

Montana State Rehabilitation Council

Wilderness conference room

November 7 & 8, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Monique Casbeer, Tiffany Costa, Barbara Davis, Chanda Hermanson-Dudley, Coreen Faulkner, Kathy Hampton, Brook Hodge, Denise May, Kathy Meier, and Marcy Roberts

Members absent: Andy Kemp, Dale Kimmet, Michele Letendre

Staff and guests: Bill Alexander, Beverly Berg, Nicole Berg, Anna Gibbs, Bill Harant, Shauna Johnson, Cole Mack, Mark Mahnke, and Shawn Tulloch

Welcome and Introductions: Council Chair Tiffany Costa called the meeting to order. Introductions were made around the tables. Dale Kimmet and Marcy Roberts are the newest members of the Council.

September Meeting Minutes: Motion made to approve the minutes unanimously with a minor revision.

Public Comments: (none)

Windmills Training, Bill Alexander of Billings VR office and Mark Mahnke, Business Services Specialist: Bill and Mark led the training on "Taking Emotion out of Emotional Disabilities." The Council was split up into groups and discussed a disability and type of accommodations for that disability in a work setting. The groups did again this time with different kinds of emotional disabilities in the same work setting as before. Those with physical disabilities seem easier to come up with accommodation as compared to those with emotional disabilities. We rely on the person with emotional disabilities to share what works and what doesn't. However, they are least likely to disclose mental illness. The employers would gradually notice lack of productivity and increased absences; that is when the employers will need to ask questions to the employee. The Council discussed some fears employers might have regarding hiring those with emotional disabilities. Job Accommodation Network handouts were passed out; brief discussions on the accommodations.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, Mark Mahnke: Mark shared with the Council on an update with the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Every three years, we complete this by getting feedback from our partners, constituents, consumers on what they think we need to change for VR, how VR can improve their services, etc. The Council confirmed that the main topics of their recommendations in the Governor's Report are: internal continuous improvement, provide 21st century quality service, network with other agencies & employers. Mark asked that if there are any additional topics, please let him know by January/February. He is compiling everything and should be done by then.

Blind & Low Vision Services Report, Beverly Berg: Beverly reported that in addition to her BLVS duties, she is also working on the contracts with Community Rehabilitation Programs. Then she continued giving BLVS update. She sent out surveys to 128 individuals receiving services and got 47 answers back. The responses are mostly positive. She will write up a report of the results and share them with the Council when completed. Seven of her BLVS staff attended the conference in Idaho – different trainings on mobility, transitions, and employment. Good turnout from Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Washington.

Registered Apprenticeship, Cole Mack & Shauna Johnson: Cole talked about Registered Apprenticeship – there are 13 programs throughout the state. As the special project coordinator, Cole covered the central region (Bozeman to Great Falls) – he also covered the eastern part of the state. Shauna works in Bozeman Job Service. Based on the Montana Code, electricians, plumbers, sprinkler fitters, and elevator repairs (licensed trades) are required to go through apprenticeship (that is if they are to start learning the trade here). Those from out of state and received their license elsewhere are exempted from going through apprenticeship. They can still apply and pay for the license. Employers can choose to use apprenticeship to help their employees to increase their skills and get the certification. Another bonus for the apprenticeship is the employees do not have to leave their location – they can stay and work and improve skills to get certification. The employers can get \$750 per employee participating in apprenticeship (\$1,500 for veteran employee in apprenticeship). The basic components of the registered apprenticeship program are employers willing to take the inexperienced workers and the employees putting in the hours (2,000 hours of on the job training, one year of full-time work and for every 2,000 hours, there is 144 hours of required technical instruction.) The third part of the program is the entry level wage for the employee. As they gain more experience and skills, the wages will increase to match their skills. This will encourage the employees to stay with the employer's business. After the employees complete the program, they get the credential. Pre-Apprenticeship can be done for youth. The hours can be changed to match the needs; the students can try different trades to find out what they want to do. For example, group of students went to help build a house. Few of them realized they don't enjoy it. Others realize they prefer woodworking than being outside. Then few others enjoyed the experience and continued down that road. They were able to carry over the hours to apprenticeship program instead of starting all over. Students in pre-apprenticeship programs do not get paid. Shauna talked about the different local businesses and what the apprenticeships look like.

Gallatin College, Nicole Berg: Nicole talked about Gallatin College (GC) which is part of MSU. It is a 2-year education. They offer transfer & general education, workforce programs, development education and dual enrollment (for high school students who want to work on college credits). The GC students can take one or two years to complete the program. Due to other commitments outside of school, most students attend the programs part-time. There are supports for GC students such as free tutoring, math lab, and writing assistance. Submitting SAT or ACT scores is not required as part of application; instead, high school transcript or GED scores is required. MSU's Disability Services coordinates with GC to provide accessible accommodations for the students. GC does not have a campus; however, they have four different locations for

classes. They also have an agreement with MSU for housing. For in-state student, GC tuition runs about \$1,800 per semester.

Federal/State updates & Field Services updates, Chanda Hermanson-Dudley:

Chanda reported on the Division budget. She mentioned that DPHHS will develop a new division that will house children's health services. She clarified that Pre-Employment Transition Services will not be going in the division; it stays with DETD. Disability Determination Services has a new unit called Continuing Disability Investigations to investigate fraudulent activities related to Social Security benefits. Regarding to Order of Selection, we are at 253 people invited off the waiting list. Chanda reported on the VRBS jobs being filled and the vacancies. Joe Weber is the new Budget Analyst for VRBS. A second budget analyst position has been advertised who will handle DDS, MTAP, and IL. Lacey Conzelman has been hired as the Program Manager (Mike Hermanson's old job). Chanda hope to advertise Chief of Field Services and three Pre-ETS specialists (different from VRBS counselor position). No reports on the appeals as there haven't been any. Chanda talked about a new procedure with uploading documents on MACS. Any purchase above \$500.00 needs to go to director's office for approval which has been Procedure for two years. Counselors are now required to upload notes from providers into MACS as a backup. Case summary is shared with the Council: 3,200 people on the waiting list. Chanda reported about the penalty, and she described the process first: vocational rehabilitation grants are released on October 1st; we get 85% of the grants and 15% is held back as a 4th Quarter Award. In the case of Montana, RSA kept the 15% which essentially paid for part of our Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Penalty assessed on 10-1-2019. So, our MOE Penalty was not as big as originally anticipated. A related topic, the MOE rules got changed: instead of back to back penalties, there will be no penalty in FFY21 (meaning we get the full grants) but the penalty will impact the programs in FFY22. RSA is working closely with us to make sure we can continue the programs.

Program Support & Operations report, Anna Gibbs: Anna began her report by talking about the Division budget information. The Council did not receive the traditionally formatted budget report ahead of time as there was no budget analyst hired yet. Anna projected the budget in spreadsheet on the screen showing the amount of grant monies, the dollar amount for Pre-ETS, and the amount from the state. She also projected data dashboard in the fourth quarter of program year 2018 (April, May, & June of 2019). She reviewed the measurable skill gains, exit date, Pre-ETS data, competitive integrated outcome data, and summary of VR participants.

Reports from the Committees

- Education and Membership
 - Denise May reported on recruiting more people to serve on the Council. Currently, we have vacancies on 4 seats to represent Business, Industry, & Labor; 1 for Parent Training & Information Center; 1 for Workforce Investment Board; 1 for Native American VR Project; and 2 Disability Advocates.
 - Some of these seats have been vacant for a long time. It is a challenge to find people.
 - Shawn asked if Denise would be willing to give training to the new members; she will send her the PowerPoint slides (orientation & training).

- Planning & Review
 - Barbara Davis reported that the committee has been working hard on the 2019 Governor's Report. The success stories have been edited. We need to have a group picture today. She asked Tiffany if she would write a message; it has been the same message for a couple of years.
- Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment
 - Bill Harant reported that the committee needs to revamp the survey to be more accessible and to add fillable slots. People with low vision cannot see Survey Monkey; so, a different accessible one is needed. Discussion on how to get more people to fill out the survey. Bill will bring the survey next time.
- Policy, Procedure, & Personnel Development
 - Brook reported about community work incentives coordinator (CWIC) which is basically a benefits counselor. A few of the BLVS staff will attend the training on benefits. Brook talked about the feedbacks from the staff on the September's All-Staff training in Lewistown. The Policy & Procedure team meets monthly and is currently looking at six procedures (transportation, purpose approval, IEP development, informed choices, adverse action, and annual review). They also talked about internal control process.

Wrap-up:

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2020: Tiffany Costa as the Chair and Brook Hodge as the Vice Chair.
- SRC meeting dates in 2020: Feb. 27 & 28, May 14 & 15, Aug. 13 & 14, and Oct. 22 & 23. The Wilderness Room in Helena has been reserved for all the meeting dates.
- A joint meeting of SRC and SILC will be on May 14 & 15 in Helena.
- A possible cultural trip can be arranged on August 13 & 14. Shawn will collect info and share at the next SRC meeting.
- Possible agenda items:
 - Job Corps in Anaconda or Butte
 - Internal control process