



Washington State Rehabilitation Council
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WSRC COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 17, 2009
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Silverdale Beach Hotel
3073 NW Bucklin Hill Rd.
Silverdale, WA 98383

Minutes prepared by: JoAnne Lang, Executive Assistant to the WSRC.

In Attendance:

Joelle Brouner, Jim Larson, JoAnne Lang, Carol Maher, Sandra Carr, Don Brandon, John Harrison, Paul Vetrees, Kelly Boston, Kelly Franklin, Lynnae Rutledge, Jeffery Abe-Gunter, Jerry Johnsen, Bill Murray, JoAnne Lang, ASL Interpreters: Sarah Rasmussen, Judith Kaddoura.

Meeting is called to order at 9:00 am

Mr. Larson calls for introductions. Then he points out a change in the agenda trading time between the CAP report and the DVR Director's report.

MOTION:

Approval of Agenda

Bill Murray Moves to approve today's agenda.

John Harrison Seconds the Motion

Vote: To approve the meeting agenda—unanimously passed.

Remarks from Chair – Jim Larson

The WSRC's role in the State Plan is important right now, as DVR will be using that plan for the next three years. He thanks everyone for coming. Mr. Larson remarks that his role is a 'gatekeeper', and sees his role as "meeting manager" and would like to just move along the meeting and keep it moving. He hopes that everyone knows that if he stops you from speaking, it isn't because he doesn't like a person, or because he disagrees with a person, but that there are time limits on our meeting, and he will keep it moving along. He thanks Ms. Brouner and Ms. Lang for their work this quarter.

Remarks from Executive Director – Joelle Brouner

Ms. Brouner asks if anyone needs a microphone to be used in order to participate. No one indicates that they do. She asks that if this changes, to let her know.

Ms. Brouner begins by welcoming Don Brandon, we are pleased to have him and look forward to getting to know him and working with him. Ms. Brouner remarks that she would like to thank Lou Colwell, for the public record, who will no longer be joining us. Her schedule has changed and as a consequence she will no longer be able to join us. OSPI may or may not be sending another designee. She would also like to thank Kris Tefft for the record, our member from the Association of Washington Business. He feels that his job commitments are such that he no longer has the time to be a member of the Council, but he has recruited a member to replace him. When he spoke with Ms. Brouner, his critique of his service on the WSRC was much harsher than her own. The same day that he resigned, she learned that 40% of the responses on the employer survey were attributed to Mr. Tefft's efforts at AWB to get employers to respond. She would also like to shout out to Bob Roberts, our member who is out of the country on an adventure, she is sorry he was unable to join us.

Ms. Brouner talks about Operations. She is happy to let the Council know that Ms. Lang has scheduled our next two meetings with hotels booked and contracted. We will meet at the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, which she notes for the public record, has offered us the best per room rate, ten dollars lower than per diem. We will also be meeting at the Spokane Doubletree in October.

She wanted to talk a little bit about the budget. She asks the members to turn to Tab 5 in their meeting mailing, where Ms. Lang has prepared some information. As of February we were 37% spent. We have a shorter format for our meeting this time in an effort to save money, it turns out that it really is not that much cheaper, because we pay the per diem rate to members anyway. The money that we did save has gone to have the Say Hey event. We continue to look for ways of saving money, and if anyone has any ideas about that, we welcome the feedback.

She wanted to thank several people for making this meeting a success, including Sandy Adams of DVR's program and performance unit who worked hard in facilitating the customer focus group yesterday. She also thanks Don Farrell, the supervisor of the Silverdale office, and his staff members, Tina and LeAnne. It was a good thing that Silverdale was open to hearing feedback, and to be the first office to participate in the office based focus group.

She wanted to thank Martin McCallum and the members of the Planning, Policy & Advocacy Committee for their work in the month of March on the State Plan discussion. That will lead to a better outcome for the council. And she thanks all the members for their participation. This leads into discussion about recruitment.

We are at the end of a recruiting cycle. A lot of members are cycling out, and a lot of new members will be coming on. We as staff will miss several of the people who have been on the council for a long time. But we also welcome the opportunity to work with new people.

In the coming months we will be working on the State Plan, and it is fair to say it is a bureaucratic document, hopefully we can use any recommendations that the WSRC makes as a guidepost to following up with DVR process, so that we can ask how they are working on those recommendations. What are things DVR is doing to address staff training or strategies for achieving better wages, and what is DVR's vision for quality rehabilitation, because it is that dialogue that will help DVR strengthen itself and serve customers and achieve our federal mandates. Ms. Brouner found some interesting reports in iShare that were from 2008. They are a rich source of information. She would like to work with DVR to figure out what they mean.

DVR is receiving recovery act money. She would like to talk about green jobs and green economy.

She would also like for the Council to evaluate her performance today. For the public record, it is inappropriate for anyone to suggest merit based raises, and she knows that, and so she is asking for a gold star, rather than any sort of compensatory recognition.

Remarks from DVR Director – Lynnae Ruttledge

Ms. Ruttledge remarks that she stays in contact by doing a Director's message monthly, which goes out to staff and key stakeholders. Starting in May she also will be doing a video interaction with staff. We are in a time of rapid change, and she wants to make sure that everyone gets the same information as quickly as possible. Paul Cox is helping to create that. With the legislative session ending soon and the budget coming out, and recovery money from RSA, information needs to be shared quickly.

A significant change has occurred in DSHS, the head of DSHS was Robin Arnold-Williams, and now she has resigned to work in a policy position in Governor's office, and now the new DSHS Secretary is Susan Dreyfus. She is from Wisconsin, and has done a lot of work in Childrens' services. She starts in the middle of May. She will be holding an Extended Leadership Team Meeting, then. This will be a good time for DVR to put their best foot forward and show her about the work we do. There is a transition book being put together by the department to summarize information and each division is contributing to it. Kelly Boston did a program overview. Kathy Krulich identified key contacts. Don Kay identified key stakeholders. They also did a SWOT analysis, (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), which shows how we are doing building the capacity of our program. She will forward that information to the Council.

April 26th is the scheduled end of the legislative session. There are huge issues in the legislature, and the most important ones revolve around the budget. There is about a 9 billion dollar shortfall in the department. One concern will be cost of living increases or merit increases in state government. There will likely be no wage increases in the next two years. It is a difficult situation.

The legislature will be working on funding around services for GAU, developmental disabilities, mental health, education and other key state services. In the governor's supplemental budget, we were reduced by 4.1 million dollars for the biennium. She went into 09-11 biennium and reduced us by 5.1 million dollars and 13.4 FTEs. There will continue to be scrutiny about the cost of administration in state government, about the numbers of employees that we have across DSHS in management and executive service. So the senate reduced our budget by \$5.1 million and then the House came out with their version reducing us by \$6.1 million. There is currently no agreement in the legislature about the budgets, but will know hopefully by the beginning of May.

The hiring freeze was lifted in January. DVR filled many of their vacancies, probably 20 people. They looked at the critical needs of DVR for hiring, and filled the key positions across the state. If they had not filled those positions quickly, they would have remained vacant, as the Governor signed a bill on February 18th to freeze any hiring in state government.

Ms. Ruttledge points out that we are now about half way through the year, and so DVR is looking at their performance. Almost \$9 million is coming in the form of Stimulus Funds. She closes with the comment: there is no choice on the part of the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) about whether to appoint a new representative for the Washington State Rehabilitation Council, it is the law. She will be clear with OSPI on that. The law is very descriptive about who the state's SRC is to be made up of, as far as members. One member is required by law from OSPI. She offers to help work together with Ms. Brouner and Mr. Larson to make sure that happens. Ms. Ruttledge then opens the floor for questions.

Carol Maher has noted that the representation of people with disabilities working in State Government is falling, and it seems a good place to start for DVR clients, especially regarding the stimulus money, and asks is there an effort to remedy this?

Ms. Ruttledge answers that she does not think there has been attention from this governor in recognizing the importance of people with disabilities in state government. Ms. Brouner has been working with the Governor's Affirmative Action Policy Committee, (GAAPCom) and it has been difficult to work with the Department of Personnel, (DoP) to gather data about people with disabilities in state government. Ms. Ruttledge is not hopeful that DoP would be the major partner or driver, for improving employment for people with disabilities in state government. DVR had created a position within their agency for a person who coordinated supported employment within state government, but then the hiring freeze happened, twice. They still have that as a high priority. Ms. Ruttledge was able to meet with the Governor a few weeks ago, to hear her direct approach about what the stimulus funds should do and how we as a state should use that, and she would like to look at any agency that gets stimulus funds, to recommend that they get representation from people with disabilities. Ms. Ruttledge thinks that DVR, the Governor's Committee on Disability and Employment, and other key players will have to work together on the issue of people with disabilities working in state government.

Ms. Maher says that the Department of Justice has a real clear message on their webpage about civil rights and the recovery money. That message needs to go to the Governor. If we aren't getting it to her, we are doing a disservice to our people.

Ms. Brouner is having a meeting with DoP to gain more recent data on May 21, 2009 to get data from 2003-2008. She was able to gather old data from 1994-2003, showing a general decline in representation of people with disabilities working in state government. Her term on the GAAPCom concludes in May.

Mr. McCallum says the state house and senate have both suggested general fund cuts to DVR. Are they aware of the consequences of those cuts and the federal funds that will be lost due to those cuts?

Ms. Rutledge answers that they are aware, find it a compelling but not necessarily winning argument, and know that a maintenance of effort penalty will have to be paid back to the federal government by the state.

Mr. Martin says that he saw an interview with the Governor where she said she had been getting pressure to tap into the "Rainy Day Fund" so that we could meet those requirements and keep our federal funding by matching it with state funds. This goes beyond just DVR, into many areas of state government.

Ms. Rutledge mentions that if there was ever a time for advocacy, it is now.

Mr. Larson suggests that we all write or call the governor and our legislators about our concerns and present our view.

Ms. Carr asked about the Governor's interests in closing boards and commissions. She says that some of those councils are necessary. She is curious of how that determination was made.

Ms. Rutledge replies that there were several dynamics in play at once, including a bill that was introduced that proposed to cut all boards and commissions. The ones that were eliminated don't have much to do with the disability community including advisory committees that advise specialty areas. She thinks over all that they looked at any board or commission that was established by state statute and not federal mandates, and didn't necessarily have a continuing driving need. The governor wanted to streamline that and take a look at whether we need all of those. There was also a Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLARC), which looked at the large scope of boards and commissions and had a relatively large allocation of state funds, and see if any boards and commissions could be consolidated for less administrative staff and executive support, if they have similar mandates. She thinks we all need to be vigilant and continue to watch how that discussion develops.

Ms. Carr responds by saying that one of her concerns was that they kept the council for the Blind, but cut the Council for the Deaf and hard of hearing, which pushes her buttons and disappointed her.

Mr. Murray asks to back up a little bit, and remind the council that DVR, Ms. Ruttledge and Ms. Brouner cannot advocate for particular funding issues and financing issues, but that the Council can, and with the unique position that the state is in, the council chair should put together a letter from the Council with our concerns and our request for financial support.

MOTION:

Council and staff, and DVR work together to craft a letter from the Council for the time sensitive consideration of the legislature, detailing advocacy for funding.

Motion proposed by Bill Murray.

Seconded by John Harrison

Discussion: Ms. Ruttledge recommends that the Council send that letter to not just key decision makers, but to everyone because DVR provides services in every community, and it is relevant to the entire state. There are key people in ways and means to send it to and in the past week the Traumatic Brain Injury interests did strong advocacy to preserve funding for a designated, dedicated fund that was safe because of that. Mr. Larson calls for a vote.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Larson would like to say before we move on to the Client Assistance Program, (CAP) Report, that Ms. Ruttledge mentioned a SWOT analysis, and can we see that? Ms. Ruttledge says yes of course.

CAP Report—Jerry Johnsen

Mr. Johnsen passes out a report on paper. Every year the CAP is charged with putting together an annual report. Along with data they include systemic issues. They try to find things that are systemic issues that occur in DVR all across the state, and focus on the experience of customers within DVR. Over the years, Mr. Johnsen has noticed a repetition of issues that seem to be core that makes DVR a positive force for customers. The CAP has found itself pointing out the same issues each year, or three years or five years ago. He would like to talk about a few of those things now.

The first issue that he has identified is Staff Development. This issue could probably be applied to every agency that exists. Do you hire good people and provide good training, stay in contact with the people and follow up with the employee? It is important to continually monitor our actions here, to look at the performance of our employees: are they respectful and creative? Are they asking for help when they need it? Is there a supervisor who asks what the counselor's relationship is with customers? What do supervisors do to help individual employees to help that individual to help agency do business? CAP's experience is that sometimes bringing those issues to a Supervisor, they are either quick to defend or they roll their eyes, meaning they know there is an issue, but do not know what to do about it. In those cases, they see that the employee with problems may need

mentoring. Mentoring is key, in this issue. It is important to pair the one needing mentorship with a mentor who has a positive outlook, loves what they do and has a good grasp of the mission. In the tension between production and quality of services, the person who is a good counselor, is a person whose numbers will be good because they empower their clients.

The second issue he runs into is Informed Choice. He means people coming to VR and understanding the scope of services available to them. The Council heard yesterday about DVR customers not knowing what services are available from DVR. Some of this comes from the reluctance of the Counselor, or the person who initially engages the customer, with the fear that someone will say “I want all the services you offer.” This is a give and take process between the counselor and the customer. If a customer is not presented the big picture initially, and then finds out about it later, this causes trust issues between the customer and the counselor. Counseling and guidance is about presenting the big picture and narrowing it down to the needs of the customer.

The third issue is Trial Work experience. In the passage of an amendment in the 1980’s, there was a change in the way DVR provides services. They changed into saying that anyone with a disability could benefit from DVR services, we want to go into the VR process thinking that, but if you feel that someone can’t benefit, then Trial Work Experience is your out. It is done at the eligibility determination. It is primarily used because they think the persons’ disabilities are bigger than what they can overcome as a barrier to employment. The amendment provided that it had to be done in a certain way, with safeguards and information, it has to be clear and convincing evidence. Mr. Johnsen doesn’t necessarily agree with the way the law is written, but it is, and so it is what we work with. The CAP finds itself working with counselors to make a distinction clear between the work or community based assessment that happens post-eligibility, and the trial work experience, which happens pre-eligibility and carries a lot of weight. What CAP found was that in the language of the contract that DVR used with CRP’s, they used the term “trial work experience” and “assessment” interchangeably, which confused everyone and still does, but it is getting better.

The fourth issue is direct pay. This refers to an audit process where it is found that somewhere a customer says they were allowed to buy something, and there is no receipt or record that the person bought the services, and DVR goes back to the customer and says they owe DVR for that service because there is no receipt. The records that they audit are poorly documented or poorly maintained and can be the culprit for this, and if we go back and ask customers to pay back something, we need to be sure that we are in the right.

The fifth issue is Communication and Timeliness of Service. People need to have a sense of what is going on with their personal Vocational Rehabilitation Process. People need to not be left hanging. The onus is not only on DVR. Customers are expected to be aggressive and ask questions and be active in their cases and to follow through. Customers do not always have a clear picture of how or when to do this. They call CAP and ask when to do this, or if they will be bothering their counselor. Or perhaps they already have called, and were not well received. The person they reached was stressed out or cannot give good answers. So timely communication is important. Mr. Johnsen concludes his report by opening the floor to questions.

Ms. Brouner asks, how does Mr. Johnsen think our Council should use the information he presents to the benefit of the federal mandates we serve?

Mr. Johnsen thinks the information they generate has value and the Council should pay attention to it. What he sees as important is that the council members should understand fully, and if we decide as a council to take any action on it, they need to really understand the issue.

Mr. McCallum asks about the last page of his report, and the example of Jane, the customer of DVR and was she successful in her outcome?

Mr. Johnsen cannot remember that particular person's case, but that most of the exemplary cases they use come from successful closures, and CAP tries to bring life to peoples' cases, to help them be successful.

Mr. Abe-Gunter comments that there used to be cash payments to clients, and sometimes it was questioned whether customers were getting the services they needed, DDD went to providing contracted goods and services to customers or using a check writing services to write checks specifically to vendors for those services, instead of the clients. This creates a documentation of services purchased for customers.

Dialogue about DVR's receipt of Federal Recovery \$\$\$

Lynnae Ruttledge informs the council that the dollars DVR received from the stimulus program was due to national advocacy by the disability community and primarily by the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation, (CSAVR). The result was 540 million dollars appropriated to the US Dept of Education for the public VR programs. RSA took some time to decide to distribute the money by proportioning the money the same way they do the general funding. \$10.4 million came to Washington State. DVR gets 85% of that and DSB gets 15%. This means DVR's portion totals \$8.8million. So DVR received 4.2 million dollars on April 1st, 2009, and will receive the other half in September, 2009. There is no maintenance of effort penalty related to it. They have until September 30, 2011 to obligate those funds and by Dec. 31, 2011 it must be spent. So DVR has 2.5 years to use those dollars. Congress has been clear that we have to be transparent in how we use these funds. How accountable we are and how many people will get jobs. DVR is looking at how we can best spend about 9million dollars to help people with disabilities find jobs. It has to be focused on DVR eligible clients. If it is allowable under the federal VR program, it is allowable for the stimulus monies.

The intent is to spend the money as quickly and practically as possible. The governor has asked that we prepare for a 21st century economy, being bold and taking actions that can propel us forward and to jumpstart our economy. Do not build expectations that cannot be maintained. The money needs to be spent on increasing employment outcomes now, and that do not need maintenance.

So, DVR's strategy is to find where growth is happening. Social Security is filling 4-5 thousand jobs in the nation over the next 2 years. They are actively looking to hire people with disabilities. The Naval shipyard wants to hire people. We can be strategic about how to take advantage of that. How can we use this, be true to the intent of the President and Congress, and what the Governor expects, to make an impact on our economy? Looking at green jobs is a great way to do this, also looking at International Trade, Aerospace, and Information Technology: in-demand jobs.

We want to get one thousand people with disabilities into full time jobs, (meaning more than thirty hours per week,) with wages at a mid- to high-salary range, (fifteen dollars per hour is a framework, but may not be realistic for the very most rural areas, like Wapato or Island Counties, so DVR will be flexible about what mid-to high-range can be, in that it should be reflective of the local economy) with health benefits, in high demand occupations.

The Governor wants us to be a partner in workforce and economic development in Washington that moves us toward a 21st Century Economy. When they talk to economic and workforce development professionals, what they say are high demand occupations are generally local or regional and if you look locally, it's healthcare. There are openings in every community in Washington State, the area of Green Jobs, a Green Economy.

How do we do this? Internally, Kelly Franklin and the Field Services unit are looking at a fast-track system. If we could get people determined eligible and signed plans within days, for people who are clear about what they need. Good target populations are dislocated workers, people whose occupations were in failing industries and were laid off; folks who are on unemployment who have disabilities and barriers to employment; folks who have finished educational programs and have degrees but who are no longer working, or are underemployed; DVR will also partner with agencies that are great at connecting people to employers and WorkSource partners. There is a benefit to waiting until we get our budget.

Mr. Larson says that he and Ms. Ruttledge and Ms. Brouner meet on a regular basis and recently the Council crafted a memo regarding those funds. There has been a lot of partnership in examining that.

Mr. Brandon likes Ms. Ruttledge's plan, and thinks that people with disabilities are losing jobs faster than the general population. Will DVR be contacting people they have served in the past, to remind them that they may still be eligible, and a person could go through the VR program again? The Workforce investment board can work with VR on that. In providing services to people who may be dislocated, some of those people may be homeowners. People with accessibility issues and transportation issues could benefit. Personal transportation for people to maintain employment might be helpful.

Ms. Ruttledge says that these are the people they want to be able to serve, people who are currently employed, but have employers who reduce their hours.

Ms. Maher points out that Medicare is cutting back on the purchase of motorized wheelchair. Green building is happening all over. The state should hire people with disabilities to build them.

Ms. Carr's agency gets referrals for Vocational Evaluations. She works with a lot of Deaf or hard of hearing people and helping people get hearing aids, or other assistive technology could be helpful in a customers' successful VR process.

Ms. Brouner asks two questions: In DVR she has heard people talking about customer recidivism. What she has heard is that post employment services are not often utilized. How will we convey the benefit of a change in thinking to their staff? The second question is about figuring out how to help staff, if people are feeling responsible for the cost of their caseload management, how can counselors feel comfortable managing their case loads in mind of costs?

Ms. Rutledge says that she thinks those are very good questions and ones that DVR will be thinking through.

Mr. McCallum asks what is DVR's plan in terms of trying to use the resources without additional staff? Will this mean more contracted services?

Ms. Rutledge thinks that there is still capacity within DVR and that it won't effect their workloads too much, if they use a fast track approach for people who already know what they want and need.

Mr. Brandon thinks that VR nationwide has often had this problem. A marketing firm might help, not just to inform the public of DVR services, but also to inform the DVR employees that while we used to do business in a certain way, but for this time period, we will do it differently.

Ms. Carr asks, is the money DVR uses earmarked by disability? Are there a certain number of dollars for this disability and a certain number for that?

Ms. Rutledge answers that the costs of services are determined by the individual receiving services and their needs. DVR can go back and separate it out by disability or by services used, but as an analysis tool, but not as a planning tool.

Mr. Larson thanks Ms. Rutledge and the full Council for participating in this discussion.

10:45 a—11:00 a

B R E A K

State Plan Discussion—

Mr. McCallum talks about the recommendations that the SRC has made to DVR. There was a memo to Paul Vertrees crafted by the planning policy and evaluation committee. The memo suggests that the wording change in the State Plan. He directs the Council to Tab 7 in the meeting notebook. The Planning, Policy & Advocacy Committee crafted a memorandum to Paul Vertrees,

who is coordinating the State Plan this year. What they did, was look at the current DVR State Plan, reviewed the three goals they have. They offered some alternative language in the memo regarding those three goals. With congress putting pressure on State Government to succeed with federal investments from the Recovery Act, the goal is larger numbers of people with disability achieving employment, but also quality outcomes, successful numbers, which is a tension in the process. The memo lists some strategies for maintaining that balance. In addition the committee proposes two additional goals. "1. Increase the number of individuals achieving employment who earn a living wage with benefits and/or who may be eligible for union membership. 2. Increase the availability of long term supports needed by individuals to achieve and sustain supported employment."

MOTION: That the State Rehabilitation Council accept the April 17, 2009 Memorandum on State Plan Input as recommendations for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's consideration in the development of the 2010-2013 Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan. He further moves that the Council's April 17 recommendations be included with other Council recommendations when the Council submits its 4.2 (c) report in March 2010.

Motion made by Martin McCallum.

Motion seconded by Bill Murray.

Discussion: Paul Vertrees would like to acknowledge Mr. McCallum's and Ms. Brouner's leadership on this. They worked well on this and it has helped a lot. Mr. Brandon asked if these recommendations were acceptable to DVR, will there be negative impact? Mr. Vertrees hopes that any impact would benefit DVR and help them do business well. Mr. McCallum acknowledges that Ms. Colwell worked hard on this as well. There are State Plan Forums in Spokane on May 8th, in Tumwater on May 11th and May 21st in Seattle. We are hoping for council members to attend these meetings. Mr. Larson calls for the vote.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. McCallum would like to echo Ms. Ruttledge's sentiments about OSPI's participation on the Council, especially regarding transition efforts. He encourages active recruitment for the appropriate position within OSPI. Mr. Johnsen points out, OSPI has the ability to appoint a person to represent them, and for the Governor to approve that person.

Agency Reports

Martin McCallum – Workforce Board—

Part of the state statute that created the Workforce Board requires the development of a state plan for the Workforce Development system as a whole. They call it "High Skills, High Wages" and is developed by the Workforce Board. The legislature voted and adopted that plan. DVR has been identified as a lead for implementing parts of it. The legislature has asked that the Workforce Board think in long terms on this, thinking ahead for the future workforce. The Recovery Act funds bring money to assist with the shortfall of available resources for the National Labor Exchange system. There has been a bump up and one time increase in the available money for three grants in the workforce investment act. This includes assistance for dislocated workers, unemployed and low income adults, worker retraining and large bump up in funds for youth

employment and training programs, and for the first time in 11 years, a chance for a summer youth employment program. Low income youth getting paid work experience. Soon there will be recruitment efforts in news, to sign up for the summer youth employment program for kids living in poor families. Youth with disabilities should also be included in this. They will use AmeriCorps volunteer recruiters to get the word out. The funds are from the U. S. Dept of Labor. They put on a one-day economic recovery forum, which will be held at SeaTac on May 12th. It is a statewide event with an aggressive agenda focusing on Green Jobs. They will be talking about U.S. Dept of Labor grants which are competitive in nature. There will be a legislative panel to talk about the actions of Workforce legislation. There will also be a discussion about high demand populations. There will be representatives from State Agencies as well in the areas of transportation, health care, energy, broad band communication to discuss their plans for stimulus funds in those areas. There are many streams of moneys, the more we learn about them, the more we can leverage our portions to do the best good in areas of need of stimulus.

Mr. Larson thanks Mr. McCallum, and asks how are educational institutions affected in this time? On one hand, everyone is cutting back and reducing costs, but there are stimulus funds for those areas as well?

Mr. McCallum replies that the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges has been thinking about working toward establishing courses of training in high demand fields, establishing centers of excellence and training programs focusing on high demand fields.

Mr. Brandon points out that in our region, there is a state that is not accepting stimulus money. He asks Mr. McCallum and Ms. Ruttledge, since they both participate in the Workforce board, has anyone thought of asking to take that money for Washington State?

Mr. McCallum replies that Dick Thomson volunteered to be the Stimulus Czar for the Governor, and he said that originally, states hoped that stimulus money would come with flexibility for the governor to choose how to spend. Possibly because of the lack of accountability with financial bailouts in the “toxic assets” issues, the money came with a lot of structure. Instantly there were people offering suggestions of how that recovery money could be redirected.

Lou Colwell – Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI)–

Lou is not here to offer a report.

Sharey Cleveland – Section 121 Tribal VR–

Sharey is not here to offer a report.

Sandra Carr–State Independent Living Council (SILC)–

The State Independent Living Council (SILC) met January 28th. The state plan for independent living is under construction, and Mr. Honan is working on that. Trina Forest is a new member. She is the Director of the Center for Independence in Lakewood. Eric Raff from the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing spoke at the meeting, because some independent living centers are

having hard times serving people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. He was there to offer information about all the services that his agency provides as technical assistance. They offer video phones attached to high speed internet. The Sorenson is free; they install it and will allow some communication between people and independent living centers. They are examining the costs of interpretation services. The SILC are still working on their Logo contest. They got six logo contest entries, none of which were exactly appropriate. They have extended the contest until July and opened it to any person with a disability. Joelle Brouner spoke at the SILC meeting and gave everyone WSRC annual reports on disc, and made the suggestion of working closer together to help advance independent living and Vocational Rehabilitation. They also talked about the Yakima valley school closure and budget reductions. They talked about how the Association of Centers for Independent Living of Washington State (ACILWA) is now a 501c3 agency, and they have hired Lucille Wall as their Executive Director. She starts May 2nd. She comes from Ohio.

Ms. Brouner asks, now that ACILWa is a 501(c)3 could they establish a contract to share costs in the interpretation services so that they could get a group discount rate on their insurance, or attendant care or interpretation services, for access to the insurance/attendant care/interpretation pool?

Ms. Carr thinks that almost all deaf people now have a video phone in their home. So the simplest thing would be for all centers to get a video phone.

Appreciations:

Mr. Larson presents Mr. McCallum with a memento of appreciation. A clock that reads, "Presented to Martin McCallum in appreciation of his leadership as Council Chair in 2008 for his service as Chair of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council."

12:00 p –1:00 p

L U N C H

Perspectives from the field— LeAnne Raines, Lead VRC in the Silverdale DVR office

Ms. Raines loves working with people with disabilities. She loves helping them achieve their goals, especially transition students. She thinks the Supervisor at the Silverdale office does a great job and that the Silverdale office is a great place to work. She thinks they are all good team members, everyone is there to help people with disabilities go to work. She believes they have strengths that compliment one another to assist customers to go to work. She has been a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for 12 years. She started in Seattle, then moved to Bremerton and now is in Silverdale. Now transition students, mostly just people with disabilities, but now people with developmental and other disabilities. She was a recruiter, where she recruited people with disabilities for her employer. She did job placement and voc rehab in private companies. She has seen a lot of changes in rehab services through the years. She works with North Kitsap, Bremerton, school districts. She prepares students to be ready for work once they leave school. They take applications at the high schools and she attends IEP meetings at schools with customers and potential customers. She is trying to increase the number of 504 student applications. She holds meetings with transition coordinators and school counselors and psychologists. She has worked

with psychologists in the area. One anecdote she told was about a man with the wrong diagnosis. She has been helping do trainings for psychologists and school counselors to ensure that does not happen again. She tries to help students be better prepared. They work with school districts and independent living programs, they meet with schools and customers to help determine needs and supports for people and develop partnerships in the community to benefit customers. The local office works closely with DVR around transition, some schools do better than others. They try to make the schools an equal partner in the process of transition. If the school district places a person in a job, she can help provide trainings for those persons. She is a transition trainer for the state, along with Maureen Roberts and Patricia Sparks. One thing that they have developed is a resource guide for the school districts that is a poster, that shows what resources are available. She passed around a handout that is a smaller version of their poster. It is also available online, and with larger print for accessibility.

With transition students, she has found that the reason they are unsuccessful in the workplace, is that soft skills are not developed when kids are young. People with disabilities often do not get taught to do things for themselves and be independent. She has a rough draft of a brochure that has been produced, that talks about soft-skill building, like communications, social skills, teamwork, dependability, work ethic, self advocacy, self awareness, physical mental and social supports. They are also developing a “skills for successful employment in the community” checklist, so that parents, teachers and other community partners to help with skill building at young ages, prior to their transitions into the workforce, and postsecondary education.

She is also involved in developing an Assistive Technology website, and does presentations with many community partners in the evenings at local schools.

Ms. Raines believes in partnerships in the community. She believes it is important to make and build those and learn from each others’ strengths. For example there was a recent case: one of her customers had barriers to employment. She had a man who came to her office, who she was unsure about whether she would be able to help him get to work. His diagnosis is that he has severe mental retardation, he is nonverbal, he is autistic, he has bipolar disorder with depression, anxiety and panic attacks, especially when routine is changed. He has anger and a short temper if his routine is changed. He had behavioral issues including self stimulation, maladaptive behavior, ritualistic behavior, hearing loss and health issues with blood clots. He lived in a local institution; he was the first customer out of that local institution to find a competitive job. The reason he got that job was the partnerships made within the community. One partner was an autism specialist, to determine what barriers needed to be addressed, which was paid for by another partner at DDD, where they could determine a plan to transition into working with her DVR counselor. They determined that he needed structure in the form of routine, and a way to know what to expect in his day. So they decided that all his meetings with Ms. Raines would be on Mondays at 11:00. They took a photo of Ms. Raines for him, so that before his meeting with her, he could look at that photo and know that he was going to see her that day. The Frances Haddon Morgan center paid for the camera to take photos that he needed to prepare for his routine. DDD paid for a community based assessment, using the same method with the photos to prepare for his transitions

and the employer wanted to hire him. DVR paid for the intensive training. DDD paid for long term supports. Francis Haddon Morgan Center paid for the camera, which would take photos of his transitions, they also bought items for him, tools with which to do his job. His job is to sort nuts and bolts from scrap metal, to keep it from being just thrown away. The employer purchased a monitor to make sure he did not wander off, as he was wont to do occasionally, but it never became an issue. Now he has a digital micrometer which he uses measures different types of metal with, in order to sort them. So, all these partners were involved, and they are the key to successful rehabilitation: DVR, DDD, Francis Haddon Morgan Center, the employer, the customer, the counselor, the person doing the autism assessment, etc.

Mr. Johnsen asks, is this modeled by the state, or after the state? She answers no. This is just what they do in Kitsap County. He asks, when the CRPs and DVR are doing the same thing, what is her response to a customer who says they are getting the same leads off the internet doing their own research as the CRP is giving them. Ms. Raines thinks sometimes that's a valid complaint. It does depend on the level of support a customer needs. Some customers can do self directed job searches in addition to the CRP giving those leads, but also if they are finding the exact same job leads, it may be time to talk to the CRP and find out what is going on. It is the role of a Counselor to keep in touch with those CRPs. One thing that the Silverdale office does is have the customer select the CRP vendor they would like to work with. They can interview the CRP, talk to them and look at their statistics with success rates and the jobs that they specialize in.

Ms. Brouner asks, how do you try to reach 504 plan students? She answers, 504 students do not have to prove a disability, they just say they have one, and then they get a 504 plan. She reaches out at presentations to the teachers, at school districts for referrals. She meets with 504 coordinators. She is hoping that teachers will send the students to her presentations.

Ms. Rutledge announces that Ms. Raines is one of the highest performing VR Counselors in the state. She engages with customers and partners, her performance was about 70+ plans written with 50+ rehabs. She carries a caseload of around 150 customers.

Debrief of Thursday Customer Input--All

Mr. Larson points out that we had our customer forum, and also a focus group yesterday. Mr. Larson asks for input. Mr. Murray co-facilitated the focus group yesterday with Sandy Adams. She can't be here today but she did a great job planning that with Ms. Brouner. He felt like he stepped into a well prepared event. He found it well attended, with valuable information. He valued the process a great deal. Mr. Murray talks a little bit about the content. For the majority of the group there were 8 people present. Four of those spoke the majority of the time. Ms. Adams and Mr. Murray went through a list of 6 questions, which they were given time to answer and discuss further. They were articulate, bright, communicative, and daring in sharing their concerns. There was a wide variety of information shared, as is typical a lot of it was complaints and concerns, but there were positives mentioned as well. Several things that kept coming up were issues about orientation and information the customer receives about what the VR process is about. It was not clear from their perspective what was offered by DVR. There were several insightful statements,

one was from a woman expressing that as long as she is a good advocate for herself, and she figures out how everything works, then she can make it happen, but what she needs is a Counselor. There people were asking for a counselor, which meant from their perspective that they did not feel like they were getting counseling and guidance. They were describing barriers, but not identifying them as barriers that could be addressed. For example, a woman worked in a grocery store, and now that she is in a wheelchair, she could not do that anymore. Another woman had childcare concerns. They did not identify these as true obstacles and things that DVR could help them with.

Mr. Harrison had felt apprehensive before the discussion about how it was going to play out, because we have never participated in this kind of focus group before, but he found that it was very informative.

Ms. Brouner found people articulated their emotions around adjustment to newly acquired disabilities. She heard one person say “I don’t know what to do when I get a job interview, and I have to say that I’m in a wheelchair now,” and how people maybe need more support around newly acquired disabilities.

Mr. Larson had helped on the committee that developed the questions and content of the focus groups. We would welcome future focus groups because it was very informative.

Ms. Ruttledge would like to use the focus groups as a contributor to their comprehensive needs assessment.

Mr. Larson talks about his experience as the Master of Ceremonies in the forum. He had a playful and engaging presence in the forum that really drew out peoples’ input. The most poignant comment we received was from a woman who was concerned with how welcome people of color are within DVR.

Mr. McCallum talked about a woman working at a grocery store, who had sought promotion but keeps getting passed over for promotion. He wonders if there are ways DVR can help her.

Ms. Ruttledge answers that DVR wondered and asked if she had engaged with her union, and that perhaps if she didn’t see a future there, that DVR would be able to help her find that future.

Mr. Brandon asks, does DVR have an interpersonal skill development component? His experience is that interpersonal skill development assists with self advocacy and independence.

Ms. Ruttledge says that Workstrides offers interpersonal value based trainings. Each office may take a different approach.

Ms. Brouner asks, is there a way for people to observe, with customer mentoring or peer pairings?

Ms. Franklin answers that there is a lot of value in that.

Mr. Abe-Gunter mentions how one woman felt that sometimes VR Counselors maybe just read the file without really understanding the barriers that someone has to achieving a good employment outcome. That she addressed it with the Counselor, which she addressed it with the supervisor at the local office, and she still felt that they did not fully understand the barriers.

Ms. Ruttledge finds it humbling to hear people talk about their experiences. It is difficult to hear their concerns and their criticisms, and important to hold ourselves accountable for those shortcomings.

One thing we would like to try again, that failed this time, was to try to have the conference call option at our forums.

Say Hey had 50 people, employers, Worksource staff and a lot of interaction as a networking event.

2:15 p – 2:30 p

B R E A K

New Business or Discussion—All

Discussion of Joelle Brouner's job performance.

There is an evaluation form that the council will fill out, involving questions about her performance and her job duties. If you want to talk about anything that isn't on there, feel free to write in or include extra pages. With the economy, we aren't talking wage increases. But we can help her become more effective, and this is that opportunity. Deadline? End of the month. We will also send it electronically.

There are meeting evaluation surveys in the back of your notebook. Please return those today. We can email those as well.

Feedback about the meeting? Jim asks, the forum was earlier. The 1:00 start time? How did this work for everyone?

Mr. Johnsen says that he liked the daytime. He thinks other meetings have gone too late.

Mr. Murray liked being able to meet with his committee personally to have a half hour to do group work.

Mr. Abe-Gunter enjoys having more DVR staff around for questions and answers as resources.

Mr. Larson thanks Ms. Brouner for any preparation.

Don Brandon started with DVR in 1971, when they bought his books and tuition so he could go to college. They helped him with assistive technology, braces, so he could go to school without his chair. He participated in VR in Alaska, and he has been involved in Independent Living, starting

the furthest north Independent Living Center in the country. He was director of programs in Hawa'ii. Work with easter seals. He was one of the first people at Dept o Justice to be an ADA coordinator, affirmative action officer, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Committee Reports—

Executive Committee—Jim Larson

The committee met at the end of each month this quarter. You can read in the notebook what they have met about so far. Including budget discussions with DVR for the SRC's budget for the 2010 fiscal year.

MOTION: That Jeff Abe-Gunter attend the Behavioral health conference in Vancouver, June 17th 18th & 19th, with travel paid for by the Council.

Mr. Mcallum Moves

John Harrison Seconds the motion

Discussion: Mr. Abe-Gunter thinks he does a good job representing the Council there. And DDD does pay for his time and salary.

Vote: Passes unanimously.

Customer Satisfaction & Program Evaluation—Jeffrey Abe-Gunter—

Mr. Abe-Gunter reads Tab 3, and the mandates involved in the committee. He does not believe that we have requested formally. Sponsoring the forums and summarizing trends. Collaborating on the needs assessment with DVR. They are meeting monthly. They met in February. There is a summary of that under Tab 3 in your notebook. Sandra Carr, John Harrison, Jerry Johnsen and Jim Larson are the members. Mr. Johnsen provided info from CAP on trends, and Mr. Larson is thinking about a CRP customer satisfaction surveying effort. Perhaps CARF could provide information about that. He suggests visiting the Surveys and Assessments link on the WSRC Website. He would like to look into how the SRC can collaborate better and more closely with DVR on surveying effort. At the July quarterly meeting we will talk about employer survey results, and Kelly Boston will elaborate on that for us. Ms. Rutledge says we sent out 7k, and got back 2k responses from employers in a surveying effort.

Employer & Rehabilitation Partnerships—Carol Maher—

Carol Maher, and Don Brandon participate in this committee. Ms. Maher is cycling off of the Council in October. Between now and then she might strengthen our relationship with the State of Washington. She would like to help to make connections between DVR and other state agencies where people with disabilities might find work. In the Department of Justice, Correctional Industries and other agencies that might offer jobs for people with disabilities.

Member Recruitment & Participation—Bill Murray—

Mr. Murray has not had to meet just with his self, had monthly phone conferences. Most members have attended each month. They have focused on recruitment and attendance and surveys they're very fast and easy surveys.

Mr. Murray had a great committee meeting yesterday and the members were very engaged in a brainstorming activity around recruitment. Sandra Carr, John Harrison and Carol Maher are on the committee and all attended their meeting.

Mr. McCallum reapplied, Mr. Abe-Gunter is reapplying. Ms. Maher, Mr. Harrison, Ms. Butts, Mr. Murray, Ms. Colwell and Mr. Tefft are all coming to the ends of the service terms next quarter.

Planning Policy & Advocacy—Martin McCallum—

Mr. McCallum talks about how his committee met monthly. The motion to provide input to the state plan is the product of that. Congress will take action this season on reauthorizing the workforce investment act or giving it a new name. He is interested in hearing from Ms. Rutledge to hear her thoughts, she agrees. This planning and policy committee will have an opportunity to see drafts of federal legislation and to prepare letters on their opinion about aspects of legislation, while the clay is still soft.

Confirmation of Action Items and Assignments—

- Email Ms. Brouner's Job Performance Survey
- Email all the surveys in the back of the notebook
- Letter has gone already, to the legislature.
- Progress between quarters, Tab 2: individual commitments. Council members can see how they progress on an individual level.
- Newsletter and website will be updated soon.

MOTION: Adjournment

Bill Murray moves we adjourn.

John Harrison Seconds the motion.

Jim calls the meeting to a close at 3:19pm.

3:19pm

A D J O U R N