

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MAY 8, 2018

ATTENDEES

Sherri Clark, Kim Drew, Page Eastin, Pam Fitzsimmons, Lori Moore, Rosie Thierer, Brian Warner (non-voting), Scott Turczynski, Alex Watters.

IVRS Support Staff: Steve Faulkner, Jeff Haight, Brandy McOmer-by phone in p.m.,

Kathy Slater, Kelley Rice-afternoon, Lee Ann Russo.

Other: Jill Avery, interim CAP representative; Vicki Carrington, IVRS Info Specialist

ABSENT

Richard Clark, Nicole Cleveland, Randy Davis, Gary McDermott

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Alex Watters called the May 8, 2018, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting to order at 10:47 a.m., with introductions.

QUORUM

A quorum established with eight voting members present.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Page motioned to approve the agenda, Scott seconded. **Approved unanimously by voice vote.**

FEBRUARY 13, 2018 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

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

INTRODUCTIONS/PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment at this time. Jill Avery, with the Client Assistance program, is attending with Page Eastin. Page now works in a new position with Iowa Workforce Development. She has applied to the Governor's Boards and Commissions office to transition within the council to be the Workforce representative. Jill sits in today to gain insight into the CAP role within SRC.

Alex commented about the *Bottom Dollars* film screening, noting he had viewed it and found it to be a powerful and moving documentary. He strongly encouraged SRC members to attend one of the screenings around the state. The film viewing is 55 minutes, followed by a panel discussion. Page added that if members cannot attend, the film could be purchased or downloaded for rental at BottomDollarsMovie.com at a minimal cost.

VOTE TO SELECT SFY19 SRC CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

The Nominating Committee (Turczynski, Moore and Drew) presented their candidates to the council for the 2018-2019 officers. They have nominated Alex Watters as Chair and Scott Turczynski as Vice-Chair; both have agreed to accept the nomination. Vice-Chair Watters asked if there were any other nominations from the floor, there were none. Rosie made the motion to vote, Lori seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously for Watters to serve as Chairperson and Turczynski as Vice-Chair for SFY19.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING MEMBERS

David Mitchell presented certificates to CRP representative Sherri Clark; Parent Training and Information Center representative Lori Moore; Advocacy representative and SFY2017 Chair

Rosie Thierer; and in abstentia, SFY8 Chair Jill Crosser for their collective 22 years of service on the council.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT/WORKFORCE UPDATE

- SRC videos are in the finishing stages with commentary that will help orient and lead new members into their roles on the council. There are three videos of approximately 5 – 10 minutes. Look for those on the IVRS website.
- IVRS received a Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy inquiry from WINTAC (Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center) about customized employment and job carving. WINTAC is researching and quantifying the cost of creating competitive employment opportunities. Resource Manager Michelle Krefft and the Waterloo office business team reached out to several area businesses to participate in a focus group on this topic. The businesses provided data from their HR departments. Businesses that participated include Master Brand Omega, Hy-Vee, Roskamp Champion, and Den Herder Veterinary.
- The *Sioux City Journal* features an article about SRC Vice-Chair Alex Watters regarding building accessibility for those with disabilities.
- Heartland Finishes, a division of Heartland, of which SRC member Scott Turczynski is a founding partner, will offer opportunities for students to learn more about the job opportunities and the skills needed in the construction industry.
- SRC member and IVRS counselor Brian Warner is engaged in activities related to goals in the state plan that relate to transition services. Brian is working in partnership with the Region 2 IowaWORKS WIOA Director of Youth Services. Money needs to be spent on transition services and they are utilizing it on work experiences for those ages 24 and under. The work experience program lasts for 6 months and will pay the prevailing wage. Success stories from these efforts include someone trained in janitorial work at an elementary school who will be hired full time. The position will offer good benefits and pay. Another is a high school dropout, age 21, who is obtaining his equivalency degree. He is working at an auto body shop and the hiring manager for the shop just happens to be a VR success story.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Resource data manager Jeff Haight presented information through the period ending March 31. FFY19 federal funding remains unclear, however, IVRS projections continue to show a positive cash flow until 2021. This is based upon current information and factors such as a fully staffed payroll, etc. Reviews of any deficit possibility occurs monthly at the Budget Team meeting.

The state appropriation match decreased \$122,651 from last year. In addition, eleven full-time employee (FTE) positions were cut – down from 255 FTEs to 244. David assured that this is not a crisis situation; the agency has anticipated and planned for any possible FTE reductions.

Federal changes in tracking the agency's Period of Performance has an impact on budget reporting. Previously, the fiscal year was determined according to when the services were received; now it is by the authorization date. The college tuition authorizations have a specific impact on the fiscal year from which the money is pulled.

The plan is that IVRS will match all federal dollars in FFY19 – third party contracts have helped IVRS to meet the match requirements. It is important to remember that the number of potentially eligible the agency is serving is increasing. These students are not tracked in IVRS case numbers; staff also are in schools working with students – reducing capacity to serve in other areas.

LEGAL/DD COUNCIL UPDATE

No report due to staff attorney prior commitment.

CAP REPORT/WORKFORCE REPORT

April 5, 2018, was Page Eastin's last day with the Department of Human Rights and her position is in the process of being filled – she anticipates the new Client Assistance program (CAP) rep will be hired and attending the September SRC meeting. In her new role at IWD, Page will be a part of the Ticket to Work partnership and hopes to increase third-party contracts through her endeavors. IWD is the Employment Network, following up with job candidates as VR services end in successful case closures, ensuring ongoing job success for job candidates and creating a win-win for all. She will also lead the State Workforce Partners Network.

DAC: Page will remain on the Disability Access Committee (DAC). They have reviewed all workforce centers for ADA compliance regarding physical access to services. Action steps after the review may mean removing barriers or moving the workforce center elsewhere. Page sent out a checklist of things needed to make a facility welcoming and accessible for a variety of disabilities.

DAC Training: The local DACs are leading the training on disability etiquette, which also includes an IVRS member. A series of training webinars was held in May, providing information on how to provide good information and referrals to meet other needs in order to obtain employment – such as childcare, clothing, transportation, etc. Mike Lightbody from Iowa Compass demonstrated accessing resources from Iowa Compass, 2-1-1, and Life Long Links. The training was open to all IowaWORKS staff and partners, including IVRS. Future training includes how to use the Purple Virtual Remote Interpreting (VRI) app on iPads and tablets. All IowaWORKS offices have either an iPad or Android tablet with instructions on how to install the app. This will allow staff to provide on-demand ASL interpreting services to job seekers.

CAP Videos: Page created an orientation video about CAP's role and responsibilities. Kathy Slater will send out the video to SRC members, with David noting that he will ensure the video also appears on the IVRS internet website. April has incorporated the video into her new counselor orientations. The *Bottom Dollars* documentary is rolling out with the video "Great Debate;" both will be on the Department of Human Rights website.

Jill Avery, with CAP, commented that IVRS has a history of being a leader in their partnering efforts, noting it is not a new agency effort just because of WIOA legislation. David encouraged SRC members to continue to promote VR collaboration to expand capacity, particularly in light of the staff reductions.

INDEPENDENT LIVING/PARTNER CONTRACTS UPDATE

David referred members to his recent Friday news update. Bob Hendrickson and Alice Kehr provide support for the IVRS Independent Living (IL) program. They have done a great job of decreasing the program's waiting list and providing services that help individuals who do not have an employment goal to maximize their independence and avoid institutionalization. IVRS' IL services operate on a small budget with items averaging less than \$3,000 per participant. Seventeen individuals have met their independent living goals since October 2017, with assistance regarding items such as bathroom modifications, chair lifts, ramps, scooters, etc.

State Plan – Lee Ann Russo coordinates the agency's state plan. A handout created by Lee Ann was distributed at the meeting – she noted SRC members could access the Plan through the link provided in the handout. In order for IVRS to receive federal funding, RSA has to approve the plan. The Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment (ICIE) is under contract to help IVRS with needs assessment data. Page 2 of the handout notes the three statewide goals

of the Unified State Plan, with VR goals noted within this. Of particular emphasis to IVRS staff and the SRC is the Plan's focus on collaborative partnerships, access to the career pathway process, and the value of transition as well as business services. Additional focus is on service delivery to targeted areas such as the Employment First initiative, as well as targeted groups such as individuals with autism, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, mental illness and those with developmental disabilities. The plan is now waiting for RSA approval.

LUNCH PRESENTATION – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

April Stotz discussed her work on staff development and training. She has included several IVRS administrative staff to help assist with trainings, for example Resource Managers Richard Clark may speak on quality assurance, or Mary Jackson regarding transition services. Staff training helps to create a team effort and a sense of unity and engagement. She also has brought in outside parties to talk about foster care – which may possibly help transition students, autism training for accommodations that might be helpful to this population, as well as outside experts on brain injury. Besides being a critical need for staff, effective training helps staff to feel engaged and enthused about the work they do. Another goal of April's training is the inclusion of someone with the particular disability they will be discussing. She noted the importance of getting first-person specifics about the types of things needed. This type of disability training will include both VR staff and partners.

David also wants to develop leadership skills among staff in order to help them develop professionally; he has made a financial commitment towards this. This includes area office supervisors going through the state's in-house Performance and Development Solutions classes on management and supervising others. RSB Bureau Chief Steve Faulkner shared that April's position is fairly new, and prior to the addition of her position, the only training staff received was policy training. Steve conveyed that in the Mason City office, Brian Warner (SRC member/VR counselor) took a personality disorder class, and Steve asked him to present it to their staff. Brian took the initiative to create his own two-day training, which he then presented to his colleagues. Steve added that he and April are working on an entrepreneurship training as a Pre-ETS training for students. Lori said not to forget the wealth of knowledge that comes from families, who can be included as trainers, too. Kim noted that when people work together, they learn more about each other, resulting in more effort to connect with those who can help.

This year, IVRS is collaborating with the Iowa Rehabilitation Association (IRA) for the IVRS/IRA conference. There will be four tracks: Leadership, Disability-Specific Trainings, Ethics Overview, and Business Partnerships. The conference is Oct 17-18, 2018. Additional information will be available soon. All staff can attend. April is hoping to recruit ISU to record this for staff who will not be able to get away to attend.

Steve added that development of a Google Drive folder would help to store training information. Although it will take some time to get it organized, April has added several different labels to make it easier to find information.

RSB UPDATE

Steve Faulkner presented his update, noting his first six months in his new position is coming up soon. In his first three months, he traveled to each of the area offices as well as tasked himself with getting to know each of the workforce partners. In Regions 9 and 10, he shared a PowerPoint presentation and presented on the opportunity afforded to all of them under WIOA. He has taken this initial time as the Chief to get to know where there are needs. WIOA did not increase funding, but it did mandate doing more and working together with workforce partners. His takeaway from this experience was that IVRS cannot operate in a silo and leaders cannot dictate to people that they need to work together. We are better together when we recognize the strengths of each partner.

IVRS is getting better quality closures – even if fewer. He shared several examples from around the state of how IVRS and its partners found ways to make things happen to move towards successful case closures. Examples include finding funding to assist a young man to finish his last year of college, increasing the focus on assistive technology, and assisting a job candidate in farming whose needs did not fit into the current ISE program processes.

RSB POLICY DISCUSSION

Brandy McOmber conveyed that the Coordinating Council reviewed the policies discussed today, as did the VR Service Delivery SRC committee. She provided a brief overview of changes.

CASE SERVICE GUIDANCE: Any additional comments should go to Brandy by May 21. A great deal of verbiage was removed in the policy that did not make sense or was not necessary. Some information was moved to more appropriate policy sections. There are no significant additions to this policy. Page added that members of the VR Service Delivery Committee are adding documents to Google Drive, where subcommittee members add their comments. There were minimal changes or additions by the Service Delivery committee, as they agreed with the Coordinating Council that the policy was too wordy.

Lee Ann commented that under “F. Case Work Guidance” regarding the frequency of contacts, that it should make sense for the particulars of the case. The committee would like more specificity regarding how to manage caseload. Page added that job candidates feel disconnected from the process, so this will help them to establish what to be expected. Now staff will have a conversation with the job candidate regarding needs and expectations, with flexibility to accommodate.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR POST-SECONDARY TRAINING: Any additional comments are needed by Thurs. May 10 – send to Brandy.

RSA-911 guidance indicates how funds are spent, so they have tried to mimic this to create a more appropriate policy. The basic assistance amount (fees, tuition, books and supplies) is per a fee schedule and is applied in a manner that does not reduce any federal, state or local funding assistance. It requires a conversation with the job candidate of all funding opportunities in the community to ensure funding is maximized.

Comments:

- On page 5 of the policy, SRC members asked that the formula is clear regarding what is “unmet need.” Brandy will clarify.
- David said that Occupational Skills training policy would include certificate programs, so they would be paid under that policy. There has been an explosion in those programs – and because many are new, IVRS is trying to determine how to document work readiness and develop these options, but they do not fit within the post-secondary guidelines.
- As requested, an addition to the policy will note that SSA beneficiaries are exempt from the R-406 financial inventory.
- Page encouraged caution in policies – or exceptions to policies that could slow down the process for a job candidate, e.g. summer classes, full time status. For a program that begins immediately after high school, policy should accommodate this scenario without requiring an exception. She noted that some offices have a blanket policy of not

authorizing for summer school. Another example is for someone who is unable to take a full course load, which delays the process of work readiness. Alex relayed that a class that is offered only at a certain time could put someone a year behind in moving forward. Brian added that these situations need to be looked at on a case-by-case basis, e.g. someone with anxiety might not be able to take a full caseload.

- Page asked if the fee schedule would be included in the policy. Brandy said it is not a part of the policy – it is sent out to staff separately. It does include other programs in the fee schedule. Brandy will incorporate in the policy training about having a conversation with the job candidate, when an exception is appropriate, timing issues, etc.
- David responded to the question, “How is the fee schedule determined?” Regulations state that the schedule cannot be set so low as to not be affordable. Fee schedule amounts are calculated at the actual Regents rate. For those programs that do not qualify, it will be the average rate. David added that as a part of the discussion, there would be information provided regarding financial literacy.
 - Jill inquired about the financial literacy component; she wanted to ensure that when completing the worksheet, the type of disability is considered regarding the ability to complete the worksheet. Lee Ann said the counselor and job candidate complete the worksheet together, which reflects a change for staff.
- Regarding massage therapy schools, David noted they are usually accredited – and if not, IVRS would probably not support except through an exception.
- Page sought clarification on page 4, item #3: *If a job candidate has graduated from a college program then returns to school to study a different discipline, the job candidate is considered to be starting over and is funded according to the year the job candidate is studying the new discipline.* David noted they will clarify the phrase “funded according to the year the job candidate is studying the new discipline.” David felt that removing the words “starting over” may help to clarify that funding will go by the year the school considers them to be.
- Lee Ann posed a question about developmental programs or remedial training – is anything included in this policy that addresses the need for a student to take coursework to get up to the level to take the collegiate level coursework? Alex noted that at his college, they did not see higher performance levels for students who took those remedial courses. Morningside College dropped remedial coursework, and instead encourage students to utilize resources such as the writing lab. Lee Ann also noted that BUILD (Bethel, MN) and NEXT (Northwestern in Orange City) are programs like the University of Iowa’s REACH program. They are post-secondary transition programs for students with learning or intellectual disabilities, which the federal government is considering for financial aid.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach – Lori Moore, Committee Chair – Lori will make formatting changes to the SRC brochure and asked Kathy to send out to the larger group. She noted that ICIE’s Amy Desenberg-Wines and Jessica Kreho asked that SRC members let them know what they can do to help facilitate conversations and collect data for things such as policy discussions or 14c certificates. Lori also reminded the group that the Community of Practice calls continue to occur monthly. The schedule is on the IVRS Employment First web page. The webinars are accessible on YouTube and include captioning.

VR Service Delivery – Page Eastin, Committee Chair – report included in the earlier policy discussion.

AREA OFFICE ACTIVITY UPDATE: TRANSITION SERVICES

Supervisor Leslie McCarthy presented what is happening in the Des Moines office regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Activities include working together with Des Moines Public Schools under the TEAM (Transitioning to Employment and Advocating for Myself) contract. This collaboration provides new, embedded in the classroom program services to high school students with disabilities. Eligible students include those covered under Section 511, may be under an IEP or may be a student who meets the provisions of or under a 504 Plan. Leslie provided a calendar of their 8-week summer program, which focuses on the five required Pre-ETS activities (job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities, workplace readiness training and self-advocacy instruction).

The number of students they work with has increased, from 50-75 students to > 500 students. TEAM begins with group activities to determine if a student would benefit from the program with a goal of eventually having a work experience. This is the first year of the program.

The effort brings schools and businesses together by ensuring that school staff are a part of discussions from the very beginning – it helps to have VR staff present in the schools. The *Washington Post* wrote [a story about the Dee Zee business partnership](#) with Saydel High School. A student was offered a job – and out of this experience, the school is going to revamp their curriculum to address a particular type of welding. This has the potential to allow students to get work experiences that might lead to employment at a well-paying job. Another positive – schools are offering job coaches once they see tangible results. Leslie is seeing a shift in what employers are willing to do to attract good employees.

SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT

- Group 1: an opportunity to talk with Vicki Carrington, agency Information Specialist, about what SRC envisions for agency communications.
- Group 2: an opportunity to talk to Supervisor McCarthy about an Employment First contract in which the Des Moines and Cedar Rapids offices are getting technical assistance.

ADJOURNMENT

Lori made a motion for adjournment, Rosie seconded; all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

The next SRC meeting is Tuesday, September 11, 2018, 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 Vice-Chair – Alex Watters _____