

Full Council Minutes
Of the
Washington State Rehabilitation Council
On
Friday, April 29, 2011

In Attendance: Joelle Brouner, JoAnne Lang, Mike Hudson, Martin McCallum, Jerry Johnsen, Valerie Arnold, Jeffry Abe-Gunter, Jim Larson, Vicki Foster, Vanessa Lewis, Leandro Razo, Don Brandon, Andres Aguirre, Don Kay, Bob Huven, Ron Falberg, Carla Shelton;

Council Chair Mike Hudson brings the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Approval of Minutes—

Jana Finkbonner suggests a change to the minutes: on fourth page there was a spot that looked like it needed filling in with the acronym “HRD”.

MOTION: Susan Kautzman moves that the minutes be approved with changes, Valerie Arnold seconds the motion.

Motion passes unanimously.

Remarks from Chair—Mr. Hudson thought the forum was exceptional: comments, participants and atmosphere were great. We had invited Mayor Dan Pike to our meeting, but he was otherwise engaged. One reason for this is that the hotels in Bellingham are not very accessible for people with disabilities. Mr. Hudson explains about Bellingham, and informs the Council of some summer time activities, including the Ski to Sea. Mr. Hudson has participated in this marathon in past years.

The WSRC is not allowed to lobby. However, the WSRC does have a responsibility to educate. And of course, as individuals and citizens, we each have the right to express opinions. We know that the state legislature this year has had tremendous pressure to enact funding cuts to various programs due to the budget shortfall. We understand that pressure does not always result in the best ideas and solutions. Recently the House introduced legislation to cut supported employment services, and reroute that money to adult day care services. Fortunately this legislation did not pass, however Mr. Hudson’s aim is to encourage everyone on the council to pay particular attention to what is happening in the state legislature. Ms. Brouner and Ms. Lang do a good job of keeping the council informed by providing information without perspective or point of view.

Mr. Abe-Gunter points out that there are 2,600 people on the waiver, who don’t have access to employment services, because they have been found ineligible or unable to be employed. These folks don’t have access to a day program or community access. There is waiver funding for these folks, but they don’t have access. If a person doesn’t have long term support, they are not served.

Mr. Hudson reminds the council that there are very few legislators who understand how these disability systems work, so if we are people with expertise in subject matter, we might consider putting that to

use, to help our legislators understand the systems which are in place. Each person on this council has a great story to tell, and some people might like to hear it.

Remarks from Executive Director—Ms. Brouner welcomes everyone to the meeting. We have guests from the North Intertribal VR program. Three tribal programs out of eight are present at this meeting, and thanks to Jana Finkbonner for bringing so many tribal partners together today. This council is strong and formidable and has a lot of integrity, and in recognition of those qualities, Ms. Brouner thanks a few specific people: Martin McCallum for his work on the Customer Satisfaction Survey; Jim Larson for his solid work independently in the Supported Employment arena, and his work on the Employer and Rehabilitation Partnerships Committee, and for joining Ms. Brouner to visit with DVR's Senior Leadership Team this month; Mike Hudson, as new Chair, he has been super active, went to an Independent Living Rally in the rain, invited Ms. Brouner to a reception with the state's business leaders; Jerry Johnsen, for taking photos for our annual report and website, and for being a go-to guy on all sorts of issues that come up within DVR; Susan Kautzman, for being such a sport, her flight was cancelled by the airline and she had to drive an extra hundred miles or so to get to our meeting on time.

Many SRCs are understaffed and don't have the benefit of the kind of policy partnership that we have with DVR. Ms. Brouner would like to extend condolences and friendship to our SRC colleague, Graham Sisson, who is a VR staffer in Alabama. Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi have all been hit by severe tornado weather recently, and we are hoping that they are okay.

For three months, there was a downward tick in applications for services within DVR. This was a 12% decrease in applications, statewide. There was concern that this was a trend, but it only lasted three months. In the fourth month the applications rose again, and we mention this because Don Kay explained in a previous meeting that it is important that the rate of applications for VR services stay consistent.

Because of the way that the notebook is produced, (and it is produced this way in order to ensure that our members have equal access to the information), we need to finish its production three weeks prior to the meeting, so that the printer can have a week to print it, and so that members will have two weeks to read it. This means that we are always behind in data by three weeks. Ms. Brouner points out that because of this, the numbers in the notebook are not reflecting the plans that were written in April. April saw a large number of plans written. At yesterday's forum, we could see how hard people at DVR are working.

We have talked a bit about the proposed cuts to Supported Employment for people with developmental disabilities, and balance is important. There are people for whom adult day programs can be a step in the process of becoming employable. Because of this, it's important to note that Adult Day programs and Supported Employment are not mutually exclusive. It is important that programs are not "all or nothing," because what may be right for one person may not always be right for the next. We do want though, for opportunities to be available for people who want to go to work. In response to the House proposal that would cut funding for Supported Employment and direct funds to Adult Day programs, the Senate proposed a cap to the amount of money that could be spent on employment services for one customer at \$20,000.00. We don't mean DVR's money; we mean extended support moneys available to DDD clients who are on the waiver. This is of concern because we do not know if twenty thousand dollars per person per year is enough to allow a person who needs extended support to retain their employment.

Ms. Brouner checked some numbers, and as the wage for people with supported employment went from 8.50 to 9.08, the hours went from 17 hours three years ago, to 13 hours per week now. The Senate proposal reduces the number of people who can be served under that capped waiver. This could mean that there is likelihood that people with the same needs are getting disparate access to opportunities.

Mental Health services recently got hammered. There have been reductions in cash assistance, options, access to counseling, etc. 60% of DVR's customers are people with Mental Health concerns.

In January we proposed having our July meeting in Olympia. However, we have not met in the Tacoma area in a very long time, and have met in Olympia many times in the past few years. We submitted an exemption request to OFM, even though law that requires us to submit an exemption expires in June. According to that law, they were supposed to have approved or denied that request within five days. We have not heard back yet, but we are hoping to meet in Tacoma and have not met there in a long time. Don will do some training for the council at the July meeting, about the new amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In our state, there were six independent living centers: the Disability resource center in Everett; the Alliance for People with Disabilities, and a Redmond satellite; Ellensburg; CORD in Spokane; Disability Resource center in SW Washington; and the Center for Independence in Lakewood. Two of those centers have closed down, the ones in Everett and Vancouver. The centers are an important resource, and with capacity diminished, that's a big loss. Ms. Brouner was honored to read Laura Hershey's poem, You Get Proud by Practicing at the Independent Living Rally. Ms. Brouner is pleased about getting the letter out to NDRN, and she's proud to serve the members of the first Rehab Council to point out that sheltered workshops and subminimum wages are not the direction we want to go for people with disabilities.

State Plan Forums occur in May; Ms. Lang will send the dates.

Commissioner Ruttledge has established three priorities during her term of leadership. One is to work nationally on the relationships between Designated State Agencies (in our case DSHS), and Designated State Units, (in our case, DVR). Ms. Ruttledge wants to ensure that the Designated State Agencies are not creeping into the territory that extends beyond their purview in the Rehabilitation Act. It is important to reflect why an RSA Commissioner would establish this as a priority, and to compare that to the state of affairs in our own state, and to use appropriate advocacy to continue to foster a transparent open but appropriate relationship and boundary.

Remarks from Interim DVR Director—Mr. Aguirre reminds everyone that this is Legislative session, and it's been extended into special session. The main topic of conversation is the Budget. Looking at the proposed budgets, they are all very similar in how they support DVR. Each one of them provides enough funding for DVR to meet maintenance of effort, and that means that DVR will be able to get their federal grant. The pressure will be on DVR to spend Maintenance of Effort in a timely manner, in order to be able to use federal funds.

DVR is looking forward to the end of the current budget, because many restrictions will go away. There isn't any language to suggest that a hiring freeze will continue or a freeze on personal service contracts, travel, or anything like that. Once the new budget is in place beginning July 1, 2011, we will be able to implement a hiring plan. DVR has been successful, but slow in securing approval for staff positions. A number of VRC's have been hired, but sometimes it takes longer than one would hope in getting

approval for the exemptions. The process is such that DVR fills out an exemption request, which a panel at DSHS reviews. If DSHS believes it will be approved they will forward it on to OFM. Once OFM approves it, the hiring process can begin. Sometimes DVR receives the request back for changes, which extends the time that the process takes. Lately there have been additional questions on the exemption related to how positions will be funded, and whether DVR has been able to determine any other way to do business without hiring for those vacant positions.

Mr. Larson asks what the current staffing level is, and how many vacant positions DVR has.

Mr. Aguirre says they are 20 FTE's below the cap. We are down about 7FTE's in the State Office. When we first went into the hiring freeze, we decided to focus just on field staff for exemptions. For example we have a fiscal analyst position that became vacant in October. We submitted the exemption request for that position before it became vacant, and did not receive approval to hire until February. Field positions tend to get approved much more quickly. Not having the staff in place has impacted work in the state office on how timely we should be. The number of tasks staff perform can be difficult for field offices. It can result and has, in increased caseload size. This will be alleviated once we hire people. We had approval recently to hire for a number of positions. Occasionally they have been able to anticipate an opening, and apply for exemptions to the freeze before it becomes vacant, but that is not always the case, because they can't always anticipate the opening with enough time to make an exemption request.

Ms. Brouner points out that Mount Vernon and Bellingham DVR discussions in our work day meeting yesterday were very positive. We asked the office supervisors what they needed, to do their jobs better. We heard three things: Mt. Vernon, there are 3 VRC's, which serve people in three counties. Mr. Aguirre answered we got approval for another. We also heard that they need someone who is bilingual English and Spanish, because many of the customers in that area speak Spanish. Things have reached a critical point where if there isn't some recognition people could quit, and the agency could lose capacity. What can be done in the near term to remedy that, for the staff?

Recognition is tricky because there are rules and regulations about how we can appreciate our staff.

Ms. Brouner means that they weren't asking as much for recognition for personal achievement, as much as they were working harder and harder, with more and more on their plates, with not much being removed, and that they are overworked and burning out.

Mr. Aguirre says that they have taken steps to reduce the expectations of their outcomes. This should reflect lost time.

Ms. Brouner asks, if they aren't feeling that the reduced expectations are enough, what can be done?

Mr. Aguirre answers, well, it's important for us to reiterate to our staff how much we appreciate their work, what steps are taken to alleviate their work load, and informing them that what they do makes a big difference for this agency and the people that they touch. Even if recognition is a difficult thing, through annual employee assessments, they have learned that recognition continues to be one thing that staff wants more of or they want it differently. DVR tries many approaches to fulfill their needs. Every time we get survey results back, they get the same message. So DVR is trying to find a way to make that recognition happen locally, so that people get the kinds of recognition they want.

Ms. Brouner believes that the Senior Leadership Team and the Area managers and Supervisors should be so proud of these teams in Whatcom, Skagit, Island counties, because something right is happening here.

Mr. Huven asks Mr. Aguirre about the 120 days that DVR staff have for developing plans. He has seen that some cases need more than 120 days, and some need less. But for the ones that need less, it's important they get that time and use it to achieve the best possible outcome for the customer.

Mr. Aguirre has tried to emphasize with everyone that the 120 days is a guideline, it's not a rule or a law. They just make it a guideline, and if more time is needed, then that's fine too. It is important to work with customers as quickly as possible, but if the individual needs more time, that's what they provide, as long as the case is progressing. He tries to emphasize that no plan is better than a bad plan.

Don Kay adds in response to Ms. Brouner's question, that if in July there is no hiring freeze, he believes that by itself will help DVR a great deal because they do have about 15-20 maybe 25 vacant positions, which as soon as they can hire for, they can begin evening out the workload.

Mr. Aguirre mentions that it is not just counselors feeling the workload get heavier; it's also administrative and support staff.

Ms. Brouner reiterates that she sees DVR making an effort.

Mr. Larson asks how many positions are open within DSHS. Mr. Aguirre suggests looking at the OFM website for that. Mr. Kay believes that number is about roughly 800. Mr. Larson is concerned that once the hiring freeze is over, what will keep agencies from filling up all their positions immediately and causing a huge drain on resources that the state doesn't have. He wonders if DVR is concerned about this and what they will do once the hiring freeze is over.

Mr. Aguirre answers that there are a number of state programs who are exempt from the hiring freeze. The programs that have had to abide by it may not have been successful in getting the exemptions they needed to fill positions. Once the freeze is lifted, and once the state fiscal year is over at the end of June, it will be interesting to see the FTE counts, and how many staff programs can hire. Currently DVR's FTE cap is about 20 more than our current FTE's. We don't know if those FTE's will remain the same.

Mr. Kay points out that every state agency gets a new allotment of FTE's at the new fiscal year. Many positions may completely disappear on July first because agencies will have an FTE allotment that is fewer than the previous year. He is confident that DVR will at least have an allotment that equals our current staffing levels. This might not be true for other agencies.

Mr. Falberg wanted to point out some things about field staff in this climate. When services erode around customers, the VRC's have to figure out how to patch those losses for those customers. This creates a lot of stress and a lot of extra work for our VR counselors, and could contribute to counselors feeling unrecognized and overworked. It can be very difficult, and we'll just have to weather it, but if we can all be supportive of those counselors and other agencies, it can be very helpful.

Mr. Aguirre agrees, and there are customers with crisis every day because of loss of resources. When they meet with counselors, the counselor feels that heightened emotion. So it's very important for us to support our VRCs through that.

Ms. Franklin agrees that things are tough for our staff, and we need to really be actively listening for them.

Mr. Aguirre closes by informing the council about ARRA funds. New projects include mental health employment services. There are approximately eleven service providers DVR is working with, in the North Sound, Southwest Washington, Spokane and Moses Lake, to help assist with sustaining or increasing capacity. ARRA funds are also heading toward the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment. They're working on a few things, one is an online training system for supported employment providers. DVR is also working with WISE on an online jobs listing, where employers can post announcements for supported employment customers. They have a variety of ARRA projects, and Mr. Aguirre can forward a list of ARRA projects which will be coming up soon.

Mr. Brandon asks Mr. Aguirre about this job listing, is there anything like that for people who are just looking for work and are VR clients? Mr. Aguirre answers that the WorkSource centers have that. Mr. Brandon clarifies that he asks because he has often heard people ask, where is the one place to call if you want to hire a person with a disability, and often there isn't an easy answer to that question. Do Employers know that there is also a way to say that there's a preference for a person with a disability?

Mr. Aguirre doesn't believe that the WorkSource system has an option for specifying a preference. Mr. Brandon suggests that working with WorkSource to establish a way for a preference to be identified when contacting the WorkSource. Mr. Aguirre knows that there is a system in place, similar to this idea that allows an employer to identify that they would prefer to hire veterans. Mr. Aguirre thanks Mr. Brandon for the suggestion.

B R E A K

Andres Aguirre adds to his report that DSHS is going through a restructuring process. They used to have six regions, now they have three. Those regions closely resemble DVR's areas. The area managers remain area managers. DVR will re-sequence their area numbers, so that Region 1 in DSHS will align with DVR's Area 1, Region 2 with Area 2, and Region 3 with Area 3. This is so that when sister agencies work together they have a common understanding of what area they are discussing.

Mr. Abe-Gunter points out that the regional administrators are also being moved into one building where they can be co-located, instead of in offices within their respective regions. This could change their roles greatly and the local offices within each region are going to miss having them and all that they do. They're also being called Ambassadors instead of Regional Administrators.

Ms. Brouner asks if DSHS expresses an interest in reforming job descriptions or reporting alignments, please let the SRC know, because this may align with the Commissioner of RSA's concern about differences between the Designated State Agency and the Designated State Unit.

At this point the Council is joined by Carla Shelton who was unable to participate in our public forum on the previous day. Ms. Shelton had some questions about the DVR process, and is coming from Alaska where they participated in Alaska's VR program. Her concerns were about supported employment and DVR's capacity for it.

A Closer Look at Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation—Jana Finkbonner

Ms. Finkbonner passes out some literature. She introduces herself and her colleagues. She is the Director of the North Intertribal VR Program. They serve Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish Counties. They are in a unique situation because they are not considered a consortium by federal law. Their tribe has to step forward and agree to take on the grant and provide services to other tribes as well. There are eight tribes in these 3 counties. Lummi and Samish are also represented here at the meeting. Charlene Sam, interim Director for the Colville VR program, was going to be here but could not make it.

Ms. Finkbonner is joined by a staff member, Gretchen Gayhan, who has been with the VR program for 14 years. Julie Jefferson is the Director for the Lummi Vocational Rehabilitation Program, which serves tribal members living in Whatcom County. They work a lot with the North Intertribal and the Samish program. Jennifer Dodd joins us as well, who is the only VRC with a CRC.

There are 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington State. Washington State does not have state recognized tribes. Native Americans, as of 2010 Census, are 1.5% of Washington State's population. 22.3% of the Native Americans in Washington State are people who have at least one disability. This comes from the Washington State Disability Report, 2008. The unemployment rate for tribal members, (according to 2005 BIA data), ranges from 10-82%, in all 29 tribes in Washington State. In 2005, the unemployment rate was 4.9-6.2% for general population. Native Americans have a large dropout rate, and it starts usually in middle school, so kids aren't making it to high school. Their dropout rate right now is 40% for Native Americans in Washington State. Statewide it's 21%.

Washington State has the Centennial Accord. In the 1970s there was a lot of turbulence between Native Americans and Washington State, over fishing rights in Western Washington. The Boldt decision declared that Native Americans have fishing rights and that they would alternate days. In 1998 the Centennial Accord was created to show that there is a Government to Government relationship between the tribes and the State, that the tribes are not another contracted service provider or vendor. From that, DSHS has Administrative policy 701, which focuses on how the communication is happening and whether it's working.

The literature Ms. Finkbonner handed out tells a little about Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation. In 1978 there was language added to section 130 that allowed for tribal VR programs to exist. In the first year, Navaho was the only one that had a tribal voc rehab program. In 1986 there was language added which increased the number of programs to 4, and from then they spread throughout the US. In 1998 Tribal Voc rehab moved in the rehab act from section 130d to section 121c. This is why they are called 121 programs. They receive 5 year grants, which are staggered for the 8 tribes in our state, so every year one or two grants expire and are reapplied for. Currently there are seventy three 121 programs in the country, with 8 of them in Washington State.

CANAR is an entity that came into existence in 1993. Making a Native American fit into the traditional VR program was not working. Tribes were working hard to get successful outcomes and it was not very fruitful. The major difference between Tribal Voc Rehab and State Voc Rehab is that they can provide cultural services to their clients to keep them connected to their community. CANAR is national, and they came up with 22 issues for when the Rehab act is reauthorized. Part of that, is to get tribes on the SILC boards and SRCs. A lot of states SRCs have no tribal representation on their boards.

Ms. Brouner asks for information about how people with disabilities are perceived in a Tribal context. It is a difficult question because there are so many tribes in Washington State. 29 total tribes, with 8 that have Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. This means, more than one language group, more than one genesis story. From your cultures, how do people perceive people with disabilities?

Ms. Finkbonner gives some history, besides the 29 tribes, before 1855 there were many more. For instance Lummi was at one point 19 different tribes, now all called Lummi. There are multiple views and cultures and languages. Now it's becoming a more formal process of going forward as one people. Natives historically have treated people with disabilities much the same as the rest of the world. It is becoming more inclusive.

Nooksack is very different. Nooksack reservation is 1.5 acres, whereas Lummi is 12,000 acres. The community of Nooksack is very spread out. The people of Nooksack live in many towns in the north of the state. It is also closer to the Canadian border, and a lot of their cultural identity comes from north of the border. At one point Nooksack was nearly absorbed by Lummi, but Nooksack was strong enough to assert that they were their own tribe. A lot of people of Nooksack have allotted properties.

Mr. Brandon asks, is another way to look at this, as the Lummi Nation, or the Tulalip Nation? Or are they actually tribes?

Yes. You could look at it like that. There are a lot of identities, and cultures that are similar but different. The tribes go from Canada south to participate in ceremonies.

Mr. Kay: About a quarter of the population have some kind of disability. Given that large number, do people in tribes with disabilities, do they have leadership roles in the tribes, or are they more taken care of?

Ms. Finkbonner answers that people with more significant disabilities are taken care of in their homes. People with hidden disabilities are all over in the tribe, working in all kinds of positions. There is a lot of Cancer right now. But as we start to talk and develop, it will become a greater issue, and foster a greater acceptance for people with disabilities.

Tribes don't have rehab techs and do not have funds to pay CRPs, and so their VRCs are with the customer throughout their rehab process. They sometimes refer customers to the State VR agency if there is a large cost for a service to a client, because sometimes the state has resources that the tribes do not have.

Mr. Larson asks what the average caseload size is. Average caseload is from 50-60 customers. He also asks whether tribes do Job Development. They contract for Job Development services.

Mr. McCallum asks, if Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds come from US Department of Health and Human Services? Or do they come from the state? Ms. Finkbonner says both. The larger portion comes from the feds, but they get Maintenance of Effort from the state.

Ms. Brouner asks what the Council can do to be better allies.

Ms. Finkbonner thinks that being aware of the fact that they are separate from the general VR program and that they have their unique needs.

Mr. Larson asks for an example of cultural services.

For instance, some clients see Indian doctors who practice ritual or cultural healing. One time the program bought blankets which were important for a ceremony that was important to a clients' healing.

Mr. Larson asks for an average caseload cost. Ms. Finkbonner answers that North Intertribal has \$40,000 to serve customers with. They have roughly 150-200 customers at any given time. Tribes get mental health and medical treatment, and educational resources, housing, and all sorts of services that the Tribal VR refers customers to. This helps to reduce their case costs.

Mr. Larson asks if there is any other workforce development effort besides the VR, which works to get tribal members working?

Ms. Finkbonner answers that she would love to say yes, but that it ebbs and flows. Right now there is a concerted effort in Tulalip and Lummi right now. But that is about money and priorities.

Mr. Kay asks how long they typically serve a customer, and how many people go to work each year? A large percentage of clients attend training, in 2 year, 4 year and vocational training. So it can be 4-5 years for a person. Their successful closures for last year were 40. It has been difficult for Tribes, because as the US economy is in recession, so is the Tribal economy.

Mr. Larson asks if the standards and indicators for the Tribes are the same as the standards and indicators for the state's VR program. Ms. Finkbonner answers that no, they are not.

Ms. Lang asks if caseload sizes are small because of the general population of the Tribes, or are they small because of the limited resources. Ms. Finkbonner answers that it's both, but that the VR Counselors for the Tribes are working with the customer from beginning to end, and not contracting out very much, so it's a more intensive and longer lasting relationship.

Mr. Larson asks if the Tribal VR has considered selling VR services to DVR, in order to generate income for the Tribal VR program. Ms. Finkbonner answers that yes, they have been discussing and proposing that to DVR.

Ms. Finkbonner wraps up, only Lummi offers a full fledged transition program. The rest of the Tribes do it only on an as needed basis because they are so spread out. They have events which have been happening for hundreds of years. There is a canoe race, which the Lummi has done every year. Nooksack also has races that they do every year. Tribes from the tip of Oregon up into Alaska come to Washington in old water highways to meet and celebrate. The Tribal VR program has helped people to attend these celebrations as part of their recovery.

The hardest thing for the tribes to overcome is that the Tribal VR staff is as capable and hard working as DVR staff. They do not have Masters' degrees, but they come to the job knowing what the tribal folks need to get their people where they need to be. They have been chosen to do the jobs that they do for a reason, and this has been one of the barriers that the tribal VR faces when they work with state systems.

They also lack training dollars, and staff want to go to trainings that they don't have the funding for. Ms. Brouner also says that they have a standing invitation from the SRC director to invite anyone to

participate in any training we do. We leverage our own expertise, and host trainings which the council members provide to each other.

Mr. Hudson proposes we break for lunch, after which we will have the CAP report.

L U N C H

CAP Report—Jerry Johnsen

There was a Regional CAP meeting recently. Region 10 consists of Alaska, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. Mr. Johnsen found that the different CAPs have very different perspectives on how they do their work and operate very differently. Alaska and Washington are Independent, and Oregon and Idaho are protection and advocacy programs within the Disability Rights Network. They have a hierarchy of lawyers which is very different than Washington and Alaska, whose sole focus is the VR program. Services they feel should be available to all clients. Oregon and Idaho do not advocate for college or transportation. Any services defined under the act should be a service available if a person needs. In Washington state, if a VR Counselor says, “We don’t do that,” especially when it’s school or transportation, the CAP advocates that yes, we can do it *if* the customer needs it. To make a long story short, we might be better off than some of the other CAPs.

Grievances and Hearings: CAP believes that anyone that goes to the Fair Hearing process, it’s a bit of a loss. They will always try to reach out to a customer and try to find a strategy to resolve their case before a fair hearing happens. When customers go to CAP, they try to figure out what the strategy has been and what it could be, or if there is compromise in the process to be made. CAP doesn’t like to hear “let them go to hearing.” Win or lose, they’re probably coming back to VR, and you’re going to have to work with them anyway. Lay a foundation so that when the person does come back, expectations are clear. Customers choose to go to a hearing and it’s not always preventable. But what CAP likes to hear is that Supervisors, Counselors and Area Managers have tried to find ways to help, and have set forth a record of attempts, which can set boundaries for those customers when they come back. An effort should be made by counselors. It can be hard for people working in the field. A counselor could feel unsupported when their decisions are called into question on a case. What people need to do is recognize that it is about finding a solution and look at things differently. It makes CAP’s job easier. This does not mean that we just give people whatever they want. Sometimes it takes a while to make that clear to a customer. There is a new person who has been hired to do Fair Hearings. There’s a learning curve there.

There are a lot of tools available to DVR. One tool is the 10 day letter. It says that if a customer doesn’t contact their counselor within ten days, their case will be closed. If a customer gets this letter from a counselor they haven’t heard from in a while, they could be startled by this letter. DVR does need a mechanism to get people in when they disappear, but CAP suggests that we think carefully about sending those letters out, because CAP got a lot of calls from people saying that they felt the letter was threatening, and uncalled for, because no one had tried to get a hold of them prior to the letter. This doesn’t build relationships. When they do come in or call, they feel unhappy and that VR isn’t invested in them. This is something that could be approached differently.

The environment DVR is providing services in is in crisis, nationally and in our state. This environment is a distraction to providing good customer service. Counselors are frustrated by shrinking service provision. Furlough days are affecting their work. For example, there was a rule that people who work

for DSHS make sure to return customer phone calls within 24 hours. Now it's been suggested that the time limit be moved to 48 hours. Even if the policies change, it's important to emphasize that we call people back as soon as you possibly can. Our messaging can implant ideas in staff that suggest that they have all this time to get things done, when they actually could get back to them sooner.

Ms. Brouner points out that there's a lack of parallel respect, if you require a customer to get back to you in a certain timeframe, but do not require the staff to do the same.

Mr. Johnson reiterates that these policies are guidelines. Just because you have 60 days to determine eligibility, doesn't mean you need to take 60 days to determine eligibility. Sometimes people want to do the whole rehab before eligibility even happens. We do not need to have every piece of information about a person just to determine eligibility. Congress says to make people eligible as soon as you possibly can. Then do the rehab. And sometimes the mentoring that people are getting does not convey the right message.

The pressure on staff to accommodate people is pretty heavy. People are in crisis and this creates urgency. Eligibility can't be determined by lack of services available for a person, except in a few instances.

Bob Huven, also of CAP, adds that as partners of DVR and advocates of customers, is noticing that people are calling for real survival resources, and so they are doing a lot of information and referral at CAP. They are getting a lot of phone calls for Transition services, including emancipation. Timeliness of service is still an issue. One issue occurring is that people are getting case closure letters that suggest they reapply for services when they are ready, citing conditions they need to meet in order to reapply. But, according to the law, a person can apply for DVR services whenever they want.

Valerie Arnold asks, does CAP submit data to DVR on the issues that they are seeing? Mr. Johnsen answers that they have an annual report and that Mr. Aguirre and Mr. Johnsen are in contact often. Ms. Arnold says that as a new member, and not being a part of the Client Assistance Program, she doesn't have a measure of volume of some of the issues she has heard in the CAP report at these meetings. Is there any improvement, or are there new issues?

Mr. Johnsen answers that some of this is anecdotal, and so if they get ten people who call CAP because they aren't getting return phone calls from their counselors, the CAP doesn't have anything to compare that to. They can't really say if it's more or less or better or worse than usual. They try to look at trends, and it's easy to pinpoint personalities in offices. Part of what CAP does is try to work with staff and individual units before reporting it, because they don't want to be police men, they want to be a resource for DVR staff.

Mr. Huven adds that the CAP does not keep specific data about the calls they get, but they do keep comments for the annual report. It all does show in the annual report, and the complaints seem the same each year. They do notice that there are pockets around the state where some problems show up more than others.

Mr. Kay asks, do you have regular dialogue with the Area Managers? Mr. Johnsen says they do try. Any time he goes to Spokane he meets with Teresa Kutsch. He meets with Ron Falberg regularly. Mr. Huven has a regular video conference with David Hankinson. Mr. Kay comments that we see these patterns and if there's intense dialogue with an area manager. Mr. Johnsen tries to have the conversation with the

Counselor and the Supervisor before they talk about it with the Area Manager. Mr. Huven is getting ready to suggest a regular Monday morning meeting with Mr. Hankinson.

Ms. Kautzman asks if CAP sees any relationship to the cases brought to CAP in relation to larger or growing caseload sizes.

Mr. Johnsen answers yes, but that he doesn't have data to support it. It is used as an excuse, but it always has been. Resources and messaging are issues.

Ms. Kautzman asks, over the last five years, do you see differences or trends in the types of issues brought to CAP, or are they pretty much the same issues continuing?

Mr. Johnsen answers that there is some change, but mostly just peaks and valleys of the same issues. Mr. Huven answers that in the area he works with, he sees timeliness of service as the biggest and most recent issue. He sees it as a response to staff feeling overwhelmed. Time and resources are problems, but they are also prioritization problems. Staff learning how to prioritize their largest problems first would be very helpful.

Ms. Brouner asks, rapport is so important and central to the counseling and guidance process. If a customer doesn't hear from their counselor, who actually has power over their case; This is connected to how communication is important to build that rapport which timeliness of service does build.

Mr. Huven responds that he will be conducting training on how to deal with difficult conversations and situations, on the phone or in the office. If you have skills and training to reduce the length of the call, then you'll be more willing to call someone back the next time. So a lot of this timeliness of service stuff is related to prioritization and customer service/complaint resolution.

Ms. Finkbonner asks how many calls the CAP receives per quarter. Mr. Johnsen answers 30-40 per week. Ms. Finkbonner asks how many of those are from Tribal VR customers. Mr. Johnsen can recall about a dozen last year. Ms. Finkbonner asks, is there a way for the Tribal VR's to gather feedback from CAP on where they are falling short? Mr. Huven answers that there are more problems with dual cases. Cases where people come with their Tribal VR counselor and engage DVR for services.

Mr. Johnsen mentions that the CAP receives referrals from the Blind Agency as well. However, the CAP receives less referrals from the Blind agency partly because they tend to be a little more lenient with what they give to their customers. But, they do have people with concerns and issues. You can't wait until a crisis to tell people about the CAP, because at that point they don't believe that CAP will work on their behalf.

Ms. Kautzman asks, because there are only two people who work for CAP, and you guys get 30-40 calls per week, what is your response time, and how do you coordinate your efforts?

Mr. Johnsen answers that the response time is immediate if they are in the office. He doesn't like to leave the office with any phone calls hanging. They use CAP cell phones to be reachable, and they use emails. Also when they don't reach someone, they leave a message asking when a person will be available so that they can call back at that time. It gets busy but they manage. It is much easier if they can return the calls so that it's off their plates. When they arrive in the morning they respond to all messages before they do other things.

Mr. Huven answers too, that calls vary. Sometimes people need information and referral. Sometimes they may need a whole release packet so that CAP can get information from DVR about their case. When they get the packet in the mail, they're on the phone with DVR that day. That packet becomes part of their working file. They carry around 10 to 15 files with them so that if a counselor calls, they have the information on hand and can discuss it immediately.

SRC Contribution to the State Plan Update—Susan Kautzman

Ms. Kautzman presents the SRC's contributions to the State Plan Update. The committee authored a memo on March 24, 2011 regarding our input to the State Plan Update. The Planning, Policy & Advocacy committee made some recommendations to DVR about the State Plan Update. The committee's main points in the memo were:

- Recommendation that DVR update only those attachments that require changes to be factually accurate;
- Recommendation that DVR not make substantive changes to the content of sections 4.11(c)(1), 4.11 (d);
- Recommendation that DVR focus staff time on updating 4.11 (e)(2);
- Recommendation that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in DVR analyze the root factors which have helped or hindered DVR in making progress on the current plan, to get an early start on the next plan;
- Recommendation that the SLT implement strategies to use the plan as a living working plan; and
- Recommendation that DVR use the public input from State Plan Forums to inform the development of the next Full State Plan.

Don Kay confirms that DVR and the SLT adopted all of DVR's recommendations. Mr. Aguirre will make a written memo responding to those recommendations.

The State Plan Forums are happening in May and June, in Tumwater May 12, Lynnwood June 1, and Spokane May 17. Someone from the Council will attend each of those.

Mr. McCallum believes that this is valuable for DVR staff in local offices, as an opportunity to hear from a diverse public. Mr. Aguirre answers that historically, field staff has attended the state plan forums. Mr. Aguirre will be at each forum.

Ms. Kautzman reiterates to Mr. Aguirre that the Planning, Policy and Advocacy Committee believes that the State Plan is a very important document, and that the Council believes that DVR should really use it to guide their service delivery each year, using it to track progress and update their service delivery methods. The committee understands that this particular update to the state plan has had to be processed in a very short timeframe.

Mr. Aguirre agrees that it is indeed a short timeframe, and the staff working on the project has had to shift some responsibilities around in order to complete it, including annual case reviews. Because of the hiring freeze, and having seven open positions in the state office has caused the workloads to be difficult.

Review work of Customer Satisfaction Committee

Martin McCallum reports that this year we are conducting a Customer Satisfaction Survey, which we have not done since 2006. Results were shared with DVR in 2007. This time, we have a new group including Susan Kautzman, Jerry Johnsen, Jeff Abe-Gunter, Sandra Carr, and Leandro Razo. Earlier this year, the committee brainstormed about what to include in the survey. The committee decided to focus on things that both the Council and DVR care about learning from customers, including understandable questions and individually relevant to DVR customers. We want a good response rate, so that DVR has a large enough sample to be statistically valid. This team first looked at questions from 2006, to see if we would like to reuse any. Each committee member was asked to submit questions they thought were important. The committee met and sorted all the questions. Our final questions are under tab 3 in the notebook. The committee has settled on 22 questions and considers their current list a draft. DVR will review it, hopefully very soon. If DVR suggests changes or additional questions, we will incorporate them, and move onto the next step. The survey will focus on those customers who are currently in plan.

Don Kay will meet with Joelle Brouner and Martin McCallum, to discuss further the purview of the survey, and whether we need to do additional surveying efforts for those customers who are no longer in plan, whose cases have been closed either rehabilitated or not rehabilitated. Mr. Kay points out that DVR partnered with DSHS to do a very comprehensive survey every several years. DVR does use this survey effort to inform the creation of the state plan. Monthly survey efforts for cases that are closed do not yield enough significant data to inform their state plan.

Ms. Foster asks Mr. Kay, how do they select who they survey them? Mr. Kay answers that every month, a letter goes out to every customer whose case has been closed, with a survey attached.

Mr. Larson asks, how many questions are being reused from the last survey? Ms. Brouner answers six of the twenty one questions from the last survey are still being used. Mr. Larson asks is the sampling size determined by how big our budget is, or will it be the same size as last time? Ms. Brouner answers that the size of the customer sample, depends on the current size of DVR's customer base. Ms. Brouner and Mr. McCallum negotiated authorization for the survey with DVR, and DVR did not designate a specific dollar amount for that survey. The last survey's dollar amount for two survey instruments was used to inform the cost of this one. We want to save money up front on the instrument, by having a tight list of questions, and Mr. McCallum's colleague who does surveying for a living will look at our survey to determine if it is appropriate. This should save money on the final instrument development, so that they can give the researchers time to do a better analysis, or perhaps a second survey. We want it to be statistically significant. Last time we did the survey, we didn't have a successful experience with the contractor, partly because we did not define carefully enough what the purpose of the surveys were, and what we wanted in a data report and analysis. This time we will be particularly mindful to do that. Also last time, part of the survey was about being in Order of Selection (OOS), and since DVR is no longer in OOS, those questions are not now relevant. The committee decided to survey customers who have been in plan for 6 months. This may limit the size of the sample, and if so, we can work with the contractor and with DVR to determine if there's a better way to get a good sample size. DVR has a contracts unit with limited staffing, so Ms. Brouner saved us a spot in line for contract creation. With some help of the committee, Ms. Brouner is going to try to update the contract document and save some time and effort, which will be the step after DVR reviews the questions and provides feedback. Ms. Arnold suggests that we really look at what we intend with this survey. Are we using the results to inform and impact, we will want to spend resources surveying the right people. Ms. Arnold has done survey work at OSPI, with an instrument containing 25 questions. Washington State University's Social and Economic Research Center, has been their contractor, and their results are quantifiable. WSU does

an analysis which tells OSPI overall, whether a person is satisfied with the services they received. Ms. Arnold suggests, do we want something quantifiable and how will that information be used? The Committee wants to be able to identify recommendations based on those survey results. Perhaps we can ask DVR what they want to get out of the survey. One thing we would like to do is establish a scale, and our own targets so we know. SERC gives a question by question results, and by demographic so that they can see that information in various ways. Mr. McCallum reiterates that we will go over it again with the full council in July. By that time, DVR will have reviewed and adjusted the questions. We will have more discussion as a committee, and the contract process will have been started, so that DVR's contracting staff can be ahead of the game.

Debrief Customer Forum—

Don Brandon thought that the forum was affirming and he heard good suggestions about customers and staff. It was a lot different than some of the feedback we have heard in the past. So, it appears that the crew in this area either works more effectively, or they are better at getting their customers to offer positive feedback. The people who attended yesterday were talking about how their lives change, which is an important statement to take away from the feedback. I think that we should give this feedback to the staff in the local offices, so that they know the value of their work is being seen by the customers they serve. This may help morale. If we make that statement as a Council and encourage the SLT to do the same, to help the local counselors feel like their work is important, affirmed and validated.

Mr. Johnsen thinks we should be very careful any time we draw conclusions from the forums, because it really depends on who shows up and what their circumstances are. So much is anecdotal, and there are great people working in this area, but we should not conclude from the forums that any area is better or worse than another based on who shows up to the forums. We need to use a more objective method of determining the problems and successes within DVR.

Mr. Hudson thinks that this is the same as with DVR's Closed Customer Survey, the people responding are the people who showed up. Anytime you give someone an option, you're going to get a different result than when it is a part of the process. Motivation changes the outcome and so does geography. For instance, we didn't invite folks from Island or San Juan counties. The chances of them attending might have been slim because there aren't really very many customers in those counties and it's a longer distance. It is always good though, to hear the customers who do attend and give them an opportunity to give feedback. We should hear it and accept it as it is, and not assign too much weight to it.

Ms. Kautzman agrees with Mr. Brandon, in that we heard such an affirming set of feedback. Part of our role is to listen, because sometimes you can get insight into why a person's experience was positive or negative. Sometimes it might give us a little idea of how things are. It is valuable though, to listen and to be available to hear what customers have to say. From a CRP perspective, Ms. Kautzman noticed that the language we speak is not always understood by customers. We sometimes use acronyms and lingo, and we need to be careful about that.

Ms. Lang noticed that in the forums that the experience we have, and the customers have at the forum is effected by the relationship that the SRC has with the area we are visiting. It seems like our council needs to be more connected and more visible to local offices. We should think about how we can be more visible for the customers.

Ms. Brouner wanted to share the experience that some of us had, after the forum. A woman arrived who was too late to attend, but she came anyway and caught us as we were leaving. She had a five year

old with her, who did not want to be there. She wanted to succeed but did not know how to leave her house. She was so ill and stuck and didn't know what to do. This counselor really helped her to figure out how to go to work and manage her life. We shouldn't assign all kinds of meaning, but we should combine that feedback and watch the way that Supervisors respond to questions during the forum, to inform our ideas about some of those offices.

Mr. Aguirre addresses how field staff reacts to the SRC showing up in town and how they react to attending our forums. Field staff are so busy, and they see these same customers and same interactions every day. When they hear that the SRC is coming to have a forum, they might at first think, "my customers who are not happy are going to go complain," but that doesn't mean they view the Council as something negative. Going to the public forum is a reminder for staff to not forget about these other issues, about the broader sense of VR.

Mr. Brandon believes that affirmation is really lacking in state service. We should take all this feedback seriously. If we do not take this feedback seriously, then the forums are not useful, even if the feedback is only rising to the level of anecdotal, or thematic rather than a "systemic trend."

Ms. Foster was touched by the two people we spoke to after the forum. She was also glad to hear so much positive feedback. However, she wanted to remind us of the customer who mentioned that DVR has been very helpful for her family, but not for her specifically, but she was disappointed about the way her own case was closed.

Mr. Larson mentions he might not listen as closely being the facilitator, but he was encouraged by the openness of the staff. Especially asking them, what would the staff need to be able to do their absolute best. The counselors and supervisors who met with us were really open when they met with us yesterday.

Motivational Interviewing Training Module—Peg Evans-Brown & Teesha Kirschbaum—

In Motivational Interviewing (MI) we value choice. So, Ms. Evans-Brown suggests we take a minute to decide if we would rather have an exercise to learn about MI or to talk about it.

When Kelly Franklin started at DVR in 2007, she pointed out that our VR Counselors might be experiencing compassion fatigue, and that they might need some kind of boost to morale. In 1999 DVR had solution focused counseling technique, and it was time to do that again. This time DVR hired Casey Jackson from Washington State University, who is a subject matter expert. DVR contracted him to train Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, though the trainings are open to more than just counselors, rehab techs participate too. The training focuses on being with people and how to have conversations with them. There is a two day training, six weeks pass, and one day training, and then six weeks after that, a one-day training. The training has become so popular that people aren't satisfied with the four days of training, and want more. It requires practice to put MI into practice. There are skill building sequences now, where you record your conversation and mail it in to have it analyzed. Now Motivational Interviewing has become very popular and about 90% of the staff have trained in MI.

Collaboration, evocation and autonomy are the main concepts in Motivational Interviewing. Ms. Kirschbaum is an MI trainer and coder now. If it weren't for budget crunches, DVR would be doing a lot more MI trainings for field staff, but they do meet monthly as trainers and consult in each unit. MI is a way of being with people; it is customer centered, and is highly directional.

Ms. Kirschbaum talks about how she uses MI. She started with DVR in 2008, in the Bellevue office, where she first learned about MI. She moved to Minnesota, realized she didn't want to live there and came back to work in the DVR office in Mount Vernon. She loved the respectful way of interacting with people. If you're trying to get compliance, it's not the tool to use. The role of the Counselor using MI is to find out what that customer really wants, using evocative questions, reflections and affirmations, and find their own solutions to making their lives go in the direction they want them to go. The more Ms. Kirschbaum uses MI, the easier she finds her job to be. She finds herself in a partnership where she helps people figure out what they want. Now she has the opportunity to train people to use MI.

While Ms. Kirschbaum was in Minnesota, she mentioned MI to her co workers at the Minnesota VR. This resulted in Minnesota DVR calling Washington DVR to get more information about MI, and subsequently, Casey Jackson and Ms. Evans-Brown presented for the National Rehabilitation Educators Forum. A lot of states, including Michigan, North Carolina have started to try to take on MI as a guiding principle. Many social service arenas have tried to follow evidence based practices. Vocational Rehabilitation has had trouble finding good evidence based practices to follow, because of its hybrid nature and MI might be filling that need.

Ms. Brouner points out the article under Tab 9 in the meeting mailing, which is about Motivational Interviewing.

Don Kay asks, whether MI can be misused by Counselors, to get a customer to think that they are making a decision not to apply for services, or used as a measure to dissuade them from applying for DVR services. Can MI be misused in a manipulative way by Counselors to get someone to think that they are agreeing to do something that they don't really want to do?

Ms. Evans-Brown answers that yes, it can be misused, but that would be unethical and not in the spirit of what Motivational Interviewing is about. The purpose is to figure out what the customer wants at that moment. The idea is to help tip the balance into pro social positive behavior. Ms. Kirschbaum mentions that anything can be misused, if your goal is to manipulate people. If a person has an agenda to get a case closed, you are not embodying the spirit of MI, because the spirit of MI is customer choice.

Mr. Larson asks about the example in the book. Is it real? Ms. Evans-Brown answers that the example in the article is real. And, that in training for MI, they don't role play Motivational Interviews. They do "real plays" where they pair up with partners, and one person talks about a change that they want to make in their life, and the other persons' job is to ask open ended questions, use affirmations, reflections and summaries. These are micro skills.

Ms. Brouner asks more about misusing MI. Sometimes it might not be malicious or conscious to get a person to do what you want them to do. So, as an example, an overworked Counselor doesn't have a lot of staff support, and encounters a customer who doesn't at first seem very motivated, even though the characteristics of their disability are that they have difficulty motivating themselves, could the Counselor use Motivational Interviewing to determine if a customer is ready or unready to work with DVR. That customer might not ever look like a good investment of time, simply because their case is difficult.

Ms. Evans-Brown thinks that this kind of issue is actually a cultural issue within DVR. This is about Clinical Supervision, Counselors being able to discuss issues with their supervisor. MI is really pushing the envelope on that, because it requires people to record the conversation and have it coded for effective use of MI.

Ms. Brouner asks who is listening to those recordings. Ms. Evans-Brown answers that WSU does the listening now, but DVR staff are being trained internally to do that for each other. Ms. Kirschbaum interjects that the recording has no client information attached to the recording, and the coders are not listening to what the client says, they're listening to what the Counselor says.

Mr. Abe-Gunter, are there customers who this won't work for? Do you use the MI with family members?

Ms. Kirschbaum answers that MI is a counseling technique. It's a part of her tool box. She decides when working with people, what is the best tool to use. However, MI is about having an honest conversation with a person, while believing that the person is an expert in themselves, and find what their feelings and thoughts are.

Mr. Huven points out that Counselors may look at their caseload and feel like it isn't the kind of caseload they want to have, and end up turning people away at intake. Can MI be used to help the Counselor be better at helping people succeed, rather than turning them away at the door?

Ms. Kirschbaum thinks that MI is most valuable at intake. There is a VI form that a customer fills out, which doesn't foster communication. MI adherent intake would be, to sit with a person and communicate with them, ask them what it is they want out of life, what brought them to DVR. Because they aren't going to be able to necessarily tell you what they want DVR to do, because VR is so complicated sometimes. But, they may be able to tell you what they want out of life, and their ideas about how they could get there.

Mr. Kay thinks it's important for the Council to understand that when a customer comes in for a first meeting, DVR staff traditionally has them fill in forms, ask any questions, and come back in 2 weeks. The key is to transform that very first encounter into an experience that is meaningful 2 way communication and the Counselor still explains who DVR is, what they do. Present the packet to fill out, but the most important part of the interaction is finding out what brought the customer here, what they want to do with their life, and how DVR can help make that happen. This is the kind of communication that DVR hopes every Counselor will have with every customer. MI is proving to be a tool that is making it easier for counselors to be engaged in that level of communication.

Ms. Evans-Brown says they have an integration team which meets once a month to look at the issues that the Council has brought up. At one of the meetings, a member of the team said that DVR is not culturally competent. There are people who are left out in the process. And there isn't consistency between offices on how Orientation and Intake happens. The team has selected a couple of pilot offices in which to try a more MI oriented intake process, and they're using customer comment cards to try to figure out what will work, and what will not work. They have also asked Casey Jackson to do a MI training focused solely on Intake and Orientation. The training recently had to be cancelled, but is rescheduled for April 26th in Mt. Vernon.

Mr. Brandon asks, in his experience with VR since the early 70s. In his experience he has never heard Rehab Counselors talk about counseling until MI came along. They didn't used to talk about techniques or tactics or how they were doing their counseling. This discussion and this system seems very useful.

Mr. Larson asks how long the coding recording is. Ms. Kirschbaum answers that they take however long the session, and the coder listens to the middle twenty minutes of the counseling session. Mr. Larson

asks what the most common issue that a coder might comment on is. Ms. Kirschbaum answers that the main issue is usually that counselors are too highly directive. It is easy to tell a customer what to do and solve their problems. It isn't about what we think would work, it's about how they want to solve their own problems.

Mr. Hudson asks how much time MI adds to the process of counseling. Ms. Kirshbaum answers that they haven't figured out if it adds time. For herself, she thinks things go smoother, and gets people to talk about what's important to them faster. You do spend more one on one counseling time with people, but you also get to what's really important to them sooner. Ms. Kautzman asks what the feedback process is for the counselors who have sent in recordings. Ms. Kirshbaum answers that your interviews are only being coded if you have signed up for a skill building class and the counselor sends in one tape per month for 6 to 8 months. The statistics say that it takes 6-8 tapings to bring your skills up to a range that is acceptable. The coding comes back in the form of scores. At the next skill building class you can go over your scores if you want to, to determine what areas need to be worked on. The scores do not go to the supervisor; they are just for your personal growth. The scores range from 1-5 and most people start with a 3, and the idea is to bring it up to a five.

Mr. Hudson asks, if MI is something that DVR has adopted as a policy. Is it part of DVR's plan as a system to use this technique as a way of doing business? Ms. Evans Brown answers yes. Mr. Hudson asks how many staff have been trained in MI. Ms. Evans-Brown says that it's about 90% of staff in the field and most people in the State Office too. Almost everyone has been exposed to it but might not necessarily be using it on a daily basis.

Mr. Brandon asks, this came about working with people with chemical dependency issues. Mr. Aguirre says it has also been used extensively in Canada while working with ex-offenders.

Mr. Hudson asks how DVR will measure the effectiveness of MI. How does DVR expect this to move the needle, and in what direction? Ms. Evans-Brown answers that WSU has applied for a NIDRR grant, this will be the second application, and hope to have DVR be the subjects of the grant. Internally, we do need to justify the expenditures according to data, and so they are analyzing STARS caseloads and doing customer satisfaction surveys at Orientations that use MI. There are a lot of ways they are trying to get measurements, which is tough in Vocational Rehabilitation. Preliminary information shows that there may be a slight improvement in rehab rate, and faster case movement, but that it's really too soon to tell for sure.

Ms. Brouner asks if Counselors feel that they use multiple tactics and multiple tools, or is MI an all-in proposition, if it's a guiding principle. Ms. Kirschbaum thinks that an all-in proposition probably wouldn't work. It's a technique to be used when it is appropriate. Some people will get excited about it and go to all the trainings and use it all the time, whereas other people may be resistant. Or, a counselor might have a system that already works for them. Ms. Evans-Brown adds to that by saying that DVR staff has to give customers a lot of information. With MI, you ask permission before you give information. This allows the customer to assess whether they are ready to or want to hear the information you have to give them, as a way of honoring that person's choice.

Ms. Arnold asks if MI addresses physical environment. Ms. Arnold's husband is a middle school math teacher for example, and they have discussed how the conferences take place. The parents come to the classroom and sit in the small kids' desks, while the teacher sits at his own desk. Right off the bat, the parent and teacher are not on an equal level. Physical environment can change the way the dynamic

feels and impact relationships. Ms. Kirschbaum agrees that the physical environment is an important factor to pay attention to. Ms. Kirschbaum does not recall having addressed physical environment in the Motivational Interviewing trainings. However, it might be important to look at because MI is considered an equal partnership.

Mr. Hudson asks what the best way to learn about MI is. There are good websites and books that Ms. Evans-Brown will provide information on for us. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK14856/> and http://www.motivationalinterview.org/quick_links/about_mi.html are the websites; Building Motivational Interviewing Skills, a Practitioner's Workbook, by David B. Rosengrim;

Committee Reports

Employer & Rehabilitation Partnerships—Jim Larson gives a committee report. He met with Ms. Brouner on the latest efforts on the committee. It's a pretty giant task to examine how DVR interacts with their partners. In 2008 the committee's name changed to *Employer & Rehabilitation Partnerships*, (Formerly just Rehab Partnerships Committee), thinking that Business is a primary focus of DVR. They have looked at a lot of transition services, and relationships with OSPI. There was a committee conference call on the 15th. Mr. Larson's goals for that were to look back at what we had been doing, and then also looking forward and how do we want to proceed. ARRA and Project Hire were things that the committee focused on. How much was spent, and what have we learned? The Committee would like to see specifics about that.

In Tab 4 in your notebook, you can see a memo that the committee authored and sent to DVR's Senior Leadership Team. They asked what effort DVR takes to engage employers. Had questions for John Evans. Mr. Evans met with us at our SRC meeting. Our analysis is on page 2, and what we learned about employer relations within DVR. So, after that memo reached the SLT, Mr. Larson and Ms. Brouner met with the SLT and Ms. Franklin thought that the SRC's analysis in the memo was incomplete. So, the committee would like to meet with Ms. Franklin and get more information from her about what DVR does to work with employers. The committee is concerned with how DVR works with smaller businesses. The Committee also made six recommendations to DVR, and would like to hear from Mr. Aguirre and the SLT on those subjects.

The committee is going to invite Kelly Franklin to talk about what DVR does to build relationships with employers.

The committee wants to know more about ARRA projects.

Mike Hudson was talking about using AWB to develop a training packet for small businesses to hire people with Disabilities, similar to what was done in Oregon.

The committee also thinks that if DVR is not collecting data on employers, maybe they should consider hiring a DVR customer to compile that data which would be a good skill building exercise for a prospective employee.

Planning, Policy & Advocacy—Rather than give the same report for a third time, Ms. Kautzman would just like to say to DVR that this committee wants to make sure that their activities add value to DVR. We want this to be a partnership.

Agency Reports

State Independent Living Council—Ms. Finkbonner gives the report in place of Sandra Carr, because Ms. Carr could not join us today. The main topic is that the Southwest office closed, and the Northwest area may get a grant to open a new one this year. The SILC hopes that the timing of the grant will be better this year. Because there was a center that closed this year, any funding that was left over was divided up between the remaining centers. Everett, Seattle, Redmond, Lakewood, and Spokane are the current ILC's operating in our state. Emergency preparedness has been a big focus for the SILC lately. Also, on the SILC website there are several position papers, and they are looking at updating those papers soon.

At a federal level, Obama's budget proposes a shift to oversight where Part C dollars of the 701 money goes from RSA, to DVR and then distributed to the centers. One proposal has been that all the money for IL from 701 would be allocated from Congress, to RSA, to DVR and distributed to the centers. It sounds like a small change but it isn't. VRs and ILs did not seek this change, and many oppose it. There is a difference between an IL service model and a social service model. The suggestion is being made so that the federal government can shift oversight to states. There is a lobby by Centers to Commissioner Rutledge on this. Mr. Aguirre says too, that the DSU would be responsible for oversight. But there is also the possibility of those funds being looked at by other programs as a funding source, which needs to be avoided. Those funds need to stay with the centers. This would not change the role of the SILC, but it would add to the SLT's purview the oversight of distributing dollars to the Centers. Aside from the philosophical difference of how the money is allocated, there is the practical concern. DVR currently only has one Contracts Monitor, and that would be the position whose purview it would be to oversee that allocation. That position is already spread thin, and spreading it thinner does not seem like a good idea.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction—Ms. Arnold was very excited last month when a woman contacted her named Judy Hall, from DSHS. Ms. Hall is an education liaison for the Department. She described her role as that of a facilitator. Ms. Hall facilitated meetings between OSPI and Jane Boone, an Employment Partnership Manager for DDD; and Avreayl Jacobsen, Community Relations Manager of DVR. They talked with Ms. Boone about using ARRA dollars to develop materials with information for transition aged youth with developmental disabilities. With Ms. Jacobson they talked about a draft of guidelines DVR will use for opportunities and requirements for students with Individual Education and 504 plans. There may be an effort between Ms. Jacobson and Ms. Boone to draft those materials together. There will be future meetings between Ms. Arnold, Ms. Boone, Ms. Jacobson and Ms. Hall. Ms. Arnold found the meetings very productive.

Ms. Arnold also wanted to inform the Council that OSPI's program review team has been piloting some systems analysis visits with local school districts whose data suggest they have the most room for growth and improvement with their indicator 13, secondary / transition IEP compliance and Indicator 14, which is post school outcomes. This helps districts look at compliance. The team is adding an element that helps districts use a tool called a Quality Indicators for Secondary Transitions (QIST), that helps districts look at Service Deliver, Planning

and Evaluation for secondary transition across five different domains, including school based activities, work based activities, family engagement, community partners connections. The other part of the pilot is looking at outcomes is using the State Needs Project, and the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) to come on site and do some intentional targeted coaching with secondary high school staff who work with students with IEPs and 504 plans. Those started last month and several more are scheduled through the end of the school year. The Council might be interested in a 30 minute presentation from the Center for Change in Transition Services at Seattle University.

Workforce Board— Mr. McCallum thanks Valerie Arnold for her OSPI report, and reminds the council how fortunate we are to have Ms. Arnold as a council member, what she has covered is an intersection between DVR, DDD and OSPI. Mr. McCallum is also on the CCTS state advisory body.

The Workforce Board is meeting in 2 weeks. They will examine the state budgets on employment training and education in the workforce area of a larger state budget. They are anticipating cuts and difficult choices. The federal budget pie, when you subtract defense and entitlement programs like social security and Medicaid and Medicare, what's left is "discretionary" funds. It is Mr. McCallum's opinion that the needs of the American workforce do not appear very discretionary. But this is where the close examination for cuts is taking place. Our own Senator Murray is a champion in the Senate for the workforce. Her work with the Senate HELP Committee is trying hard to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act. It encompasses Title 4, which is the amendments to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, and Title 3, Wagner-Peyser, our nations labor exchange system; Title 2, Adult Basic Education and family literacy; and Title 1, which helps adult dislocated workers, and youth grants, and also tribal grants like to the OIC migrant farm workers, job corps. Reauthorization is needed and it is a big effort, but there are other Senators and Representatives who think that these could be block granted to states, or cut radically. This is a worrisome time for social services in our country.

The Workforce Board has an initiative between their Chair Cindy Zehnder, Mike Hudson, and other board members, called Retooling Washington's Workforce. It has three prongs, intended to help with our state's recovery with such high levels of unemployment, and to assist employers in their efforts to expand again and employ people in their business. They are focusing attention to those who are exhausting their Unemployment Insurance benefits, attention to incentivizing ways to get employers to hire people, including on the job training and other direct connect initiatives, and working with the state and local level on a more initiated approach to employer outreach. They will be working on this in Clark County at the coming meeting in July. In the SeaTac on October 6 they are organizing a forum with professionals and stakeholders across the state to talk about the progress of this initiatives, to identify what is working, and in an effort to do our best across agencies and state and local partners to make meaningful work happen toward the recovery of our workforce while not having any additional resources.

Section 121, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation—Ms. Finkbonner reports that the tribal VR's will be meeting in a teleconference to develop a consortium in our state. Yakima is doing a disability conference in July, and everyone is welcome to attend, on the 13th and 14th.

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