

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR)
Executive Committee
August 18, 2021

Present: Cole Uecker, Brad Konechne, Kevin Barber and Eric Weiss. Others present Colette Wagoner, BVR staff and Julie Paluch, interpreter.

Meeting was convened at 10:00 am/central time via Zoom.

The Executive Committee met to discuss the agenda for the upcoming September meeting. Staff asked permission to review the draft agenda and timeframes, and Cole Uecker, Chairperson agreed.

Draft meeting agenda: the welcome and introductions at the start of the meeting will include asking members to provide more background information regarding their desire to serve as a member, as a new member has been appointed and will be available for this meeting. "Introductory Comments" will be included to follow announcements/public comment. Information will be shared regarding the board, role of members, composition requirements, committees, etc. This will provide general information for the new member as well.

A question was asked of Eric and whether he could share information under the Division Director's Report about the status of the 121 Native American VR programs in the state. Eric agreed to provide information, i.e., how the State VR program collaborates with the 121 programs, referral process, dual eligibility, etc. The remainder of the agenda was reviewed.

Eric brought up the topic of hybrid meetings and the testing that was recently conducted. He asked for discussion on the meeting format due to the increasing number of COVID positive infections. He shared he doesn't envision going back to 100% face-to-face meetings. Members were surveyed earlier in the year and responses supported the use of Zoom. All members have access to Zoom and most are comfortable in utilizing it. In the past some individuals have been approached about becoming a member and they have declined because of the travel commitment. Meeting via Zoom would provide an alternative to meeting in person, and it has increased meeting participation.

A comment was posed of why the Board wouldn't maintain a virtual option for all meetings. Kevin noted that he prefers the use of Zoom for meetings, and for individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing it has become a part of their culture as it is user friendly and accessible. Brad was comfortable with hosting meetings via Zoom for the time being and have the Board revisit this discussion in a year. Staff agreed to communicate this with the full board when the agenda and other meeting related information is disseminated.

A question was asked about the Fall Conference and if there are plans to move it from an in-person event to being held virtually. Eric stated that the plan remains to host it in person.

There were no other discussion items. The meeting concluded at approximately 10:50 am.