

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 14, 2017

ATTENDEES

Jill Crosser, Randy Davis (joined by phone), Kim Drew, Page Eastin, Pam Fitzsimmons, Gary McDermott (joined by phone), Lori Moore, Rosie Thierer, David Mitchell (ex officio, non-voting)
IVRS Support Staff: Kenda Jochimsen, Kelley Rice, Lee Ann Russo, Kathy Slater

Other Attendees: Matt Coulter, Ben Humphrey (noon speaker), RSB Supervisors: Monica Brockway, Adam Dahlke, Eric Evans, Steve Faulkner, Sue Frice, Jeanne Helling, Mike Howell, Kelli Hugo, Holly Mateer, Leslie McCarthy, Sally Prange, Chad Pratz; RSB Asst. Bureau Chief Charlie Levine

ABSENT

Nicole Cleveland, James Smith (non-voting), Scott Turczynski, Alex Watters

CALL TO ORDER

The March 14, 2017, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting was called to order by Chairperson Rosie Thierer at 10:40 a.m., with introductions.

QUORUM

A quorum was established with 8 voting members present.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Pam motioned to approve the agenda, Lori seconded. **Approved unanimously by voice vote.**

December 6, 2016 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

Page motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Randy seconded the motion. **Minutes approved unanimously by voice vote.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Rosie Thierer

Rosie requested volunteers for the Nominating Committee, reading from Article VI(b)(c) of the SRC By-Laws and providing a brief explanation of what the nominating committee will do. Volunteers who offered to serve on this committee are: Jill Crosser, Page Eastin, Pam Fitzsimmons and Rosie Thierer. This group will present their slate of candidates at the June meeting, at which time SFY18 officer elections will take place. Rosie noted that nominations can also be made from the floor at the time of the elections.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – David Mitchell

Administrator Mitchell provided these updates:

- A replacement is needed for Marketa Oliver's Workforce SRC representation as she is no longer employed with IWD. Changes are currently taking place within the State Workforce Board to become consistent with WIOA regulations. They will transition from 9 to 33 voting members. David noted he is currently a non-voting member but will change to a voting member with this transition. He will work with the state board to fill this vacant SRC position. The hope is to have the position filled this summer.
- David is on one of the Future Ready Iowa (FRI) Alliance workgroups called *Getting Iowa Credentialed*. Because of a conflict between today's SRC and FRI meetings, Resource Manager Lee Ann Russo is substituting for David at the FRI meeting. The goal of the credentialing workgroup is to have postsecondary education or training strategy recommendations to the governor by September 2017. Work-Based Learning (WBL) is another initiative in which David continues involvement. Although this is about work experience for all Iowans, he stated this effort is even more critical and needed for persons with disabilities. Iowa is one of five states participating nationally, which has a big push towards apprenticeships.
- Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) State Board updates include Courtney Greene, who was formerly the communications director for Iowa Workforce Development and is now their new Operations Manager. IWD is moving forward with a new web-based case management program through a contract with Geographic Solutions. Core partners are considering options to add modules that will allow other systems to access the IWD system as well as report federal data. There is still ongoing work to do with partners regarding this, such as determining financial costs, who pays, etc.
- IVRS hosted and facilitated a two-day Rehabilitation Services Agency (RSA) regional meeting in December 2016 with VR and Blind agencies from Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska. An RSA grant recipient for technical assistance – WINTAC, was also in attendance to assist with how to incorporate performance measures into agency performance and planning. IVRS Resource Manager Jeff Haight is providing assistance with this very data-driven task.
- Iowa is the lead agency with the Department of Labor's Office of Disability and Employment Policy's *Employment First* project. David provided a handout of the Community of Practice 2017 webinars, noting the February webinar had over 100 registered participants. Information about these webinars – how to view them or participate – is on the IVRS website.
- As part of Iowa's 2017 Employment First plan, there is ongoing focus in the Ottumwa area, partnering with the South Central Behavioral Health Region. Priority areas are provider transformation for four targeted providers and building networking skills for the region in the area of business engagement.
- IVRS strategic planning is now an ongoing discussion to improve service delivery and not just a static document that is updated every few years. Based on feedback and work with Dr. Groomes, the following have emerged as areas of focus:

Developing working relationships with business and industry, good communication regarding transition initiatives, and implementing the use of technology to increase field staff efficiencies. Kenda is spearheading a work group that will review strategic plan efforts occurring through feedback from the local offices.

- IVRS is making a conscious effort to reduce the size of the agency. There are currently five vacant positions – all in ASB staff, which will not be filled, as well as Matt's CFO position. This does not mean the agency is cutting service delivery; positions that come open are carefully reviewed. Pre-ETS positions have been filled in the field as we have to change the dynamic in which we serve – assisting people at a younger age provides a better employment outcome.
- David was in Washington, DC, last week and was able to interact with staff at the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Iowa has positioned itself well, and David's sense after talking to others is that IVRS isn't "missing the boat" with what the agency is doing.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW – Matthew Coulter

Information presented in Matt's handouts were as of the end of January, so the information has changed since that time. The appropriation cuts for the 2017 current year were better than originally anticipated and ended up being \$61,862 rather than \$265,036. Rather than take smaller cuts from several appropriations, all of this was taken from the VR Basic Support appropriation. Had the \$265,000 cut occurred, IVRS would have been facing a significant federal match deficit. Current projections show positive cash flows through 2018, with a \$2 million deficit in 2019 – which is one reason why IVRS staff positions are not being filled.

The agency is still spending carry forward dollars for 2016; not quite half of that has been expended. The agency is running a little behind in spending these dollars, but David has some ideas for how to use the carry forward dollars so that we can spend in the year allocated.

Beginning in 2018, IVRS will reduce the tuition reimbursement rate from 60% to 40%. This will save approximately \$2 million. Matt noted that management recognizes the impact this has on those receiving this service and it wasn't a decision arrived at easily, but is needed to allow IVRS to continue to provide a variety of services.

IVRS caseloads have seen a slow but steady decrease of those coming to the agency for services. However, IVRS is serving more due to the potentially eligible, which makes financial projections more difficult. Employment outcomes are on-target and actually a little ahead of this time last year. The bottom line Matt wanted to convey to the SRC is that the agency is able to continue the mission of helping people with disabilities to obtain jobs.

The federal government remains under a continuing resolution, which means appropriations are locked at the prior year numbers. If a budget approval is lower, it will have a dramatic impact on the sustainability model.

Matt explained that indirect costs are administrative overhead, which is mainly generated by the Disability Determination Services Bureau. This bureau adds revenue to IVRS and those dollars are used to pay for administrative costs. When we are lean and efficient, the indirect costs are lower, but we then have less revenue for VR as a result.

SSA revenue generated by the Ticket to Work program has been about \$1 million – 1.5 million at this point in time. Revenue generated by this program has been less recently.

Regarding the financial graphs in the handout, Matt highlighted:

- State Revenue is slowly building since the recession, but is not going up as quickly as expected. The Revenue Estimating Conference is currently meeting, Matt cautioned that reductions in revenue could mean reductions in VR appropriations.
- The IVRS Waiting List shows those in the MSD or SD categories are generally entering service within a week.
- Cumulative successful closures are ahead of FFY16 at this time.
- Personnel expenses are running slightly ahead in January and this is because there were three paychecks in this month.
- IVRS operations expenses are running higher due to a \$175,000 computer purchase, which happens about every four years.
- There has been a decrease in the dollar amount of case service authorizations, the reason for this is unclear.

The SRC presented a card to Matt and thanked him for his service to SRC and to the agency.

David noted that with Matt's departure, there is a potential to disband the SRC Financial standing committee. There will be a discussion opportunity at the June meeting as this is not noted on the March agenda. Resource Manager Jeff Haight will be assisting David with a Financial report to the council – this information will still be provided to members as the agency desires to continue apprising the council and receiving their feedback on financial matters.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

VR Service Delivery – Page Eastin, Committee Chair

Because of absences, Page noted their group was small, with less than half their members present. Rather than just reviewing numbers, they used the time as an opportunity to discuss what more can be done to address service delivery. Jeff Haight was present at the meeting to answer any data questions they might have about the survey results. This committee will identify points they believe need attention and report back to SRC.

David shares at his field office visits what the agency does with the SRC survey. He indicated that feedback isn't as positive with those who do not obtain good employment outcomes. He conveyed that the committee's actions will be a good thing to message out to staff. David noted that staff have access to the survey information but struggle to interpret the data. The satisfaction survey is on the SRC website.

Finance – Pam Fitzsimmons, Committee Chair

Pam had no additional comments as Matt Coulter provided a detailed presentation.

As Sherri Clark is also on the Finance committee, David asked her to discuss her experience with decreased funding, managed care and her perspective on how it affects Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). Sherri's organization, Nishna Productions, has contracts with all three Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). Nishna is assigned the reimbursement rates (floor rates) based on revenue received in 2013-2015, which presents a problem as their funding is based on past revenue, which must be used for current – and potentially higher expenditures. Historically, they have been able to negotiate higher floor rates, but effective April 2017, they will no longer be able to negotiate rates. This change will eliminate over \$332,000 dollars in revenue for Nishna. Some CRPs will not be able to survive. Without room to maneuver and limited resources, it is difficult to get quality staff and provide staff with competitive benefits.

Lori Moore inquired about what can be done – what options are available? Sherri responded that some parents contact the State Ombudsman's office. Some parents have tried a grievance process with the MCOs, but were told there wasn't a process, which is not true.

Outreach – Lori Moore, Committee Chair

The legislative reception date for next year has been set. The date is February 14, 2018.

Fruit, small pastries and coffee along with the flyers will be distributed at tomorrow's reception. Lori asked for small donations to offset the cost of some items – donations should be given to her.

The committee met with Amy Desenberg-Wines and Jessica Kreho, with the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment (ICIE) for the first time at today's meeting. IVRS/SRC has a contract agreement with ICIE. The coalition has over 200 diverse stakeholders, (MCOs, provider agencies, family members, individuals, etc.). Family members are also oftentimes professionals who work with people with disabilities. They discussed how they can reach out to the average family member who might not otherwise be in this profession. Lori noted that parents and families don't have the same perspective as a professional and need to be included in any coalition discussions.

The Outreach committee identified two areas of focus: Section 511 and Pre-ETS. They will develop a plan to solicit feedback regarding what is working and what gaps exist. Committee members received a report from Amy Desenberg-Wines that provided a brief overview of the Coalition and a vision of the work they hope to accomplish with IVRS. The board secretary was asked to make this report available to all SRC members after the meeting.

LUNCH PRESENTATION – Ben Humphrey, Attorney, Iowa Workforce Development

Ben is an attorney with IWD as well as a legislative liaison, along with their agency's deputy director, Myron Linn, who is the former manager of government affairs at Pella Corporation. Ben's presentation was about the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation, IWD information, as well as the State Workforce Development Board.

State Budget. Ben is also a part of the Revenue Estimating Conference – which makes a projection every December and upon which the governor makes budget recommendations; Ben updated SRC on the current state budget. In December 2016, a decline in projected state tax revenue forced \$115 million in state spending cuts for the current fiscal year. He learned of an additional \$131 million needed this week, however, the Department of Management indicates it is too late in the year to make these cuts. The plan is to dip into the state's emergency fund.

Workforce Development Boards. One of Ben's duties is handling the bill to change the structure of the state workforce development board. This board was created at the same time IWD was created – as well as regional advisory boards – it is very workforce centric. Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the boards were grandfathered in as alternative entities. WIOA replaces the 1998 WIA legislation; the intention is to align the workforce system so they can collaborate (across education and economic) systems to serve the needs of jobseekers and employers. WIOA has a required membership structure, as well as an alternative entity path to satisfy the mandate requirements.

Core programs/core partners – must have a unified state plan – or a conditional letter of approval that notes any additional changes needed. The membership structure of the Workforce board needs to be changed, increasing voting members from 9 to 33. This is the smallest number they can have under Iowa code. They tried to keep the smallest number possible, with a majority business representation. In addition, unlike some boards, the governor is a required member, and not a governor-designee. Currently, this board meets quarterly.

Thirteen of 15 boards have agreed to become WIOA-compliant boards with the hope of all in compliance by July 1. Local boards function as a regional hub to ensure business needs in the region are being met and align economic efforts with workforce efforts. The governance structure has been a positive process for everyone to understand what they need to do. HF572 is the Workforce State Board bill to modify their membership and duty requirements and Ben is optimistic it will pass. Myron has worked in the legislature for an extensive period of time – as has Ben, and they believe few lobbyists will register against it as they have carefully “dotted their i's and crossed their t's.”

WIOA allows the board to create standing committees to do some of the work/board duties, with the committees reporting to the board at large. David is the chair of the Disability Access Committee (DAC). One reason to forming the DAC early at the local level is because of a WIOA-required certification to meet the physical and programmatic accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

IWD Update. IWD is looking at how to utilize their grants in a way that allows more access to their programs. One activity is looking at a new case management system. They've mapped 46 processes of how they currently do things, and now must look at how they want to do things under the new case management system – allowing them to provide individualized services based on each person's unique needs and desires. They will be leveraging the internet to increase accessibility, which will particularly benefit those in rural areas and those with mobility issues. Previously a person had to go to a workforce center to register for services. They plan to provide more of a 21st century experience, e.g. access via texting, phone apps, etc. IWD is also looking at an RFP for a new employment insurance benefits system. These are two big projects in close proximity to each other. Ben noted that Iowa will be at the forefront of the country's workforce management systems.

SRC member Randy Davis asked if Ben could also reach out to the Oskaloosa CIL as Randy sees an opportunity to work together, which Ben plans to do.

REHABILITATION SERVICES REPORT – RSB Bureau Chief Kenda Jochimsen

Rather than read through her *RSB Update* handout, Kenda asked if there were any questions or comments. David noted they have responded to item #6 on the handout. This is regarding Disability Rights Iowa's letter to DHS stating dissatisfaction with the IVRS/DHS collaboration on Section 511. The IVRS response is that they disagree, have an agreement with DHS to expand capacity and support partners to communicate information about those interested in employment. The focus should be on those interested in employment services.

Kenda summarized Performance Measures, WIOA Section 116, establishing performance accountability indicators and reporting requirements that apply across the core programs to assess a state's effectiveness in employment outcomes. She noted she has been bringing Performance Measures to the council since 2014, including all WIOA policy updates. It has been a process – for example, when she first brought potential policy revisions regarding job retention to SRC members, the SRC response was to wait on commenting until receipt of the final rules. Then, in September 2016, Kenda was able to provide the additional regulatory clarification to the council and the SRC agreed with the job retention policy IVRS wished to establish.

The performance measures will change how the agency reports data. IVRS has written the policy straight out of the regulations in a very pure form and she believes the performance measures will be more meaningful. The complete policy manual can be seen through a link on the IVRS website.

Looking ahead, Jeff Haight, who is the agency's Resource Manager for data, added that IWD Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data will go in the IVRS case management system, however, the two systems won't be ready to talk back and forth for a couple of years. IVRS will begin the required quarterly submissions as of July 1, 2017. IVRS funding is on a federal fiscal year and not a state fiscal or calendar year.

IL AND PARTNER CONTRACTS UPDATE – IVRS Resource Manager Lee Ann Russo

David Mitchell provided this update for Lee Ann since she was attending a meeting on his behalf:

- IVRS reduction in state funding could have been applied to decrease Centers for Independent Living (CIL) funds from IVRS, however the agency decided to make cuts elsewhere so as to not reduce the CIL allotment in mid-year. Randy Davis expressed his appreciation for their funding.
- Two CILs have developed employment programs which will expand capacity and choice for job candidates served under the traditional IVRS program. Access 2 Independence in Iowa City is approved to provide Job Development, Customized Employment, Supported Employment Job Coaching, and Job Follow-up and Non-Supported Employment Job Coaching services. It is anticipated that these services will be available through the Central Iowa Center for Independent Living in Des Moines as well.
- Seventy-one individuals are working with IVRS' Bob Hendrickson in the IL program. The three-year wait list has been whittled down to just a little over a year wait time, which reflects a big improvement. IVRS has reached out to 45 clients to request they make contact with Bob as they will be coming off the waiting list. Bob is working with 19 clients currently; most need services such as widening of doorways, modifying bathrooms and building ramps.
- IVRS hosted a meeting originated by Page Eastin of the Department of Human Rights with CIL Executive Directors and interested stakeholders. Due to the nature of the core services each CIL is mandated to provide, a discussion was held to outline options for Self-Advocacy, Self-Determination and Peer Mentoring services. The CILs are in the process of providing models on how these services are currently delivered in order to be incorporated into a shared curriculum. Training materials and a tool listing current resources that exist in each area of the state is under development.
- Ongoing meetings are planned between IVRS, SILC, and IDB to schedule annual visits to the six Iowa CILs.
- IVRS participated in several webinars about independent living.

Randy updated the group on what is happening at the South Central Iowa Center for Independent Living (SCICIL) – they just bought a building, which will give them a lot more room to collaborate with other agencies as they now have the space. Currently, they are modifying to make it accessible and hope to be in by April 1.

They provide the legislated Core services – in which they are meeting the requirements for their federal funding – as well as some additional services. They have taken a look at their community to determine what else might be needed and are focusing on

education and employment for persons with disabilities. Mahaska county has a 17% drop out rate. They have a tutor to help those who need to get their GED. Randy noted that math is the biggest difficulty for GED students. Their tutor – who is volunteering, focuses on this area, assisting students to improve their math skills. They have a contract with IVRS to provide 15 computers a year, which means that each student can have a computer to use as needed. They also provide free employment prep services. Currently, they are working on a website to help link people needing services with those who can provide those services.

SCICIL has established a system to work with anyone who comes through their doors on things like individual development accounts, resumes services, etc., as they try to help people in the advancement of their own personal “toolboxes.”

LEGAL UPDATE/DD COUNCIL UPDATE – IVRS Staff Attorney Kelley Rice

The first funnel date for bills was March 3, which is the deadline for bills to come out of committee. If they fail to make it through committee, they are dead for this year, but can be brought back next year. The second funnel date is March 31. Bills that make it through the first funnel could die by the second funnel date. Kelley provided an updated handout regarding the status of bills of interest to SRC and IVRS.

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP) REPORT – Page Eastin

Page noted that two of their nine staff members have been laid off due to budget cuts, with a last day of employment of March 31. One person served with their Office of Deaf Services and the other was the coordinator of the Youth Leadership Forum – which was discontinued in 2017. Another vacant position will remain unfilled for an indefinite period.

DHR is finalizing a draft Executive Order to submit to the Governor's office. The Executive Order is for the executive branch to align their policies with the Employment First initiative to serve people with disabilities. Iowa is an Employment First state, and David is the chair of the Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP). This is expected to be the first Executive Order Kim Reynolds will sign as Governor and they hope to coordinate the signing with EFSLMP. Kenda asked if language could be incorporated in the order that notes the funding from executive branches that will have an impact on Employment First services, but at this time, it was decided the timing for a funding request was not appropriate.

Page served on a team with SRC member Alex Watters to revise the Job Candidate Handbook, which now includes a guide to developing an IPE. There were significant changes to the handbook. She also provided suggested revisions to these IVRS web pages: Business Services, Partners, and Job Candidates as part of an IVRS update to their internet site.

CAP is also providing technical assistance to the regional Disability Access Standing Committee as they begin the physical accessibility assessments.

As noted in Lee Ann's report, a planning meeting was initiated by Page with VR, IDB and CIL directors to address the need for training opportunities for self-determination, self-advocacy and opportunities for peer-mentoring for individuals employed at subminimum wage. Five of six centers participated. She noted the SCICIL did not participate, but did handle in-house. CAP and staff from the Development Disability Council are taking the lead in the development of a curriculum that can be utilized across the state. ICIE is also involved in this effort.

SILC UPDATE – Gary McDermott

Gary provided a handout to members, highlighting in his update:

- The 2017-2019 State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) has been submitted and approved. Development of the plan included a survey of consumers and public input meetings across the state.
- The SILC Executive Director, two SILC council members and one CIL director are active participants in the Iowa Olmstead Consumer Task Force. They are participating on the development of a new DHS Olmstead State Plan and monitoring the implementation of the Iowa Medicaid Managed Care system, advocating on issues of concern relating to its implementation.
- The SILC Executive Director, several CIL directors and SILC staff signed an op-ed piece, written by Jane Hudson, the director of Disability Rights Iowa. The letter for the Des Moines Register was an effort by the Iowa Disability and Aging Advocates Network (IDAAN), in response to the governor's press release that Iowa has a very good mental health services system, which they believe is misleading. They also wrote a letter to legislators to thank them for their service to their constituents and to tell them about IDAAN and what the group represents.
- Regarding the Refueling Assistance legislation Gary, as well as members of IDAAN and the Olmstead Community Taskforce, supported SF 353 as well as a companion bill, HF 417. This legislation will benefit Iowa veterans with disabilities as well as all citizens with disabilities who drive but may need assistance at a gas pump. Gary expressed disappointment that this bill did not make it through funnel week for the third consecutive year. They hope to improve next year by adding veterans to advocate for this bill as well.

STATE WORKFORCE UPDATE – David Mitchell

David noted that Ben Humphrey handled any workforce updates with his lunch presentation.

PREP FOR LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION – David Mitchell

Supervisors joined the meeting with a round of introductions by all present. David noted that the focus of the reception is to thank legislators for their support and also to show what the agency does with their financial support. As noted by the noon speaker, the REC is estimating a \$191 shortfall for next year, so this is a good reason why it is important to demonstrate the need to maintain current funding. David added that this year's flyer was created to be as simple and clear as possible with a key message that shows for every state dollar, the agency receives additional federal dollars. Cuts in the IVRS state appropriation will significantly cut federal dollars. The brochure reflects the positive return on their legislative investment in IVRS.

Lori noted they would like to get an accurate accounting of attendees, and would like those who stop by to be asked to sign the guest book. If they don't sign, find out who they are and write it down. The set up this year includes food and coffee instead of goody bags.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion for adjournment was made by Kim Drew and seconded by Pam Fitzsimmons; all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

The legislative reception will be Wednesday, March 15, from 7 – 9:00 a.m., Capitol 1st Floor Rotunda (west/south corner).

The next SRC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 6, 2017, in Des Moines at the Jessie Parker Building, Knudsen Room, from 10:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., with committee meetings beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting minutes approved by the Council on this date: _____

SRC Chair – Rosie Thierer _____