

Virginia State Rehabilitation Council
Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2007

The meeting of the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on January 22, 2007, at the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present: Chet Avery, Karen Baugh, Daniel DeBoer, Kenneth Holloway, Dana Nelson, Hiawatha Nicely, Philip Sieck, James Rothrock, and Roy Ward.

Members Absent: Marianne Moore, Michael Organ, Samuel Simon, Cherie Takemoto, William Hall, and Florence Watt

Others Present: John Phelps, Field Rehabilitative Services Director; Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Ernie Steidle, Chief Operations Officer; Barbara Tyson, Staff Support; Vanessa Rakestraw, Policy Analyst; Mary Lutkenhaus, Policy Analyst; Doug James, Regional Director; Patricia Beattie; Chair, State Rehabilitation Council for the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired; Neil Sherman, Specialized Program Manager, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

Call to Order

Council Chairperson Hiawatha Nicely called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Chet Avery, seconded by Roy Ward, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2006 meeting.

Matters of Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Chairperson's Report

Mr. Nicely commented on the need to get new member appointments made to the Council in time for the March meeting and thanked DRS staff for their work on the 2006 SRC Annual Report.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Rothrock announced that Rick Sizemore has been hired as the new Director of the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center effective February 10, 2007. The Commissioner mentioned that Mr. Sizemore has been very involved in DRS' Skills for Leadership Program, which is yet another tribute to the success of this program in

enhancing the leadership skills of DRS staff. The Commissioner invited Council members to participate in future Skills for Leadership training programs if they are interested.

The Commissioner complimented the vocational rehabilitation staff on their increased production over the past year, but stated that this production is resulting in increased case services expenditures. John Phelps and the Regional Directors are developing strategies to curtail spending without interrupting services.

The Council received a list of bills and budget amendments being considered by the General Assembly, which will be in session until February 26, 2007. Governor Kaine included budget amendments of approximately \$500,000 for the vocational rehabilitation program, \$280,000 to expand the capacity to process Medicaid claims in Disability Determination Services and some capital improvement money for the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. Members of the General Assembly have proposed budget amendments for Employment Services Organizations, Centers for Independent Living, Personal Assistance Services, long-term employment support services, Rehabilitation Services Incentive Fund, brain injury services and the Statewide Independent Living Fund. A motion was made by Roy Ward, seconded by Chet Avery, and passed by unanimous vote to send a letter, under the Chair's signature, to Governor Kaine thanking him for his budget amendments and seeking his assistance in protecting these amendments, as well as others that enhance services to Virginians with disabilities, during the budget process.

Council Roundtable

Virginia Workforce Council: Mr. Nicely reported that the Virginia Workforce Council has sent its strategic plan to the Governor. He will send Ms. Smith a copy to distribute to SRC members. Discussions continue regarding the consolidation of Workforce Development programs in Virginia. In addition, there will be model One Stop Centers across the Commonwealth that will require different agencies to co-locate in these Centers.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC): Mr. Sieck reported that information regarding the Independent Living State Plan goals and scheduled public hearings can be accessed from the Statewide Independent Living Council's website at www.vasilc.org.

Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Advisory Council: Mr. Avery reported that the VATS Advisory Council website is more user-friendly and can be accessed at www.vats.org. The Council is currently working on restoring a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration for assistive technology recycling around the Commonwealth. The recycling centers currently address mostly the needs of the aging population with mobility issues. However, they would like to expand to the deaf and blind population.

Committee Reports

External Affairs

Chet Avery reported on three items discussed during Committee meeting:

- Public Hearings – The first State Plan public hearing was held in December in Fairfax in conjunction with the Fairfax Disability Services Boards meeting and approximately 30 people attended the hearing. On January 26, there will be a hearing in Richmond at 4:00 p.m. following the Virginia Brain Injury Council meeting and one on February 8 in Richmond in conjunction with the Virginia Interagency Transition Council meeting. On March 14, there will be a hearing in Alexandria in conjunction with the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities. Ms. Smith also is working on possible hearings for the Rappahannock, Southside Virginia, and Southwest Virginia areas.
- 2006 SRC Annual Report – The Council received copies of the 2006 SRC Annual Report which has been sent to the Governor, Secretary Tavenner and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Council members will send copies of the Annual Report to members of the General Assembly along with a letter containing information on the budget amendments for the Department of Rehabilitative Services. At the March meeting, the Committee will appoint a couple of members to work with DRS staff on the 2007 report.
- Appointments to the SRC – The Committee reviewed the membership status of the SRC. The reappointments for Ken Holloway, Philip Sieck, and Sam Simon and appointments for seven vacancies on the Council are pending with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. A motion was made by Chet Avery, seconded by Roy Ward, and passed by unanimous vote to send a letter, under the Chair's signature, to the Secretary of the Commonwealth requesting her assistance in facilitating these appointments as soon as possible. Second terms for Chet Avery and Dana Nelson will expire September 30, 2007 and they are not eligible for reappointment. First terms for Karen Baugh, William Hall, and Cherie Takemoto also will expire on September 30, 2007.

Internal Affairs

Karen Baugh, Acting Chair, reported that:

- The Committee received a budget status report from John Phelps. The vocational rehabilitation program is spending more in case service fund this year due to serving more clients and serving more clients with significant disabilities. The situation is being closely monitored and vocational rehabilitation staff are being asked to be more selective in their spending. At this juncture, there is no plan to close another category in Order of Selection, but if the expenditure situation does not improve, this may be necessary later in the fiscal year.
- Mr. Phelps reported on the status of the performance measures for the vocational rehabilitation program. As of December 31, 2006, Employment

Plan development increased by 6% and successful employment outcomes increased by 12% as compared to the same date in Federal Fiscal Year 2006.

Old Business

None

New Business

Patricia Beattie, Chair of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) State Rehabilitation Council, provided information on the programs within DBVI and the activities of her State Rehabilitation Council. Ms. Beattie invited any interested Council members to attend the DBVI SRC meeting on Saturday, March 3 at the DBVI Headquarters, 397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23227. Mr. Nicely appointed Roy Ward and Chet Avery to discuss ways in which the two SRCs could collaborate and bring recommendations back to the Council at their March meeting.

Neil Sherman of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) provided a presentation on the Federal Transit Authority's new initiatives on transportation services for people with disabilities and the need for further coordination among state and local entities to improve transportation access for people with disabilities. Jack Hayek and Richard Kriner are representing DRS on the Virginia Interagency Workgroup on Human Services Transportation Coordination, which is working on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and the Secretary of Transportation to enhance coordination between the agencies in their respective Secretariats regarding accessible transportation for persons with disabilities. In addition, under the federal SAFETEA-LU Program, there will be federal money to support the development of local transportation coordination plans and DRPT is planning Coordinated Planning Transportation Forums, which will be held across the Commonwealth to learn of new opportunities and requirements under SAFETEA-LU. As soon as the dates and locations of these forums are announced, the Commissioner will send the information to the SRC members.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. The next SRC meeting is scheduled to be held at the Sheraton Waterside in Norfolk, Virginia, on March 12, 2007 in conjunction with the 2007 Transition Conference.