



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting  
Nebraska VR Office  
August 11, 2015**

**Meeting Minutes**

*Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under “Master Calendar” at least 5 days prior to each meeting.*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Pam Baltzer, Nancy Drevo, Gayle Hahn, Rita Hammitt, Seamus Kelly, John McNally, Brad Meurrens, Jonathan Moeller, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Mark Schultz, David Scott, JD Simmons

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Robert Danner, April Isaacs, Vicki Newman, Leslie Novacek, Joni Thomas, Susan Williams

**VISITORS:** Corrine Holtz (substitute for Leslie Novacek), Sandy Peterson (substitute for Susan Williams)

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Janet Drudik, Lindy Foley, Angela Fujan, Ashley Hernandez, Christine Hess

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:05 a.m. public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Introductions were made to welcome Corrine Holtz who was substituting for Assistive Technology Partnership and Sandy Peterson substituting for PTI.

No other public comment or announcements were given.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

JD Simmons moved and Gayle Hahn seconded the motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

**APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2015 MINUTES**

Vicki Rasmussen moved and Pam Baltzer seconded a motion to approve the May 12, 2015 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **UPCOMING MEETING DATES**

Kipp Ransom proposed the following dates for future SRC meetings:

- October 13, 2015
- February 9, 2016
- May 10, 2016
- August 9, 2016
- October 11, 2016

Gayle Hahn moved to set the dates as proposed and Seamus Kelly seconded the motion to approve the meeting dates. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **ACTION ITEM FOLLOW UP**

- Kipp Ransom shared that members have been being notified via email with meeting information. Kipp reminded the council of the importance of RSVPs for meetings to ensure meetings have a quorum. Kipp stated the executive committee is working on increasing membership, especially members with disabilities and additional business members.
- Kipp discussed possibilities of subcommittee selection. John McNally stated he will visit with the different subcommittees during their meeting time.
- The action item stating: Are the current subcommittees and their structures meeting the needs of the SRC and possible changes due to WIOA, was discussed. Council members revisited the last meetings discussion on subcommittees. Mark Schultz shared the Employer Service Committee is very important in the dual focus of businesses and clients. Mark stated he does not see a need to add any different committee at this time but stated under changes of WIOA assessments of individuals in sheltered workshops may need to be addressed when additional guidance is received from WIOA. Vicki Rasmussen stated she feels the current committees are meeting the current needs and possibly add or blending some committees later if needed based on the WIOA regulations and needs. ***Kipp Ransom stated discussion of a subcommittee to address the needs of sheltered workshop and any other possible WIOA needs will be added to agenda for October as the regulations roll out.***
- Vicki Rasmussen reported the proposed changes to the client satisfaction survey by the client services committee were accepted and made. Vicki stated they will be monitoring the survey responses to see if any additional changes or additions need to be made. Vicki shared a copy of the client satisfaction survey with the council.
- Angela Fujan reported that she and Vicki Rasmussen were on a committee to establish a code of conduct for Nebraska VR. Angela shared some issues discussed were the issues of gifting between clients and counselors, as well as the boundaries of personal relationships. Angela shared that the draft code of conduct is currently being reviewed by their legal council and should be finalized soon. Angela stated the finalized copy of the VR code of conduct will be presented to the council for their support.

## **COUNCIL'S ADVOCACY ROLE**

Kipp Ransom reviewed that at the May council meeting the council discussed the SRC's role in advocacy and the previous work of the council meeting with the state senators. Mark Schultz reviewed the role of the SRC as stated in WIOA (*read from May minutes*). Mark stated that the ultimate goal of the outreach is to ensure Nebraska VR is fully funded. Mark stated VR in the state of Nebraska has been fully funded for many years and does not share the same struggles as some other states. Mark shared that advocacy to increase awareness of what VR does and sharing success stories could also be a function. Kipp shared his experiences with Nebraska VR and the SRC; Kipp discussed the possibilities of what has facilitated VR being fully funded for so many years. Angela Fujan reminded the council of Sarah Chapin's presentation on the constant contact email system at the last meeting. Members discussed if the constant contact messages are effective or personal enough. David Scott shared he was surprised when meeting with senators in February that a lot of information was not known and stated he feels the council has a job to educate and that email will not facilitate that. David also stated that he believes that when the council reaches out to state legislature that it should be done with one voice. Brad Meurrens shared that he feels the constant contact email can serve a role in sharing some information but meeting in person adds the interactive portion that is necessary. Kipp Ransom shared that due to changes with regulations VR is not able to fund or solicit funds to sponsor a meal. Brad suggested if there are members who are uncomfortable with cold calling senators perhaps creating a small group of members who are comfortable and interested in outreach could man a booth setup in the capital at a designated time. Seamus Kelly stated it would be most beneficial to have a booth setup during the month of October due to it being Disability Awareness Month. Members discussed possible table setups in the Capitol with literature and videos playing. Members willing to volunteer at a booth in October were Gayle, Jonathan, Brad, and Sandy, any additional volunteers can contact Angela or Kipp via email. Kipp stated ***Sarah Chapin will work to establish plans and materials for October's Capitol booth and contact booth volunteers regarding possible dates.*** Brad shared he thought the Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards was wonderful last year and stated that type of information of successes would be a great way to share what VR does with senators. Members discussed holding the Entrepreneurs of Distinction Awards at the Capitol could be very impactful to senators. Angela Fujan stated she can look into ***scheduling the awards at the capitol and holding the SRC meeting at the state office building.*** Brad Meurrens shared that setting appointments or arranging meetings with select senators can be very beneficial in assuring time for a conversation face to face with the senators or their staff. Members discussed when the most useful time to meet and greet with senators would be based upon the Senators' legislative session and scheduling. Brad shared he believes it is very important to find a few select senators who will be champions or strong supporters of disability employment and they will then take the information shared with them to the remaining senators. Kipp concluded that the council will have a presence at the capitol in October including a video and members manning a booth and will work to hold the Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards at the capitol, as well as continuing to meet with senators in February. ***An advocacy work group with David, Pam, Nancy, Gayle and headed by Brad will work short term to organize a plan for February Senator outreach.*** The work group will meet following October's council meeting to strategize for February's outreach to Senators. David Scott moved to develop a work group to address senator outreach strategies for February, Gayle Hahn seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion passed by unanimous consent.**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Client Services**

Janet Drudik shared VR is finalizing the *Discover the Job that Works for You* booklet and the committee reviewed it. The committee determined Education Quest needed to be added to the resources portion of the booklet. Janet reported the committee discussed the importance of adding a note regarding benefit analysis to the booklet. Janet shared that the booklet is utilized for both students and adults.

### **Employer Services**

Lindy Foley reported Christine Hess visited with the committee and discussed the applications for the Entrepreneurs of Distinction Awards. Lindy reported the winners selected by the committee are Dave Fricke of Babyboomers' Cycles, Mike Hersh of Patriot Family Chiropractic and Pam Baltzer of Ascent Tutoring. The alumni winners selected were Jake VanHorn of VanHorn Saddlery and Vern Roso of Upholstry Rescue. JD Simmons moved to approve the selections as submitted by the committee; Vicki Rasmussen seconded the motion to approve the five Entrepreneur of Distinction Award recipients. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion passed by unanimous consent.**

### **Transition Services**

Gayle Hahn shared the committee discussed broadening the scope of its focus. Gayle reported the committee discussed not only focusing on transition, but also other sub groups of clients that may need additional attention, such as the developmental disability population and/or clients in sheltered workshops to address some of the WIOA requirements. Rita Hammitt shared they have been working to ensure that VR and schools will be working collaboratively. Angela shared an updated VR transition services brochure and the 5x7 laminated card to assist referral sources identify potential clients for VR Services.

### **MEMBER SERVICE RECOGNITION**

Mark Schultz recognized members for their council service. Seamus Kelly was recognized for completing his second term with the council. Kipp Ransom was recognized for completing his first term with the SRC. Kipp stated he will continue with the council for a second term.

### **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR**

Kipp Ransom asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members. Gayle Hahn shared that she spoke with a father of a client who stated they were very happy with VR services and felt VR assisted with everything they needed.

### **CAP REPORT**

A written CAP report was provided to members. Vicki Rasmussen reported an overview of the report. Vicki stated an issue arose when a client whom had used up all of their allotted credit hours, Vicki reported that Angela Fujan with VR was able to approve the additional credits. Vicki reported another client needed to complete some additional computer courses and she was asked to take a memory assessment with Madonna to establish how she could best learn and what type of course would be best for her. Vicki shared the client was not willing to take a memory test with Madonna or at the Nebraska VR office. Vicki shared the job she desired was not appropriate and that was not communicated correctly by the placement rep.

### **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS**

Members were provided with written reports from ATP, CAP, VR Statistics and NSILC. Brad Meurrens summarized the written SILC report he provided. Council members did not share any feedback.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mark Schultz reported that tomorrow there is a partner kickoff between the WIOA partners to begin the discussion on how they are going to work together and how they should interact. Mark shared some real life scenarios will be posed to the group to see how they would be worked through. In addition, Nebraska VR with the Department of Labor are co-hosting WIOA focus groups. Lincoln held a focus group at the end of July and groups will be held August 13<sup>th</sup> in Grand Island, Norfolk, North Platte and Scotts Bluff via the VR teleconferencing system and another group will be held in Omaha August 20<sup>th</sup>. Mark shared one of the biggest concerns is increasing pre-employment services for high school students. Mark shared that he has been encouraged to apply for a couple grants including a grant in which they would increase technical assistance for those employers who would be willing to focus on customized employment, or job carving. Mark shared that this grant would create training for VR staff and employers. They have also looked at the Career Pathways Grant, which would support the development of a strategy to increase employment advancement for those with disabilities. Mark shared they have been receiving a lot of recognition in particular from the National Council of Disabilities which put together a publication on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Mark reported that in the report Nebraska VR was recognized as the model for disability employment in the nation. The report highlighted the “meet you where you are” model, rapid engagement and Project Search programs. Mark shared with this new combined plan with the Department of Labor some new goals for Nebraska VR need to be established. Mark requested suggestions for state goals.

Council members broke into small groups to discuss: 1) In terms of employment services what would a better world look like in five years? 2) What would VR's role be in that improved world? Ideas shared from small groups were:

### **VR's Role:**

- Project Search Model
- Relationship building with employers & agencies
- Spokesperson with business background to talk to employers
- Business Advisory Committee
- VR coordinates services, businesses & agencies
- Coaching
- Training
- Educating
- Starting younger with students & families
- Benefits education
- Transferrable job skills – career paths
- Soft skills

### **VR Leadership's Ideas:**

- Customized training
- Building relationships
- Autism
- Rural services/availability
- Staff retention

Mark stated this input will be used to craft goals that will be shared at October's meeting.

## **INFORMATION**

The Association for State Rehab Councils' National Conference will be held in Seattle on October 31<sup>st</sup> and in the Spring will be held in Washington D.C. Mark shared Nebraska has not been a member of the Association of State Rehab Councils in the past but if any members are interested in attending the conference to notify Angela or Mark and the executive committee will decide on membership.

David Scott moved that the Nebraska SRC join the association and Gayle Hahn seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion passed by unanimous consent.**

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 2:24 pm.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Possible subcommittee for sheltered workshops & WIOA regulations updates discussion
- Capitol information/advocacy booth during October- Sarah Chapin & council volunteers
- Scheduling Entrepreneurs of Distinction Awards at the State Capitol & October SRC meeting at the State Office Building – Angela Fujan
- February Senator Outreach – Advocacy Workgroup (David, Pam, Nancy, Gayle & Brad)
- Join the Association for State Rehab Councils – executive committee
- New VR Goals – Mark Schultz