

Virginia State Rehabilitation Council
Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2008

A meeting of the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on January 28, 2008 at the Department of Rehabilitative Services Headquarters Building, Richmond Virginia.

Members Present: Karen Baugh, Charles Benagh, Sandra Cook, Daniel DeBoer, Matthew Deans, Donna Kay Graff, Kathleen Maybee, Hiawatha Nicely, James Rothrock, Cherie Takemoto, Roy Ward, Florence Watt

Members Absent: Kenneth Holloway, Sarah Liddle, Marianne Moore, Michael Organ, Samuel Simon

Others Present: Philip Benton, Fiscal Director; John Phelps, Field Rehabilitative Services Director; Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Vanessa Rakestraw, Policy Analyst; Mary Lutkenhaus, Policy Analyst; Rick Sizemore, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center Director; Cat Clough, Interpreter; Bernadette Mayhall, Interpreter; Barbara Tyson, Staff Support; Robin Metcalf, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired SRC Liaison

Call to Order and Introduction of Members: Council Chairperson Danny DeBoer called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Mr. DeBoer stated that he had received a written request from Cherie Takemoto to participate by teleconference because of an emergency situation that prevented her attendance. A motion was made by Hiawatha Nicely, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve her participation in the meeting by teleconference.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Roy Ward, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2007 meeting as distributed.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no comments from the public.

Chairperson's Report: Mr. DeBoer stated that he attended the Leadership Summit of the chairs and vice chairs of the DRS councils and board on November 29, 2007. This summit allowed the chairs and vice chairs to continue their discussion on ways to better collaborate and the upcoming General Assembly Session. Also, Gail Jasper, Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources, spoke on the Governor's initiatives and other items of interest and a professional parliamentarian made a presentation on Roberts Rules of Order and effective meetings.

The March 17, 2008 SRC meeting will be held at the Comfort Inn Airport in Roanoke prior to the beginning of the Transition Conference. The members agreed to start the meeting at 8:30 a.m. and end no later than 12:00 noon.

Commissioner's Report: The Commissioner briefed the SRC members on the results of an employee satisfaction survey that was conducted with DRS employees back in the fall. Eighty-four per cent of the employees reported being satisfied with their jobs, 91% stated that their work connects to the mission of the agency, and 91% reported that they enjoyed their work. There is concern that forty per cent of the employees were dissatisfied with their opportunity for upward mobility and 22% stated that they did not feel that their opinion was valued. DRS is working to address these issues.

The Commissioner reviewed the status of some of the legislation and budget amendments being considered by the 2008 General Assembly that affect DRS and Virginians with disabilities. Because of the current economic situation, it will be difficult to secure budget increases, but there may be some money available to support various initiatives or restore some money that was lost during the budget cuts. The SRC discussed Delegate Marshall's House Resolution (HJR80), which proposes to consolidate the Departments for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Rehabilitative Services. A motion was made by Hiawatha Nicely, seconded, and passed unanimously that the SRC Chairperson send a letter, on behalf of the SRC, to Delegate Marshall, with a copy to the Chair of the House Rules Committee, expressing concern about this resolution and requesting that Delegate Marshall withdraw the resolution.

Council Roundtable and Working Lunch

Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI): Mr. Ward reported that he attended the last DBVI SRC meeting and they expressed a desire to coordinate efforts on legislation and other areas that might be appropriate. Robin Metcalf was introduced as the new liaison from the DBVI SRC.

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC): Kathy Maybee reported that she is now working for PEATC. PEATC is hosting training webinars with Virginia Commonwealth University and Ms. Takemoto will provide a list of the training opportunities to the SRC members. PEATC is now the parent information system for parents with students with disabilities in Virginia.

Workforce Investment Act Council (WIA): Mr. Nicely reported the WIA Council has met twice since the last SRC meeting. Marge Connelly resigned as Chair of the Council and Dr. Robert Lieber from the Northrop Grumman Corporation is the current Chair. The Chancellor of the Virginia Community College is looking at the role that the Virginia community colleges should have in the workforce training system.

Other Reports: Karen Baugh invited members to attend a celebration of Black History Month on February 29, 2008, beginning at 12:00 noon, at the DRS Alexandria Office. She will forward an agenda when it is finalized.

Committee Reports

Internal Affairs Committee

Karen Baugh, Chair, reported that the Committee decided not to recommend a change to the SRC By-Laws to abolish the current committee structure. John Phelps distributed the Field Rehabilitation Services Division Performance Measure Report for Federal Fiscal year 2008, Month ending December 2007. He noted that closures were up 3.9% over last year. In addition, the order of selection waiting list has grown to 615. Mr. Phelps reported that the Field Rehabilitative Services' (FRS) Managers met on January 14-16, 2008 to discuss strategies to implement the "Good to Great" concepts in the FRS Division. Mr. Phelps was pleased with the outcome of this meeting and will keep the SRC members advised of their efforts.

External Affairs Committee

Hiawatha Nicely, Acting Chair, and Danny DeBoer presented the names and credentials of the five employees recommended by the Committee for the 2008 Roy J. Ward Employee Leadership Recognition Award. A motion was made by Hiawatha Nicely, seconded, and passed unanimously, for Karen Baugh, Gwendolyn Davis, Mark Fletcher, Susan Green, and Larry Overbay to receive the 2008 award. Mr. DeBoer will send a letter of congratulations inviting them to the March, 2008 SRC meeting to be recognized for this achievement. Commissioner Rothrock also will recognize the recipients during his remarks at the Transition Conference.

Barbara Burkett provided an update on the next triennial assessment of Virginians with disabilities, as required by the Rehabilitation Act. She invited members to attend the meeting to be held at 3:00 p.m. in the Headquarters Building.

Ms. Smith provided information on the current SRC vacancies, a representative from business, industry and labor and a representative from the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy, Client Assistance Program.

The 2007 SRC Annual Report was provided to members. Hiawatha Nicely made a motion, which was seconded and approved unanimously, for SRC members to distribute the report to members of the General Assembly with a personal note advising the members of the excellent work of DRS in assisting Virginians with disabilities in becoming employed and living more independently. It also was suggested that electronic copies be sent to the members of the General Assembly.

Unfinished Business

Fiscal Report: Phil Benton provided an update on the DRS budget as of December 31, 2007.

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) Report

Mr. Sizemore reported that the WWRC 60th Anniversary Celebration was videotaped and will be shown in Harrisonburg and may be picked up by National Public Television. Due

to the tight budget situation, the WWRC leadership has been meeting to prioritize position vacancies that need to be filled based on criteria established that focus on WWRC's mission and core services. Ms. Buddy Hayes, Ms. Wheelchair Virginia, has been asked to appear on the Montel Williams' Show. Information about the broadcast will be distributed as soon as it is available.

New Business

Mr. Benagh asked if future SRC meetings could begin at 10:30 a.m. to accommodate his train schedule. The SRC will discuss this issue at the next meeting.

Dr. Ashley, Joyce McKune, and Meir Amar provided a presentation on the agency's new teleconferencing capabilities. If members wish to participate in SRC meetings by teleconference, they need to contact Barbara Tyson and ensure that their participation is consistent with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.