

**Virginia State Rehabilitation Council**  
**DRAFT Meeting Minutes**  
**November 9, 2007**

A meeting of the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on November 9, 2007 at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, Fishersville, Virginia.

Members Present: Karen Baugh, Charles Benagh, Sandra Cook, Daniel DeBoer, Donna Kay Graff, Kathleen Maybee, Marianne Moore, Hiawatha Nicely, James Rothrock, Philip Sieck, Roy Ward, Florence Watt

Members Absent: William Hall, Kenneth Holloway, Michael Organ, Samuel Simon, Cherie Takemoto

Others Present: John Phelps, Field Rehabilitative Services Director; Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Vanessa Rakestraw, Policy Analyst; Mary Lutkenhaus, Policy Analyst; Rick Sizemore, WWRC Director, and two Interpreters.

**Call to Order:** Council Chairperson Danny DeBoer called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Mr. DeBoer announced that he had received written requests from Chuck Benagh and Roy Ward to participate by teleconference because of a medical condition/disability that prevented their attendance. A motion was made by Hiawatha Nicely, seconded by Florence Watt, and passed unanimously to approve their participation in the meeting by teleconference.

**Approval of Minutes:** A motion was made by Florence Watt, seconded by Sandra Cook, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2007 meeting with a correction to show Sandra Cook present at the meeting.

**Matters of Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public.

**Chairperson's Report**

Mr. DeBoer presented an award to Hiawatha Nicely recognizing him for his service as the 2006-2007 Chair of the SRC. Mr. DeBoer also appointed Karen Baugh as the Chair of the Internal Affairs Council and Ken Holloway as the Chair of the External Affairs Council for 2007-2008.

**Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Rothrock thanked the SRC members who were able to attend the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on November 8.

The Commissioner stated that the department has received a budget cut in the amount of \$1.8 million to assist with the State's budget situation. The Consumer Service Fund was cut and the Employment Services Organizations and Centers for Independent Living each took a 3% budget reduction. The vocational rehabilitation program was not affected.

In commemoration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, there were about 20 employer recognition events throughout the State. One of these was the October 23 Disability Employment Champions Award co-hosted by DRS and Dominion Resources, Inc. Employers recognized at this event included Omni Richmond Hotel, Food Lion, Booz Allen Hamilton, City of Waynesboro, Goodwill of Central Virginia, Thomas Bogart of Bogart Custom Carpets, and three Virginia state agencies, Department of Social Services, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Department of Health. The event served as a venue for the unveiling of Governor Kaine's Executive Directive 8, which directs all executive branch agencies, including boards and commissions, to expand existing efforts for recruiting, hiring, accommodating and advancing qualified people with disabilities for positions available in state government.

The 2008 General Assembly will convene on January 9 and the budget situation is expected to be of major import. There also will be a focus on improving Virginia's mental health system and DRS is hoping for additional funding to support the expansion of our vocational rehabilitation program that serves those with serious mental illness.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission has issued its report on brain injury services in Virginia and DRS fared well in this report.

The Commissioner commended the vocational rehabilitation program for a very successful and productive 2007 performance year. There were 4,278 successful employment outcomes, which is the highest number in 20 years. In addition, the rehabilitation rate rose to 59.6%. This was accomplished even with only one category being open in order of selection due to a very tight budget situation.

## **Council Roundtable**

### **Workforce Investment Act Council**

Mr. Nicely reported that the Governor attended the October meeting of the Virginia Workforce Council (VWC) to announce that the Virginia Community College System will be assuming responsibility in large part for the Workforce Investment System in Virginia. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) has not been reauthorized in the last five years, so the WIA system continues as originally legislated without additional funding to support the program. The VWC has been working to determine the amount of money in the State for workforce programs. The Council has concluded that there is approximately \$500 million in federal and state funds for these programs.

### **Statewide Independent Living Council**

Mr. Sieck announced that Marcia DuBois was elected Chair of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) at the October meeting. The SILC has approved the State Plan for Independent Living, which has been signed by Commissioners Rothrock and Bowman, and has established committees to work on each of the goals in the Plan. The SILC has received a contribution from a foundation in Northern Virginia for the SILC fund which was established by the General Assembly. In addition, the SILC has decided not to pursue private non-profit 501(c)(3) status at this time.

### **Department of Education**

Marianne Moore stated that there is a tri-state transition grant that will allow for upgrades to the transition website to make it more consumer friendly. Yesterday, representatives from the school systems, four-year and community colleges, Department of Education, and vocational rehabilitation met to discuss issues of disability documentation and ways that this can be streamlined. Some of the community colleges seem to be emphasizing that their mission is to prepare students for attendance at four-year colleges rather than job training. Ms. Moore suggested that a copy of the Transition Guide be included with the distribution of the meeting minutes to the SRC members.

### **Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired State Rehabilitation Council**

Mr. Ward stated that the DBVI SRC approved the proposal to have a liaison to the DRS SRC and Pat Beattie will be serving in this role.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Internal Affairs Committee**

Marianne Moore, Chair, reported on the following:

The Committee reviewed the 2007 report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration on vocational rehabilitation appeals and the Hearing Officer decision in a vocational rehabilitation administrative hearing. The Hearing Officer ruled in favor of the consumer who challenged the department's denial of interpreting services for her attendance at a proprietary school. The department had asserted that the school had an obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to pay for the interpreting services.

John Phelps distributed the Field Rehabilitation Services Division Performance Measure Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2007, Month ending September, 2007. He noted a 1.3% increase in Employment Plans initiated, a 9.1% increase in successful employment outcomes, and a 5.7% increase in the rehabilitation rate as compared to Federal Fiscal Year 2006. In addition, the order of selection waiting list has grown to 501.

The Committee tabled until the January 2008 meeting a discussion on whether to continue, change, or eliminate the two standing committees, Internal Affairs and External Affairs.

### **External Affairs Committee**

Florence Watt reported on the following:

DRS is beginning to work on the next triennial assessment of Virginians with disabilities, as required by the Rehabilitation Act. Donna Kay Graff, Kathy Maybee, Florence Watt, and Sandra Cook agreed to serve as the representatives from the SRC to work on the development of this assessment with DRS staff.

The Committee members received the nominations for the 2008 SRC Employee Leadership Recognition Award. The Committee will review the nominations and vote on the nominees at the January 2008 meeting.

The Committee reviewed some possible designs and content for the 2007 SRC Annual Report and provided suggestions to Kelly Wolf, DRS Marketing Director. Danny DeBoer will review the final draft of the report once it is prepared.

### **Old Business**

#### **Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) Report**

Mr. Sizemore reported on the following:

WWRC has received a lot of very positive press regarding the Center's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, including an article in the Waynesboro newspaper and television spots.

During the first quarter of the State Fiscal Year, WWRC's census increased by an average of 20 clients per day; WWRC's goal is to have a census of 300 clients per day.

Due to its tight budget situation, WWRC has instituted a hiring freeze. Thirty positions are currently vacant, but WWRC will be filling the Director of Admissions and Director of Residential Services positions and is utilizing the Field Rehabilitation Services rehabilitation engineer to support WWRC.

The renovation to Birdsall-Hoover Hall will begin and the building should reopen in 18 months.

WWRC has received a grant through the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Trust Fund to provide specialized services for consumers with brain injuries and substance abuse. The Center is beginning to receive some inquiries regarding possible services to veterans with disabilities who have returned to their home communities after receiving medical services from the Veterans Administration.

## **New Business**

### **Ticket to Work Regulations**

Dr. Ashley reported that the Ticket to Work regulations will change in April and will allow more flexibility in Employer Network ticket reimbursements. DRS will be reconvening the Commissioner's Roundtable to look at ways to increase Social Security reimbursements for Virginia.

### **WIA Staff Certification Requirements**

Dr. Ashley explained that the Virginia Workforce Council has approved a plan to require employees, who provide counseling services at the One-Stop Centers, to be certified; this would include DRS' vocational rehabilitation counselors. The certification training is approximately 75 hours long and Dr. Ashley would like to see the counselors receive national accreditation credits for this course. The SRC decided to take no action at this time about the credentialing process, but requested that Dr. Ashley report back to them in the next 12-18 months after the vocational rehabilitation staff has had some experience with the credentialing process.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.