

Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC)
January 18, 2008 Quarterly Meeting
Meeting Minutes

Members present: Joanne Butts, Sandra Carr, Kimmer Gordon, John Harrison, Rudy Hernandez, Jerry Johnsen, Jim Larson, Carol Maher, Martin McCallum, Bill Murray, Bob Roberts, Lynnae Ruttledge

Members absent: Jeff Abe-Gunter, Lou Colwell, Linda Pratt, Kristopher Tefft

Staff present: Joelle Brouner, Amy Rossiter
Notetaker: Kathy Krulich

Interpreters: Michael Kosanovich, Sarah Rasmussen

Guests: Tina Bredengerd, Michael Cunningham, Kelly Franklin, David Hankinson, Bob Huven, Don Kay, Cindy Murray, Kerry Tarullo

- A. Approval of Agenda
Motion: to approve agenda without changes.
Moved: John Harrison
Second: Carol Maher
Discussion: none
Vote: unanimous in favor
- B. Approval of October 2007 quarterly meeting minutes
Motion: to approve October 2007 quarterly meeting minutes without changes
Moved: Carol Maher
Second: John Harrison
Discussion: Note there is text that needs to be filled in but content is clear so no need to complete at this point.
Vote: unanimous in favor
- C. Council Chair Remarks – Bill Murray
- Bill welcomed everyone and extended greetings for a Happy New Year.
- Accomplishments:
- Jerry Johnsen, Executive Director of the Client Assistance Program, was officially appointed to the Council.
 - The WSRC welcomes new staff member, Amy Rossiter. Amy was appointed as the WSRC Executive Assistant on January 10, 2008. Her ½ time position is now dedicated to supporting the WSRC.
 - The WSRC annual report was completed and submitted on time to the Governor's Office. Thank you members for your efforts on this.

- Member surveys were completed – thank you, Carol.
- Joelle Brouner and Rudy Hernandez attended the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Fall Conference held in San Antonio.
- Two new committees are underway providing new insight, direction and a new voice for the Council. This is a great sign of the Council's growth.

Elections are being held today for Council positions. Members can be nominated or nominate themselves. Nominations can also be declined.

D. Executive Director Remarks – Joelle Brouner

- This Martin Luther King Jr. birthday marks the first year that he has been gone longer than he was alive. A theme in his vision was economic justice. At the WSRC Customer Forum last night we heard customers passionate about economic equity and the desire to participate in something greater. The WSRC has a role and is a link for people with disabilities to participate in something greater for their lives – employment.
- Congratulations to DVR for eliminating the wait list in February. This required tremendous effort by DVR field staff and management and a vision to get beyond Order of Selection.
- Welcome Amy Rossiter as WSRC Executive Assistant. And thank you to Lynnae Rutledge, Kathy Krulich and Joanne Lang for their assistance in managing the office this quarter while we were filling the Executive Assistant position.
- Thank you, Bill, for his leadership as Council Chair.
- Encourage members and staff to celebrate each others achievements and to support each other through personal trials and loss.

E. Remarks from DVR Director – Lynnae Rutledge

Lynnae highly values staff, customers and partners. Looking back over the past two years Lynnae knows she brought her faith that DVR could be a healthy organization. She continues to be energized. DVR is in a good place now as an organization and team and she is honored that DVR shared her vision. She believes in staff, the work DVR does, the partnership with the WSRC, and the staff's abilities to do good things in the future.

- State Plan – RSA's approval of DVR State Plan was contingent on receiving two assurance letters. These assurances brought attention to two areas of non-compliance. The first assurance addressed the agreement between DVR and the public institutions of higher education (PIHE) – the two and four-year colleges and universities. Although DVR had a current agreement (since 2000) with Higher Education, the agreement did not specifically address financial responsibilities of partners to pay for disability accommodations for DVR customers attending school.

The agreement between DVR, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) and the PIHE was signed in November 2007 and is the result of purposeful and thoughtful collaboration between the parties.

- The agreement details how extraordinary costs of accommodations for American Sign Language, Braille, and real time captioning will be shared. Once the “per student” accommodation exceeds \$7,500 for the academic year, the PIHE will contact DVR or DSB. DVR or DSB will share equally the remaining cost.
- This agreement will help us to develop data on accommodations which will help inform the Legislature of the financial burden placed on the school system. As partners, DVR and DSB can share in the costs however it is the PIHE’s responsibility to provide the accommodation.
- With the agreement in place respective staff can be trained on the elements of the agreement. Training will occur in Spring 2008.
- This State Plan assurance has been completed and RSA has been notified.
- Client Assistance Program (CAP) vacancy on the WSRC.
 - Joelle was very instrumental in having the WSRC CAP appointment finalized. It was a matter of federal compliance ensuring and acknowledging the important CAP plays as a visible partner to the WSRC and DVR.
 - RSA has been notified.

Kerry Tarullo, DVR Project staff person, has done an excellent job creating the DVR Annual Report. The report highlights DVR’s customers, partners, employers and staff.

Lynnae recently met with the VR Directors of the American Indian Tribal VR Programs (AIVRP). Linda Pratt took the lead to ensure the memorandum of understanding was updated as required (annually) by the RSA grant to the AIVRP.

International travels – Lynnae went to Moscow Russia and Tunis Tunisia in October. In Moscow, Lynnae presented at an international conference on the employment of people with disabilities. The conference will impact government employment of people with disabilities and was sponsored by the government agency Perspectiva, MicroSoft and Johnson & Johnson.

In Tunis, Lynnae presented at a conference with the focus on creating educational opportunities for Muslim students, including students with disabilities to come to the United States. Lynnae’s presentation focused on helping students with disabilities to be successful.

December flooding – DVR’s Centralia office was closed on December 3rd due to the flooding. We have photos of people rowing boats passed the building front.

Staff have just returned to the office this week and are preparing to open for business today. We were very fortunate to have offers by partners for space to meet with customers during this time. Our Aberdeen office had no power for five days. Tina Bredengerd supervises both offices.

Legislature is in session and focused on the supplemental budget. DVR has no financial requests to be considered. DVR offered State General Fund dollars to the Division of Developmental Disabilities for transition services. DDD will receive DVR State General Fund money for the remainder of this biennium and part of 2009. The transfer of funds to DDD does not affect our federal match.

House Bill 2599 was pre-filed by Representative Sullivan and is a result of the 2007 Youth Leadership Forum. The bill's focus is recognizing disability history in the public education system. Web link to HB 2599: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=2599&year=2007> The bill will bring awareness about disability history and teach self-advocacy in leadership. Lynnae will send the bill to Joanne. Joelle has personal involvement in this bill and will be a speaker at an upcoming advocacy day.

Next quarter DVR will be assisting partners to develop more opportunities for Supported Employment in State Government. DVR, DDD and the Mental Health Division (MHD) will work with the Department of Personnel (DOP).

Tribal VR current interest areas:

- Creating more opportunities for co-enrolled clients
- Creating more opportunities for tribal members to be served by DVR
- Linda has a strong relationship with the Yakama Nation and DVR in Wapato but several other AIVRP Directors are not experiencing this level of collaboration.
- Continued commitment from DSB and DVR to involve tribal VR staff in agency staff training and policy issues

RSA 107 monitoring report:

Lynnae met with Bob Roberts and Joelle to review the WSRC's recommendations to the 107 monitoring report. The WSRC will have a deeper discussion on this at the April quarterly meeting. Bob and the Policy Committee have reviewed the findings and made recommendations for DVR action in areas such as staff training, case reviews, and increasing employment outcomes. Other areas for involvement with the Policy Committee: timely services, working with a broader range of people with disabilities, more robust interactions with employers, apprenticeships and internships, caseload size, case flow and outcomes.

Bob asked Lynnae about the Higher Education costs for accommodation. What are the average costs and what type of information can be taken to Legislature? DVR can provide some information to the WSRC but the information would be an

underestimate since DVR services to the Deaf have been minimal due to order of selection. Lynnae anticipates that DVR will experience a limited number of cases where the higher education accommodations exceed the \$7,500 threshold.

F. Remarks from the Client Assistance Program by Jerry Johnsen and Bob Huven

- CAP is also celebrating the end of the DVR wait list.
- Nationally, other priorities contribute to the continued under-funding of the VR program. VR programs across the nation need to send Congress message to appropriately fund the program.
- CAP is celebrating a good working relationship with DVR. Still some work needed to in offices around the state to build the CAP/DVR relationship and assist staff to feel comfortable with CAP's role in resolving issues and helping staff to see things differently.
- CAP annual report doesn't reflect the actual client contact CAP has. CAP tries to help resolve issues behind the scenes before the client becomes a "CAP Case". CAP encourages the client to self advocate and build their skills in resolving case issues. CAP enters more formal process if the initial efforts do not resolve the issues. Often DVR staff is not aware of CAP's involvement.
- The change from 20 days to 45 days to appeal a DVR decision has helped significantly to allow time to resolve the issues more informally without requesting a fair hearing.
- Plans that include higher education – DVR needs to look at this carefully and give customers opportunity to discuss whether a higher education plan is appropriate. This allows the customer to be involved in the rehabilitation process and gives choice. When the plan involves higher education DVR needs to be clear about the support given and cautious of the impact of DVR changes and how those disrupt the customer's progress.
- Closures – counseling and guidance occurs at each point in a customer's process. CAP encourages DVR to continue counseling and guidance when closure is being considered. The staff need to have meetings with the customer about the possibility of closure and not just send a letter out of the blue. Customers need the opportunity to appeal the decision, especially if the action is not properly handled or if the closure is appropriate but crucial pieces of the process and the client's needs were missed. Customers need formal options to have decisions reviewed.
- Orderly closure action and documentation important especially now without the waitlist. Customers can reapply immediately upon closure and if closure was not handled appropriately the new application/case can be difficult.
- Supported Employment – the DVR policy and training is good. Staff implementation of the policy is an area of continuing CAP scrutiny. Customers in supported employment need support on the job after DVR closes the case. They need a job coach or natural supports to keep their jobs. If DVR staff perceive that there may not be funding for extended supports after DVR closure the staff may go right to closure instead of proceeding with the plan

activities and using the eighteen months to provide on-going support while waiting to identify possible extended support opportunities.

- Jerry is requesting more time than ten minutes on the WSRC agenda for the CAP report.

G. Rehabilitation Law training by Kelly Franklin, DVR Field Services Administrator

In response to one of the WSRC 2006 recommendations to the RSA 107 monitoring report, DVR created the Rehabilitation Law training. Phyllis Hansen, Michael Cunningham and Kelly Boston did an excellent job creating the training. The training provides fundamental information for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor about the Rehabilitation Act and its mandates. It assists staff in understanding the law as a foundation for what we do and how that translates into how we do business as represented in the Customer Service Manual. The training was piloted this week. Feedback about the pilot is good. Staff commented how the training has brought back or reignited the fundamental passion for the rehab profession. Jerry attended the training and commented how it brought awareness on how we cannot isolate issues but need to keep perspective of the law and use it as a tool to assist customers overcome barriers rather than as a weapon to deny services. Rehab Law training will be an agenda topic at the April quarterly meeting.

Bob Roberts wants to be added to the list to take the training.

H. Real time customer surveying – Kerry Tarullo, DVR special project intern

Kerry recently conducted a phone customer satisfaction survey. Kerry reached 20 out of 44 DVR customers. The individuals represented a random sample (approximately two clients per unit) of customers who have developed their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with DVR within the past six months.

The survey questions (seven total):

1. What brought you to DVR?
2. What kinds of things did you expect from DVR when you applied for services?
3. How do you feel about the time it has taken to receive services from DVR and your counselor?
4. Did your counselor help you find your strengths?
5. Were you able to understand how those strengths related to the job in your plan?
6. Do you feel recognizing your strengths will help you become successful in getting the job you want?
7. Do you feel DVR is addressing the issues or barriers that stand in the way of you gaining employment?

Trends surfaced through the survey:

- Most people hear of DVR through their High School Transition Program or other parts of DSHS, friends or family.
- The majority of the sample had a good idea of what DVR is all about, however several of the customers interviewed had absolutely no idea what to expect from DVR when they applied.
- About half of the sample thought the wait for services was much too long due to the waitlist and the other half who got right in were amazed at the timeliness. Almost the entire sample thought once they got off the waitlist, they received services in a very timely manner.
- 75% or more thought their counselor helped them find their strengths and this was relevant to developing their plan for employment.

Lynnae will forward results of survey to members.

Discussion: Does DVR plan to continue real time surveying of customers? We are sharing results with the Senior Leadership Team, Area Managers and VR Supervisors and will be developing a strategy to move forward. Kerry is taking a new position next week and her position will not be filled. However once the strategy is defined we will engage the WSRC Customer Satisfaction Committee to ensure it fits with the Council's direction.

Kerry Tarullo was also the editor of DVR's 2007 Annual Report. She did an excellent job in all aspects of the design and content.

Question about the wait list: How is DVR addressing the delays in plan development now that the wait list has been cleared?

The Area Managers and Supervisors are reviewing the wait time. Plan development services can take approximately 120 days. Actual wait time for plan development has not increased significantly overall. However in offices with high release numbers, management is determining strategies to increase intakes, involve customers in WorkStrides, assist customers in being more proactive, empowered to make choices, involved in vocational exploration, addressing support service needs. Kelly Franklin is working with the Area Managers to identify underlying issues or challenges to timely services and will develop and implement strategies to address. Each area has its own unique challenges to address, such as recruitment.

Question about CSPD (Comprehensive System of Personnel Development): Has DVR considered creating a Rehabilitation Technician 3 (RT3) classification for potential employees who don't meet the VRC minimum qualifications? The RT3 could do intensive job shadowing to assist the VRC with the workload.

DVR has not considered creating an RT3 classification. However other recruitment/staffing strategies are being used:

- Changes to the minimum qualifications for VRC positions, accepting a broader range of degree disciplines
- Employing RT1 and RT2 in training to VRC positions and supporting education to meet VRC minimum qualifications
- Hiring interns from graduate programs
- Customer internships for customers DVR supported to become VRCs
- Increase in Supported Employment in State Government

I. Focus on WSRC Customer Satisfaction Survey Recommendations 3 & 4 (See Tab 2 of quarterly notebook)

Recommendation 3: strengthen existing practices regarding CAP and reminding customers of rights

When the survey was done, responses showed not many customers were aware of CAP's services. The Council wanted DVR to remind the customers of CAP services at numerous steps in the VR process including periodic mailing of informational postcards. The Council has had opportunity since the time the survey was conducted to know that CAP has good representation. The Council acknowledges that although DVR provides information about CAP, often when the customer comes to the WSRC forums they are in a panic about an immediate issue and have forgotten about CAP.

The Council is satisfied that this recommendation is being addressed as long as CAP continues to have a solid presence and the customers receive reminders about CAP services.

Jerry commented on the good support CAP receives from DVR administration. He indicated the breakdown is in the field with some offices not consistently sharing the information about CAP with clients. Jerry wants to explore with Lynnae and Kelly Franklin different mechanisms to provide information that are not dependent on the VRC.

Joelle asked what would help increase the consistency of information practice.

Discussion:

- VRC is in control and it is at their discretion if the information is share. If there is an issue with case services, the VRC may not remind customer of CAP in fear of future challenges
- CAP to determine outreach efforts, broader distribution and more consistent across the state
- CAP continue going to offices for informational meetings to talk with VR staff
- Perhaps the WSRC could co-sponsor a workshop on how to use CAP (workshop elements as identified by CAP)
- DVR continue to use the quarterly newsletter *Rehab News Flash* to inform customers about CAP services and the rehabilitation process

- Cultural issues with staff need to be reframed. It is not a “badge of honor” to have no customers that have gone to CAP. Staff need to embrace using CAP to address hard challenges. CAP needs to be seen as a benefit to moving a case when roadblocks appear. When the VR Supervisor creates and upholds the advantages of including CAP it helps to foster a “CAP-friendly” environment.
- Rudy recommended that VR supervisors spend more time talking with staff about the advantages of involving CAP.
- Remember when people receive information it is likely they do not know the language or culture and may not understand the information (whereas staff is well-versed and knowledgeable about its own processes and language.) When people come to DVR for services they are new to the process and reluctant about getting services from a government agency. We need to remember that people are not aware to the degree we are and our training should be focused to their level – address the audience appropriately.

Recommendation 4: develop proactive wait list strategy

- DVR working strategically with key partners (DDD, MHD, schools, community colleges and universities, Workfirst, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA)) to educate or re-educate how to best partner with DVR to know the VR system and what makes a good referral to DVR and to involve CAP early in the process.
- DVR has a dedicated Customer Service program administrator, Pam Whiteley. Pam is the point of contact for customer complaints and fair hearings. Pam was recently appointed to her position and has begun visits to each field office to share her role and CAP’s role. Pam was previously the VR Supervisor for the Port Orchard and Tacoma offices and has been a VR Counselor.
- We need to remember people do not know how to navigate our system and ensure at the initial contact and throughout the process that the customers are well informed, comfortable with the process, including periodic check ins so it is clear where the customer is at in the process and where they are going.
- DVR is looking at the fiscal processes including memorandums of understanding and contracts, asking if these agreements continue to serve us today.
- Continue to use comparable benefits to the fullest, sharing the cost and responsibility for serving.
- Bringing to the community awareness needed to address support services
- Educating partners about DVR services, long term supports and what DVR can and cannot do. DVR is in the process of producing 3 marketing videos: one for customers, community partners and employers.
- Management is continuing to set and expect expectations to be met, holding staff accountable. DVR is doing a better job with planning, evaluating and

measuring the program and providing tools to management to keep focused on outcomes.

- The vision being set is not just for the immediate future but 3-5 years out.
- Workstrides is proving to be a valuable tool for customers, providing choices and increasing involvement.
- DVR is increasing capacity in the State Office to promote and educate at the local level Ticket to Work and benefits planning.

Jerry asked how many states are in order of selection. Lynnae responded that approximately one half of VR programs are in order of selection, some actively and some not yet active but have identified strategies in their State Plan.

Wisconsin has been in and out due to state funding match issues. WA DVR is the only state that is making its way out of order of selection. Some states use the strategy to put pressure on state Legislature to increase funding. Lynnae's desire and vision to get out of order of selection was focused entirely on the customers.

J. Customer Forum Debrief

Acoustics were an issue at the forum. WSRC needs to consider purchasing a lapel speaker system for Chair and other primary speakers. The Blind SRC just purchased a low cost system and the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) has a system. Staff, please check out what is available and compatible with FM systems and hearing aids. Carol will donate an assistive listening system from General Administration.

The closest bus stop was too far from the facility. Ensure meeting place has adequate transportation access.

Comments about the forum:

- Customer understanding the scope of DVR services:
 - What does or does not DVR provide? Since services are individually tailored, initial information needs to be broad in scope and narrowed to how it is appropriate for the individual, how the services will assist the individual to eliminate the barriers to employment.
- It was noted that less than half of the customers at the forum talked about the wait list as an issue for them. This is a sign of progress.
- Lynnae and staff were thanked for being available at the Council meetings and forums. DVR presence is profoundly helpful especially at forums.
- DVR needs to help customers understand time frame for providing services. When people apply for services they anticipate that there will be a wait, but some find the wait much longer than expected. Giving a better idea to the customers will help them make a more informed decision about involvement with DVR.

K. Elections (note: majority vote, Chair breaks tie)

Chair

Nominations:

Bob Roberts nominated himself
John Harrison nominated Martin McCallum

Bob Roberts: has served on the Council for three years with primary interest and service in Planning and Policy area. He has accomplished a lot as Chair of Planning and Policy Committee. He has gained a much better understanding of DVR. He is retired and has time to commit to Council activities and travel. Transition is a major focus and area of personal interest. He has had significant professional experience helping people with employment which supports the Council's focus helping people with disabilities go to work.

Martin McCallum: is honest and straightforward and will lead meetings with honesty and respect. He supports non-discrimination laws and the Rehabilitation Act and will uphold the broad definition of diversity. On behalf of the customers, he will empower them to make choices to be independent. He will foster leadership among Council members and customers and collaboration with state and non-governmental agencies to enhance outcomes. He has strengths and weaknesses.

No further nominations were offered.

Vote: Bob Roberts received two votes; Martin McCallum received 6 votes.
Martin McCallum was elected Chair of the WSRC.

Vice Chair:

Eastern Washington: Carol Maher nominated Bob Roberts. Bob confirmed his interest. No other nominations were offered. The Chair appointed Bob as Eastern Washington Vice Chair. A vote was not needed.

Western Washington: Carol Maher nominated herself. Carol confirmed her interest to the Chair. No other nominations were offered. The Chair appointed Carol as Western Washington Vice Chair. A vote was not needed.

Committee Chairs:

Business Relations and Networking: Kris Tefft had agreed to serve in this capacity. No other nominations were offered. The Chair appointed Kris Tefft as Chair of the Business Relations and Networking Committee.

Council Effectiveness: Bill Murray nominated himself. No objections to Bill appointing himself as Chair of the Council Effectiveness Committee. No vote was needed.

Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation: Martin McCallum nominated Jim Larson. Bill confirmed Jim's interest. No other nominations were offered. The Chair appointed Jim Larson as Chair of the Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation Committee. A vote was not necessary.

Interagency Liaison: John Harrison nominated himself. No other nominations were offered. The Chair appointed John Harrison as Chair of the Interagency Liaison Committee. A vote was not necessary.

Planning and Policy: Bob Roberts nominated himself. No other nominations were offered. The Chair appointed Bob Roberts as Chair of the Planning and Policy Committee. A vote was not necessary.

Veterans Ad Hoc: Rudy Hernandez nominated himself. No other nominations were offered. The Chair appointed Rudy Hernandez as Chair of the Veterans Ad Hoc Committee. A vote was not necessary.

Martin McCallum resumed leadership of meeting as new Council Chair. Joelle and Martin will be contacting Committee Chairs regarding committee work plans.

L. Committee Reports

Interagency Liaison will be involved in individual projects to learn about partner agencies working with DVR (Kris Tefft with the Association of Washington Business; Jeff Abe-Gunter with the Division of Developmental Disabilities, and Linda Pratt with Tribal VR.)

Washington PAVE by Joanne Butts

PAVE will have its annual self-determination forum on April 4-5, 2008 in partnership with self advocates of Washington. *You Are The Expert Conference 2008 "Celebrating Families and Professionals, The Heart of Success"*

PAVE regularly holds numerous activities to help parents be the child's best advocate and has excellent outreach. Some of the programs offered by PAVE: Birth to 3, person-centered planning, community inclusion (matching disabled children/families with non-disabled children and families in the community.) Most of the materials PAVE offers are available on the web at: <http://www.washingtonpave.org> and available for download.

Kimmer Gordon recently attended a Transition Conference held by PAVE and looks forward to being a presenter at an upcoming PAVE Conference. Martin encouraged members to present information about the WSRC at other community events.

John Harrison recently attended the Pierce County Construction Partnership conference, a pre-apprenticeship program for youth. He was very impressed and touched with the impact on the youth and their futures. It is a great practical skills program for youth not attending college. The partnership has a special interest in making programs attractive to girls also.

M. Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Report by Joelle Brouner and Rudy Hernandez

Joelle and Rudy attended the CSAVR Fall Conference in San Antonio Texas in October. This was Rudy's first CSAVR conference experience.

At the national level, there is a lot of energy focused on State Rehabilitation Council activities. SRCs do not currently have national level representation (no counterpart like National Council on Independent Living for State IL Councils and Centers for Independent Living.) SRCs are trying to form a national coalition. There are a number of obstacles to face: few SRCs have dedicated staff to support the Council; with no staff and frequent member turnover, there are challenges to retaining institutional memory and moving forward on initiatives; few SRCs have good relationships with the VR designated unit. SRCs for Blind agencies are concerned about having strong representation for blind issues.

At this point the strong SRC leaders are Marlene Malloy from Michigan and Rhoda Hunter from Oregon. Joelle recommended that a national resolution or mission statement be developed. Joelle drafted the resolution (see Tab 7 in the quarterly notebook.)

The National Council for State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) has no legal identity yet. Once it receives a legal identity the hope is that it will be a good resource for SRCs to get information for formulating by-laws, staffing, funding, and resource planning, etc.

In Washington, the SRCs (General VR and Blind) have good relationships with DVR and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB). Both SRCs have dedicated staff to support their respective councils. DVR and DSB also have a good working relationship. Compared to other SRCs nationally, the WSRC is far more established and well positioned than most other SRCs.

N. Perspectives from the Field – Tina Bredengerd and Cindy Murray

"Perspectives from the field" has been a good addition to our agenda and will continue to be a featured item. This meeting's perspective is from Tina Bredengerd, VR Supervisor for the Aberdeen, Centralia and Kelso offices and Cindy Murray, Administrative Assistant 4 to David Hankinson, DVR Area 1 Manager. Tina's home base is in Kelso and Cindy's office is located at the WorkSource Thurston in Tumwater. Tina and Cindy experienced first-hand the

devastation brought by the December 2007 floods and provided tremendous leadership during the flood recovery of the Centralia DVR office.

Life at the Centralia DVR office became very complicated when the dike broke and flooded the downtown area. DVR has pictures of folks in row boats rowing past the building where Centralia DVR is located. There was about twelve inches of water in the building and the building was closed for two days. The building owner, Bill Ralph, was exceptional. He went immediately to the office and moved the computers out of danger and worked with the DDD Office Supervisor to rescue the files out of the file cabinets and the staff's personal items. Once he was able to access the building again, Mr. Ralph made recovery of the Centralia DVR office his top priority. The Centralia DVR staff were temporarily relocated to the WorkSource Thurston office and just returned to their office this week. They will be holding their first customer orientation since the flood sometime the week of January 22nd.

The Aberdeen Office was also affected by the storms and was without power for a week.

Although Tina was not able to go to the Centralia Office due to the freeway closure, she was able to connect with the staff to ensure their safety and make plans for contacting customers. It was difficult to connect with some DVR customers due to downed phone lines. The staff shared information about emergency services in the community once they were able to reach the customers or they were able to relay the information through other customers who were in contact. Staff was able to have meetings with customers during this time due to the generosity of DVR partners who made space available for DVR staff. Morningside staff took extra efforts to drive to customers' homes to reconnect and determine needs.

There are 85 customers on Centralia's caseload. 5-6 customers lost their jobs or couldn't go to work due to business closures. The community is still severely impacted and will be for some time. A lot of small businesses were impacted by the disaster. This will impact availability of jobs for DVR customers as often small businesses are where DVR customers find jobs. Housing also continues to be a big issue for this area.

Cindy Murray was appointed and worked tirelessly as project lead for the Centralia DVR office recovery efforts. She coordinated all the clean-up, restoration of equipment and furnishings, worked with the landlord and other services to restore the office for the staff's return. Cindy indicated that the county was not prepared to assist and had no real plan in place for recovery. She encouraged the WSRC to help by influencing policy makers at the state and county level to improve disaster recovery measures and assistance to people with disabilities. After her experiences helping the Centralia office she realizes that people generally cannot rely on FEMA or other formal sources. She

recommends that everyone take emergency preparedness seriously and use the 3-day rule for emergency supplies.

Tina Bredengerd thanked Lynnae, Kelly Franklin and Cindy for all the help and support during the recovery efforts. Lynnae commended David Hankinson, Tina Bredengerd and Cindy Murray for their leadership and care with both staff and customers. David Hankinson thanked Tina and Cindy for their leadership and efforts above and beyond.

Local data: in response to Jeff Abe-Gunter's request for local performance data DVR will be providing local vs. statewide comparisons at each quarterly meeting. (See Tab 6 for Thurston County data.) Lynnae wants to expand the data elements and will work with Jeff to ensure the elements are captured that he was interested in. She encouraged members to let her know if there are other data elements they are interested in having.

O. Committee Assignments

Joelle went over committee assignments for 2008 to ensure all members' interests were noted:

Business Relations and Networking – Kris Tefft, Chair; Jim Larson, Carol Maher
Council Effectiveness – Bill Murray, Chair; Joanne Butts, Sandra Carr, Kimmer Gordon, John Harrison,

Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation: Jim Larson, Chair; Jeff Abe-Gunter, Joanne Butts, Sandra Carr, Jerry Johnsen, Bill Murray

Executive – Martin McCallum, Chair; John Harrison, Carol Maher, Bill Murray, Bob Roberts

Interagency Liaison – John Harrison, Chair; Jeff Abe-Gunter, Lou Colwell, Kimmer Gordon, Martin McCallum, Linda Pratt

Planning and Policy – Bob Roberts, Chair; Lou Colwell, Jerry Johnsen, Jim Larson, Martin McCallum

Veterans Ad Hoc – Rudy Hernandez, Chair; Jeff Abe-Gunter, Bob Roberts

Committees need to be prepared to give reports at the April 17-18, 2008 quarterly meeting in Chelan County. The length of time the Council will spend on reviewing the mission and vision at the April quarterly meeting will be determined by the Executive Committee. The by-laws will need to be changed to reflect moving the elections from October to January.

P. Agency Reports

State Independent Living Council (SILC) by Sandra Carr.

- Robert Honan, SILC Executive Director has met with several entities to determine what services the Centers for Independent Living can improve on.

- The SILC will be hiring a half time grant writer to assist the Centers for Independent Living to obtain more funding and to increase funding to assist people with disabilities
- The SILC State Plan was approved by RSA.
- Housing and transportation continue to be areas of focus for the SILC.
- Shelley Hawkins resigned as SILC Chair and Romel Mackelprang was elected chair. Romel is a professor at Eastern Washington University, Disabilities Studies.
- Rob Honan has just completed the Thurston County Leadership Development Training.
- The SILC is interested in collaborating to assist with Veterans services.

Workforce Board (WFB) by Martin McCallum:

- The next Workforce Board meeting is January 31, 2008 at the New Market Skills Center in Tumwater.
- Kelly Boston, DVR Program Planning and Evaluation Administrator will be addressing the board to report success in breaking down barriers between DVR and the Public Institutions of Higher Education (PIHE). The agreement details the responsibility of the PIHE to provide accommodations for DVR customers in academic programs and defines cost sharing between DVR, DSB and the PIHE.
- Workforce Board keeping watch for Legislative bills affecting the workforce. Some issues are: dropping out of school, secondary careers, skills training in demand occupations.
- Martin is the Workforce Board representative on DDD Jobs by 21 program (from 2007 Legislature). The program provides additional resources to County government which acts as the fiscal agent for local DD services.
- Eleni Papadakis, WFB Executive Director, coordinated a grant opportunity through the Council for Adult Experiential Learning. The grant will enable employees to save for lifelong learning classes by setting up an employee account that will be matched by employers. The account is transferable between employers when employee changes employment. The Washington Workforce Board is the sole grantee.
- The January 31st WFB meeting is the first meeting that Julie Wilkerson, Director for Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) will be attending as a standing WFB member. Having this position on the board will strengthen the link between the workforce and economic development. The WFB submits their strategic plan – High Skills, High Wages to the Governor annually and the Governor will be expecting CTED to also develop a strategic plan.
- Martin has been involved with Department of Labor grants since 1975. The nation needs to step up its investment in youth, unemployed adults and dislocated workers however DOL recently received three cuts to its budget: (1) cut across the board, (2) 1.7% cut to services to adults and dislocated workers, (3) \$250 million cut nationwide to Employment Security. The cuts will affect DVR customers.

Q. Other

Bill Murray asked if the WSRC should vote to support HB2599 - recognizing disability history in the public education system or is it appropriate for members to support. There is no pressure either way.

Motion: The WSRC will support the passage of HB2599. Joelle was asked to prepare a letter of behalf of the WSRC.

Moved: Bill Murray

Second: Joanne Butts and Kimmer Gordon

Discussion: Jerry Johnsen was concerned about formally supporting the bill without know more about the scope and any controversy or side issues surrounding the bill.

Vote: 6 in favor, 2 abstain, 0 opposed

Joelle will prepare a letter to Bill Ralph, landlord of the Centralia DVR office to thank him for his care and support of the office during the December flood.

Vote: unanimous in favor

Joelle and Martin asked members to reflect on the Council work plan and identify tasks and key activities to incorporate into the plan.

Joelle confirmed her follow-up tasks:

- Letter to Bill Ralph, Centralia office landlord
- Letter to express WSRC support of HB2599
- On agenda for the Executive Committee is the mission/vision and updating the by-laws
- Follow-up on Council work plan
- Obtain speaker system, Carol Maher will donate system

R. Meeting adjourned

Motion to adjourn the quarterly meeting at approximately 4 p.m.

Moved: Bill Murray

Second: John Harrison

Vote: unanimous in favor.