

WSRC FULL COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Friday, July 25, 2008

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Doubletree Hotel Spokane City Center
322 N Spokane Falls Ct
Spokane, WA 99201

In Attendance:

Jeffrey Abe-Gunter, *Labor Representative*; **Joanne Butts**, *Parent Training and Education Program Representative*; **Sandra Carr**, *State Independent Living Council Representative*; **Mary-Louise “Lou” Colwell**, *Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Representative*; **Rodolfo “Rudy” Hernandez**, *Vocational Rehabilitation Representative*; **Jerry Johnsen**, *Client Assistance Program Representative*; **Jim Larson**, *Business Representative*; **J. Martin McCallum**, *Workforce Board Representative & WSRC Council Chair*; **William Murray**, *Community Rehabilitation Program Representative*; **Lynnae Ruttledge**, *DVR Director, Ex-Officio Council Member*; **Robert “Bob” Roberts**, *Business Representative*; **Joelle Brouner**, *WSRC Executive Director*; **JoAnne Lang**, *Executive Assistant to the WSRC*; **Andres Aguirre**, ; **Marcinda “Cindi” Kirtschmeier**, *Morningside*; **Rob Martin**, *Chinook Enterprises*;

Meeting begins at 9:00 am:

Approval of Minutes from the meeting in Wenatchee:

MOTION

Murray moves to approve meeting minutes;

Abe-Gunter seconds the motion.

McCallum confirms passage of minutes.

Remarks from the Chair—McCallum mentions that the meeting preparation notebook under Tab 2 has responses from Kelly Boston and Kelly Franklin, which is to follow up on questions asked by members at the previous meeting, and some information on equal opportunity plan. He is pleased to be in Area 3, and thanks Teresa Kutsch and her staff on their statistics from the DVR Intranet Dashboard. There are DVR staff he would like to acknowledge. Andres Aguirre, Dudley Bowers, Donna Dalzell, Avreayl Jacobson, Teresa Kutsch, Lee Ruddy, Genie Ybarra, Kelly Franklin and Kelly Boston for their follow up. McCallum says that we will later hear from Lynnae Ruttledge, and that we are glad DVR is making strides in strengthening relationships, and would like to hear more about the agreement with OSPI, Project SEARCH, and the Customer Internship Program. The Co-hosting of Say Hey was successful and he thanks the Spokane contingent who hosted and greeted the community.

Remarks from the Director, Joelle Brouner—We are having a wonderful July meeting so far. We are accomplishing a lot. It has been a busy and active quarter. We now have a full complement of SRC staff and members who have succeeded in getting appointments. The quality of the transition discussion was great. Our discussion about CRPs will be also useful.

- Council Budget Update—The WSRC budget was negotiated between Martin McCallum and Lynnae Ruttledge with Ms. Brouner in attendance and with input from Executive Committee. It was a successful negotiation and the SRC received the budget that we asked for.
- Appreciations—Ms. Brouner thanks the members for participating and convening the CRP and Transition panels for discussion. She commends DVR on the rising rehabilitation rate. Recruitment work is obvious and strong.

Ms. Brouner is looking forward to learning how to better work with DVR offices and field staff. With new members, the Rehabilitation Council has built a constructive council culture. She hopes that we can work toward supporting new members to be a part of that council culture. Ms. Brouner welcomes Sharey Cleveland, the new Tribal Liaison to the Council and JoAnne Lang, the new Executive Assistant to the Council.

Remarks from the DVR Director, Lynnae Ruttledge—She shares that DVR continues in the challenge of vacancies in staff and the active recruitment efforts. DVR looks forward to getting more applicants. Ruttledge recognizes that retaining current staff is also a big effort. She asks that we please continue to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of those staff. Many of the staff from the Spokane office joined us for Say Hey Spokane and we thank them for that. Ruttledge refers to McCallum mentioning the agreements being negotiated with OSPI and she says that DVR wants to have a regency agreement between DVR and OSPI. It means a great deal to transitioning people. She is excited about taking that agreement and helping people to understand what it means. DVR has asked the Centers for Independent Living to focus their services on transition and students with 504 plans. The agreement with the Economic Services Administration, Work First and the ongoing relationship with them, sharing information and relationship building, sharing the Work Strides curriculum, which has been a proven way of helping people feel better about themselves and focus on their strengths. This is a generally busy time for community partners offering letters of support for grant writing. Ms. Ruttledge says that she has offered letters of support to Technical Assistance and Continuing Education to Lori Ford and Kari Matrone of Region 10, who are competing for the dollars. Washington and Oregon Universities are also competing for dollars and she offered a letter of support for them as well. Many communities have submitted grant applications, and she has offered 5-7 letters of support. There are two organizations competing for a migrant and seasonal farm worker grant. She provided letters for both those.

Project Search: Many communities including Spokane, Yakima, and Olympia have local employers who make a commitment to partner with DVR locally to help local people find jobs in their industries. Sacred Heart, Swedish Medical Center in Vancouver, and Children's Hospital in Seattle are examples of these. Vancouver partnered with the County, who is the employer. The national conference for Project Search was in Seattle last week, to understand best practices and lead the way for Washington State.

Customer Internship Program—Ms. Ruttledge says that this is an effective way to assist our customers in demonstrating skills with employers and hiring individuals in ongoing positions after they finish internships.

Looking ahead—Mental health employment in Wenatchee, hoping to have a DVR service expo. There will be an in-service training for all staff focusing on building skills in key areas in September. This in-service is open to Tribal VR programs, The Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), and all State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

members. DVR is partnering with the Workforce board for the Governor's Economic Development Services in Lynnwood.

Mrs. Ruttledge says that it is a very exciting time to be a part of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). DVR is continuing to sustain and increase the rehabilitation rate, the number of new applications, the number of new eligibilities, new plans and rehabilitations. Mrs. Ruttledge closes by thanking the Council.

Jerry Johnsen asks, when people leave DVR, is there an exit interview process? Lynnae replies yes, Nancy Murphy used to do it, but she left. They reinstated that, and the text goes to Lynnae, and the Senior Leadership team to find trends.

Jerry Johnson asks, IL/504 initiative, how does that fit into existing plans? Are they motivated about it, or is it something they are pushing to the side?

Lynnae answers that it is about half and half. They identify what they will intend to provide in services to youth, and that some already do provide youth services, others who do not are encouraged to think of this as a "transition year". About half of the Independent Living Centers have youth programs.

Bill Murray asks what the relationships with OSPI and 504 plans are really about. Lynnae answers that the staff and local schools share values, and the 504 initiative is more about contractual dollars for independent living. She will follow up to provide more info.

Jim Larson asks about staff and turnover, there are a lot of people retiring. 400+ staff reaching retirement age February 25th What percent of the staff positions are vacant now? What will the percentage be then? What strategies does DVR have for replacement?

Ms. Ruttledge replies that DVR would like to answer that when we meet in October and follow up with what we have now. For state plan, we have 340 staff. Vacancy rate is tracked as well as the retirement eligibility rate.

Jeff Abe-Gunter asks about the DVR website and the map that shows who in DVR is assigned to what schools around the state and request that DVR spread word about seeking new employees. How do people apply, what are the requirements? What does DVR offer?

Ms. Ruttledge responds that recruitment packets are available and will be distributed.

Teresa Kutsch answers, on transition in Area 3, Counselors are assigned to all high schools. The disconnects are that activities happen seasonally rather than year round. We know we need to have a closer link with high schools. Co-location is an option. Having a counselor in every high school is maybe not possible. One thing is (this summer) Project Search: she met a teacher who is onsite at Sacred Heart for Project Search employed by school district 81. Both have an interest in improving transition services. It would be great to bring her on board to DVR. We have hired two teachers to provide transition services. Both are well known in their district for their good work. They want to understand DVR better. They have a six week hire period and will observe and learn how to facilitate work strides. They will do this for transition students at the DVR office for students who are currently enrolled in DVR and some who will likely be enrolled in the

future. They are learning a lot about what DVR does and DVR is helping them understand about individualized services.

Joanne Butts asks about 504 plans and how do students and families know that the resources exist?

Ruttledge answers that it will be a joint effort between Centers for Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, and hopefully PAVE. OSPI does not collect data about 504 services.

Lou Colwell asks Teresa Kutsch, this model where teachers train in DVR to learn how DVR works for six weeks; is it exciting; is it shared with other regions? Can it be replicated and shared?

Teresa Kutsch says that the outcome goal is to find a way to replicate it every summer, or broaden it to other key community partners, because it is a great opportunity. Perhaps the in-service in September would be an appropriate time to share it, by including staff. The 504 is the other piece of that. Making connections with teachers is not an area that DVR has been successful forging locally. The intention is to help make those connections in schools.

Joelle Brouner informs the Council that the acoustics in the room are poor and not accessible to everyone. She asks Bob Roberts to let us know if he needs us to be more mindful of the sound issues.

Martin McCallum asks if anyone would like to propose a motion in the Council for DVR to encourage this plan in other areas.

Lou Collwell proposes a

MOTION

That the Council recommend to DVR, after the summer data collection on the success and challenges they research, that they replicate this model in other areas throughout the state.

Bill Murry and Bob Roberts both Second the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Brouner asks could the council offer support either financially or with research or letters of support? Ms. Ruttledge does not anticipate that it will be a resource issue because they are non-permanent employees, but that she will hold that as a standing offer for collaboration and assistance in the future. Jim Larson says that it is a great idea to collaborate with groups that have the same goals.

VOTE:

Aye: all

Nay: 0

Ms. Brouner mentions such a temporary hire would be helpful in Mental Health and CRP partnerships as well.

Chair Debriefs Budget Negotiation—Under Tab 5 in the Meeting Preparation Notebook, McCallum points the group to the cover letter to Lynnae introducing the budget year beginning October 2008. Then he moves on to the Budget and Proposed Resource Plan, the Rationale for Budget Reductions, the Supporting Documentation of WSRC out of state travel and the documentation of the value that the WSRC has added to DVR. Mr. McCallum reports that the negotiations are concluded and were successful. The budget page has adjustments, the additional detail lays out the cost of meetings and committee expenses and out of state travel, reducing the out of state costs too.

Ms. Brouner clarifies for the record that during this meeting, the budget materials that are listed in the notebook are not what DVR and the WSRC finally agreed upon. We got what we wanted and what we needed and a strong sense that if new members or existing members had reasonable accommodation needs, the WSRC will provide those. The Needs Assessment is a large project. It is getting bigger all the time. DVR will be the lead on the financial piece of that, rather than the SRC. Ms. Brouner's reasonable accommodation costs are also not included in the budget, as it involves privacy issues. She reiterates that we are not required to attend CSAVR, we choose to.

Reports on Council Related Representation

- **Jeff Abe-Gunter—Behavioral Health Conference:**

Mr. Abe-Gunter thanks the WSRC for sending him to the conference. The title of the conference was Recovering Action and started with Sherman Alexi, a Native American poet, and a friend of Mr. Abe-Gunter's who was not expected to live as a child and did despite expectations. He says that there was a DVR Expo and they had a huge display board with different and diverse clients and greeters. They gave an introduction card, telling you which stations to go to, with poster boards on five stations. The visitor was to go to each station for a stamp and then get a prize at the end. Abe-Gunter failed to get a prize but did find that it was a great informative DVR presentation on the services DVR offers. There were 15 counselors at the expo, all wearing blue shirts. He says that it was very professional and some of the best tabling he has ever seen. He brought a lot of material back with him that he says he would provide copies to the WSRC for follow up in the next notebook. His only complaint was that only one out of ten VR counselors knew what the WSRC was. He asked them to go look at the website to find us. When he looked up the WSRC, he found that there was no link on DVR's website, and no link on DVR's Intranet site. He asks that Mrs. Rutledge please put the WSRC on the front page of these sites so that we can be more accessible to DVR staff. He also went to a Veteran's section and found that 25% of the United States population is a veteran or the dependents of veterans. 643,000 veterans reside in Washington State. He says that he learned about some of the emotional issues effecting veterans when they return from deployment, like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the stigma of mental illness. Jeff wondered how many people come out of military service saying they have any mental health problems and learned that the numbers are very few because of the stigma. Jeff asked when they do report having a mental health issue, do they ask for help, and the answer was no. Jeff reports that the conference next year will be in Vancouver on June 17-19, 2009 at the Hilton in the heart of downtown Vancouver.

Martin thanks Mr. Abe-Gunter for attending the Behavioral Health Conference and thanks him for his complete report. Lynnae Ruttledge confirms that there will be a WSRC link on the website.

- **Joanne Butts—CSAVR:**

Joanne says that CSAVR was great in Bethesda, but that it was a long drive from DC during rush hour with a great cab driver. There were lots of stops and he turned off the meter in the taxi. She says that she learned a lot. There seems to be a lot of support for the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). Not every council across the nation had ratified the effort. Three or four declined to participate, mostly Councils for the Blind. One of the problems Ms. Butts learned of was how long it takes for new members to get appointed in other states. Folks from Florida could not get members, and people just stayed on forever, not exceeding terms, but filling in for people who had dropped off. Washington's support is extraordinary compared to other states who do not have a budget or staff. DVR in Washington is progressive enough to support Council activities and a budget and working together but maintaining separation. Vanessa Lewis, a guest from PAVE adds that she was impressed with the meeting's voice, there were differences in opinions, but the voice of advocacy was apparent and that the diversity was also impressive. She says that the man from New York highlighted working on transition in school districts, she was impressed with Massachusetts, New York, and Tennessee.

Jerry Johnsen asks why DSB did not participate?

Ms. Butts says they did not say why but that she felt they were feeling threatened.

Joelle Brouner gives the Council some background: Blind organizations and the councils affiliated with those were concerned that the NCSRC were pushing for consolidation of blind and general programs. They were concerned about losing the dedicated funding stream for the blind organizations.

Joanne Butts says that she spent some time in a training on SRC involvement with the state plan. She was proud of the involvement of this council in the state plans. They had divided into groups to work on a list of best practices. Then they would compile it and distribute it to all participants.

- **Martin McCallum—RSA Training:**

Alaska, Samoa, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington Chairs were present at the training from June 17-19 in Sacramento facilitated by RCEP of region 9&10. They trained with a new online training package called E-rehab and the Chairs were the first to test it out. McCallum proposes to Ms. Brouner that the WSRC cull the six hours of training and introduce it to our Council. Each state represented at the training reported on their challenges. In Alaska the challenge is finding meeting places because of the lack of roads, and that the nature of the work makes it so that many members on their council are people with disabilities who may have difficulty traveling in the small airplanes that people in Alaska use to travel around their state. Similar challenges were reported by the Chairs from American Samoa and Guam. After Mr. McCallum's report at the training, many of the Chairs from other states asked for more information and they complimented the WSRC's annual report. He says that they also expressed interest in the memorandum of understanding with higher education and asked for a copy of that memorandum. They envied the WSRC our support from the state VR who give us a budget and staff

support. Martin points out that the California Rehabilitation Council has conference calls instead of quarterly meetings. Under Tab 9 in the meeting mailing you can see a summary of the E-rehab training site.

10:30 am –11:00 am B R E A K – Hotel check out

Meeting resumes at 11:00

Revisiting the Community Forum Debrief and adding Debrief on Say Hey Spokane:

Bill Murray expresses interest in James, a customer at the forum, and service coordination between DVR and Mental Health. James was pleased to hear that the Council was addressing the issues and that it was important to DVR. James encouraged Mr. Murray to continue to forge a meaningful relationship and help address those issues. It is along the line of members' interests.

Martin McCallum notes that there were many Spokane DVR staff at the forum and that Jeff Abe-Gunter had mentioned that there were some DVR staff who did not know about the SRC, and that it does not appear to be the case in Spokane.

Jim Larson comments about personal questions in the public forum, that if people have private issues it might be more appropriate to talk with customers individually rather than airing their problems in a public setting.

Lynnae Ruttledge comments that if someone got to the level of specific services, it would be appropriate to redirect them to specific helpful people like herself or members of the Client Assistance Program.

Jerry Johnsen comments that we cannot really have a dialogue in that environment about individual service concerns and should redirect people to where they can go for that.

Martin McCallum requests specifically that the Council help with that when the need arises.

Say Hey Spokane:

Rudy Hernandez says that he was asked for his business card by a coming graduate.

Jeff Abe-Gunter says that as a greeter he counted five people who stopped to ask about what Say Hey was. One person associated it with Willie Mays, baseball star.

Lynnae Ruttledge points out that people will continue to facilitate the Say Hey Spokane locally and so it is likely to achieve more of a public face in the future as it grows.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report—Jerry Johnsen focuses on a comment from the previous day's transition panel: "You don't know what you don't know." He points out that many clients have that problem of not knowing when they come to VR. Clients do not get all the information they need because 1. VR counselors do not completely understand what DVR offers; 2. CAP finds that counselors really do not want to talk about the specific services DVR offers because they find that then the clients will want those specific services. Later clients find out that the services are offered and get upset because the service was not offered to them. CAP gets a lot of calls from people who ask why they were not informed and if they can be reimbursed. Mr. Johnsen points out that

up front communication is key to avoid these issues, including the presentation that under certain circumstances which services are offered.

Communication: there are clients who worry about how long it is taking to receive services from or hear back from DVR. CAP offers to these folks, bug them. Call DVR. He asks that when VR Counselors receive calls from these clients, that they should specify that the time a client spends waiting is not dead time and that something productive is happening for them. He asks that Counselors specify for the client what he or she can do in the mean time while they wait.

Rehab Law Academy training: Mr. Johnsen says that this is a great training and classes are full. The training is giving a perspective on history and how the system today is related to the laws that mandate services.

On National Veteran's Experience: Mr. Johnsen was at a national conference about veterans and says that it was depressing. We return so many veterans with disabilities who are not recording/reporting those disabilities. Those that do report the disabilities get in to the veterans vocational rehabilitation system and have little results partly because it is not a holistic system. He says that they do not deal with or address other issues in the veterans' lives, like alcoholism or family issues.

Lynnae Rutledge offered to CAP to work together to help find a good location if they want an office in Spokane. Jerry responds that there is not a lot of funding and that Cost of Living Increases have not even been kept up with and with technology he can be available to anyone here in Spokane.

Committee Reports—

- Veterans Ad Hoc, Rudy Hernandez—Regarding serving veterans and what DVR could do: Mr. Hernandez says that in November Andres Aguirre, Jim McVey and Mr. Hernandez made an appointment and met with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and talked about collaboration. They decided to develop an interagency agreement. It was a good meeting and as a result, Mr. Aguirre exchanged an agreement and talks back and forth with the VA, and he says that at this point the agreement is in draft form and is not ready to be introduced to the Council, but that it is being worked on. The next meeting will be within the next two and a half weeks with the VA. They are taking it step by step. As he gets involved and connects with people, he understands the complications involved with that collaboration, such as when it is a good time for VR to step in. Mr. Aguirre says that there are veteran rating systems that they have to wait for. Breaking into the culture of VA is going to be a challenge. VR can compliment what they do, and can maybe provide better services for disabled veterans. Rudy Hernandez would like for Andres Aguirre and Jeff Abe-Gunter and other committee members to put more action into it, to get the VA to work with them and perhaps have conference calls and meetings with VA staff. He would also like the process to be done methodically, so that they can be effective. In December, there will be a break out session with VA staff. The discussion will be emphasizing the referral process, and the process of referring people from the VA to DVR.

Joelle Brouner asks, with a change of staff and VA and the interagency nature, it might not be the right time for the Council to weigh in, would be a good idea if over

the next year, the Ad Hoc Committee hosted a forum with the VA and the Disabled Veterans of America, to strengthen relationships. Would a forum like that be useful?

Mr. Hernandez asks what the forum would look like.

Ms. Brouner responds that maybe people who have been back from the war for a year or so or who may be on the road to starting to treat issues could come to the forum or really it does not have to be a forum. She will support as staff whatever the Veterans' committee needs. Sometimes DVR takes leadership, sometimes it is WSRC. She wants to make sure that the WSRC helps in appropriate ways. The Council wants a way to be useful.

Bob Roberts asks, with the complications, can Mr. Aguirre include for the Council some information on the process so that we can have at least some information on the process?

Mr. Hernandez replies that we are in the second meeting regarding this agreement, and we will start including everyone in the distribution list, and that in the near future, the rest of the veterans committee will meet with the VA.

Mr. Roberts mentions that the rest of the committee is behind on the discussion, because the whole committee has not been involved. Maybe the Veterans Committee should hold a conference call to get everyone up to speed.

Jeff Abe-Gunter mentions that playing the path of the Veteran might be a useful way to learn how the VR process in Veterans Affairs works. He worries that people who get out of the military are unaware of the available services. Counselors should know what language to use to help them get access to services.

Lou Colwell mentions the new Governor appointed Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board. They have a veterans committee too, and assisting people with TBI to get back into the workforce. Our committee may want to collaborate with them.

Council Effectiveness Committee—Bill Murray comments: Sandra Carr, Joanne Butts and Bill Murray met and reviewed the current work plan. They went over the member feedback surveys, in the meeting mailing Tab 4, please fill out and return surveys to Mr. Murray. In addition, they focused on producing a council recruitment DVD tool to advance the process of reaching out to develop a membership pool of applicants.

Martin McCallum asks about the member feedback.

Mr. Murray notes that so far all the feedback has been pretty good. There are no trends highlighting concerns. He will make a final report and present it to the Council. He says that generally the Council is pleased with the Executive Director's performance and feels motivated to participate in Council activities.

Jim Larson—Customer Satisfaction & Program Evaluation:

Tab 4 has a Customer Satisfaction section and shows some of the work on the needs assessment. The Committee consists of Jim Larson, Bill Murray, Sandra Carr, Joanne Butts and Joelle Brouner participates as well. Kelly Boston, Lynnae Rutledge, Joelle Brouner and Jim Larson all met and discussed the needs assessment on May 30th.

There is a timeline and a Gantt chart that express the project timeline. Our questions are how do we go about doing the research portion of the survey for the joint study? One suggestion is that we could go to DSHS Research and Data Analysis. The committee met with them on Tuesday July 22nd. They do research and performance data analysis. They can do the work of gathering data and analyzing data. They will get rough cost estimates and the scope of the project. The project will be fairly long. There are pieces to the project: Employers, Participants, DVR Staff and Community partners like CRPs. They do not have to do contracting out for the service tools. The DSHS research and data analysis team also talked about other entities of data collection and analysis that are available. They manage sub-entities that can do some contracting with groups that would do focus groups, as well as the Council doing focus groups. The DSHS unit seemed excited about the needs assessment project and Susan Kinney of that team will work with us in late September when we will move forward. The committee understands that it is a “dance we do with DVR” because it is a project with leadership from many entities.

Joelle asks: there has recently been some discussion of concerns about developmental disabilities and corrections facilities. We might want to look at groups who are coming out of the correctional system and determine what their needs are and if they are being met.

Agency Reports

SILC—Sandra Carr: There is a new Executive Assistant in the SILC office, Barbara Hathaway, who is deaf. Collaborating with the SILC is a good challenge for the WSRC now, with the language barriers. Barbara Hathaway is learning the process through text messaging and it is creating the opportunity for the WSRC staff to learn some American Sign Language. Independent living at the meeting, they are position updating so that the state plan includes things as they go along including transportation, housing, seasonal migrant workers, families, voting, and veterans with physical or sensory disabilities. The VA provides clinical care but maybe not other services. Independent Living centers might get info on how they can help veterans. Seasonal Migrant workers, the largest population of which is in Omak, whose closest Independent Living Center is in Spokane are a current challenge for Independent Living Centers in learning how to reach out to those outlying communities. They are working on getting people the right to vote, and assisting them to have the opportunity to vote; long term care and making sure people have information about what resources are available; follow up and working toward actual outcomes are key for that. Ms. Carr mentions that CORD had the Extreme Makeover. It was a bad looking place before the makeover and they will be having an ADA celebration at 3:00pm where people can see their new space.

L U N C H

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction—Lou Colwell:

Ms. Colwell talks about her agency’s report on Transition for students, Part C, infants and toddlers to preschool. This is the first time the state has heard the federal government have any urgency in their message to address that part of the law that encourages transition planning at such a young age and making sure students have positive outcomes when they leave school.

One thing that has changed from how things happened in the past was that when individuals in the general population went into employment they stayed in that job for thirty or forty years. It is anticipated that students who graduate in 2025 will have anywhere between 20-25 jobs in their working life. OSPI is focusing on how education can then keep up with the training these students will need, and what transition will look like in the future?

Panel Discussion:

DVR's Partnership with Community Rehabilitation Programs—The panel consists of Jim Larson, WSRC member and CEO of Morningside; Andres Aguirre, Statewide VR Program Administrator, Marcinda Kirchmeier of Morningside, Rob Martin, Executive Director of Chinook Enterprises.

Jim Larson introduces the project and introduces our guest speakers. Mr. Larson has a power point presentation, a hard copy of which has been obtained for the October meeting's notebook. The presentation is titled "CRP—Community Rehabilitation Program Overview Presented to the Washington State Rehabilitation Council"

Topics to be covered,

- History of CRP's
- Contracted Services
- How CRP's get Paid
- CARF

History—In the 1960's CRPs often worked out of donated spaces with little in the way of budgets; In the 1970's sheltered workshops were en vogue, and we saw the introduction of RCEP and CCER; In the 1980's Supported Employment and Community Integrated Employment became a focus with the growth of enclaves in industry; In the 1990's there was continued expansion into the community and the closing of sheltered workshops. Most CRPs today are non-profit organizations, school-to-work transition started getting funded in CRPs from the federal government; Washington State is a leader in progressive CRPs. There are many sheltered workshops in the rest of the country compared to Washington State. Our current decade has focused on outcome based contracting services and Order of Selection, (OOS).

Contracted Services—Ms. Kirchmeier talks about the contract with DVR and what services are offered by CRPs to customers of DVR. These services include Vocational Testing, Trial Work Experience, Community Based Assessment, Job Placement, Ongoing support services, Job Retention services, and Transitional employment.

Vocational Testing—Individualized standardized tests. Organizations and individuals provide these testing services, and there are specific qualifications required to provide it. The outcome is a written report of results or recommendations. The fee is a flat rate for each test and the payment is received 15% up front and 85% paid on outcome achievement.

Trial Work Experience, (TWE) and Community Based Assessment, (CBA)—These are activities that determine the person's eligibility and ability to do a job. Trial work experience is used to determine if a person meets the eligibility

requirement of a job. The level determination is a conversation between the CRP and the DVR Counselor about how difficult it will be to secure what the counselor requests. The Service Delivery Outcome Plan is the CRP's contract from DVR and what CRPs are expected to provide. CBA can happen at any point during the person's plan or activities in the VR process. TWE is only authorized prior to DVR eligibility to determine whether the severity of a person's disability renders them ineligible for DVR services. Intake fees are at 3 levels, Level 1-\$1,000.00; Level 2-\$2,000.00, and Level 3-\$3,000.00. When outcome is achieved, meaning the TWE/CBA is completed by the client and DVR questions are answered, remaining 85% is paid. If a person completes an assessment and the employer says they want to hire the person, and offers that position, the CRP receives a secondary outcome fee, which is 600 dollars.

Ms. Brouner asks, what happens if someone needs more than one trial work experience, are CRPs paid by clients or by the number of assessments?

Ms. Kirchmeier answers that this is determined by the Counselor.

Ms. Brouner asks Rudy Hernandez—Hoe does a counselor determine the level 1, 2, or 3?

Mr. Hernandez says that the negotiation happens between the Counselor and the CRP staff. It is determined by how much work it will take, and the knowledge of the needs of the person receiving services. This is why it is important to know the client well.

Mr. Johnsen adds that sometimes participants get overwhelmed by the work it takes to research the decision and defer to the VR staff to help make that decision.

Ms. Carr says the TWE is difficult for severely disabled people, especially for clients that have no transportation, and also that depending on who the client is, it may not even be necessary.

Cindi Kirchmeier continues with the presentation:
CARF accreditations require certain things from the CRP to contract for services with a client.

Bob Roberts asks, how long does a person continue employment for trial work experience? 90 days is considered employment success in DVR, even though the client may decide that they do not want to do the job that they are doing.

Ms. Kirchmeier responds that if it is within the 90 days they can help but if it is after the 90 days the outcome is complete.

Ms. Kirchmeier continues the power point:
Transportation Fee—travel time at an hourly rate set by contractor if it is over 50 miles from the person. Mileage is paid at the current state reimbursement rate. Partial payment has to be approved by DVR supervisors, and written supporting documentation should be included with the partial payment request.

Job Placement—Defined by location and placement into competitive employment specified by DVR and client. The outcome is complete employment. Level 1-\$1200.00, Level 2-\$2400.00, Level 3-\$3600.00. These fees are paid 15% at intake and 85% at outcome.

CRP Intensive Training—this is authorized for clients who have a goal requiring supported employment, working in a paid integrated employment, and achieve stabilization on the job. Is the person eligible for long term support, do they get it from DDD or private pay?

Jeff Abe-Gunter asks, are there long term supports available? Most of the time there are no CRP services unless long term support system is available.

Joelle Brouner asks, there are a lot of pieces and bargaining, it sounds like the customer is the DVR counselor, which is fine, but it seems like the client should have more emphasis.

Ms. Kirchmeier responds that they spend a lot of time in the intake process. They get to know the client, they understand why they are there, what is in their plan, and what will be the CRP's responsibility

Ms. Brouner asks, how do you help your clients understand the tension between the client's best interest and DVR's interest?

Jim Larson answers, the interests are the same, and that they all work together as a team to be aligned.

Joelle Brouner asks what happens if the client has emerging interests that do not match DVR interests, what happens then?

Cindi Kirchmeier answers that plans can be changed, and that there is a CAP program for that.

Lynnae suggests finishing the presentation and holding questions until the end.

Cindi Kirchmeier continues the presentation:

Intensive Training Outcomes—

Intensive training has three levels, Level 1-\$1500 dollars, Level 2-\$3000 and Level 3-\$4500. Payment methods are the same as the intake fees with 15% up front and 85% upon completion.

CRP Job Retention—Direct on the job training services that enable a client to learn job functions and meet expectations of job performance. Follow along assistance to the client and employer to ensure the client continues to meet performance expectations. The outcome is that the client learns the functions of their job, and maintains performance expectations. There are three levels of payment, Level 1-\$1500, Level 2-\$3000, and Level 3-\$4500. Like the other payment arrangements, the CRP receives 15% up front and 85 % upon outcome. Exceptions happen when the CRP invests nearly 90 days and the client changes their mind about the outcome.

Rob Martin and CRP Qualifications—

Voc evaluation certification includes CVE, CRC and CARF. Most CRPs do not have CARF evaluators on their staff. A CRP has to be CARF accredited.

TWE/CBA—more than one person must be CARF accredited.

Placement—CARF

Intensive Training Job Retention—CARF accreditation.

Sandra Carr asks, sometimes getting CARF accreditation can cost 10k dollars, and that can be a big hardship for a non-profit. But in getting it, the accreditors give you recommendations and help you improve services.

Rob Martin agrees that it is hard to get CARF accreditation, but everyone who has been through the process has determined that it is a worthwhile activity and improves the organizations performance. There are a bout 2500 standards that have to be met in order to get accredited. In Canada the accreditation process is paid for by the ministry and the cost is \$1900.00 per surveyor, per day, which is expensive but helpful and rewarding.

Rob Martin continues with presentation—

CARF—Was founded in 1966 as a private non-profit organization. CARF Promotes quality rehab services. It establishes standards for organizations to use as guidelines. The standards are developed with input from consumers using customer feedback, rehab professionals, state organizations, and funders. Every year the standards are reviewed and new ones developed.

Ms. Kirchmeier continues—The process has become more interactive since 1995 when CARF began a different kind of survey. Jim Larson confirms that it is a peer review process. Accreditors get a stipend for each survey, fifty dollars a day.

Rob Martin Continues—Other Assurances:

Background checks are done on all employees.

Minimum levels of general liability—one million dollars worth of insurance

Business automobile liability

Workers comp insurance

Compliance with DVR's code of ethics, standards of practice, informed choice, and professionalism and competency.

Joelle Brouner asks how many CRP's are CARF accredited.

Andres Aguirre answers that they all have to be, but there is a two year exception.

Jerry Johnsen brings up the relationship between the CRP and the customer. CAP identifies that there are issues about choice when a VR staff contracts with another entity. It is the staff's responsibility to ensure that those organizations are treating the client with respect and actually following through with helping the client achieve their goal. CAP reports to DVR if the standard is not met. CARF requires that as well.

Jim Larson Continues—Why use a CRP? What are the advantages?

- They know the community, they are connected to the employers, residents, chambers, rotary, Kiwanis, etc.
- Are well known and recognized.
- Provide hands on direct services.
- Experience in providing service to the most severely disabled and have the ability to carve jobs with trained and competent, dedicated staff.
- The quality assurance with CARF accreditation.

Challenges—

- There are challenges for CRP's when the revenues are tied to the rates and number of referrals that they get. Increasing medical costs, retaining staff with cost of living increases, and payrolls, and transportation for staff. The Federal mileage reimbursement rate is 58 cents. Sometimes looking for other types of revenue is necessary to maintain their operations. Another challenge is during OOS, which is when referrals dry up. At the end of OOS, the challenge is the influx of referrals.
- The consistency of policy application across DVR, for agencies that work with many VR offices or in multiple counties. It can be hard if the counselors at DVR are not consistent in their knowledge of services available.
- Consistent expectations
- Valued partnership ebbs and flows in DVR, at times it is obvious, other times not knowing if DVR does value the partnership. There have been times in the past when DVR has not utilized CRP's. Currently they have a good relationship with DVR, and feel that the current partnership with DVR is very useful and valuable.

For the DVR perspective, Andres Aguirre on CRPs—

The relationship with CRPs is a local one, between the Counselor and the CRP. A big factor in that is communication. As Mr. Martin mentioned, the plan for service has to be signed by the customer, by DVR Counselor, and by CRP representative. Another factor in the relationship is outcomes, what is the outcome of the plan? As Mr. Larson mentioned, there is ebb and flow with OOS. Some CRPs have difficulty sustaining staff levels. The capacity of staff impacts the CRP's ability to take referrals. Sometimes there are CRPs who can take all the referrals they can get, but others do not have the staff to provide service for all the referrals they could get. DVR values the partnership with CRPs.

CRPs provide direct, one-on-one assistance to customers who need that. They have a low caseload, around 20 customers compared to caseloads of 80 and higher, with an anticipated increase. They also provide direct observation of the customer in the job, so that they can make recommendations to what needs are met or unmet, what supplies or skills the person will need to do that job.

In the future, it is unclear what relationships with CRPs will be like and what services customers will need. What DVR needs is feedback from CRPs.

Jerry Johnsen asks about psychiatric evaluations.

Mr. Aguirre says that it depends on who generates the evaluation. If the customer signs a consent form the CRP can do an evaluation. He says there is an exception to so many policies, and the challenge in that is consistency of services.

Sandra Carr comments as a person who works for a CRP, that they have trouble getting information on psychiatric evaluations, which can be a big challenge, especially, and for example, if a person is a sex offender and the CRP does not find out until late in the plan process. The process then stops and then has to be reevaluated.

Jim Larson adds that the communication between Counselors and CRPs is crucial, and that the Area managers are always very responsive to the concerns of CRPs. CRPs are

seeing a lot more people with significant disabilities in transition processes, longer trial work periods, and this appears to be becoming a trend.

Rob Martin mentions that transition customers have specific ideas about what they want, and that the school systems are not always good at preparing students for what it is going to take to get a person to that level to achieve that goal.

Joelle Brouner asks the panel about wages, and how much people make when they work for CRPs. Frankly, she says that it is an area that the Council believes needs attention. Do you think it is true that some CRPs accept whatever job at whatever wage, and she also wants to know what we can do to support a shift in wages?

Rob Martin responds that when he does CARF accreditations, if a CRP says they cannot afford to send their staff to training, the accreditors have little tolerance for that. He hopes that over time DVR would set clear expectations for wages, and improvement of wages at outcome with an ultimatum of not contracting with the CRPs that are not working toward higher wages for their customers.

Jim Larson mentions that there are correlations between the severity of a person's disability and the wages they earn. Some jobs pay more than others.

Joelle Brouner asks DVR, when people retire from their jobs in DVR, it seems the relationship between DVR and CRPs will be very important at that time.

Lynnae Ruttledge answers, certainly DVR wants to have strong relationships with CRPs. Also, DVR wants to develop their staff to do what CRPs do and serve a broader range of customers, and have a bigger capacity. Ms. Ruttledge always wants to look at the complicating factors including benefits impacts. DVR is close to not meeting the federal standard regarding wages, and plans on addressing that.

Jerry Johnsen asks the panel, do you see many referrals from DSB? Can you accommodate them?

RobMartin responds that at Chinook Enterprises they get few, but they have accommodated them.

Cindi Kirchmeier says that they get a lot of referrals from DSB.

Sandra Carr mentions that most placements are minimum wage, and sometimes with benefits, and usually only if the person is skilled and able to communicate. A lot of people have changes in their employment needs, and then they cannot drop their benefits, and so they do not want to work too many hours or earn too much in wages.

Cindi Kirchmeier thinks that state government jobs are where people with disability should really be working and the Council agrees that it is an advocacy issue.

B R E A K 2:48-3:05

Martin McCallum reports on Executive Committee—

They discussed yesterday the idea of holding monthly conference calls between the committees so that everyone can remain on the same page. Also, if there are topics we particularly want to discuss make sure that Ms. Brouner knows in advance.

McCallum also offers his Workforce Agency Report—They are organizing a Governor's 2008 Economic Workforce Development Conference in Lynnwood at the convention center on September 3-4. What it takes for local partners tied to edo's and providers to find a more effective connection between workforce systems and system development. One expectation is for the Workforce board to develop a strategic plan for the development system, a system wide plan that is signed by all partners. As the plan is signed on the partners agree to goals, objectives, and strategies looking to the future for two to ten years. One group led by Lynnae Ruttledge was about adults, and one about youth and industry. This draft is made and is going on the road for revision.

Member discussion on Transition—Bill Murray says that he thinks that the panel was well organized and he came away with questions and motions for consideration that he will not present today.

McCallum notes on behalf of Lou Colwell, since she had to leave early from the meeting, that Schools are not responsible for the student after they graduate.

Bill Murray asks, how could the school just let the student walk away without connections to DVR or other community resources?

McCallum suggests that the contact between the student and DVR should be checked off and documented when it happens. He suggests providing public sector subsidized employment funded by the U.S. dept. of labor. It could be that seniors have the job of seeing to it that the youth get to their job interviews or to DVR or to other training activities that the student needs.

Jerry Johnsen says that he appreciated the panel, but he believes that the system is dysfunctional and that the laws are not applied at the grassroots level. We are responsible for applying this. Teachers should know about special education law. That it is pretty much a huge problem. Having said that, he believes the information was very helpful. It is a full time job to make things happen for your kid, and what about those kids that do not have support or family awareness?

Lynnae Ruttledge mentions that Ms. Colwell presented the future invitation for her to sit on the Special Education Advisory Council. She offers to represent on the WSRC's behalf any questions or concerns or recommendations to that council. We may have the opportunity soon.

Bob Roberts expresses that he would like to participate in that too.

Joelle Brouner offers to Ms. Ruttledge, transition being so important, she could assist with research.

McCallum mentions that according to the survey and bar charts Cinda Johnson presented, he wonders why the youth who are non-graduates are not being tracked well? He asks Rudy Hernandez and Teresa Kutsch if they find that there are many non-graduates coming to DVR?

Teresa Kutsch responds that they do show up, but much later than graduates, and that they have maybe committed crimes or been inactive in the mean time. Usually those kids come through other programs, PASE, or alternative high schools.

Rudy Hernandez agrees with Ms. Kutsch, that the transition plan is in place to help the student, when a person drops out, the plan does not get implemented, so it takes longer for the student to find DVR.

McCallum points out that the shuttle to the airport leaves at 4:00 and so our members that are flying need to have the meeting wrapped up soon.

Member Discussion on Motions (should any be brought forward)

M O T I O N

Bill Murray Moves that a couple council members work with him and Joelle Brouner to hone down the discussions on Transition panels to lead to recommendations for DVR at the October meeting.

Joanne Butts Seconds that motion.

Martin McCallum volunteers to work on that with Bill and Joelle.

Voting—all in favor?

Aye-all,

Nay-none heard.

Motion passed.

Bob Roberts, before adjournment, requests for himself and the Planning & Policy Committee to get more information on Fair Hearings. They would like a whole year's worth rather than a quarter's worth in order to compare and get a better summary of why people are requesting fair hearings.

Jerry Johnsen mentions that he came across a great book that is insightful about disability, called "An Unquiet Mind" by Kay Redfield Jamison, a Johns Hopkins professor with bi polar disorder writing about her experience of disability.

Joelle Brouner offers some parting thoughts: Next quarter is the Council's last meeting of the year. Each of the members should make sure that we have not dropped anything off. She will send emails about follow up as needed. Next meeting will have us taking photographs for the Annual Report.

Sandra Carr has a question for Jerry Johnsen about the Rehab Law Academy, can he give one for the council, a longer more extensive training? Mr. Johnsen replies that there are trainings planned, including one in Spokane. He suggests sending a request to Joelle Brouner or Lynnae Rutledge if one wants to attend that training.

Bill Murray moves we adjourn, everyone seconds that motion.

Meeting **Adjourned 3:38 pm.**

Minutes prepared by JoAnne Lang, Draft 3, August 18, 2008

