

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation
September 26, 2019
AmericInn – Teton Conference Center
Ft. Pierre

Members Present: Eric Weiss, Cole Uecker, Kristina Allen, Jolleen LaVerdure, Lisa Sanderson, Kristi Eisenbraun, Kendra Gottsleben, Kim Ludwig, Joe Vetch, Brad Konechne, Brooke Lusk, Bill McEntaffer, Pete Bullene, and Kevin Barber. **Members Excused Absence:** Beth Schiltz and Colleen Moran **Others present:** Bob Jahner, Consultant; Bernie Grimme, DRS Assistant Director; Shayna Ebben, DRS Program Specialist; Jordon Trumbo, DRS Program Specialist; Becky Blume, DRS and DSBVI Administrative Assistant; Lyle Cook, Director Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe VR Program; Shelly Pfaff, BVR Staff; Interpreters – Rick Norris and Julie Paluch.

OPENING ACTIONS: Lisa, Vice Chairperson, called the meeting to order at approximately 8:35 am. She invited all to introduce themselves. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Lisa asked if there were any changes to the agenda, as mailed out. Hearing none – **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS MAILED – MADE (M), SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).** **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Due to a lack of a quorum at the last meeting there were two sets of regular meeting minutes and two sets of Executive Committee minutes to be approved. Lisa asked if there were any changes to the March and June BVR meeting draft minutes as mailed. Hearing none – **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH AND JUNE BVR MINUTES – MSC.** Lisa then asked if there were any changes to the May and August Executive Committee minutes as mailed. Hearing none – **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MAY AND JUNE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES – MSC.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Lisa asked if there were any announcements. Hearing none, she moved on with the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Lisa asked if anyone present wished to make public comments. Seeing and hearing none, Lisa invited Eric take the gavel for the next agenda item.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Eric explained that this would usually take place at the June meeting, but due to a lack of a quorum-it was postponed to today's meeting. He went on to share that a slate of officer nominations had been prepared, yet nominations will be invited from the "floor" for each position. Chairperson: Lisa Sanderson was nominated and seconded for this position. Eric called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none – **MOTION TO ELECT LISA SANDERSON AS CHAIR FOR THE CURRENT YEAR – MSC.** Vice Chairperson: Jolleen LaVerdure was nominated and seconded for this position. Eric called for nominations from the floor.

Hearing none – **MOTION TO ELECT JOLLEEN LAVERDURE AS VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE CURRENT YEAR – MSC.** Member at Large: Brad Konechne was nominated and seconded for this position. Eric called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none – **MOTION TO ELECT BRAD KONECHNE AS MEMBER AT LARGE FOR THE CURRENT YEAR – MSC.** Eric congratulated the newly elected officers and handed the gavel back to Lisa. Lisa invited Eric to address the next agenda topic.

DRS DIRECTOR’S REPORT: BOARD APPOINTMENTS – Eric began by thanking the members for their commitment to the Board. He welcomed and thanked new appointee – Brooke Lusk – and spoke briefly of her long history of service to people with disabilities and an understanding of their need for services. Eric also thanked Pete and Beth for their willingness to serve a second term, and thanked them for their continued service. **QUARTERLY DATA REPORT** – Eric had sent out a report earlier, and he handed out another at this time. He reviewed how the number of applications is below average, and this fact impacts a number of other statistics within the report. He stated that DRS is working to reverse this trend. Factors out of their control that impact this reality are the economy and changes in law and regulations, which impact DRS’ ability to serve some individuals. He shared that about half of their caseloads are students with disabilities. There was some dialogue on unsuccessful closures and the primary reasons for these closures e.g., unable to locate, no longer interested in services. **BUDGET** – Eric explained that part of the annual budget process is to compare budget expenditures and consider if there is a need to request additional general (state) funds. DRS’ budget is primarily made up of three types of funds – general, federal authority and other fund authority. The VR program has not requested additional general funds for several years, and is not requesting additional general funds for FY2021. The reasons for this reality are actions taken at the federal level e.g., sequestration, cost of living adjustments, which have impacted the program in ways that have resulted in not needing to ask for additional general funds. **SSA-EN OVERPAYMENT** – Eric provided a brief overview of this issue for the benefit of the new member, explaining how reimbursement is requested, and at the last meeting he had reported that SSA had sent an email alleging an overpayment of \$1.5 million to DRS and DSBVI over the past several years. DRS has an email from SSA with policy clarification that supported the method which DRS and DSBVI has been following, and thus they have been appealing this decision to whoever will listen. There has been no communication from SSA on the appeal. DRS and DSBVI have begun to see payments on the ticket portal, with a larger pending payment. This may suggest that SSA has resolved the issue. **RSA 911** – Eric explained that this federal report provides a wide variety of statistical data to RSA. It used to be an annual report on all closures. It is now a quarterly report on all open and closed cases. DRS is working with appropriate staff to get necessary programming in place by July 1, 2020. **COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT (CIE)** – Eric explained the impact of

federal regulations barring a VR agency from providing services to a person for an employment outcome that does not meet the definition of CIE. Regulations require a VR agency to make CIE determinations when necessary. QUESTIONS FOR RSA FROM DRS AND BVR – Eric explained followed up on action taken as a result of dialogue at the June meeting. It focused on asking RSA for clarification on topics regarding post-secondary education programs for individuals with ID/DD. RSA's responses were sent to BVR members prior to the meeting. Dialogue followed, and consensus was that the Consumer Services Committee meet to further discuss the response. **MOTION THAT THE CONSUMER SERVICES COMMITTEE MEET, REVIEW THE RSA RESPONSE AND DEVELOP A REPORT TO PRESENT TO THE FULL BOARD AT THEIR NEXT MEETING – MSC.** Pete asked to be taken off the committee. Brooke, Kim, Lisa and Cole will be on the committee. Katie Gran, DRS Transition Program Specialist, will also be invited to participate. Bernie will provide technical assistance and support to the committee. It was discovered that not all BVR members had received a document Lisa referred to so she will send it to BVR staff, and it will be sent out to all members.

A fifteen minutes break occurred at this time.

Upon returning from the break, Lisa asked Lyle Cook to introduce himself. He has joined the meeting. He did so, as well as spoke of a Disability Awareness Event tentatively planned for October 30th in Eagle Butte.

VR PROGRAM INITIATIVES: Bernie Grimme, Assistant DRS Director, provided the major portion of this report. AUDIONET – DRS purchases hearing aids for approximately 12 individuals annually. Both the information from audiologists and the pricing of the aids has been very inconsistent. Thus, DRS sought a different method for securing these devices that would address these issues. They are developing a contract with AudioNet to assist in evaluating audiograms and Audiologist recommendations, as well as device pricing. This contract will begin October 1st, and some training has been provided to DRS staff, with additional training to occur at the Fall Conference. More information on AudioNet can be found at: <https://www.audionetamerica.com/> FALL CONFERENCE – Bernie handed out the latest Agenda at a Glance for the conference. He encouraged members wishing to attend to contact him right away so he might be sure to secure them needed lodging. BOARD STAFF SUPPORT CONTRACT – Bernie shared that the SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities notified DRS that they would be ending their involvement with this contract as of the end of September. A request for proposals was issued August 7th with letters of intent due August 23rd. Written inquiries were due September 3rd and responses to about eight questions were issues by September 20th. Proposals are due November 1st. The hope is to have new support in place prior to the next face to face meeting. STATE WAGE INTERCHANGE SYSTEM (SWIS) –

Bernie reported that as a result of this agreement, state workforce administrators, state adult education directors, state vocational rehabilitation directors and state unemployment insurance directors who sign the agreement will be able to exchange interstate quarterly wage records. This will assist these agencies in satisfying performance requirements in section 116 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). DRS is currently working with the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation to complete the SWIS Agreement. CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT – At this time, Bernie invited Jordan Trumbo to provide an update on this newest initiative. She is the primary staff person working with the implementation of this service. Jordan provided an overview of what customized employment is, who it is intended to assist and how it differs from other vocational rehabilitation services presently provided to eligible individuals. She identified the four groups involved in the project, as well as the various agencies participating in each group and the status of their training on customized employment. Group sizes are limited to a maximum of 25 people, and trainees complete 40 hours of training, which leads to ACRE (Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators) certification. Trainees will also receive on-site technical assistance and on-line mentoring, as well as administrators receive training on the Discovery Fidelity Scale. The BVR will continue to receive an update on this initiative and its impact on those served, as the initiative continues and the service is fully implemented.

BUSINESS SPECIALIST REPORT: Kim Ludwig was invited to provide this report. 2019 NDEAM UPDATES/EVENTS – Kim provided an overview of this event from the national perspective, as well as sharing that Governor Noem has proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) in South Dakota. The theme for 2019 is “The Right Talent, Right Now.” It emphasizes the essential role that people with disabilities play in America’s economic success, especially in an era when historically low unemployment and global competition are creating a high demand for skilled talent. A listing of various planned events in South Dakota had been mailed out to members earlier, and Kim highlighted that these are also listed on the DRS and Ability for Hire websites. She noted that the BVR, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Statewide Independent Living Council are co-sponsors of these events. 2019 GOVERNOR’S AWARDS – Next, Kim addressed the annual Governor’s Awards process and status of that process. This year’s ceremony is scheduled for Monday – November 4th – at the Capitol Rotunda at 10:00 AM (CT). A reception will be held following the ceremony at the Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center in Ft. Pierre. Kim asked Shelly to announce this year’s recipients – she announced the following: Outstanding Individual with a Disabilities – Brad Konechne/Brookings; Outstanding Employee with a Disability – Carolee Bucholz/Sioux Falls; Outstanding Private Employer (Small Employer) – Cammack Ranch Supply/Union Center; Outstanding Private Employer (Large Employer) – Five Star Call Centers/Sioux Falls; Outstanding Employer (Other – Any Size) – University of

South Dakota/Sanford School of Medicine/Vermilion; Outstanding Transition Services – Carolyn Schuldies/Sturgis; and Distinguished Service Award – Nancy Schlichenmayer/Pierre. VR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES INITIATIVE – Kim explained the focus and development of this initiative. A written report had been sent out to members prior to the meeting, which provided an overview of the entities involved, training locations, the dates trainings were held and the number of participants. A total of 107 students were involved in the trainings. Sixty-four are currently receiving services from VR, and 43 are potentially eligible for services. BUSINESS ASSOCIATION TRAINING – In July, Kim facilitated a webinar for SD Retailers Association on Recruiting, Hiring & Retaining Employees with Disabilities: VR Services Available to Businesses. It focused on promoting to businesses the availability of VR supports to them for workplace assistance and solutions. NORTHEAST REGIONAL DEVELOPERS MEETING – Earlier this month, Kim met with this group. It involved 25 economic development and chamber of commerce representatives from the northeastern part of the state. She had a brief opportunity to share information with them, and she is working to be able to make a lengthier presentation to them at a future time. BUSINESS MEETINGS/ON-SITE TOURS – During the past quarter, Kim has had the opportunity to meet with several businesses on-site to learn more about their workplaces, workforce needs through the completion of on-site tours. She has done this with Twin City Die Castings/Watertown; United Hardware Distributing Center/Milbank; Tech Ord/Clear Lake; and Terex Utilities/Watertown and Huron. PROJECT SKILLS ARTICLE – In early September, SD Retailers Association staff interviewed Kim. They will also be interviewing two businesses who have experience working with the Project Skills program. From these interviews, they will be writing an article for their membership publications. The purpose of doing so is to promote Project Skills to their members, as an opportunity to broaden their workforce and provide an opportunity for youth with disabilities to experience the world of work while in school. ABILITY FOR HIRE EMPLOYERS BROCHURE – Kim handed out a copy of the current materials. She shared that it is time to review this material and determine if an update it needed. Consensus was that the Public Awareness Committee will take the lead on this activity. Kendra agreed to spearhead this effort with support from Kim. It was suggested that a future meeting provide Kim with greater time to share her report, including her presentation that is provided to businesses/employers. It was noted that she is often cut short with time due to other agenda items, and the members would like to hear more about the activities carried out by this position, including data on topics such as the Ability of Hire website. She could also show the website to members so they might see all that it has to offer.

SILC UPDATE: Eric provide this report, as a SILC member. The last meeting was held September 11th in Brookings at McCrory Gardens Visitor Center. He identified the new SILC members and shared that the agenda included: New Member

Orientation, Boards of VR and SBVI Updates, SBVI Older Blind Report, State Plan for Independent Living process and the awarding of the Champion of Independent Living Award to Doris Schumacher for her work in advocating for services for people who experience traumatic brain injury. Eric shared that the SILC will be meeting via video-conference on December 3rd.

BVR STAFF REPORT: Shelly took the opportunity to thank the member on behalf of the Coalition for the many years of providing staff support to them. It has been a solid partnership, and the Coalition is grateful for the many years of working together. She also took a moment to thank them on a personal level for the opportunity to serve them and in many cases form lasting relationships. At this time, Eric took a few moments, on behalf of the BVR and DRS to thank the Coalition and Shelly for their work of the past twenty plus years, presenting gifts and a card to her. Lisa added her thanks and invited others to do so prior to the end of the meeting.

At this time, the members broke for lunch. They agreed to reconvene at 1:00 PM when they will be joined by members of the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS: Lisa welcomed everyone back, and she welcomed the members of the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired to this portion of the meeting. She asked everyone to introduce themselves, prior to moving into the focus of the afternoon.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA): Bob Janner, consultant, was introduced and a handout was provided to all in attendance (see attached). Bob shared that he would be reading this information to the group, and in doing so, ensuring access for all participating this afternoon. Upon completion of the sharing of the information, Bob asked members to pair up and take time to have conversation about the report. They were asked to identify three top sentences of need identified by the assessment, share them with one another and make any recommendations relating to these needs. At the conclusion of this time, Bob gathered these notes so they might be incorporated into the final product resulting from the completion of the CSNA. Bob explained that he would be working with the Board of SBVI later today on their State Plan goals. If they follow the process used in past years, the BVR will work through its Consumer Services Committee to draft goals to be brought forward to the full board at their next meeting. Bob thanked the boards and divisions for the opportunity to once again assist with this process. He encouraged them to begin their next CSNA process with their next meetings, identifying any assets that may surface and any needs in their minutes, so they might turn to these when needing to develop their next state plan update.

CLOSING ACTIONS: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – Lisa shared that a few items had been identified during the meeting, and these will be incorporated into the December agenda. **SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING** – The December meeting has been held via video-conference the past few years, and it will be so this year. A Doodle Poll of potential dates and times will be sent out to members. Lisa also mentioned that they will be asked their preferences for future meetings about: having lunch brought it vs. breaking for lunch; getting meeting materials electronically vs. on paper or both; holding meetings an afternoon of one day and morning of another vs. one full day. **ADJOURNMENT** – Lisa asked for a **MOTION TO ADJOURN – MSC.**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00 PM (CT).