



Washington State Rehabilitation Council  
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## WSRC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Friday, July 16, 2010**  
**9:00 am to 4:00 pm**

Red Lion—Olympia  
2300 Evergreen Park Dr  
Olympia, WA 98502

*In Attendance: Andres Aguirre, Valerie Arnold, Vanessa Lewis, Martin McCallum, Jerry Johnsen, Bob Roberts, Jim Larson, Joelle Brouner, Robert Frasquillo, Susan Kautzman, Vicki Foster, JoAnne Lang, Don Kay, Kelly Franklin, Bob Huven, Rob Honan, Kathi Richards.*

### **MOTION:**

**Approval of Agenda**

**Motion to approve the agenda, Jerry Johnsen**

**Seconded Susan Kautzman**

**Motion approved unanimously.**

### **MOTION:**

**Approval of Minutes from April 2010 Quarterly Meeting**

**Jerry Johnsen moves to approve the minutes from the April meeting.**

**Susan Kautzman seconds the motion.**

**Motion approved unanimously.**

### **Remarks from Executive Director – Joelle Brouner**

**State Plan Forums:** The council discusses their attendance at the different state plan forums around the state. One observation was a focus on Transition services from customers who attended. In discussing transition further, the council concludes that it may be time to revisit Transition as a discussion for the full council. Convening a panel of experts again will be useful for council education.

Susan Kautzman attended the State Plan Forum in Spokane, and found that transition is a big concern with people who attended the forum. She also found communication is an issue for customers and partners, where DVR maybe isn't informing people of what is offered, or even being visible enough for people.

Vanessa Lewis finds that the mental health issue is pretty important and there needs to be some training around Mental Health Division (now DBHR) and DVR, to help clients be more successful.

Ms. Arnold says that the comments about person centered planning to augment standardized assessments stands out to her.

Mr. Larson noted about 504 students and school districts.

The discussion ends with the Council deciding to have another Transition panel at the next quarterly meeting. We will draw on the expertise of our current members and DVR staff, rather than bringing in outside experts, because of the budget situation.

#### **CAP Report—Jerry Johnsen**

Mr. Johnsen follows up about the regional CAP meeting. Oregon brought a representative from the Oregon Youth Transition Program. Mr. Johnsen noticed a marked difference in Oregon's transition efforts in comparison to Washington State's efforts. He believes we as a state could be doing much better.

#### **Remarks from DVR Director – Andres Aguirre**

*Furloughs:* The first temporary layoff day happened in July. This is a cost savings measure employed by state law. For DVR, that was Monday July 12<sup>th</sup>. This included Ms. Brouner and Ms. Lang, and the SILC staff, Mr. Honan and Ms. Hathaway. There are nine more furlough days in this budget cycle, roughly once per month.

Ms. Brouner clarifies that in Ms. Lang's case, the law said that if a person made under a certain amount of money per month, they would be eligible to use their annual leave time to offset the loss of wages for that day. Ms. Lang makes under that amount, but the law has been interpreted further to include only employees who work full time, rather than part time. So because Ms. Lang works part time, she was unable to offset the loss of wages by using her accrued leave.

*Hiring Freeze:* There is a hiring freeze on in the state, so any time DVR needs to hire someone they have to submit an exemption request. They made three requests several weeks ago, and heard yesterday that they will be able to fill a position in Bellingham and in Kennewick. They still have one request pending for a position in Lynnwood.

Ms. Brouner asks, we discussed the sizes of caseloads in DVR earlier in the meeting, and we know that two of the locations Mr. Aguirre has mentioned are offices with high caseloads, so the Council is glad to hear that they are pursuing hiring in those offices. She also noted there is a vacancy in the Pullman office. Historically it hasn't been easy to staff that caseload. Will there be an exemption there?

Mr. Aguirre allows the Area Managers to determine if they need to fill the vacancy. He suggests that any time a vacancy comes up, he encourages the Area Managers to get that filled as soon as possible. Pullman is a difficult place to fill because of the location. The University of Idaho's Masters in Rehab Counseling program is moving to a different location, so it may make the Pullman caseload even more difficult to staff.

**GMAP:** In terms of Rehabs and Plans written, they're doing well. The Rehabilitation Rate is something they are still working on. It is improving but it needs work still. They are encouraging writing solid plans, with good careful solid thought put into it. This will bring the rate up. The Rate has raised up to 49% from 47%. The Rehab Rate is difficult because there is a 120 day guideline in which to develop a plan. If staff are working with a customer who is demonstrating progress to work toward plan development, continue working with them, because that 120 days is a guideline.

Mr. Johnsen asks, is there a punitive measure if a Counselor does not complete a plan within 120 days. No, there is not.

Mr. Aguirre has seen the 120 day guideline being overemphasized, and then bad plans get written. If the Rehab Rate is overemphasized, people hold on to cases with bad plans, in order to maintain or raise the Rehab Rate. When they notice that these customers' plans are not progressing then they start closing those cases. This causes a sharp decline in the Rehab Rate. So, in order to get that rate back up, you have to write more plans and the plans have to be successful to increase the rate. So, emphasizing writing good solid plans is the key to success with the Rehab Rate.

Ms. Brouner asks Mr. Aguirre to explain why retaining a case would be a response a Counselor would make?

Mr. Aguirre explains that when you examine the Rehab Rate, it represents the number of cases that are put into plan, which have successful outcomes. If you have a case that is "in-plan" it does not hurt your Rehab Rate. If you close the case unsuccessful, this lowers your Rehab Rate.

Ms. Franklin interjects that as Counselors, social workers, and human beings, they try so hard to help people and they hold on until there is just no hope of helping someone achieve a successful outcome. So sometimes, people hold on to plans that aren't

working just because it is difficult to explain to a customer that DVR doesn't have the help that they need.

***Exemption Request for Public Meetings:***

Ms. Brouner was successful in acquiring an exemption from SB 2617, which is a law recently passed that prohibits boards and commissions from meeting in person, as a cost savings measure during the rest of this fiscal year. This means that the WSRC will be allowed to meet for at least this current meeting, and the October 2010 meeting. However, our meeting plans may have to change in January 2011 and April 2011. We do not know what will happen for meetings after that.

There is also a Travel Freeze, a Hiring Freeze and a Purchasing Freeze. The law reads that there is a freeze on purchasing staff equipment, and it exceeds \$5,000.00, one must get approval. DVR has found that this is being applied to client services. This is problematic because there are many services that DVR provides that exceed \$5,000.00, which means there is a delay in service provision. This has been in effect since 2009, and at that time there was an agreement that this request for approval did not apply to DVR service purchases. However, recently it has been applying to DVR purchases.

***Disability Lifeline:***

The new law indicates that individuals who receive the Disability Lifeline benefit will be referred to DVR for Vocational Rehabilitation services, if there is a belief that they can benefit from these services. The referral is mandatory, but only if the customer can benefit from DVR services. DVR staff including Mr. Aguirre, Ms. Franklin, Don Kay, Paul Cox, and Brian Clark met with some folks from Economic Services Administration, (ESA), Sandy James, Doug Seven and Stacy Bouchet to talk about what DVR has developed for the assessment tool in its initial phase of development. One factor that DVR emphasized to ESA was the customer's motivation and desire to go to work, because one of the key factors to the success of an individual plan for employment is the person's desire to find work. Mr. Aguirre believes that ESA understands the concept and found the meeting to be successful.

Mr. Johnsen asks, is the process confidential? Can DSHS access that information, and determine that if a person declined to participate, can they lose the Disability Lifeline benefits that they may have been able to receive if they had participated?

Mr. Aguirre answers that we are talking only right now about the assessment tool to determine if a person is a good candidate for referral to DVR. If someone is referred to DVR and we find that a person isn't the best candidate for DVR services, staff is cognizant of how that could affect their other social service benefits. DVR staff will work with a person to frame that in a way that does not affect their benefits.

Ms. Franklin interjects that as long as DVR staff makes that determination before an eligibility process, there is no consequence to the customer.

Ms. Brouner asks, in the CFR she found that it says the application, the status of the application and whether or not a person receives any services from DVR is all supposed to be confidential. The CFR defines an application process pretty broadly. If mandatory referral is required by State Law, will it be tracked and confidential?

Ms. Franklin interjects that ESA is the one who is going to refer customers to us. Once that referral is made, DVR has no obligation to respond back to ESA about that referral. This will maintain any confidentiality that is needed.

Ms. Franklin also tells us about the referral software tool. DVRs plan for the referral packet is such that you can attach any scanned documents to an electronic packet with the software. Within that packet will be a consent form, for the person to sign if they need.

Ms. Brouner expresses concern that the release of information becomes perfunctory, because it's just included in the pile of papers that a customer signs. The release needs to be a separate and distinct process that a person does not feel obliged to give.

Ms. Brouner asks, certified Rehab Counselors have a code of ethics to follow. There is a fundamental change to the rehabilitation process if a counselor says that a person would not benefit from services. Does DVR see the potential for participating in that referral process to conflict with the counselor code of ethics?

Mr. Aguirre understands that concern, and doesn't think that it will impact the rehabilitation process or ethics. The reason for this is that DVR will not be determining the referrals. Once a referral comes to DVR, the customer will be treated just like any other customer.

Mr. Larson asks, what exactly is the assessment tool?

Ms. Franklin answers that the tool is a software tool that logical in its coding. They are keeping it as simple as possible. So there are questions that the software asks, and if you respond yes to all, then you are an appropriate referral. If a negative response hits the tool, it tells the ESA social worker that the person is not a good candidate for referral to DVR for services. It is also an educational tool in that when an ESA worker mouses over the section about informed choice, a little window pops up with the CFR letting them know what informed choice means and what it takes to be considered an informed choice. Ms. Franklin recalls for us that when the economic crisis really hit our state and funding started drying up for social services at ESA, DVR got a huge increase in referrals from ESA. Because this tool is so useful and it is mandatory for

ESA workers to use it for Disability Lifeline recipients, it may be that the tool actually weeds out and reduces the numbers of people who are getting referred to DVR.

Mr. Larson asks about the timelines.

Ms. Franklin answers that the tool must be ready to go by December 1, 2010. The final date is December 31, because the rollout date is January 1, 2011.

Mr. Larson brings us back to an earlier conversation about DVR and purchasing practices. Does the council wish to make a motion around encouraging the state and DSHS to keep DVR's programmatic and budgetary integrity?

**MOTION:**

**Jerry Johnsen moves that SRC write a letter to OFM regarding the equipment freeze, where DVR has had trouble buying equipment for customers.**

**Bob Roberts seconded the motion.**

**Motion passes unanimously.**

**11:20 a—11:35 a     B     R     E     A     K**

**SILC Agency Report—Rob Honan, Executive Director of the State Independent Living Council**

Mr. Larson reconvenes the meeting and introduces Rob Honan. Mr. Honan is the Director of the State Independent Living Council, (SILC). Our member Sandy Adams is the SILC liaison to the WSRC but since she is unable to attend our meeting this time, Mr. Honan came in her place to give the SILC report. Usually agency reports happen in the afternoon, but Mr. Honan is here with us for a limited duration today, so Mr. Larson is moving the SILC agency report up on the agenda to now.

Mr. Honan thanks us for having him by to talk about the SILC. The SILC is similar to the WSRC in some ways. They are a governor appointed council of volunteers. They work on issues surrounding Independent Living for people with disabilities in Washington State. Their main product is a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) every three years. They just completed their SPIL for this year. They recently submitted the SPIL on June 30, 2010. They will probably get back to the SILC with additional questions. The running joke is that there will be questions, and expected answers within two days. When the SILC gets back to them within two days, it will take them two months to get back to the SILC again. Once the SPIL is approved it will go into effect on October 1, 2010, and covers the following three years through September 30, 2013.

Ms. Brouner asks, what kind of things does the SPIL cover?

Mr. Honan answers that the SILC has looked at the SPIL from a substantive point of view, and from the Centers' point of view, and also an outreach/ education component. They try to identify six areas to focus on. One focus is Transitional Services for kids with disabilities, and how centers and other partners can help those folks. Transportation, Housing, Emergency Preparedness, Assistive Technology and Deinstitutionalization are the other areas of focus. Deinstitutionalization is a hallmark of the Independent Living movement, because it is important that people with disabilities live in the manner of their own choosing in our communities. In addition, the network of Independent Living Centers is a big part of the State Plan. RSA asks, where will new centers pop up if there is additional funding? One thing the SILC is working on, is to get state funding for the Independent Living centers in our state. There are currently five centers in our state: Lakewood, Seattle/ Redmond, Ellensburg, Vancouver and Spokane. A Center in the Everett area has closed. The other priority area is the South East Washington Tri-cities Center, there's a very diverse population of people in that area who are going un-served. The Coastal region, Jefferson, Wahkiakum, Clallam, and Pacific counties on the peninsula are also underserved, so they would be another priority location for more independent living centers.

Deaf, Deaf/ Blind, hard of hearing, traumatic brain injury related to veterans and civilians, and other disability groups, as well as LGBT, Seniors and Youths in Transition are the targeted outreach populations currently.

The next SILC meeting will be in October, for which they will seek an exception to SB 2617 prohibiting boards and commissions from meeting in person. Mr. Honan hopes that people will look at their website.

Mr. McCallum asks, with approval of the plan from RSA, the state qualifies for federal funds, how much is that? And what does it buy?

Mr. Honan answers that the Centers receive Part C funds, which is about \$185-\$190k per year. They also get Part B contracts also provide them \$45-50k per year, so their core funding is about \$230,000 per year. The state was fortunate to receive ARRA moneys worth 1.9 million dollars in Part C funding through ARRA. Most of the centers purchased benefits planners or upgraded badly needed infrastructure.

Ms. Brouner asks, there is complexity Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) granting and what the strengths and tensions for the IL community is?

Mr. Honan answers that the concept emerged on the federal level. In Alaska they made a good connection with the Independent Living centers there. The idea is for an aging populace, while the Independent Living movement is trying to make sure the "D" in ADRC is well represented. Mainly they do information and referral and some case management. The ADRC has had a project in Pierce County. They have a good

relationship with CFI, the independent living center in Lakewood. They operate through the Area Agency on Aging. They branched out to Bellingham, Spokane and Yakima. There is some concern from our state's independent living centers that the ADRC will supplant the work of the centers. Mr. Honan is of the opinion that the IL advocacy groups are so strong.

Mr. Johnsen asks about how transition services are implemented in the IL community.

Each center has a Transition Coordinator. They work primarily with DVR and 504 students with Part B funds. The focus became primarily on youth about two years ago. They are trying to make sure that youth are aware of the resources available.

Mr. Aguirre gives us a little history. When Mike O'Brien was the DVR Director, they had IL Counselors across the state. Mr. O'Brien decided to move those transition counselors into regular caseload carrying counselors and to contract out for Transition services. So when Ms. Rutledge became director, she decided to focus on Transition within IL, because that is the future of IL. So, as students are exiting schools and becoming adults, they will be aware of the services available. The emphasis is capturing the 504 students. DVR has a good relationship with DDD students really well, but has not been as successful in the 504 students.

Mr. Johnsen asks, is it happening, and how?

Mr. Honan can get information for Mr. Johnsen about that.

Mr. Larson thanks Mr. Honan for coming, and moves along with the agenda. We are skipping the Discussion of remaining ARRA funds, and tying up some loose ends. The ARRA fund conversation was contingent on the committees coming up with proposal for those funds. That proposal has not been made yet, so the conversation will have to wait. The Planning, Policy & Advocacy committee will discuss the topic at their conference call in early August.

Ms. Brouner wants everyone to know that the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The council contributed \$500.00 to a celebration in Seattle for that event, we will be providing ASL interpreters. Ms. Brouner will be speaking to some young people on the 28<sup>th</sup> in service of the ADA at the Alliance for People with Disabilities. The Alliance has moved out of the Basement of the Good Shepherd's center in Wallingford and are moving into the Capitol Hill area. The Center for Independence might be moving to Bridgeport and Custer, which is a more accessible location. The Council also sent buttons commemorating the ADA to all the employees of DVR with a postcard attached that explains why it's important.

**Customer Forum Debrief**

Vicki Foster mentions that she found the forum to be the most enlightening part of serving on the Council. She spoke with a gentleman after the forum, who shared his talents with Ms. Foster during the mingling portion of the forum.

Mr. Larson agrees that the mingling portion of the forum is crucial.

Ms. Kautzman notes that she found people to be glad just to be heard.

Ms. Brouner mentions that it was refreshing to have 10 people, which is a very manageable number. She would appreciate feedback on the revised customer invite. Ms. Lang and Ms. Brouner have a proposal about the forum. We want to balance not having a 12 hour day. We also want to balance having a cross-section of customers. You may recall we used to have our forums from 5-7pm. We had a phase where there were zero customers at the forum. We moved them up to 2-4pm, so that the Council members could have a more manageable day. We also added the conference calling option. What if we chose to still have a conference call, but moved the conference call to a different day earlier in the week, so that the call in option didn't interfere with the dynamics of the live forum? We can still have a quorum of members attend, just not during the meeting. We could also do this between 5-7pm, so that people who may work during regular business hours, we could reach those customers.

Mr. Johnsen thinks it sounds workable. He agrees about the phone problem.

**MOTION: To move the dial-in option out of the public forum time, and into its own dedicated time on a separate day, not during the public meeting.**

Mr. Johnson moves,

Mr. Roberts seconds the motion,

Vote: Motion passes unanimously.

**12:00 p –1:00 p L U N C H**

**Perspectives from the field—Kathy Richards**

**B R E A K**

**Committee Reports**

- Executive Committee**
- Employer & Rehabilitation Partnerships**
- Planning & Policy**
- Member Recruitment & Participation**
- Customer Satisfaction & Program Evaluation**

**Agency Reports**

**Martin McCallum – Workforce Board**

**Valerie Arnold – Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction  
(OSPI)**

**Confirmation of Action Items and Assignments**

- Set up conference calls for each committee between now and next meeting

**Adjourn**