to contract with DRS to provide services after June 30, 2018. There is the possibility that some providers may not seek to continue in this role. **BUDGET UPDATE** – Eric reported that with two months remaining in the state fiscal year, expenditures are \$500,000 below where they were for the last couple of years. He also reported that applicants are down about 10% and they are reviewing this information closely. Due to guests arriving for their presentation, Eric delayed the remainder of his report until later.

## **BREAK**

**THE CONNECTION:** At this point, Kim introduced the history behind business-led, community-based groups designed to provide education, consulting, and technical assistance to businesses about employing and retaining employees with disabilities. The Connection is the Aberdeen community group, supported through a “seed” grant from the Division of Rehabilitation Services. She introduced three members of the group – Laura Stoltenburg, Linda White, and Eric Vetter. Kim, Laura, Linda and Eric took turns sharing various aspects of a presentation (see attached) which focused on the group’s purpose, group composition, shift in fiscal partner, outreach and accomplishments to date, goals moving forward and disability-related topics on which they offer trainings, as well as examples of some trainings. Patty thanked them for their time in preparing for and presenting to the group and for their efforts to promote employment of people with disabilities in Aberdeen and the surrounding area.

**VR INITIATIVES:** Bernie Grimme, Assistant Director, provided this update. **CASE FILE REVIEW REPORT** – He explained the purpose of this process is two-fold – to

ensure case file documentation compliance statewide and to utilize the review as a training opportunity to ensure consistency of practice statewide. He disseminated a printed report – Case File Review Report – 2018 – Division of Rehabilitation Services (see attached). It provided the following topics – introduction, reviewers, review instrument, case file review findings, and recommendations. Bernie explained that they had to make a number of changes to the review instrument due to changes made by the Rehabilitation Services Administration to compliance measures. His presentation was followed with some questions from members. SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION REVIEW – Bernie explained that the Department of Human Services has a data exchange agreement with SSA so VR staff can get information on whether or not an applicant is receiving SSI or SSDI; if so, the amount of the monthly payment and the effective date of the benefit. This assists VR staff in making timely decision on individuals who are considered “presumptive eligible” for VR services. As a result of the review, DHS needed to make only minor changes, and the SD Bureau of Information and Technology was heavily involved in this process. DRAFT PROGRAM GUIDE – FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY TRAINING PROGRAMS (see attached) – Bernie explained how case service expenditures in this area are major for vocational rehabilitation agencies nationwide; in fact, it is a major reason some states have had to go on to an Order of Selection. He also shared a couple of newspaper accounts reporting of audit findings that demonstrated excessive expenditures were made and successful employment did not result for the persons supported, as well as expenditures were made without consideration of comparable benefits, which federal regulations state must be considered in providing funding. The draft program guide is seeking to provide further guidance to staff on how to determine the extent of an individual’s participation in the costs of certain VR services – in this case, secondary and post-secondary education services. Because this issue is complex, not only due to the individual situations of those being served, including impact of their disability; also due to different school settings (e.g., public, private, university, technical institute, tribal; vocational goals being pursued and educational basis required); the program guide has been revised since the most recent revision was completed in 2002. Bernie also spoke to the issue of remedial course work and shared an article relating to the impact of this on students in South Dakota (see attached). He noted the following portions were new: Assessment for Determining Post-Secondary Readiness, Remedial Courses, Internet Services, Part-time student, Dual Credits, Non-Degree Post-secondary Programs, and 18-21 Programs on Post-secondary Campus. Eric shared that DRS would like to continue to move this program guide forward. Dialogue followed, and due to this just being made available to members, it was decided to return to it during tomorrow’s meeting, at which time a decision will be made whether to act upon it at that time. Members will use this evening to review it and prepare for further dialogue tomorrow.

Due to the lateness of the time, Patty asked Kim if it would be workable for her to present her report in the morning. Kim said it would be, so this adjustment was made to the agenda. Patty handed the gavel to Eric so the next item could be carried out.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Eric explained that the Board's process in past years has been to have the Executive Committee come forward with a slate of officers to consider as a starting point to the election process. At this time, he reported that the current officers – Patty/Chairperson, Lisa/Vice Chairperson and Jolleen/Member-at-Large have all expressed an interest in running for another term in their respective positions. At this point, Eric called for further nominations for the position of Chairperson. He called a second and a third time for nominations. Hearing none – **MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS AND ELECT PATTY AS CHAIRPERSON – MSC.** Eric then called for further nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson. He called a second and third time for nominations. Hearing none – **MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS AND ELECT LISA AS VICE CHAIRPERSON – MSC.** Eric called for further nominations for the position of Member-at-Large. He called a second and third time for nominations. Hearing none – **MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS AND ELECT JOLLEEN AS MEMBER-AT-LARGE – MSC.** Eric returned the gavel to Patty. Patty thanked members for their continued confidence in the current leadership.

There was approximately 10 minutes remaining, and Eric asked to use that time to hand out and give a brief overview of the DRS 2017 Data Report. He explained that this report is not one dictated to be done by anyone, rather it is one they compile for their own purposes. He explained some changes to the format, and he invited members to be in touch with comments and questions at any time.

Prior to adjourning for the day, it was suggested the meeting begin tomorrow at 8 am rather than 8:30 to ensure ample time to complete the remaining agenda items and still be able to participate in the YLF Luncheon. Consensus was to do so. **MOTION TO ADJOURN FOR THE DAY – MS.** Meeting adjourned for the day at 5 pm.

Patty called the meeting to order the next morning at approximately 8:00 am. Brief introductions followed.

**BUSINESS SPECIALIST REPORT:** Kim Hoberg, DRS Business Specialist, provided this report. 2018 SUMMER INITIATIVES – Kim handed out (see attached) a schedule of the Pre-Employment Transition Services to secondary students with disabilities being supported by the Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. The handout provided an overview of what specific entities will be involved in these events, the training locations, and tentative training schedules.

**JUNE TRAINING FOR VR STAFF** – On June 25<sup>th</sup> training will be held on WIOA's performance accountability indicators or performance measures. Kim and Mitchell Close will provide the training via video-conference. The six performance measures are: 1) employment rate – 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit; 2) employment rate – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit; 3) median earnings – 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit; 4) credential attainment, 5) measurable skill gains and 6) effectiveness in serving employers or businesses. These are required performance measures for VR and other workforce development programs.

**ABILITY FOR HIRE UPDATE** – Kim handed out a multiple page document with analytics from the Ability for Hire website (see attached), and she reviewed several pages of the document with members. She also addressed the relationship with Epicosity and strategies under consideration for promoting increased usage of the site.

**BUSINESS CONTACTS** – Kim reported that she has initiated or received 130 new business contacts. A few examples of these are: Deuel County Farmers Union Oil Company C-Store located in Clear Lake; Hegg Companies, Inc. headquartered in Sioux Falls with other locations in-state and out-of-state and SD Bureau of Human Resources.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** – Kim reported that she and the Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills shared a vendor booth at SD's State SHRM Conference held in Deadwood on May 10<sup>th</sup>. There were approximately 200 conference attendees. Kim also spoke of the business-led groups in Aberdeen, Brookings, and Yankton supported by "seed contracts" from DRS and some of their recent activities – Brookings' group named Employer-Led Disability Alliance (ELDA) presented to the Brookings Area Human Resources Association on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The Yankton group – Yankton Employment Assistance & Resource Network (YEARN) – released their website and Facebook page in April. Their website address is [www.yanktonearn.com](http://www.yanktonearn.com) and their Facebook page is listed at YEARN.

**UPCOMING EVENTS** – A presentation will be given to the Webster Kiwanis Club on June 18<sup>th</sup>; and the business resource specialist will be at the 2018 SD Safety & Health Conference scheduled in Pierre on August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

**PROJECT SEARCH:** Patty invited Linda White and Renae Rausch to come forward to share about the project. They were planning to talk about Project SEARCH, Project Skills and the Transition Learning Campus. Linda, the Project SEARCH teacher, started out with sharing about the project. It has been in Aberdeen for eight or nine years, and Linda has been working with it for six years. It is for students in their last year of eligibility for education services from the school district who are preparing to move on to post-secondary life. The project in Aberdeen is a project between the Aberdeen School District, Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Avera St. Luke's Hospital. Students from around the area are able to apply, and if accepted, it is an opportunity to learn what life is like in the adult world and what employment opportunities they may or may not want to pursue. Linda spoke of the importance of starting transition planning with youth with

disabilities early – age 14 if at all possible – and she advocated for this to be the practice all working with youth with disabilities. Aberdeen’s Project SEARCH has the capacity for six students. This year they will have four students. The students have various disabilities, and often they have had previous experience with Project Skills. The students are involved five-days a week for five-hours each day. They learn about available supports and services within the adult service world and are encouraged to explore and apply for those that are appropriate to their needs. The local community support provider – Aspire – provides any needed job coaching supports to the students. Linda shared some success stories of students from past years. A couple of internship sites for employment outside of Avera St. Luke’s have been Kesslers and the Barnett Center on the NSU campus. She invited people to go to the Aberdeen school district website to learn more about how Project SEARCH works in Aberdeen. Linda thanked the BVR for their past support of staff participating in national training on Project SEARCH – an opportunity to learn from others and bring it back to strengthen what happens here.

**PROJECT SKILLS:** Renae Rausch continued by speaking briefly about the role Project Skills plays in the lives of youth with disabilities served through the Aberdeen School District. She explained that they are in the process of transitioning to a new director/coordinator for the program. Last year there were a total of 20 students who participated in Project Skills. This project is a collaborative effort between the school district, DRS, DSBVI, Office of Special Education and employers. Of the 20 students who participated last year, 16 were placed into jobs; four attempted to work but for various reasons were not successful in those attempts.

**TRANSITION LEARNING CAMPUS:** Renae shared that this program had been on the campus of Presentation College in past years. More recently, it has moved to the Northern State University campus. There will be nine students. None of them will be living on campus, but the program will be provided on campus. Nicole Olson is the teacher, and she also has an education assistant to assist with the programming. Students apply to the program and then go through an interview. The parents are involved in a shorter interview following the initial interview with the students. A student can participate in this program for up to two years depending on their age, their interest and their choice. If they participate for two years, the second year is focused more on employment related experiences. Often students get their first taste of employment and adult life through a job experience via Project Skills. They then move on to the Transition Learning Campus to learn more independent living skills as they draw closer to leaving secondary education and home life. And the final step is Project SEARCH for some wanting to delve deeper into employment options and the world of work.

Patty thanked Linda and Renae for their presentation, and again members were encouraged to go to the Aberdeen School District website to learn more about any of these projects/programs.

## **BREAK**

**SILC REPORT:** Shelly provided this brief verbal report by highlighting a few items from a written report Chuck had emailed her from the March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting (see attached). The items she referenced were: DRS Report, Unserved Areas, DSBVI and BSBVI Reports, SILC Staff Report, Policies and Procedures and Workgroup Updates.

**BVR STAFF REPORT:** Shelly reported on the status of the Governor's Awards Process for 2018. She is presently awaiting one additional letter of support. At the same time, she will be polling the joint committee members about potential dates for hosting a conference call to review their ratings of the nominations and work towards consensus on award recipient recommendations for the BVR Executive Committee. She reported there are two nominations for Outstanding Citizens with a Disability, four nominations for Outstanding Employee with a Disability, one nomination for Outstanding Employer – Small Private, two nominations for Outstanding Employer – Large Private, one nomination for Outstanding Employer – Other, and two nominations for Outstanding Transition Services. No nominations were received for Distinguished Service Award. A question was asked what is done since one category did not receive any nominations. Shelly reported that this has occurred in the past, as well as the committee has not recommended an award recipient from nominations in a category, and for that given year, that award is not presented to anyone. Some dialogue followed on what happens with nominations that are not selected. Are the nominators notified of their nominations not being selected and encouraged to re-submit in the coming year; or are the nominations held over for the next year and considered at that time? Staff indicated that they have not been held over. She would have to check on whether any communication has been sent out notifying nominators of the results and encouraging them to re-submit. At the conclusion of the dialogue, staff was directed to draft a letter that would go to all nominators, whose nominations are not selected, notifying them of this outcome and encouraging them to resubmit their nominations. A question was also asked if someone could receive an award posthumously? Staff was uncertain if this had happened in the past. If the involved boards/council would want to do so, staff did not know of any reason why they could not do so. Consensus was to ask the joint committee to discuss these and other aspects of the process and bring recommendations for changes to their respective group.



**DRAFT PROGRAM GUIDE:** At this point, Patty brought the conversation back to the draft program guide that had been handed out yesterday. She inquired as to whether the members wanted to act upon it at this time. Eric shared the following language relating to “Additional Bachelor Degree and Graduate Degree” – DRS/SBVI can provide financial assistance for an additional bachelor degree or graduate degree when it is justified how their current level of education and disability prevents the individual from being employed. Approval is determined on an individual basis considering past employment, criminal background, disability, employment goal and other factors impacting the individual’s employment potential. Considerations for VR funding of the post-secondary and other associated costs beyond a bachelor’s degree need to be approved by the appropriate Assistant Director. There was robust dialogue on this followed by a **MOTION TO ADOPT THE POLICY ONCE AMENDED WITH THE LANGUAGE ADDRESSING ADDITIONAL AND ADVANCED DEGREES HAS BEEN ADDED – MSC BY A VOTE OF FOUR YEAS AND TWO NAYS.**

**CLOSING ACTIONS:** SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING – A substantial discussion followed on whether to hold the September meeting in Pierre or Sioux Falls. Pros and cons for both sites were shared, followed by consensus to hold the next meeting in Pierre/Ft. Pierre. The weeks of September 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> were identified as the weeks to be considered, and staff will send out a Doodle Poll to all members asking which days will work best for them, excluding Mondays and Fridays of both weeks. OTHER BUSINESS – Those planning on participating in the YLF Luncheon asked for directions from the meeting site to the luncheon site. They were provided by Andrea, as she lives in Aberdeen and works at NSU. Hearing no other business, Patty thanked everyone for their participation. **MOTION TO ADJOURN – MS.** Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:35 am. Those participating in the YLF Luncheon left for the NSU campus.