

**Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council
November 17, 2017
Minutes**

Call to Order and Roll Call: Bill Dunham, ORC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. The roll was called and a quorum established.

Members Present: Bill Dunham, Renee Sansom, Lori Chesnut, William Ginn, Ekutan Dannelley, Rick DeRennaux, Audrey Farnum, Terrisha Osborn, Elizabeth Reeve, Katie Woodward, Melinda Freundt, Jean Jones

Members Absent: Diana Garrett, Becky Bradshaw, Jane Ciorba, Brenda Fitzgerald, Lisa Graven, Ginger Jaggars, Noel Tyler, Suzanne Williams, Kim Osmani.

Others Present: Wade Walters (new member awaiting final appointment of the Governor's office; Shelly Rentz with Central Tech; and from DRS Larry Hartzell, Shelly Bell, Krshika Carter, Thadd Babb, Mark Kinnison, Teresa McDermott, Bill Hayes, and Jon Ringlero.

Council Support: Linda Jaco, Director of Sponsored Programs OSU Department of Wellness; Renee Sansom, ORC Programs Manager; and Irene Martin, DRS support to take minutes.

Consumer Comments/Announcements: None

Action Items

—Approval of August 18, 2016, ORC Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Audrey Farnum made motion to approve the minutes as presented; Katie Woodward seconded. Motion passed and minutes were approved.

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 pointed out that in the future when we refer to W.I.O.A., we should speak out the letters W.I.O.A. as opposed to pronouncing it as an acronym.

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. He also reported that he has gone through steps to get permission to give the Success Stories (included in meeting packet) and Disability Primer to the new members of the House of Representatives and Senate. It was suggested that late January-early February would be the best time.

Transition Committee—Lori Chesnut presented and reviewed the written committee report. They have added Goal 7: Develop and conduct a needs assessment of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employments.

Employment Committee—Thadd Babb presented and reviewed the written committee report.

DRS Field Coordinator’s Report—Bill Hayes

Bill Hayes presented the written report that was provided in the quarterly packet. Mark Kinnison clarified that on page 1, #4 Part B Competitively Employed was 1,879. Then under IV. Closed from Service is 2,067. That is a little misleading because those were closures that had no expenditures. It looked like a discrepancy. July, 2017, is when the new standard indicators go into effect. Bill asked if Rod Van Stavern should come in after the new indicators go into effect to explain them.

DRS Interim Director Report—Noel Tyler:

No report given due to the absence of Noel Tyler

VR Administrator’s Report—Mark Kinnison: Referred to the report Bill Hayes presented.

- Average days from application to eligibility is 30 days, less than the 60 days.
- Average days from eligibility to IPE developed was 2.2 months, less than the 90 days.
- Goal: 60% successful closure rate; fell just short t 53.82%
- Planning an awards ceremony for VR/VS on December 9th. This is annual and will be scaled back due to budget cuts, but the agency is proud of staff and will celebrate outstanding efforts.
- Edmond office has relocated out on Dennis Street.
- W.I.O.A. challenges are sub-minimum wage regulations; focus is on competitive integrated employment. Employees in sheltered workshops will go through DRS application process which will increase counselor workloads. Currently they are at 110-115 caseloads.
- FSLA goes into effect December 1, 2016. Some DRS counselors don’t meet threshold of salaries, \$47,476 is threshold. At that income level they are exempt. Most are exempt. Some work to 60 hours per week. It will be a challenge to comply.
- Budget is stressful. Can’t give career progression to those who have done a good job. Rehab teachers, for example, can be promoted if they go on to get a degree.
- Success rate is impacted by buy-in from clients, keeping cases clean, and reducing no shows which are currently high. Cold Case Unite helps out.

VS Administrator's Report—Teresa McDermott:

- Same Vocational Rehabilitation issues apply to Visual Services.
- Adult blind living experience. It is a 5-day program held annually. At Shepherd Mall for newly blinded who want to remain employed. Internal program to acquire skills. They go back to tell their counselors and say they think they can go to school or go to work.
- October 15 was National White Cane Safety. One event was held at Penn Square Mall on that day and one on October 11 by Oklahoma School for the Blind held at Arrowhead Mall in Muskogee.
- October 27-30 Deaf-Blind Symposium gathered people from across the nation at Sequoyah State Park. National speakers.
- Paul Adams, Noel Tyler, and Teresa McDermott met with Rabih Dow from the Iris Network, a blind center in Portland, Maine.
- Oklahoma Library for the Blind has a new studio technician. This will increase services to the blind.
- BEP secured and opened three new facilities since August of this year. They are developing more facilities. Four trainees are going through the program for vending routes or facilities.
- Finished two months in this position. Seems like just last week.

Legislative Report—Jean Jones:

- At the national level, Congress is back in session. We are currently operating under a continuing resolution. That will affect us in terms of federal funding for all our programs.
- We don't know what will happen with the Affordable Healthcare Act. This fills medical services gaps for some of our clients.
- At the state level, the House of Representatives has a balance of parties—4 additional republicans / super majority 75 republicans and 25 democrats in House.
- Senate has 42 republicans and 6 democrats. There is a new Senate Pro Temp, Mike Schultz, from Altus. A new majority floor leader in the Senate is Senator Greg Treat. He is familiar with rehabilitation programs.
- New chair of senate appropriations committee is Senator Kim David from eastern Oklahoma. She is very familiar with vocational rehabilitation and other social services programs.
- On the House side we have a new speaker, named Charles Dekalb from Atoka. The rest of the leadership should be fleshed out in the next few weeks.
- Drafting of legislation for the coming year will begin by early December bills and will be introduced in early January.

- State budget—for last fiscal year we had a revenue shortfall of about \$1.3 million. A shortfall of about \$700 million is projected for the coming year. It will impact us in the fiscal year that begins this next July. There will be other projections in December, January, and February. There are two or three times when the Equalization Board takes a look at our revenue and updates projections. They are looking at doing some things with tax credits, but there are more things they could do. Efforts may be directed toward education and getting pay raises for teachers.

Workforce Systems Update—Melinda Freundt:

- Unified State Plan has been approved. State Plan team will continue to work. There will be an every-two-year update and every four year rewrite. Team will meet for two days in December and put together a way to work with the eight local workforce representatives in the workforce development areas to help them get ready for milestones 4, 5, and 6. These milestones will be the most critical in the regional planning to get us ready for July, 2017.
- Milestone 3 is going this month and the regional areas are going over the self-assessment document. Each region is doing things uniquely and meetings are going as planned.
- Their local plans and regional plans will have to mirror the state unified plan.
- At 1:00 p.m. today at the State Capitol there is an alumni celebration for W.I.O.A.; any participant that goes through the workforce system and has gotten gainfully employed and stayed on the jobs uses the word alumni. They will also honor some businesses and employers around the state.
- The success stories are really paying off. Renee took the process and nominated some individuals that got accepted from the central part of the state to honor; Marla Smith is going to be the honoree from VR. Her Counselor was Carla Coburn. That was under the direction of Mike Goza as Program Manager, and Mr. Bill Hayes and ultimately Mark Kinnison.
- The System Oversight Committee that Melinda co-leads is working on next steps for getting the process stuff out for milestone 4. Milestone 4, 5, and 6 will be the most critical because they address the infrastructure funding agreements and cost-sharing within the system. For the public vocational rehabilitation system, this has been the most difficult to join in because they have not had to “pay to play” in the past, but will moving forward.
- DRS Chief Fiscal Officer, Kevin Statham has been working on the committee for two years to come up with a cost model. DRS is bringing that to the table for all the systems to consider. None of the other agencies have come up with any other proposals for how we are going to co-locate or pay for our part of it.

- Access for all, meaning all things are accessible and making sure that job seekers have an easy path in working through the workforce system with Core partners and DRS. Within milestone 3, they have put together a road map that takes into consideration the real (physical) environment and the information communication technology portions of accessibility. It is an appendix to the self-assessment document. It has been sent out to McAlester area because they have a pilot going on that will model on how to co-locate.

Business Services Update: Melinda Freundt:

- We are moving from a job placement model to a business engagement model. With W.I.O.A. we are in a dual customer approach. Our focus has been a client with a disability. Now the focus needs to be on businesses/employers as well as a client with a disability.
- This is challenging to VR counselors. Bottom line of this approach is our return on investment; how well we achieve higher quality outcomes for people with disabilities. A lot of moving parts affect that with our relationships internally and externally. A lot of employment contractors impact that, as well.

Transition Team—Shelly Bell

- When students graduate, parents are often suddenly wondering what the student will do next. Transition Team has created quarterly Parental Awareness Workshops (PAWS) which will be held December 13th, 6:30-8:00, at Central Tech in Sapulpa. They will present on “DRS: The Best Kept Secret” to focus on elementary and middle school.
- At this grade level, parents still come to get information. They will provide food and honor society kids to do some activities with siblings and younger children that parents bring.
- Since transportation is a big problem, Sapulpa schools is providing bus routes to pick up parents and students.
- Second quarter will include speakers on guardianship and Social Security.

Workforce Development Board Rep—Thadd Babb

- This is the second year for the Disability Awareness Committee. Workforce Tulsa reached out because they did not know how to serve people with disabilities. In the past they were automatically referred to DRS, across town, for people to find out they didn’t really need DRS services.
- Disability Awareness Committees were strongly encouraged in W.I.O.A. but Tulsa was the first, and only. A couple of others are being developed throughout the state now.
- Idea is a one-stop facility for people with disabilities, staffed by agencies that serve people with disabilities in various capacities.—VR, VS, Goodwill, etc.

- They are brainstorming on how to incorporate DRS into the training of frontline staff and outreach to let people know about services and resources.
- There is a referral ticket for tracking. Send it to the client who will turn it in a workforce. Thadd has requested to be copied on the ticket so job seekers won't have to report to DRS that they went to the Workforce Center.
- There will be a physical move of the Workforce Job Center in Tulsa to be more centrally located. Okla. Employment Security Commission (OESC) has been a partner.
- DRS should be included in the talks to get the center located close to where clients are and on a bus route and fully accessible.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Report—Elizabeth Reeve

Elizabeth Reeve reported that SILC is currently going through a lot of transition; there is nothing major to report. The next meeting is December 30, 2016, at 10:00.

Program Manager Report—Renee Sansom presented the written report.

New Business:

Linda Jaco— The NCSRC meeting in San Diego was very worthwhile; pleased that ORC had the funding to take additional members this year.

Rick DeRennaux— The next Tech Now competition will be held May 4th beginning at 9:30 a.m. Rick will send the link in order to share the details.

Adjournment:

Elizabeth made a motion to adjourn; Thadd seconded. The Motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Next ORC Quarterly Meeting is February 16, 2017