

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
State Rehabilitation Council
Draft- Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2012**

10:00 a.m.-Welcome and Call to Order – Melanie Brunson

Introductions & Designations

Members Present: Melanie Brunson, Vienna, VA-(Chair/Disability Advocacy Groups); Michael G. Davis, Chesapeake, VA-(Vice Chair/former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Valerie Walker, New Port News, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries); Marguerite Bardone, King George, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries); John Bailey-Fairfax, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries); Rebecca Bridges- Arlington, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries), James Taylor-Richmond, VA-(Disability Advocacy Groups); Celia Yette, Petersburg, VA-(Client Assistance Program); Doug Powell, Falls Church, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Claudie Grant, Jr., Prince George, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Angie Matney, Fredericksburg, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Debbie Pfeiffer, Yorktown, VA-(Virginia Department of Education); Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, VA-(Statewide Independent Living Council/SILC); Nicole Jeffords, Norfolk, VA-(Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Ex-Officio); and Rick Gonzalez, Springfield, VA-(Virginia Workforce Council).

Members Absent: Rick Holley, Hallwood, VA-(Disability Advocacy Groups)

Guests Present: Faye Adams, Virginia Beach, VA

DBVI Staff Present: Raymond Hopkins-(Commissioner of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired); and Bob Burton-(Deputy Commissioner for Services); Susan Davis Payne-(Vocational Rehabilitation Program Director); and Marcus L. Byrd II-(Technical Support Staff).

Adoption of 6 October 2012 Agenda-Action Item

Melanie Brunson entertained a motion to approve the 6 October 2012 agenda. Marguerite Bardone moved for approval and was seconded by Rick Gonzalez. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Approval of 2 June 2012 Meeting Minutes-Action Item

Melanie Brunson called for a motion to approve the 2 June 2012 SRC draft meeting minutes. Doug Powell moved that the meeting minutes be accepted as distributed and was seconded by Debbie Pfeiffer. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Comments from the Public

Melanie Brunson called for comments from the public and Mrs. Faye Adams expressed her excitement at the fact that Celia Yette has been appointed to serve in the Client Assistance designation on the State Rehabilitation Council. The seat had previously been vacated since Mrs. Adams retired in 2010.

Commissioner's Report-Raymond Hopkins

Commissioner Hopkins expressed his contentment with the recent appointments/re-appointments to the DBVI-State Rehabilitation Council.

Commissioner Hopkins elaborated on the working relationship between the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired and the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy, specifically in terms of clients enrolled in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Presently there has been a trend of more formalized grievances which has resulted in fair hearings that are typically uncommon. Commissioner Hopkins would like to pursue conversations with the Disability Rights Advocates in an effort to resolve issues and concerns prior to any formal administrative action. In addition, Mr. Hopkins believes that policy and procedures enacted and followed by counselors within the agency should result in a fair hearing if they legally fail to meet the needs of consumers. By the same token, if policies and procedures enacted are legally sufficient and meet the necessary criteria required for consumers and issues derive, then a fair hearing should be explored. Ultimately, the pursuit is to serve customers more effectively, it would be advantageous for all parties to work through issues at the local level.

Commissioner Hopkins touched base on an area of emphasis in regards to engaging businesses and building long-lasting relationships. In an effort to accomplish this goal, the agency is changing the Job Placement Specialist positions at the Regional Offices from part-time to full-time. Furthermore, DBVI's goal is to interact with businesses in a manner in which they fully understand the qualifications and capabilities of our consumers which will hopefully lead to employment. Commissioner Hopkins has developed a business advisory council and regional roundtables in an effort to promote and foster relationships between the DBVI and businesses within each region. Ultimately, the goal is to gather a better understanding of what business owners need and how we can play a role in fulfilling those needs.

Commissioner Hopkins elaborated on the upcoming legislative session in which the Governor is currently reviewing recommendations from agencies regarding the budget and legislation changes. The Governor has expressed a strong interest in special education and has made it a point of emphasis for the next session.

Governor Markel of Delaware, has been appointed the chair of the National Governor's Association (NGA), and has adopted an initiative entitled "A Better Bottom Line: Hiring People with Disabilities." DBVI is hoping that this focus from the NGA will lead to state sponsored initiatives in Virginia.

The council would like to be kept abreast of any updated information between the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired and the Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy. In addition, the council would also like to receive updated information about the newly developed business advisory board.-**Action Taken**

VR Program Update-Susan Davis Payne

Agency Report which includes the VR Program update was provided prior to this SRC meeting.

Development of the SRC Annual Report

Susan Payne touched base on the fact that the State Rehabilitation Council's annual report submittal date is slowly approaching and that the majority of the information needed has been obtained. The success stories and expenditure figures from the 2012 Federal Fiscal Year have been submitted from the field. The final pieces necessary to develop the report are the council members within the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council that will assist with drafting content. The following council members have agreed to assist with the annual reports development: Marguerite Bardone, Rebecca Bridges, Melanie Brunson, and Michael Davis.

The council requested and will receive a copy of the State Rehabilitation Council's annual report from Federal Fiscal Year 2011. In addition, the DBVI webmaster Anastasia Flegas will play a vital role in the annual report process in terms of consolidating information posted to the website.-**Action Taken**

State Plan Development and SRC Responsibilities

Susan Payne called for volunteers from the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council to assist with the development of the 2014 State Plan. The following council members have agreed to assist in the process: Marguerite Bardone, Ken Jessup, Michael Davis, and Celia Yette.-**Action Taken**

Susan Payne elaborated on the upcoming Public Meetings and inquired about whom from the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council planned to attend. Susan will oversee all 5 meetings which begin on 17 October 2012 and ends on 10 November 2012. Council members are encouraged to attend the meetings if possible to hear comments from the public and answer any questions they may have. Melanie Brunson explained that the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council should have at least one representative at each meeting. Please reference all 5 meeting times and dates below:

Roanoke Public Meeting

Lions Club
501 Elm Avenue, SW
Roanoke, Virginia 24017-3916
October 17, 2012
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Bristol Public Meeting

DBVI Bristol Regional Office
111 Commonwealth Avenue
Bristol Virginia 24201
October 30, 2012
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Richmond Public Meeting

Virginia Rehabilitation Center
for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI)
VRCBVI Dorm Lounge
401 Azalea Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23227
October 19, 2012
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Richmond Public Meeting

Crowne Plaza Richmond Downtown
Raleigh/Drake Rooms
555 Ease Canal Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
November 2, 2012
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Northern Virginia Public Meeting

Holiday Inn Eisenhower
Potomac Room
2460 Eisenhower Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
November 10, 2012
2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Report on SRC Facebook page

Susan Payne elaborated on the status of the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council facebook page, in which a great deal of research of other State Rehabilitation Council's across the nation and their use of social media has been conducted. Susan received roughly eight responses, all of whom explained that facebook was not a tool utilized for their State Rehabilitation Councils. Due to confidentiality guidelines, only certain information would be eligible to post. In addition, someone within the council would have to be designated to maintain and make appropriate updates to the page. Specifically, information pertaining to the council will be the focus as opposed to an individual's opinion. Ultimately, there are many issues and concerns that must first be addressed before the page is created. The council requested that a workgroup be established who's responsibility would be to focus on the aforementioned issues. The following individuals have volunteered their services: Marguerite Bardone, Michael Davis, Angie Matney, and Rebecca Bridges.

Deputy Commissioner's Report- Bob Burton

Bob Burton reported on the end of the 2012 Federal Fiscal Year closure numbers pertaining to four customers whom prior to receiving vocational rehabilitation services had no wages, however after leaving the program received a substantial amount of reported wages. The average annual income for those individuals ranged between 55 to 70 thousand dollars a year.

In terms of training, a very successful rehabilitation staff meeting took place on September 12th-14th in Richmond, Virginia which included hands on training and presentations for orientation and mobility specialist.

The Annual Association of the Deaf Blind meeting took place on 6 October 2012. The Deaf Blind Program Director, Ms. Elizabeth Spiers is currently spearheading a support service provider program in Virginia. The program contains personnel who are trained to assist individuals that are deaf blind with accessing various community services. It appears that the Department of Association of the Deaf blind may actually be the entity that will administer the program.

Three Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors from DBVI: Megan O'Toole, Nikki Jeffords, and Felicia Williams in the summer of 2012 participated in the National Research Center on Blindness and Low Vision training at Mississippi State University. All three received their vision specialist in vocational rehabilitation certification.

DBVI/DRS Liaison Report-Jim Taylor

Jim Taylor referenced the fact that the Department for the Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)-State Rehabilitation Council was excited to finally receive their board member appointments.

The Department for the Aging and Rehabilitative Services explained that they currently have two existing hearing officer contracts, and attempted to get a third but was unsuccessful. The agency re-submitted a bid for a third hearing officer on 1 October 2012 and is currently waiting on a decision.

Commissioner Hopkins explained that the DBVI- State Rehabilitation Council is involved in the selection of hearing officers. The Department for the Aging and Rehabilitative Services will take the lead and collaborate with the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired and DBVI- SRC.

The Director of the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, Rick Sizemore explained that under the current capitol budget, the training facility will undergo renovations next year. Renovations to the center's dormitories were recently completed and they hope to have an open house in the spring of 2013. Lastly, the agency has been recertified for an additional six years.

The next DARS- State Rehabilitation Council meeting will take place on 14 November 2012, and Jim Taylor will attend on behalf of the DBVI- SRC.

SRC Development and Learning Communities

The Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Region 3-George Washington University: Mid-Atlantic consist of (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia). The TACE center provides services to agencies and state rehabilitation councils, specifically to rehab programs. Region 3 has a learning community which conducts a two day meeting twice a year. The idea of the learning community is to share information and focus on specific training goals. The next learning community meeting is scheduled for October 15th & 16th in Baltimore, MD and no one will represent on DBVI-SRC's behalf.

VRCBVI Programs- Melody Roane & Amy Phelps

Amy Phelps, Assistant Director of Instruction explained her role within VRCBVI, which is to work with instructional staff to make the programs better as a whole. In addition, her goal is to make consumers successful in pursuit of a career path and not mediocre employment.

Melody Roane explained that in April 2012, the center conducted the Learning Independence Feeling Empowered (L.I.F.E.) program which included 20 students. Doug Powell also conducts a self defense class in the summer, which is very popular amongst the students. Currently, the center has 22 students that participate in the Personal Adjustment to Blindness Program. In addition, the center is working with DSL students-(French, Spanish, and Persian languages) and they are in the process of learning English. Mrs. Roane anticipates raising the number of students from 25 to 30 by the end of October. The center also provides nutritional education for consumers in an effort to educate them about the dangers of obesity and diabetes. Furthermore, vocational evaluations are conducted to provide consumers information about employment and education as well. Michael Fish is a valued trainer and instructor at the rehabilitation center and is providing training on IOS products to consumers that seek operational assistance. The center also provides training on the following: orientation and mobility, skills of blindness, cooking, personal/home management, organizational skills, adult basic education, and Braille. Students are in class Monday-Thursday from 8:15a.m. to 5:00p.m., and on Friday from 8:15p.m. to 12:15p.m. From 12:15p.m. to 5:00p.m., students will conduct independent training studies with the approval of their instructors. This practice affords students the opportunity to troubleshoot new skills and training learned during the week.

Positions within the VRCBVI that will be interviewed within the next few weeks are the Assistant Director for Administration, Orientation and Mobility Specialist (2 positions), Computer Instructor, Fiscal Assistant, and Vocational Leader positions.

On 20 October 2012, VRCBVI will host family day which is an opportunity for current and previous students of the past 3 years to allow family members to learn about the center's programs. The goal is to ultimately provide consumers with skills that they can use once they return home and to hopefully maintain.

Commissioner Hopkins and Mrs. Roane have been in discussion in regards to providing focus groups across the state of Virginia for informational purposes about the rehabilitation center. The goal would be to provide and to receive information in terms of how to make the center more effective in terms of service delivery. In the spring of 2013, the center will begin to provide technology classes for consumers seeking additional training as well.

The DBVI-State Rehabilitation Council has requested and will receive a tour of the VRCBVI during the next council meeting on 15 December 2012-**Action Taken**.

Old Business and New Business

On 14 December 2012 the new member orientation will take place. The following members will be present: Rebecca Bridges, Celia Yette, and Richard Gonzalez. The DBVI- State Rehabilitation Council retreat's date will be discussed at the next council meeting in December. In addition, one of the items of business will be to vote for a vice chair also known as the chair elect. The elected member will assist the chair for the first year before eventually taking over as chair at the end of the year. One of the issues of concern will be for the council to examine the structure of the executive committee determine if the current establishment will suffice moving forward.

The council members have requested and will receive an opportunity to shadow a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor in the field.-**Action Taken**

SRC Member and Member Organization Update:

Michael Davis: Michael Davis and Marguerite have worked together on developing a strategy as to how facebook would be a great tool for marketing the council.

Valarie Walker: gave thanks to Nicole Jeffords for providing great service to her son who is vision impaired.

John Bailey: elaborated on his recent trip to Kosovo and the fact that local nationals truly admire the United States because they stood up for them during the war. In addition, he explained that he visited a school for the blind and even though they lack resources such as computers, individuals who are blind or vision impaired are encouraged to become active in the community.

Doug Powell: has served 2 consecutive terms which officially ended on 30 September 2012. He has requested and will remain on the mailing list to receive any and all information associated with the council. In addition, the council would like to thank him for his service and wishes him the best moving forward.

Rebecca Bridges: expressed her thanks to Doug Powell for encouraging her to get involved with the DBVI- State Rehabilitation Council.

Debbie Pfeiffer: shared with the council the dates and times for the 2012 Public Hearings on Revisions to the Standards of the Quality:

Hearing Dates	Location	Contact
Tuesday, October 9 7 p.m.	Pulaski County High School – Little Theater Pulaski County Public Schools 5414 Cougar Trail Dublin, VA 24084	Melissa Luchau Director for Board Relations Phone: 804-225-2924 Email: Melissa.Luchau@doe.virginia.gov
Wednesday, October 10 7 p.m.	Centreville High School – Auditorium Fairfax County Public Schools 6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton, VA 20124	See possible Recommendations for Revisions to the Standards of Quality (PDF) based on public comments received from May to September 2012, as well as recommendations from previous SOQ reviews that have not been acted upon by the General Assembly.
Wednesday, October 17 7 p.m.	Meadowbrook High School Chesterfield County Public Schools 4901 Cogbill Road, Richmond, VA 23234	
Thursday, October 18 7 p.m.	Bethel High School Hampton Public Schools 1067 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, VA 23666	

Ken Jessup: explained that Joan Carneal is preparing to retire in January and that the council should do something special in her honor.

Marguerite Bardone: wanted to thank Doug Powell for his work.

Jim Taylor: wanted to thank Doug Powell for his work.

Nicole Jeffords: explained that she has served on State Rehabilitation Council’s in the past and is looking forward brining that piece of knowledge to this council.

Angie Matney: wanted to thank Doug Powell his for service.

Celia Yette: nothing to report.

Susan Payne: nothing to report

Melanie Brunson: explained that the council should consider ending the DBVI- State Rehabilitation Council meetings at 1:30p.m. as opposed to 12:40p.m.-**Action Taken**

Date for Next Meeting/Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m., the next State Rehabilitation Council Meeting will convene on 15 December 2012, 401Azalea Avenue, Richmond VA 23227 @ 10:00 a.m.