

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

March 9, 2021

Meeting Held Via Zoom

Face to face meetings have been postponed due to COVID-19.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Stewart, Mark Koterwski, CJ Moit, Roger Bowie, Patty Kuglitsch, Ronda Williams, Mark Sternhagen, Kyrsten Zimmerman, Eric Weiss, Alan Adel, Catherine Greseth, Tasha Jones, and Syndee Jundt. **MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jen Red Bear and Ben Wolf Necklace. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Matt Cain, Jennifer Lewis, Bernie Grimme, Andrea Heronimus, Brenda Schweitzer, Ron Baumgart, Sara Spisak, and Colette Wagoner. Interpreters were Julie Paluch and Rick Norris.

HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS: Prior to starting SILC staff reviewed the use of microphones, cameras, and encouraged individuals to take breaks throughout the meeting as needed. Members and other attendees were asked to identify themselves by name when speaking as interpreters were being utilized. The voting process was explained and any items requiring action, voting would be taken by roll call.

OPENING ACTIONS: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Alan Adel, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 9:07 AM. He welcomed everyone and asked him or her to introduce themselves. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Alan asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda. Staff asked about the ability to switch two agenda items - Bridging SD/Intersection of domestic violence /sexual assault and disability and the Staff Report – as CJ Moit was calling into the meeting at this time and she would not be available until later in the meeting to address her item. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS REVISED, MADE (M), SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).** YEAS – Mark S, Mark K, Kyrsten, Catherine, Roger, Syndee, Patty and Steve. NAYS - None. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – Alan asked for any changes or additions to the draft December 8 meeting minutes. There were no changes or additions. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 8 MEETING MINUTES, MSC.** YEAS – Mark S, Mark K, Kyrsten, Catherine, Roger, Syndee, Patty and Steve. NAYS - None. Alan asked for any changes or additions to the SILC's executive committee meeting minutes. Staff noted the minutes included a funding recommendation to approve financial support of the 2021 YLF organizational funding application in the amount up to \$2,000. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 17, 2021 TO INCLUDE APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT UP TO \$2,000 IN SUPPORT OF THE 2021 YLF APPLICATION, MSC.** YEAS – Mark S, Mark K, Kyrsten, Catherine, Roger, Syndee, Patty and Steve. NAYS - None.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Alan invited public comments, hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Alan asked if there was any need for the SILC to hold an executive session. This is a standing agenda item. The agenda includes a note that if there is a need for closed discussion to address any matter(s) that is sensitive/private or confidential the meeting agenda provides time to do so. Hearing no need for this item, he moved the agenda.

DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH/OVERVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH

PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND PROVIDERS: Eric introduced Andrea Heronimus, Program Manager with the Division of Behavioral Health, Department of Social Services. Eric spoke to VR providing services to 182 participants under the category of mental health last fiscal year. Individuals with various disabilities can receive services from multiple service providers. Andrea spoke to the Division of Behavioral Health as the entity to provide oversight of publicly funded programs. The Division supports children and adults with serious mental illness; adolescents and adults with substance use disorders and youth/young adults in need of prevention services. Services include outpatient mental health services, outpatient and inpatient substance use disorder treatment services and prevention services. The Division contracts with the Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) to provide services (11 centers in the state). Mental health (MH) demographic information: 59.2% of clients served were between the ages of 18-64 years of age; 33.9% are under the age of 18 and 6.9% are 65 and older. Satisfaction ratings for services and access to services outlined the state average of 96% in both areas which are higher than national average ratings. There is a map available online and by clicking on a specific county a person can identify contact information for mental health and substance use disorder treatment services and days/hours of operation. Telehealth MH services include psychiatric evaluation, intake, screening, and testing; medication management, individual/family, and group therapy. Telehealth substance use disorder services include assessment, individual/family /group counseling, crisis intervention and early intervention. DSS has partnered with 211 Helpline and Lutheran Social Services to provide the 605 STRONG.COM program. This is a federally funded program to provide crisis counseling support to targeted groups impacted by COVID-19 (e.g., health care workers, business community, tribal members, nursing facilities). Andrea was asked about other emerging issues/unmet needs/change in population or age groups seeking services. She could not answer some of the questions but would look into things. One response was that providers are adapting services to meet individual needs due to COVID. A comment was made about different disability populations struggling with MH issues and whether the Division had numbers/data regarding individuals with co-occurring disorders/disability. She would look into this and get back to the SILC. There were no other questions. Members thanked her for sharing information and resources.

(Andrea followed up following the meeting; the Division (Data and Outcomes Team) does not have data available that looks at co-occurring disorders.)

CASE SCENARIOS – PARTICIPANTS SERVED BY BOTH A CIL AND MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER: Matt was available with two participant scenarios as served by ILC. Before starting he stated he felt numbers reported for those with mental illness are probably low, especially for the CIL's because when documenting a disability for a participant, if the person has more than one disability, it is entered as 'multiple disabilities', not registering mental illness. Matt described the first participant as a female living with her mother. She applied for IL services and expressed an interest in living on her own. ILC staff met with the participant and the Avera Therapist to assist her with identifying appropriate housing and living as independently as possible. She was assisted with locating an income-based apartment. The participant also reported falling a lot in her home and the IL specialist coordinated services with Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) to obtain an ERS system which increased safety and her feelings of being safe at home. Participant also participated with peer support which supported her in contacting the IL specialist if she felt she was slipping and the need for the case to be reopened. The participant has received services on and off over 10 years. The second scenario involves a participant with multiple personalities (dissociative identity disorder) who was referred to ILC in 2019. ILC assisted the participant with applying for housing, food stamps, filling out paperwork i.e., social security benefits and peer support. Other entities assisting her included Northeastern Mental Health Center, Avera at Home (household and personal care needs) and VR. Discussion continued on eligibility for independent living services, serving individuals with a disability i.e., physical, mental, sensory, cognitive, and the impact of the disability and living independently. Increases have been seen in serving those with mental/emotional disabilities and autism. Individuals with physical disabilities served by ILC are going down.

BRIDGING SOUTH DAKOTA/INTERSECTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DISABILITY: CJ spoke to working with this project in her capacity with Disability Rights SD and working with partners of SD Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault (Network) and CSD. Funding comes through the Office on Violence against Women (OVW) through the Department of Justice. Work started with disability related organizations and recognizing the need that individuals with disabilities experience violence/trauma more than individuals without disability and the issue of underreporting. Training centers on disability awareness/etiquette and accessibility issues of disability related organizations (i.e., offices, shelters). Partners have been included with training of law enforcement on disability awareness, accommodation needs, and availability of disability related services. Efforts have included work with the sexual assault response teams (SART) and the sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) to promote the development and implementation of a coordinated/multidisciplinary victim centered response. CJ referenced a flyer which outlines the liaisons working with the project across the state, she will forward to staff

to share with members. OVW grant funding will end soon and the Network will reapply for a Bush Foundation grant to continue work. A comment was made about the increase of numbers of child abuse and reporting due to the complications brought on by COVID. CJ also noted issues raised with guardianship. If/when a victim comes forward and reports abuse/rape and if there is guardianship in place, what happens if the guardian is the abuser. The partners are receiving these types of calls. Human trafficking is an issue that is on the rise and the need to increase education and awareness for law enforcement and providers in order to appropriately respond and make referrals.

BREAK

PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS: Eric introduced Brenda Schweitzer and Ron Baumgart. Eric spoke to both the VR State Plan and State Plan for Independent Living having transportation goals. Transportation has been identified as a need on a continual basis. Strategies under the State Plans speak to learning more about transit services and promoting transportation in rural areas. Brenda Schweitzer, Brookings Area Transit Authority: Brenda spoke about the network of transportation providers throughout the state; each transit provider is a non-profit organization, having a board of directors. She encouraged individual with questions to call their local transit provider. Challenges for rural transportation providers include educating community members, ridership, collaborators, city/county officials regarding changes in order to improve services and remain responsive to individual needs. There is a listing of all transit providers and contact information on the Department of Transportation's website: <https://dot.sd.gov/transportation/public-transit/rural-transit>.

Brookings Area Transit Authority (BATA) is a federally funded rural transit program and must apply annually for funding; funding also comes from local/city/county/state entities. BATA has a 50-mile radius coverage area and has offices in Dell Rapids and Freeman. Trips are made to Sioux Falls three times a day, five days a week. Training is provided to all staff on safety, security, disability, and regulations (training can be made available to other agencies/staff/individuals). BATA is a Medicaid provider, and the fleet is accessible to all individuals. BATA works extensively with the VA coordinating trips for veterans and medical appointments. Transit providers have to follow federal regulations and how things can be accomplished. i.e., there is a taxi service in Brookings, and they cannot compete with this business. Demographic information is collected per rider, which is utilized with grant writing (age, disability, type of appointment). Communication is key with ridership, drivers, transit providers and other entities/organizations (scheduling, timing, cost, expectations of passengers and drivers). Ridership includes moving over 700 people a day. Cleaning and other protocols have been implemented due to COVID-19. Brookings has only had two staff impacted by COVID to date, all drivers and passengers must wear masks. BATA can

be contacted via phone or online and riders utilize tokens and vouchers. Efficiency is important for all – including ridership - from scheduling and cancelling rides and being ready for the ride. A promotional video is available which outlines how to utilize transit services. Collaboration is a pivotal piece for an individual in terms of employment, housing, medical needs, shopping, and for employers in terms of their workforce. Transportation issues outside of the Brookings area can be worked out most times when looking at scheduling, drivers, and vehicles. In reference to challenges in rural areas she noted the need for continued education as each transit provider is different, services vary, and individual circumstances vary. Logistics can be flexible, which reinforces the need for individuals to have conversations with the transit provider to identify possible solutions with their given circumstance. Responses to questions regarding what the SILC can do to support transit providers included: need for drivers/word of mouth; promote utilization of transit services; talk with legislative and congressional delegates about the need for transit services, which can impact funding.

Ron Baumgart, River City Transit Services (Pierre): Ron stated he has worked in his role as executive director for twenty years. He spoke to the history of River City Transit, noting it is a demand response service, 24/7 hours, and 365 days a year. Ride share is \$2.25/ride for prescheduled rides with a fleet of over 100 vehicles. The numbers of rides dropped between 40-60% during COVID and late-night rides were stopped for a short period of time. River City also provides inner city connection with the Jefferson and Greyhound bus lines. River City Transit manages an operation in Phillip, contracts with Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe to provide services throughout their territory, operates the Highmore shuttle service (veterans, job transfer/employment) and manages Yankton transit (provides the vehicles). They have a contract in Sioux Falls to provide rides to individuals receiving services through DakotaAbilities and LifeScape, and a new contract to provide non-emergency Medicaid rides in Sioux Falls. Ridership includes elderly, baby boomers, veterans, oncology and dialysis patients, and youth. They have a new program to support veterans with rides to medical appointments located in highly rural areas which covers 35 counties.

Brenda and Ron responded to questions of things to do to assist transit providers which included encourage persons with disabilities to serve on local transit boards, share success stories, attend the transit board meetings, and establish partnerships. Another resource offered was Dakota Transit Association website: <https://dakotatransit.org>. Members commended the transit agencies for their work in the midst of very challenging times and thanked them for their services.

STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SPIL) – SPIL GOALS/OBJECTIVES & INDICATORS: Ronda shared that the Consumer Services and the Assistive Technology/Home Modifications Adaptive Devices Committee met the end of January. They discussed activities that the two committees worked on in the past and possible

activities that need continued work (i.e., updating the IL manual). They talked about the new State Plan and goals and objectives. Committee members concurred that the full SILC should be involved with reviewing the objectives and making committee assignments. This would identify the need for a committee or if the SILC could do away with a committee. Staff was asked to forward the SPIL goals and objectives monitoring tool to the full SILC. This will be utilized as a visual when talking about the objectives and activities and assigning work tasks to the committees during the March meeting. The committee's conversation identified the need for an update on the Money Follows the Person program for the full SILC. This recommendation was forwarded to the executive committee for consideration. Other discussion items included activities or needs to improve consistency of IL services across the state. This was a result of reviewing the CIL quarterly reports and information reported in areas of transition services and nursing home transfers or deterrence.

Staff displayed the State Plan monitoring tool and identified the goals and objectives. Descriptors were provided for columns to include committee assignments, necessary activities, work accomplished and the findings (what was learned). This tool can be utilized to gather and document work/progress made in support of accomplishing the goals. Work activities completed to date and entered into the form were outlined, i.e., sharing of vacancy positions of the CILs, SILC having DSS staff present on Money Follows the Person Program, SILC member attending a transit board meeting and being elected to serve on the board of directors. The SILC member activities reporting form was displayed and members were reminded to complete it and turn it into staff. Information obtained from the reporting form will be entered into the monitoring tool. Catherine made a comment about the goal and objective outlining CILs educating Long Term Care Facility administration staff about IL services. She stated that she attends various meetings and can provide information on CILs and available services. This is the type of activity that if a SILC member attends a meeting and shares information, it could be documented as a step towards a goal or objectives in the SPIL. The SILC Individual Training Plan was discussed, and members were encouraged to complete their training plan and turn into staff. Only four training plans have been received to date. This will assist the SILC with identifying training needs and could lead to a possible training agenda item for a future SILC meeting.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION: Eric noted the Board is an advisory board to the Division. The last meeting was held on December 17th via Zoom. Meeting highlights included: Brookings and Pierre Transit providers, VR program initiatives, SILC update, overview of the Yankton VR office, and staff report. The next meeting is March 25th and will be held via Zoom. Some agenda items will include an update on the Post-Secondary Outcomes/Indicator 14 Survey Results, Workforce Diversity

Network of the Black Hills/Business Resource Network/Division's Business Specialist (collaborative partners), overview of the Brookings VR office, Service Rates Program Guide update, and a SILC update. He referred to the Boards/Commissions website portal which has information for various boards and councils and encouraged individuals to explore the site (<https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/>). Eric talked about previous years and the BVR and SILC coordinating a joint meeting. Interest was expressed in hosting a joint meeting sometime; identifying common areas of interest and broaden the discussion.

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES REPORT/CILS QUARTERLY

REPORTS: Jennifer Lewis spoke to the information that was shared with members prior to the meeting. The first item was the Consumer Satisfaction Survey Report. She reported on the return rate of surveys for each CIL. Written comments were positive for each CIL (e.g., participants appreciated services received, IL staff good to work with). She added a reminder of removing staff/participant names prior to submitting information to the Division. She spoke to a few comments under the "what to improve" area; no service provided due to COVID, not enough time with the IL staff, staff turnover, and other COVID related issues. Next was the "Status of the CIL Contracts" this one page item reflects the status of the CIL contracts as of 6 months into the contract year. The report reflects that ILC has provided almost 59% of its service units and is expected to overspend their contract by 10,000 units (which equates to a bit more than \$178,000). WRIL has provided 43% of its service units and is projected to underspend its contract by about \$48,000. Patty asked about WRIL, no funds shown under the HMAD line item and what does this mean. Jennifer Lewis explained that WRIL elected not to utilize set aside funds towards HMAD this contract year. Each CIL can elect to utilize up to 15% of their Part C and State funds to go towards HMAD purchases. A CIL can utilize other funds to support HMAD purchases. Next, she referenced the Independent Living Fund Sources document; a one-page outline showing the sources and levels of various funding for each CIL to include Part C (federal funds received by each CIL directly from ACL) and Part B funds (funds the CILs receive thru a contract with the Division). The one-time CARES Act funds were added for each CIL which need to be obligated by 09/30/2021. The last item was the CIL quarterly reports. Requests were made at the December meeting to compare current numbers to what was reported a year ago. ILC quarterly reports reflect hours of service are down by approximately 143 hours; participants served are down by 93 persons. In comparing data from June 1st, it shows an increase in service units provided but a decrease in individuals served, i.e., more time spent serving less individuals. She noted a few questions were left blank as these are new questions driven by the new approved State Plan. This information will be collected and reported on at the next reporting period. ILC is projected to expend its full contract. She moved to WRIL's quarterly report and noted that the wrong report was completed and submitted. She was able to share that 302 individuals received services and 542

hours of services provided this quarter. These numbers are low from last year's report. Once she receives the updated report from Jen Red Bear, she will share it with members.

MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON/DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: Jennifer Lewis introduced Sara Spisak, Program Director for the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. MFP assists individuals who are living in a nursing home, hospital or intermediate care facility to successfully return to the community. South Dakota's MFP program began after the extension of the Affordable Care Act in 2013. It was extended with the Medicaid Extenders Act of 2019 and the Consolidated Appropriations Acts of 20/21. The Consolidated Appropriations Act extended MFP transitions and affected the MFP participant eligibility by reducing the required inpatient residency from 90 days to 60 days. The program assists people finding a place to live that meets their needs and the services to remain living there. The program identifies barriers to the person living on their own and it can provide one time supports that are not typically covered by Medicaid. This program is designed to assist states balance long term care systems and help Medicaid enrollees transition to their own home and community-based services. This results in a significant cost savings as compared to residing in a Long-Term Care Facility.

Eligibility requirements for MFP stipulate the person must be a resident of SD, 18 years or older, and reside in a nursing facility, Intermediate Care Facility for individuals with intellectual disability (ICF/ID) or other qualifying institution for 60 consecutive days or more. The individual must meet Medicaid level of care and financial eligibility criteria prior to transition; intend to reside in qualified housing upon transition (home, apartment, or group home of four or less); be willing to enroll in and be supported in the community through the provision of an existing 1915 (c) HCBS waiver and express a desire to live and receive services in a home and community-based setting. She discussed the referral, intake, process, transition and follow up and what each stage entails. She outlined demonstration services which could provide transition services up to \$5,000 to secure housing, housing set up and modifications. Non-medical transportation funds are available up to \$500 for public transit or taxi services. And the Assistive Technology could support up to \$5,150 for the purchase of a variety of medical equipment essential to assist the person in being more independent. She outlined the number of referrals to the program and included the number of assessments completed, individuals found not eligible for the program and number of individuals that were transitioned. Capacity building or supplemental funding for MFP is only available to states that are currently operating MFP funded transition programs. Current funding and rebalancing (projected funds needed to support future transitions) with guaranteed funding continues through 2023. Therefore, if a person is found eligible for transitioning towards the end of the grant period, the program will work with

them for the full 365 days. MFP is accepting applications and Sara will forward a copy of the referral form for members to share.

Questions were asked about reasons why a transition has not been successful and what these included: individual was not eligible for Medicaid; the level of care needed was greater than what could be provided in the home; and the individual's guardian would not sign the needed paperwork. She provided her contact information as well as the website to obtain additional information. There were no other questions. Members thanked Sara for attending and sharing this information.

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING UPDATES: WRIL: Alan reported that Jen Red Bear was not present as a family member was hospitalized, Alan and staff received an email early this morning from her. ILC (South, North and Native American ILC): Matt spoke to individuals being served and the numbers being down mostly due to COVID. Again, he noted that ILC never shut down and staff was available and working (providing services either virtually or by the phone). All offices are open now and IL specialists are meeting with participants in their choice of meeting style (e.g., in person, via phone, Zoom) with the appropriate precautions. In regard to their contracts, ILC is on target to earn all federal/state funds. Participants served need more time intensive services. Peer support groups are being conducted both in person and via Zoom. ILC staff are on the COVID vaccination shot roster, which was started early in February. In response to a question regarding staff willing to obtain the vaccination about 60% have elected to receive it, 40% declined. ILC does not mandate staff receive the vaccination; for those who decline, they sign a waiver indicating this.

ILC received a \$10,000 donation from a participant's estate and these funds will go towards installing ramps in the area for those eligible for this service. In terms of staffing, ILC has identified greater needs in the Mobridge office and another FTE will be added. ILC will now have 16 full time and 2 part time IL specialists, with two program managers. Summer transition classes will be offered in Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, Watertown, Mobridge (Eagle Butte), Huron, Mitchell. Transition classes are offered to students with disabilities, ages 14 – 21 and will offer topics e.g., how to find employment/interviewing, identifying appropriate housing, transportation, social skills. He thanked the Division for these grant funds which allows ILC to offer these types of activities. ILC is hosting its Harley Davidson Motorcycle raffle fundraiser again. The motorcycle is being displayed at Stones Truck Stop in Watertown. Over 400 tickets have been purchased to date. Tickets can be purchased on their website with the drawing to be held on August 31st. ILC participated in the Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol; staff was present and shared information and outreach. ILC received state funds to build/install ramps prior to the end of May. They have 18 ramp projects in the works, as the mild winter has been conducive to building. ILC should easily surpass installing 40 ramps this year. ILC is currently undergoing its annual audit as well as preparing for the IL review with the Division. ILC continues to receive requests for

services from outside their normal coverage area, they mostly refer them to WRIL, but in some cases they will provide services if staff are close to the area, or if they have received multiple requests from the same individual. ILC also agreed to assist the Division with a \$30,000 ADLS project in Spearfish which is nearing completion. Matt asked if there were any questions and there were none at this time.

CIL FY 20 ONSITE REVIEW/FOLLOW UP: Bernie reported on WRIL's targeted review conducted by the Division as a follow up to the IL review conducted in September. The outcomes of the reviews were reported on during the December meeting. The review identified several significant problems with WRIL which then required an additional review which resulted in corrective actions and a follow up targeted review. This targeted review consisted of pulling twenty case files from one of WRIL's offices. This review identified issues with casework areas and noted internal quality controls were not put into place.

The Division sent a draft report to WRIL on January 15th that provided WRIL the opportunity to make comments in response to the findings by January 31st. The Division received no response and issued a final report on February 5th. The report outlined two corrective actions which needed to be implemented by March 5th. The corrective actions were: 1) need to implement an improved internal quality assurance measures (e.g., monitoring case file documentation). Additional case work oversight was to be provided and case documentation was supposed to improve. He noted the targeted review did not reflect improvement. 2) need to provide units of IL services as outlined in the contract. The Division's contract with WRIL outlines the provision of 19,469 units of services; and the Division is projecting them to be significantly short. The total contract was in the amount of \$163,070 with a projected shortfall of \$99,017.00. He explained that the overpayment from last fiscal year in which WRIL had to pay back \$18,000, these funds were withheld from the current contract. He explained in response to questions asked earlier that these are funds that could have supported HMAD services. WRIL is short staffed with at least three vacancies which also impacts service provision. A plan of correction on how to increase services in the coverage area and filling vacancies was to be submitted to the Division by March 5th which was received today. The Division needs time to review this and will respond. Unless there are corrective actions taken, the Division is considering whether to renew the contract, or possibly renew only a 6-month contract, or identify a different agency to provide services. The Division has been receiving feedback from other agencies and possible participants regarding the lack of service provision, especially in the area of HMAD, which raises strong concerns. Alan stated that WRIL's board is seriously reviewing these issues. Patty thanked the Division for the information and outlining its concerns. She stated she hopes that WRIL implements positive changes and continues to provide services. And if not, she asked if another agency would be contracted with to provide IL services in this territory. Bernie responded that is an

option, hoping that WRIL will make the necessary changes; but if need be the Division will look at other entities to contract with to provide these services. Matt stated there were two CILs - Native American Advocacy Program and Opportunities for Independent Living – that provided services in different parts of the state. There were issues with these two CILs and then ILC applied for and was awarded the Part C federal awards and the Division's contracts.

DIVISION OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (DSBVI)

REPORT: Ronda provided this update noting the Division has been doing a lot of planning and developing guidance for staff regarding COVID and CDC guidance. The Rehabilitation Center for the Blind opened to the public yesterday utilizing CDC guidance. DSBVI staff are receiving vaccinations as well as rehabilitation teachers and counselors tracking who is receiving the vaccinations. The Division is developing a prescreening questionnaire and developing safety protocols to utilize for those who receive services in their home. The Division has an orientation and mobility (O & M) specialist vacancy at the Rehabilitation Center. There is a seasonal part time O & M specialist working in the interim as getting a specialist is very challenging. The Division will retire 25 CCTV's and replace them with new ones, which brings the total of 195 CCTVs in the program. Some individuals are interested in keeping their old devices, those that are not will receive a replacement. Staff are on the Fall Conference planning team and work is being done to identify presenters and topics for the IL track i.e., resiliency. Division staff continued with the virtual peer support group meetings and these have been well received. The Board of SBVI will be meeting on March 19.

BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED REPORT:

Catherine reported that the Governor's Awards nomination packet will be disseminated on March 15th and nominations will be due in early May. Members have been watching proposed legislation at the state level that might impact voting. The Board of SBVI is soliciting nominations for upcoming vacancies, as of July 1st they will have three vacancies. A few upcoming events will include White Cane Day, which is celebrated every year on October 15th and National Federation of the Blind will host its state convention on April 24th. You can learn more about the convention or to register by going online: [State Convention | National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota \(nfbsdhttps://www.nfbsd.org/state-convention.org\)](https://www.nfbsd.org/state-convention.org). A board member participated in Disability Awareness Day that was held at the Capitol in February.

STAFF REPORT: SILC Program Performance Report, PPR, (formerly known as the 704 report). Staff stated that the on-line based web portal is not available yet, once the Administration on Community Living has this up and running the SILC's information will be uploaded. BVR/SILC Nomination Process: The solicitation packet for pending vacancies was disseminated the middle of January with a due date of April 2nd. Several nominations have been received to date and members eligible to serve a second term

have been polled regarding their interest in serving a second term, if appointed.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM): The NDEAM review committee with representatives of the BVR, BSBVI and SILC met on February 25th to review 11 requests for funding. The funding requests totaled \$26,300 and had an in-kind match of funds/time/meeting room rental was \$11,200. Proposed events varied with face-to-face meetings/trainings, hosting events virtually, and use of advertising. The review committee recommended a funding recommendation of \$26,300. The review committee also provided comments: appreciated the use of advertising, looking at alternative means of continuing events, utilize unused monies (i.e., speaker fees) for use of advertising opportunities, and appreciated some communities utilizing funds to support individual's attendance (e.g., transit fares, registration fees). Discussion continued on financial support from SILC, BVR and BSBVI of previous years events;

MOTION TO APPROVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT UP TO \$5,000 FOR THE 2021 NDEAM EVENTS, MSC. YEAS – Mark S, CJ, Catherine, Roger, Syndee, Patty and Steve. NAYS - None. (Mark K and Kyrsten had left the meeting).

Governor's Awards Nominations: the solicitation packet for these awards will be disseminated on March 15th with a due date of May 3rd. The packets will include a cover memo, nomination forms and a previous recipient listing. Information regarding the nominations can also be found on the Division's website. Kim Ludwig has been working with the IT staff with developing a fillable pdf which will be made available as well. This information can be located at: <https://dhs.sd.gov/rehabservices/govawards.aspx>. **Budget update:** A budget report was disseminated to members prior to the meeting. The report identified the budget figures for the previous contract year (January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020) and the figures for the new contract year (January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021). Staff reminded members this is a one-year agreement to provide staff support to both the BVR and SILC. It identifies separate budget line items to support member travel, meeting expenses, and strategic planning. There were no questions regarding the report.

OTHER BUSINESS: Alan reminded members that the election of officers will take place at the next meeting. The executive committee will bring forth a proposed slate for consideration. He encouraged members interested in one of the officer positions to let him or staff know. Nominations will be taken from the floor as well. Patty encouraged members to think about attending the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) annual conference. The conference will be held virtually July 19-30.

CLOSING ACTIONS: **Future Agenda Items:** Mark K could present an overview of CSD services; election of officers; Matt asked about an overview of IL services to include eligibility requirements for services; CJ inquired about having Cole Uecker address the Client Assistance Program and available services; Jennifer Lewis will provide updates on the upcoming IL onsite reviews and follow up with the continued review. Positive comments were shared about the presenters at this meeting and learning about other

services that fit into the IL realm. Eric noted that SPIL outlines topics to increase learning/networking and increasing partnerships and these areas should be looked at when identifying future agenda items. Schedule Next Meeting: SILC staff will send a doodle poll to members to identify a date for the next meeting to be held in June. Staff was also asked to poll members about meeting styles and preferences. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson. The meeting ended at 3:05 pm.