

Board of SBVI Meeting
Minutes

June 14, 2024

DDN with locations in Pierre, Sioux Falls, Aberdeen,
and Rapid City

Members Present: Ryan Groeneweg, Jeff Nelson, Carla Miller, Kendra Ringstmeyer, Nichole Nelson, Kelly Deckert, Burdette Clifford, Richard Crawford, Michael Hommel, Cole Uecker

Others Present: Sandy Neyhart, Becky Blume, Ronda Williams, Raymond Tracy, April Schulte, Bailey Terry

Members Absent: Elaine Fritz, George Seamon, Chelle Hart, Kellie Hauglid, Pam Fisher, Tom Martinec
Ryan Groeneweg called the meeting to order.

Public Comments: None

Board Member Updates:

Ryan Groeneweg: No current updates – today is the first day that we are having a Board meeting without Gaye Mattke as she has recently retired. Things at the Center for Disabilities are quiet currently but are gearing up for new activities after the fiscal year changes July 1.

Jeff Nelson: EROS Data Center has not had much change for Business Enterprise Program. Things are steady but slow.

Carla Miller: Quiet at SD Parent Connection for the summer. Largest percentage of calls come from families of Transition Age Youth. State Report Card was recently published and did not meet expectations for Transition Age Youth. Behavioral

challenges and discipline practices are also a concern. SD Parent Connection is reaching their 40th year as the Parent Training & Information Center.

Richard Crawford: Great state convention for NFB in Rapid City. Richard spoke about NFB to Transition Week students at the Rehab Center and mentioned he would like to see students reading success stories of Blind individuals and what they've accomplished. NFB continues to put Braille Alphabet cards in boxes for the Toy Lending Library which has been a good outreach for them.

Kelly Deckert: Brookings NFB chapter recently started up. There are currently 16 members, officers were elected, and a President is in place. They have hosted multiple events already. NFB is hoping to host the state convention next year in Brookings. The Peer Support group in Brookings is seeing growth and there is now a Facebook page "Brookings Visually Impaired Support Group" for community to connect with.

Nichole Nelson: First summer school session began on June 3rd with 15 regular on-campus students, plus 14 outreach students. Each week is focused on a different topic of extended core curriculum. Graduation was held at the end of May, with 4 students graduating.

Burdette Clifford: VR Program has moved from Sinte Gleska to RedCo to the Sioux Rosebud Tribe. Tribe is currently working to get their program started up.

Kendra Ringstmeyer: Department of Labor and Regulation is continuing to work through change and restructuring. In the summer they offer the Summer Passport Series to help students

gain exposure to business and post-secondary education options. Information is on the DLR website to be shared. WIOA Symposium will be in Pierre February 25-27, 2025, and will be held with the Governor's Economic Development office.

Mike Hommel: This is Mike's first meeting. He is from the Webster area and is ready to learn.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve agenda by Carla Miller, second by Jeff Nelson. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from March 15th Board Meeting: Motion to approve Minutes by Jeff Nelson, second by Nichole Nelson. Motion carried.

Membership Update – Ronda Williams:

New board member Michael Hommel has replaced Jill Kuntz. Cole Uecker was reappointed. Members with terms expiring at the end of June are Elaine Fritz, Chelle Hart, Kellie Hauglid, Kendra Ringstmeyer. Ronda thanked them for their knowledge and service to the Board throughout their terms. There are several re-appointments and new appointments that are waiting for approval at the Governor's office.

Vocational Rehabilitation Case File Review Results – Ronda Williams:

SBVI staff reviewed 144 open and closed cases, which is the highest number of cases reviewed since Ronda has been with SBVI. Selection of cases is based on recent closures of cases but is random, or with high dollar amounts being spent. SBVI staff got together in April to do the case file reviews. There was also a smaller group that reviewed cases virtually.

Ronda has a report that was completed following the review. If anyone is interested in reading that report, please reach out to Ronda.

Areas of High Performance by VR Counselors:

- Annual Reviews by counselors for clients.
- Pre-authorizing for services based on Individualized Plan for Employment to vendors and employers.
- Ensuring that services are necessary to reach employment goals.
- Notification of eligibility for services and case closure (ongoing communication between counselor and client).

Areas in Need of Improvement (anything below 90%):

- Timeliness and documentation of eligibility determination and plan development. Counselors are allowed 60 days for eligibility determination and then 90 days for plan development, with extensions available if needed.
- Financial Need – I.E. Medical Restoration, Post-Secondary Education assistance, extenuating expenses, etc. require supporting documentation.
- Verification of wages and employment – Federally mandated to get verification of start date and wages. There are some clients who are placed in Employed Status without the verification and documentation needed.
- Measurable Skills Gained – Required Documentation of skills gained. I.E. Regularly receiving report cards and transcripts for those in secondary or post-secondary education to ensure skills gained.

Ronda shared several comments from reviewers regarding specific cases. Results will be shared with counselors and will be used as a training opportunity. VR Supervisor will be doing regular reviews of open cases throughout the year to stay on top of cases.

SBVI Program Updates

SD Rehabilitation Center – April Schulte: Transition Week was held in June with 8 transition age students attending. Activities included career exploration and bonding time throughout the week, while staying at the Augustana dorms. This year a new event was the welcome barbecue with the students, staff, and NFB and SDAB giving presentations. There were also several new connections that gave tours and presentations to the students. JoMarie Laughlin retired on May 8. Katy Manke started in the Assistive Technology position on May 24th. She has applied for University of Boston Assistive Technology program.

Employment Specialist will be taking Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) exam in June.

Program Specialist is starting a 3-month program to become a Certified Vocational Evaluation Specialist which will allow the Program Specialist to provide comprehensive vocational assessments to clients and enhance the services provided from SD Vocational Resources.

Center Counselor was accepted into the Master of Science in the Counseling and Human Resource Development – Rehabilitation Counseling program for Fall 2024 semester.

Home Management teacher has reached 20 years with the Rehab Center recently.

Several tours of the Rehab Center recently including staff from the Accessible Library, and the new Chief Financial Officer for Department of Human Services with several inquiries to other tours, trainings, etc.

Clients continue to do community training events where Rehab Center students go out into the Sioux Falls area and practice their skills.

Independent Living – Sandy Neyhart: SBVI staff were able to participate in a Listening Session in Kyle hosted by Disability Rights as an Outreach activity.

Staff have also participated in outreach activities like Senior Companion Presentations, Community Healthcare Worker organizations, Rotary Clubs, Peer Support Groups, NFB State Convention with SBVI Listening Session.

Rehabilitation Teachers continue to receive referrals across the state. There have been some areas/counties identified where outreach activities should be increased. Carla Miller said that several of the counties mentioned by Sandy are familiar to SD Parent Connection as needing outreach and recommended potentially looking into a Resource Fair for groups to come into an area on a single day and share information with the communities.

Applications versus closure numbers are staying steady.

Applications have increased this year versus last year.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys were sent to 72 clients who have closed cases between the first 2 quarters. There is a 44% response rate currently.

Sandy has been selected to be a representative for SBVI on the DakotaLink Advisory Council. They meet on June 18th.

Business Enterprise Program – Raymond Tracy: BEP currently has locations in Pierre, Huron, Aberdeen, Sioux Falls and Interstate rest areas.

Aberdeen is without a vendor but has been using a third-party vendor for the last several years, with 100% of commissions going to Huron vendor. A potential vendor for the Aberdeen site will be doing their assessment in July at the Rehab Center for the Blind.

Cashless vending has drastically improved vending operations in Pierre. There are currently 16 machines running with cashless vending out of the 32 in Pierre.

Interstate commissions for 2023 were about \$80,000 which goes back to the program and vendors in benefits and pay. Contracts are being re-evaluated due to issues with commission reporting by the third-party vendors, which Ray is working to get resolved. Management Services RFP has been completed and a bid has been accepted. Anderson Mill will now be doing management services (vendor paperwork, bills, expenses, income, taxes, etc.).

Board Priorities/Planning:

Governor's Awards: Ryan Groeneweg represents SBVI Board on larger Review Board. There are 39 submissions to be reviewed this year. June 18th is the next meeting for reviewers to vote on category winners. Date for awards ceremony has not been set at this time.

Disability Employment Awareness Month: Sioux Falls has a contract for presentations with Rocky Mountain ADA Center Coordinator, Emily Shuman. Emily will also be presenting to several communities across the state while she is in South Dakota in October. The theme for this year is "Access and Good Jobs for All."

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF): YLF was held June 2-6 in Aberdeen at Northern State University. Students with disabilities learn about resources, self-advocacy, have group discussions, social activities, etc.

Carla Miller shared about an upcoming opportunity for transition age students who could be on a regional board of students about self-advocacy which could give leadership growth opportunities. She will be receiving more information in July but would look forward to collaboration to identify potential students for this board.

Other Activities/Sponsorships: None.

Statewide Independent Living Council – Ryan & Ronda

Ronda's term will be expiring at the end of June as a representative of SBVI on SILC.

State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) for FY 2025-2027 has been approved by the Council and has been submitted for review. SILC members reviewed a Training Plan that was originally presented in 2020 and were able to look at and approve an updated draft proposal.

Officer elections were held. Ryan Groeneweg is Chair, Matt Cain is Vice Chair, Brett Glirbas and Kendra Gottsleben are members at-large.

There was discussion held regarding the Champion of Independent Living Services Award. Nominations are due Friday, June 21st.

Election of Officers – Discussion for Fall Meeting

Discussion was held about postponing the Election of Officers until the September meeting due to new members. Carla Miller asked for information to be prepared for voting at the next meeting, i.e., current officers, open positions, possible candidates, etc. Suggestion was made that as information is received and processed by Board Members, they can contact Executive Committee Members (Ryan Groeneweg, Richard Crawford and Cole Uecker) who will nominate at the next meeting.

Motion to table to the election of officers until September meeting and information be sent 30 days prior to meeting was made by Richard Crawford, second by Carla Miller. Motion carried.

Attendance at next meeting is highly encouraged so voting can be well represented.

Assistant Director's Report – Ronda Williams: Tom Martinec, DHS Deputy Secretary, has been named Interim Director of SBVI.

State plan has been approved and published. Amendment will be completed in two years, which will include a progress report of meeting goals and objectives.

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) sent a Corrective Action Plan for Timeliness based on Eligibility to Plan Development for time period of July 2022-June 2023. Success rate for that period was at 88% (below the 90% acceptable rate from RSA). SBVI was aware that they were out of compliance and Ronda is researching possibilities of why that was the case. One thing she has found is that Plan Extension Dates were not properly importing from the case management system into the RSA data spreadsheet for three out of four quarters in that time period. A Corrective Action Plan is due by August 5th.

Staff Engagement Survey Results: All SBVI staff were invited to complete an engagement survey. SBVI results are below:

- 96% of SBVI staff completed the Survey.
- 52% of SBVI staff are actively engaged in their work. DHS is at 28.6% and State was at 28%.
- 7.4% of SBVI staff are actively disengaged. DHS is at 15.2% and State is at 21.5%.
- Net promoter scale is from -100 to 100. SBVI score was 52, anything above 0 is considered a positive score. DHS was at 19.

SBVI All-Staff Training will be held July 16-18 in Ft. Pierre at the AmericInn. Topics include a Deaf-Blind presentation, Counseling Techniques, Orientation & Mobility, Anatomy & Pathology of Vision Loss and Case Discussions.

Fall Conference is scheduled for October 29-31 in Deadwood. Ronda is part of the planning committee. The theme is "Don't

Stop Me Now". There will be a pre-conference event on the morning of the 29th. Throughout the conference there are presentations and ethics sessions from a variety of presenters. There will be a RehabACTion meeting and social, provider booths, breakout sessions, luncheon, and keynote speakers. Registration will open in August. Board members are eligible to attend the conference and can register through Becky, with per diem and transportation paid for by the Board. Registration applications will be emailed and mailed out to Board members when it becomes available.

Plan Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Friday, September 20th at 9 AM to 1 PM via DDN.

Motion to Adjourn by Richard Crawford, second by Carla Miller.
Meeting adjourned.