

**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting
June 3, 2005
ElDorado SRS Office**

Present: Members: Dale Barnum, David Rosenthal, Morris Taylor, Barbara Crooks, Wendy Blaauw, Josie Torrez, Julia Fonseca, Anita Trainer
Absent: Christine Owens
Staff: Dianne Hemphill, Dennis Ford, Mike Flyzik Carrie Boettcher, Connie Daggett (Recorder)
Guests: Sanford & Barbara Alexander

Welcome & Introductions

Chairperson Barbara Crooks called the meeting to order, and members introduced themselves. Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed with two changes to the Council Meeting minutes. Motion made, seconded, and carried to accept the Public Forum and State Rehabilitation Council Meeting Minutes of March as corrected.

Public Comment

None.

Additions to the Agenda

Julia will report on the Kansas Blind Services Advisory Council following Dale's report. Sanford and Barbara Alexander were welcomed as guests.

Discussion of the Public Forum

Barbara felt the forum was very interesting with two consumers that were unique and different with lots of energy. One had to change his career and came with pictures of off-the-road tires and components of that for playgrounds, as well as looking into soccer fields in New York. The other consumer breeds cattle. Following his accident he had to sell a majority of the herd, going from 250 to 15 because of expenses that insurance did not cover. He has an issue with the need for a car that runs, and it has to be a larger luxury style due to neck and back supports. Through this discussion the other consumer thought he knew of someone who was going out of business that may have a car for him.

Julie commented on the extra job one of the consumers had to pick up, which he didn't enjoy, but needed to supplement his income. The other consumer had no interest in his tire project before the accident. Both were doing something that wasn't their career choice, but had lots of energy doing it. One of the consumers has hired another VR consumer to help him in his business and may be looking at needing more if the business gets going.

Morris commented both consumers involved self-employment and felt we needed to discuss self-employment more with regard to funding and expenditures, as well as tools and equipment needed.

Dianne felt the VR counselor needed to be commended with some of the most creative outcomes she has seen in years.

David added that he recently attended a banquet where it was commented 87% of all businesses in America are small business owners.

Barbara added the consumer with the second job at the golf course was refreshing to hear and would like to have him come and talk with her students, about not always starting at the top, that custodial or dishwasher work is not below them. David felt VR also needed to look at an individual's capabilities and educational skills in finding jobs for consumers.

Dale stated at the SRC Meeting in Hays we will be discussing cost caps and a self-employment plan in Great Bend that has been working for about three weeks. After many exceptions, RS bought a dump truck for a man going into self-employment. He is a single amputee and couldn't drive a company truck. He had a plan and put it together and now has his own truck and own business. The truck was a self-employment plan, not a vehicle for transportation. It took too long to get it done, but it did get accomplished.

Barbara added the first consumer last night talked about what didn't work, it was a long process even after exceptions, it was almost a year before he saw any money for it. Don't know what we do about that and wondered if that was just the way it was.

Dennis Ford stated business plans are one of the most important things and it takes some time. Small business training is available in the community. Also, it took a long time to find the specialized equipment to buy. Dale explained the expenses of a small business plan and steps to go through according to federal guidelines.

Barbara concluded that even though only two consumers attended the forum, she felt it was well worth the trip to hear about their businesses.

Report on Rehabilitation Services Operations and Activities in the South Central Region - Dennis Ford, Program Administrator

Dennis stated he has been in the South Central Region about ten months now. The Emporia and Hutchinson groups were pulled together. Staff are getting used to his style of managing.

Personnel changes: As of today they are losing a counselor in Wellington who had been there for almost a year. He has not been told yet if they can fill the position. An individual in Winfield left and a 50% clerical position in Eldorado was vacant; they combined the two with a person who has proven to be very efficient. He was able to hire a manager in the Emporia area, Carrie Boettcher, who was present last night at the Forum and today.

Their rehab rate has increased from 40% to 53%, workload percentages have gone up and they have cleaned up a lot of overtime cases. They are third in the state at 80% of their goal with employment rate, putting 230 individuals to work.

Staff accomplishments: they are working with Department of Corrections more and had two individuals in VR that went to training to work with that population. They made contact with the Hutchinson Correctional Center and will work with inmates with disabilities, trying to have VR services set up for them before they are released. They also have a counselor who graduated from the SRS Leadership Program last week.

Dennis shared a list of 230 people in the South Central Region who have gone to work, with hourly wages of \$21.75, \$16.50, \$12.50, etc. Jobs included x-ray techs, barber, personal

attendant, nurse assistant, resident trainer, warehouse, telemarketer, crew manager, auto body, cab dispatcher, film maker editor and welder, just to name a few.

Questions of Dennis: Josie asked when students with a disability come in for assessment? Second semester junior year. Sharing of information goes back and forth between the school and VR. Due to lack of resources, can't attend all IPEs, but can if possible. We can't spend case dollars on students before the second semester junior year.

Barbara told of an experience in Manhattan with students, working with them until age 21.

Questions were asked about the Employer Forum in Abilene, and why there wasn't one here. Dale stated from the comments in Abilene, it was difficult to understand some of the people on the video and employers in attendance commented they thought it would have been better to have more comments from the employers on the video. The video is being redone so it should be ready for the SRC meeting in Hays. He added that we have made several attempts to have public forums in Wichita and have met with little success. This seems to be common in communities that have access to public officials, like Topeka, with the Governor's office nearby.

Report on Rehabilitation Services Operations and Activities in the Wichita Region - Mike Flyzik, Program Administrator

Mike shared information on the Wichita and Sedgwick County area with regard to transition and a new director of transition, along with two specialists that were making referrals to them. That allowed them to track every student and is working well. As a result, they will continue to see more transition referrals.

Wichita VR statistics were shared showing the number of cases served per month since January 2005, along with a graph showing these numbers. Also, percentage of increase in customers by month, percent of staff utilization, as well as a graph.

They will be having two retirements in July and August and have approval to fill those positions. This may affect their statistics some with new people coming on board.

They have new supported employment contracts and Starkey is back after being gone for a while.

Mike stated even though Wichita is not a part of the south central region, they are close by and he appreciated being invited to attend today.

Questions of Mike were how many counselors they have with caseloads: 12 and two evaluators. How many specialist counselors? 1 in Mental Health, 1 for hearing impaired, 1 for blind services, and 2 for transition. They received their first referral from a home school which they had forgotten about that population so maybe need to approach them also.

Barbara commented about transition reauthorization, trying to change the age to 16, but it will stay at 14. Transition in Manhattan starts services at age 12. She was been asked to become involved in transition from pre-school to kindergarten. Wendy stated advocacy groups made it all happen.

Updates from the State Director – Dale Barnum

- Dale thanked Dennis and his staff for last night and Mike for driving over to be with us. When you deal with public officials all the time it is nice to come out to communities to see the good things that are happening with our assistance.
- For the last three months Rehabilitation Services has been involved in a federal review. The review is more in-depth this year with a financial review also. Have completed the case review portion of the review and Dennis Ford and Shari Campbell assisted with that. The regional commissioner and state representative met with the Secretary of SRS and Deputy Secretary. Interviews were held with counselors, consumers, etc. A letter from RSA has arrived related to the financial review of the state designated agency, including two major questions to be answered within 12 days. RSA's results of the review will probably be to us in November. However the first of October the Regional Office will cease to exist, so not sure where the final review will come from.
- Closing of the Regional Office has created a stir and demonstrations were held in Washington, D.C. last week, with advocates numbering 1200. The effect of that is unknown at this point. The closing of the regional office was an administrative move. Half of the staff of RSA on the federal level will be gone with everything coming out of D.C., using a special ed model. Dale relayed highlights of the meeting he attended in D.C. Concerns at the state level are that the regional office has provided a great deal of technical assistance to us in the past and that will no longer be available.
- WIA Plus is still in conference committee. VR services could end up under the Department of Labor model. Dale encouraged all SRC members to review this issue with their politicians. Where VR puts emphasis on placing people in employment careers, the Department of Labor's emphasis is placing people in jobs.
- State Budget: We expect a 4% increase in revenue for 2006-07. However the cost of government will go up more than that, so will be less money for programs. We can continue to expect that positions will remain open. We have a 15% vacancy rate in counselors and 16% rate at Central Office. State General Fund money will be reduced and RS programs will be in a waiting list situation sooner than we anticipated.
- In July of this year the Medicaid program will be removed from SRS and transferred to the Department of Administration. This means half of SRS's budget is leaving. Many problems are leaving along with it, but we have been able to use some Medicaid dollars for things that will no longer be available.
- School funding issue before the Supreme Court: more money needs to go to schools, however, that means it will be taken away from other agencies. If the Legislature says no more tax increases, that can only mean reductions in program funding. Josie stated the Governor has been quoted as saying as long as she is in office, she will not make any cuts in social services.
- Central Office is in the process of reorganizing functions within SRS. Where RS has 245 Central Office positions, this includes all of DDS, and others that do not provide direct services, leaving in the end about 40 people. There will be some organizational structure changes as a result, which could involve support to the State Rehabilitation Council. Dale will be talking with Connie Daggett and Barbara Crooks about Connie's role expanding, taking some of the pressure off Peg Spencer.

- New policy manual is now available on line as of last month.
- Training grant: RS has applied for a grant from RSA over and above that which we can apply for on a regular basis, to provide federal funding to train staff. One emphasis of training is distance learning, on-line capabilities. The Field Advisory Committee has been involved in this and will decide what will and will not work online as they are the ones that will be using it. Training is for all staff, not just counselors. Independent living centers will also be offered the training, as well as mental health centers. A needs assessment completed by all staff indicated a need for policy and procedure training in addition to counseling skills and issues. We have few specialized counselors any more, so staff want more information. Technology fields are changing quickly and it is difficult to keep up. SRC members may want some of their staff to attend the training. Dale reminded everyone this was contingent on RS receiving the grant.
- RS continues to be in Order of Selection with no waiting list right now.
- As of June 1 we have 998 Ticket to Work tickets assigned to Rehabilitation Services; 74 assigned to other employment networks in the state. This was out of 40,000 that were issued.
- Medicare Plan D, which is the pharmaceutical part of Medicare, was explained. This starts July 1 and goes through December. If you do not sign up during that time, there is a 1% penalty per month in your charge if you want to sign up later.
- We will be going to Hays in September for the State Rehabilitation Council Public Forum and Meeting.

Questions of Dale:

- Josie asked about the federal review, it is was current consumers or closed cases? A random sample of cases closed in 2004.
- RCB funding: State General Fund monies were removed that had been available from sale of land. RCBVI is making changes to be self-supportive, and is running about 85% capacity.
- CAP: RSA approved the transfer to the Disability Rights Center (DRC). Sharon Kearsse was offered a position with them, but turned it down. Mike Donnelly is now to represent DRC on the State Rehabilitation Council.

Kansas Advisory Board to KSBVI - Julia Fonseca

Julia gave an update as she is the liaison between the Kansas Blind Services Advisory Council and KSBVI. They are discussing their role as advocates to secure the future of RCB.

Update on Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired – Dianne Hemphill

- The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) has been working for a number of years to establish vending facilities on military basis. The program is self-sufficient.
- Bill Loebel with the older blind program, has retired. Two of the four positions in the older blind program are vacant and have been able to fill them with temps.

- Transition Youth program will have their 2nd annual week soon, with 12-14 teenagers.
- RCB has been trying over the last five years to make the rehabilitation training program focused more on employment outcomes; 90% of participants are VR clients focused on employment.
- Last year RCBVI developed work utilization groups with 11 counselors to provide guidance in what they need to assist in their work. The group provided ideas but because of caseloads, recommendations were not able to be implemented.
- They are receiving more requests for field outreach. Counselors are wanting more mini-workshops in their community. Unfortunately this hasn't taken off as seven were offered in the last four months, but only two communities have taken advantage of it.
- They are trying to address consultation needs and instructors at RCB are working on developing six regional teams for instructors to work more effectively with the counselors in the regions.
- The number of people being served is down, so they are working on ways to assist the program administrators and counselors. Getting people in for the training is critical and they have too many homemaker cases.

Discussion about Regional Training for SRC Members - Barbara Crooks

Barbara gave an overview of the regional training held at the Westin Crown Center. Four states were represented: Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa. Kansas is the only state that has the Blind Center as a part of the VR program; all others are separate agencies. She told of a video which was shown depicting the history of rehabilitation services which she found very informative. Dale stated if members were interested, we could see about getting the video to show at the next SRC Meeting and will see if it is captioned.

Round Robin Reports from Council Members

Morris Taylor:

- They just applied for a 5-year grant for an apprenticeship program and they will know in August if they received it; there is a lot of competition for it.
- They are dealing with recidivism issues and relapse issues.
- Current problems the tribal Nation is experiencing are mental health and drugs.
- The Independent Living Program is going well.
- They have a quarterly meeting with four tribes in Kansas, pulling together services outside the reservation to develop a cooperative relationship with the different agencies, all working toward a common goal.
- He explained how the casinos have made a big difference in the standard of living for the Indians. He explained how the government subsidy is used by the Indians.

David Rosenthal:

- They are dealing with deafness and relay issues. Many people are using the internet and video relay system.
- They are waiting to hear about a merger with AT&T and SBC.
- They receive calls about how to make video calls, which they don't have the capability to do.
- The Kansas Association for the Deaf is having a biannual state-wide conference in Olathe July 21-24 at the School for the Deaf.

Anita Trainer:

- As a consumer she continues to refer people to VR every year, some working out and some not.
- She has been working two half-time jobs for quite some time, but recently quit one, so is now looking for full time work.
- She recently had surgery
- She has been in the process of educating her employer on ADA issues.

Julia Fonseca

- She represents the Youth Leadership Forum and they will have 26 junior and senior high school students who have disabilities, at Washburn for five days this year. They are a diverse group both ethnically and disability wise. She has a good group of volunteers returning, seeing some alumni coming back as volunteers. Barbara stated Manhattan High School sends people to the YLF. They were short two mentors and her daughter will be assisting in auto mechanics.
- She passed out a flier advertising the Topeka Beep Baseball Tournament this Saturday and Sunday, June 4 and 5 at the KNI soccer field.

Josie Torrez

- SILCK is developing a legal platform for next year. They have an appointment Monday with the Governor and Secretary Daniels to explain about people they serve.
- They have a disability caucus coming up August 10-12 in Topeka; about 800 people with disabilities come every year. We empower and want people to be self-sufficient. The cost is \$35 which covers all expenses and is held at the Capital Plaza Hotel.
- She explained the afghan she is crocheting will go to her grandchild they are expecting in September.

Wendy Blaauw

- Kansas has a new special education law, with the transition age of 14.
- They are waiting on federal regulations which should be out this month.
- Their commissioner resigned and interviews are to be held over the summer.
- Kansas is going to be applying for a grant through the National Governor's Association. Jane Rhys is spearheading it.

Barbara Crooks

- They have a new superintendent for Manhattan, who was formerly the superintendent at Hutchinson.

- They are losing students after having to cut \$1.75 million from their budget.
- With the Big Red One returning in June, they are not sure how this is going to affect Manhattan, Junction City, or the smaller communities. Board members are discussing and approved spending \$235,000 to hire 15 teachers in anticipation of the Big Red One returning.
- Barbara teaches special ed summer school and explained a grant for at-risk students and how she has been asked to be involved with that also.
- Dale commended Barbara for just completing her Master's Degree, attending the training in Kansas City, along with everything else she does. Barbara added she is also a CASA representative.

Announcements

- Dale stated members are needed from business and industry sections to the Council as we are going to have several members going off the Council this year. Having someone from Dillon's was suggested.
- Barbara asked that the "Round Robin" portion of the agenda be a regular item as she found it very interesting and would like updates, particularly on the grants being applied for.

Future Meetings

Dennis and Josie worked up a suggested format for Council meetings through 2008, rotating through the six regions.

2006 suggestions

Liberal
Hutchinson
Wichita
Wyandotte County

2007 suggestions

Manhattan
Overland Park
Independence/Parsons
Derby

2008 suggestions

Topeka
Garden City or Dodge City
or Great Bend
McPherson or Winfield
Independence or Parsons

Dale suggested we go where there is a strong Chamber of Commerce in order to have successful employer forums and will discuss the locations further at the September meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45.

Connie Daggett, Recorder

Next meeting is September 8-9, in Hays