

**Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council
February 16, 2017
Minutes**

Call to Order and Roll Call: Bill Dunham, ORC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. The roll was called and a quorum established.

Members Present: Bill Dunham, Renee Sansom, Lori Chesnut, William Ginn, Jane Ciorba, Rick DeRennaux, Audrey Farnum, Terrisha Osborn, Melinda Fruendt, Jean Jones, Noel Tyler, Brenda Fitzgerald, Ginger Jaggars and Suzanne Williams

Members Absent: Diana Garrett, Becky Bradshaw, Lisa Graven, Kim Osmani, Ekutan Dannelley, Elizabeth Reeve, Katie Woodward, Wade Walters

Others Present: Barbara Case and Vikki Walls from SILC, from DRS Larry Hartzell, Terri Williams Murphy, Mark Kinnison, Teresa McDermott, Jon Ringlero, Lyuda Polyun, Tracy Brigham, Tahira Johnson, Tiffani Davis and Jody Harlan.

Council Support: Linda Jaco, Director of Sponsored Programs OSU Department of Wellness; Renee Sansom, ORC Programs Manager; and Carolina Colclasure, ORC Assistant.

Consumer Comments/Announcements: Bill Dunham introduced the new ORC Assistant Carolina Colclasure.

Action Items

—Approval of November 17, 2016, ORC Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Brenda Fitzgerald made motion to approve the minutes as presented; Noel Tyler seconded. Motion passed and minutes were approved.

-As there were new people in attendance the Chair asked all the members and the participants to introduce themselves including name, position and agency they represent.

Committee Reports: Copies of reports provided in ORC meeting packet.

ORC Executive Committee Report—Bill Dunham presented and reviewed the written committee report. He also communicated that he will not be attending CSAVR this year.

Planning & Program Committee— In the absence of Diana Garrett, Renee Sansom presented and reviewed the written committee report.

Policy & Legislative Committee—William Ginn presented and reviewed the written committee report. William referred to the client’s success stories and Renee Sansom added that DRS has sent her 7 or 8 more, which makes it a great success for this year.

Transition Committee—Lori Chesnut presented and reviewed the written committee report.

Employment Committee — in Becky Bradshaw's absence Renee Sansom presented and reviewed the written committee report.

DRS Interim Director Report

- Noel Tyler gave the names of the DRS staff that will attend CSAVR; they are: Mark Kinnison, Teresa McDermott, Noel Tyler, Tracy Brigham, Jason Price and Jean Jones. All of them will help with the Hill visits.
- Jean Jones has been focused on the Hill visits and helping ORC with the schedules and topics to be discussed with the legislators.
- She also mentioned that the agency needs to keep up with the Capitol activity coming up because there are several bills that could become an issue for DRS.
- Bill Dunham asked Mrs. Tyler about the budget crisis and she explained that the Agency is trying to do everything they can with the available budget. Priority Groups 2 and 3 have been closed and they are trying to keep Priority Group 1 open as long as possible.

VR Administrator's Report—Mark Kinnison

Updated on:

- The number of closures is up compared to this same time last year; however, the number of applications is down.
- Budget: Kevin Statham has been watching it closely to make sure DRS can serve as many clients as possible.
- The counselors have been asked and are working on closing authorizations that have not completed milestones or clients that have been closed with open authorization to bring that money back to the budget.
- WIOA – Adults there are 2500 clients on sheltered workshops. The next follow up will be on July 27th. The main focus of the agency's services is counseling and guidance.
- WIOA – Students: counselors are seeing an increase in student's interest to have employment.
- The Midwest City office is moving.
- Idabel and Durant offices are looking for new locations.
- The agency has been having staffing issues, there are several positions that need to be filled but they have not been able to due to the lack of applicants. The agency is going to target colleges like ECU and Langston to try and get better applicants.
- Ada office is having staffing issues, they have 4 positions available.
- Bill Hayes is retiring on April 1st and his position will be posted for 5 days to try and fill it internally, if no candidates apply during those 5 days it will be open to the public.
- There is a Program Manager position open in Tulsa that Belen Burkhalter left open when she retired.

VS Administrator Report – Teresa McDermott

- VS #91 staff in Tulsa participated in a public service event at Promenade Mall on Feb 10th where they held Braille demonstrations and helped people with Braille Valentine cards. This helped to raise public awareness of blindness, Braille and what Visual Services does.
- The District 3-H Midwinter Convention was held on February 11 in Stillwater. This was a type of “resource fair” where the Lions that attended could meet and chat with different organizations that might help them in serving their communities. VS had 2 representatives: Chris Wishon and Alisha Norwood from the Enid office.
- OKC-ABLE is happening this week and includes staff members, as well as consumers. It started with 11 attendees but was down to 7 as of Monday due to sickness and other cancellations.
- Irene Martin with DRS has been working with OMES on Thrive Wellness, which is a Governor’s Health Initiative. This information will be rolled out not only to staff but also to consumers, as we have a lot of diabetics and people with other health disorders that this could help. We are working with Irene to facilitate accessibility in all printed materials and websites concerning this initiative.
- OLBPH – the last bin of cassettes rolled out the bay door at the end of December so there are no more cassettes; everything is either been converted to cartridge or digital media. This was a long-anticipated goal of Library Director Kevin Treese as well as former Library Director and Interim Visual Services Division Administrator Paul Adams.
- BEP – we have 3 trainees progressing well through their program; they are completing their classroom work, having already done their OJE (on-the-job-experience). We started out with 4 trainees this time but lost one along the way.

House Bills of current interest to Visual Services:

*HB1861 would remove the management and services to the Older Blind program from the Department of Rehabilitation to other possible organizations or private agencies. This could potentially result in losing VS instructional staff.

*HB2230 would exempt county jail commissaries from priority to licensed blind managers, which would result in loss of jobs and income for some of our licensed blind managers.

Numbers as of 2/15/2017:

Title 1:

Applications:	177
Plans:	131
Closures:	56

OB:

Applications:	35
Service	296
Closed Rehab	37

DRS Field Coordinator's Report – Terri Williams Murphy

- Terri Williams presented the written reports that were provided in the quarterly packet. She pointed out that the only indicator the agency is not meeting is the Successful closures vs unsuccessful closure because it is currently 43.89% and it should be 55.8%, but it is still early and there is time to change it.
- Mark Kinnison added that because of the WIOA changes the indicators will change starting July 1st but we still do not have the information on what they are going to be. The August report will reflect the new changes.

Legislative Report – Jean Jones

State Level

Jean Jones reported on legislative developments affecting rehabilitation and disability services. She gave an overview of major issues gaining legislative and executive attention this year. She noted that the state's revenue shortfalls and the difficulty of financing core state services are dominant issues at this time. Jean's report included the following information:

State revenue: The Governor has proposed tax system reforms including:

Collect sales tax on services.

Collect sales tax for online purchases.

Impose a cigarette tax.

Reduce tax credits to business.

End corporate income tax.

End sales tax on groceries.

Raise motor fuels tax and devote it solely to transportation.

Major state bills of interest:

Services for older blind individuals

HB-1861 by Osborn requires and SB-733 by Griffin allows DRS to direct all the federal and state funds it receives for independent living services to older blind individuals to qualified community-based nonprofit organizations to administer and provide independent living services for older individuals who are blind. The community organization selected would have to be accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision.

Business Enterprise Program

HB-2230 by Rep. Glen Mulready exempts county jail commissaries from the law which gives licensed blind managers priority to operate vending facilities in state and county buildings.

DRS budget and financial operations

SB-80 by Sen. Frank Simpson allows DRS to transfer funds as necessary between its disbursing funds for efficient operations. The bill places certain budgetary provisions in law so they no longer would have to be re-enacted in legislation each year.

Deaf/Blind services

HB-1244 by Rep. Mark Lepak creates the Support Service Providers Act of 2017. This is a shell bill as introduced.

Information accessibility; websites

HB-1429 by Kyle Hilbert and SB-651 by James Leewright require a person to notify a business in writing before filing any civil action relating to websites not being accessible to the visually or hearing impaired. The person would have to give specifics about what standards are not being met. A court would have to dismiss any lawsuit against the entity if it corrects the alleged website defect. An extension of time would also be allowed if the entity has made a reasonable effort to correct the defect.

ODC

SB-722 by Griffin directs the Office of Disability Concerns to use social media and email in its outreach. SB-724 lets ODC partner with other entities to write rules related to the Client Assistance Program.

Autism; health insurance

HB-1309 by Rep. Collin Walke raises the age to which health insurance plans must cover autism, to require health coverage through age 17.

Transportation – discrimination - taxi

HB-1542 by Rep. Emily Virgin requires that taxicab companies shall adopt a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of destination, race, color, national origin, religious belief, religious affiliation, sex, disability, or age with respect to passengers. The bill further requires taxi drivers to comply with existing laws relating to accommodation of service animals. It prohibits added charges for transporting persons with physical disabilities. It requires a taxi service to allow a person to request a wheelchair-accessible vehicle and if such a vehicle is not available, requires they refer the person to an alternate service if it exists.

Hearing aids

HB-1757 by Rep. Katie Henke allows for mail and Internet sales of hearing aids without the person having to have a hearing test by a doctor or licensed hearing device dispenser. The business selling hearing aids would have to register with the Health Department.

Federal Level

The new Secretary of Education is Betsy DeVos.

Tom Price is the new DHS Secretary.

Disability Awareness Day – Jody Harlan

- Will take place on Tuesday March 28th from 12pm – 4pm at the State Capitol. This year's theme is Engage and Empower Access for All. DRS is trying to reach as many participants as possible; the main resource to participants is the website www.okdrs.gov To sign up you just need to access the website from any device.
- Disability Awareness Day is the second largest continuous event held at the Capitol for 23yrs in a row. DRS is expecting this year's event to be the largest event yet.
- This event is the platform to talk to legislatures on behalf of people with disabilities- so register and make sure to go talk to your legislatures.
- Jody will email the Council the information available like Frequently Asked Questions about the service delay for new clients, waiting lists and Disability Awareness Day.

Workforce Systems Update—Melinda Freundt

- The Workforce initiative update will be given by Tracy Brigham as part of her new role with DRS, Melinda will step out of the role.
- Tracy will represent DRS in the Workforce system activities, WIOA initiatives and workforce initiatives in VR and VS with our local board representation. She will also be DRS's representative in the Workforce subcommittee and also as the State Plan Coordinator.
- Workforce Initiative: the System Subcommittee released the guidance at the end of January to the regional and local areas for the plans they have to do, they have to make sure they match the State plans. Tracy will provide more information on how the areas are doing and will send updates as the information comes in.
- ABLE Tech and Charlie Watt are developing templates for the physical and the electronic and information technology pieces that Workforce Centers can put in their plans to address issues on accessibility. This has not been finished yet; however, it should be completed by March.
- MOUs that are coming down the line that State Agencies, WIOA core partners and regional Workforce Centers will have to sign off on is on how the one stop delivery system will operate.
- The other piece the system subcommittee is working on is Center Certification - within the one stop delivery system 3 different areas will be defined: comprehensive affiliate and specialized centers, definitions providing written State guidance and the policy around it. Tracy and Melinda will be working on this for the committee's consideration
- Center Certification will be for those specialized centers where DRS will co-locate - not the affiliates.

Business Services Update – Mark Kinnison

Melinda is no longer working on this project, so Mark gave the update. Basically there is an understanding that there will be a business service partner with all the centers to help. There are other decisions to be made in the future.

SILC – Vikki Walls

- New representatives were elected back in July; SILC is trying to have all members have specific duties and responsibilities - not just be present for the meetings.
- The Statewide Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) which was submitted to NIDLIRR had to be amended; therefore, SILC leadership had to communicate with the 5 independent living centers to make sure they would agree with the proposed amendment. They will be traveling to those centers to evaluate their needs and what they will need them to work on as a result of the amended SPIL language.
- Many of the SILC members participated in a SILC webinar to educate them on the new responsibilities under WIOA; there will be another one in March.
- Vikki has been working with the members that have been selected for committees because some are nervous about new responsibilities and duties. She also participated in her first Commission meeting in December where she was introduced and her second one was in February. She is learning about partners and the support system for SILC.

Program Manager Report—Renee Sansom

Renee presented the written report.

Other Business

Workforce Development Board Report – Thadd Babb

Thadd was absent so no report was given.

PI Unit Introductions – Lyuda Polyun

PI stands for Process Improvement. The unit has 4 functional areas:

1. QA
2. Statistics
3. Policy and Fair Hearings
4. Business Intelligence

The unit will help ORC with the state plan next year.

Their unit is understaffed, so they need some notice when a request has been submitted for assistance.

Adjournment:

Rick made a motion to adjourn; Terrisha seconded. The Motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Next ORC Quarterly Meeting is May 18th, 2017