

## **DRAFT Minutes**

August 6, 2010 – SRC Quarterly Meeting  
Oxford Hotel - Minnesota Room  
10 NW Minnesota Ave, Bend OR 97701

**Members Present:** Ann Balzell, Renata Beck, Anne Burns, Bob Craft, Guy Goode, Victoria Haight, Scott Hatley, Jesse Kappel, Linda Keller, Gary Lanctot, Dodie McKenzie, Cynthia Owens, Sandy Reese, B.J. Rosenblad, Becky Simpson, Ted Wenk

**Members Absent:** Barbara Briggs, Jackie Burr, Liz Fox, Patti Tom-Martin

**OVRs Staff:** Sandy Cooper, Sheila Hoover, Rhoda Hunter, Susan Lincoln, Joe Miller, Renee Renshaw-Myrwang, Bob Stevens, Stephaine Taylor, Travis Wall

**Guests:** Mark Beasley, Susan Hatley, Chris Lillebo, Leonard Peach, Sherry Stock, Kristi Svendsen

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Cynthia Owens, SRC Co-Chair, welcomed all Council members, VR staff and guests and introduced the two newest Council members, Renata Beck and Anne Burns, after which other attendees introduced themselves.

### **Administrator's Report**

Stephaine Taylor, OVRs Administrator, reported on the following items:

VR held its annual statewide in-service conference August 3-4. Linda Keller was given an outstanding achievement award.

OVRs continues to work on the agency request budget. DHS is now in the position of making another round of cuts. A number of DHS programs have been damaged due to the cuts so far. They're looking to find areas to cut to make up a remaining \$10 million shortfall. Currently DHS programs are being asked to come up with a proposal for 30% cuts. Every 10% cut means VR will be serving 715 fewer individuals.

VR is on track with its own budget, which will be in good shape at the end of the biennium and going forward. Currently they are in the process of taking all priority 3 clients off the wait list and are hoping to have priority 4s off the wait list by the end of the calendar year. Central Oregon, Tigard, the Portland offices, Corvallis and Albany are all extremely busy, with the Klamath Falls and Medford areas being the least busy offices in the state currently. Joe Miller gave credit to Judy Barker for VR's good spending plan, which has helped VR be in a relatively good position at this point. The Office will review the numbers in September to see how it's doing in serving all priorities. While it is prudent for VR to stay in an Order of Selection at this time, it will continue to serve all priorities.

VR is forecasting an increase in caseload size as other programs are cut and people shop for services; they are anticipating a likely increase in client numbers.

Cynthia Owens noted that Developmental Disability (DD) services are anticipating a huge loss in the 2011-13 biennium. Caseload size is anticipated to go from 1:45 to a very unmanageable 1:300. People will be coming to VR for services. This population is comprised 60% of youth and 40% of adults.

DHS is experiencing a layoff, so agencies have to stop hiring to see which employees will bump into other positions until the issue has been resolved. VR is currently being held harmless as far as hiring constraints after this layoff period.

Oregon's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (ODHHS) has been around for a number of years, scheduling interpreters for state agencies and providing training around access for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing. DHS decided to dissolve ODHHS and have one of their staff put together a manual so that units could make their own arrangements. However, ODHHS was created and mandated by Oregon statute (HB 3230) in 2005, so those plans had to be abandoned. Some advantages that come from ODHHS's existence have been their ability to negotiate good rates with interpreters and negotiate for only an hour of interpreting, where the standard is at least 2 hours. Over time, the person handling interpreter requests comes to know the interpreters and their skill levels, a resource that would be lost if ODHHS was done away with. When Sign Interpreters heard about DHS's plans, they met with Stephaine to make a case to the Department to review this further. For now the plan to close ODHHS is on hold. Deaf and hard of hearing advocates have rallied together very quickly and threatened the Governor with a class action lawsuit if ODHHS is done away with. Stephaine will be working with ODHHS during the transition. It would be very difficult for VR to take this on but Stephaine will do what she can within standards of RSA's guidelines for use of her time. It is being proposed that ODHHS become part of the new shared services between DHS and the Oregon Health Authority. The number of requests ODHHS gets will necessitate an individual working at 25-50% time. DHS could potentially make money by putting together service contracts with other agencies to provide these services.

In line with the creation of the Oregon Health Authority and working with DHS, OVRs has begun meeting with the Office for Seniors and People with Disabilities (SPD) to talk about where there might be greater opportunities for collaboration and how to better connect with community partners. There has been a lot of interest in creating navigators to help people navigate through the system.

RSA fiscal staff were here the week of July 26<sup>th</sup>. They met with the SRC Executive Team, Tina Treasure and Stephaine, and later met with the DHS Chief Financial Officer. Stephaine gave a brief history of the bubble money issue. When she came to the agency there was a reserve of money referred to as “the bubble money.” There was a debate on the size of the bubble money but they ultimately decided it was about \$5 million. Her understanding is that the agency created this reserve for when times got lean, which seemed like good budgeting to her. The Department, however, said they didn’t want agencies having big pots of money lying around, and that VR (and other agencies that had such a fund) had to spend it. While Stephaine wasn’t comfortable with this direction, VR put together a plan and went forward with spending it. VR was then told they were overspent and didn’t have any money. Later DHS told VR that it never had the money to begin with. VR had many discussions with DHS Accounting on the issue, finally showing them memos from the Legislative Fiscal Office noting the money did exist, despite DHS Accounting saying it didn’t exist. When RSA came for its monitoring visit four years ago, the conclusion was that VR has not had authority over its budget. RSA is still working with DHS to receive additional documentation regarding the bubble money issue. The SRC will continue to pursue answers – as they strongly believe it is a matter of DHS accountability.

Linda Keller asked if anything can be done to make sure VR has the authority it is mandated to have over its budget. Since the bubble money issue came up, Judy Barker has come on board in the DHS Financial Services office and her help to VR has been invaluable. One thing she discovered was that the DHS Fiscal staff didn’t realize that VR gets its funding from RSA and that there were different restrictions on the grant than the other grants that come into the Department. With Judy’s assistance, VR is now getting timely, accurate budget reports which are being actively monitored. The Financial Service’s explanation of where this money went boils down to DHS Fiscal staff taking action and not telling the program that they’d done it and, because there weren’t any reports at that time, VR couldn’t track or catch what had happened and that is not the case now.

Cynthia asked about the ARRA dollars being tracked. Stephaine believes the ARRA dollars go out another two years. Nationwide there are only eight programs out of 80 that have met the ARRA spending benchmarks; CSAVR is very concerned that states are not spending money at the level they need to. In spite of the fact that Judy Barker is working with half the staff she needs and the workloads are so burdensome in her unit, with her invaluable help Oregon is one of the few on track with this, having a multi-year spending plan in place.

Four Secretary of State auditors have spent over a year with OVRs and are finally coming to the conclusion of their program audit. Stephaine noted it does not

appear to be a positive audit report. She will share the Secretary of State's report with the SRC when it becomes available.

## **BREAK**

### **SRC On-Line Training Series**

Cynthia Owens encouraged those who have not completed this training on their own, to do so. It's a very informative training series that RSA developed and would like to see all SRC members complete. She presented the Introduction Module followed by Module I, II and IV of Series 1 to the Council. Other modules will be shown at future SRC quarterly meetings.

### **HB 2009 Transition Stakeholders Group**

Gary Lanctot noted there hasn't been a lot of push back by anybody on the taskforce. There doesn't seem to be enough outside information to focus the questions at hand. Cynthia Owens commented that having the DD and program areas separated from the budget units seems a step backward toward the situation that created OVR's bubble money dilemma.

### **Statewide Field Update**

Sandy Cooper reported the good news that one of VR's busiest offices, in Tigard, is going to be moving to a new site in Beaverton. The new site will be closer to the office's client base, is ADA compliant and has a bus stop right in front. VR worked with DHS Facilities to locate a new site. Lease rates are low right now and there are a lot of people willing to lease to state agencies.

Joe Miller informed the Council that the Employment First policy from SPD came from the DD employment committee's looking at how far we'd come away from serving people with most severe disabilities. There is a real desire to promote employment to clients. VR is looking at being able to give more money to those in the community who are wanting to employ people with disabilities. VR is partnering with SPD on the planning of this project. There will be regional forums in all parts of the state as well as local forums in September through November, 2010. This is a great example of partnership across agencies and they are hoping to have a great product in the end.

Sheila Hoover shared that this is an exciting time in VR's Intern program. VR is actively partnering with WOU and PSU on this renewal of effort with training and internship program. VR has one intern on board now and five others who have applied. They will also be offering Human Services Assistant (HSA) (counselor assistant) internships for the first time this year.

Cynthia noted that in the past there had been booklets put together on VR working with brokerages and wondered why these are not being used. Joe replied that the new version was about to go to print and SPD said they wanted to review them again, hold public forums, etc. VR will be having people going to Silver Falls next month and want to address this then with SPD partners. *Joe and Cynthia will talk about why the brakes have been put on this and whether copies can be brought to Silver Falls so this issue can be addressed.*

Cynthia asked if there is a way to find out by category which dollars have been spent on what disability population(s)? Is this being tracked? Joe replied that this information can be tracked as requested. Ron Barcikowski can put together a program to pull that information out of ORCA. The problem is that our clients often have more than one disability and such reports can only go by “primary” disability. Information can also be pulled by such additional categories as age, race, etc.

Guy Goode asked what counselor numbers are like in the offices at the moment. Sandy replied that VR does have some office that aren’t completely covered and are stretched really thin. Managers are carrying caseloads to help out. Services are ramping up, we just need to get past this hard hiring freeze.

Jesse Kappel asked what the impact has been of Order of Selection on number of days to plan. From a federal reporting standpoint, if it’s over 180 days, are the feds pushing at all to decrease that? He would like these numbers to be produced for the Council (*Joe sent data to SRC on 9/1/10*). Sandy replied that this has not been identified as an issue in any of the recent reviews and audits of the program. Counselors have been encouraged to do exceptions for clients stuck in limbo and, while there have been a few cases where this wasn’t done, by and large they have been following through on this. Joe noted that the number of plans written by this time last year was 2201. Since last August VR has written 2480 plans due to being able to serve most priority levels, but there is still a lag in employment outcomes. This is to be expected as things normalize once more.

### **State Independent Living (SILC)**

Ann Balzell, Dodie McKenzie and Sherry Stock are all members of the SILC. Ann gave the Council an overview of the start of the Independent Living (IL) movement, the purpose of SILC and Title 7 of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **LUNCH**

### **Enhancing Employment Outcomes (EEO)**

Stephaine Taylor shared materials and a slideshow on the EEO training efforts with counselors, setting minimum standards for job developers, and identifying the

motivational level and place-ability of clients. She also touched on the “Think Beyond the Label” campaign and other employer engagement campaign activities. VR is working on a pilot program creating report cards, reports on the value added to OVRs by any given vendor – particularly job developers. They have factored in for severity of disability, vehicle modification anomalies, quality jobs, etc. This is a chance to pursue supported employment more fully. To date, the biggest complaint is that people never get past entry-level jobs.

### **Public Input** (3 minutes allowed per person)

Kristi Svendsen with Central Oregon Resources for Independent Living (CORIL) addressed the Council. CORIL offers the training in the following areas to individuals with disabilities: job skills, money management, driver permit preparation, supported employment and “Brain Train” [cognitive retraining software for individuals with traumatic brain injuries (TBIs).] She gave praise to the local Work Incentives Network (WIN), who helps individuals with developmental disabilities find employment. Jobs have included scanning documents to disks, stuffing envelopes, production work, and wrapping materials for small businesses and for many this has been their first job. CORIL also works with the Central Oregon Coalition for Access (COCA), a coalition of partners and advocates who have been able to work with the Department of Justice to get changes made to the local community for curb cuts and other issues of ADA compliance. Bend OVRs Counselor Bob Stevens sits on the COCA board. The Oxford Hotel has some of CORIL’s workers on staff folding laundry and ironing.

Leonard Peach, a local WIN navigator trained by Social Security also gave public input. His job is to help clients see how their benefits will be affected by their going to work. He’s working with the Warm Springs tribe; Deschutes and Crook counties; Full Access Brokerage; OVRs; and a lot of job developers around town.

### **Local OVRs Update**

Gary Daniele, the Central Oregon Branch Manager, is out of town so Renata Beck gave an update for his offices. There has been a change to the coverage area of this branch: Klamath Falls and Lakeview have been added to the La Pine, Bend, Redmond, Madras and Prineville offices. It’s been a rough year with caseloads higher than ever and rehabs lower.

In line with DHS’s Lean efforts, the Bend office has instituted the practice of morning huddles, which help get everybody up to date on what people are doing that day. In addition, the office is working actively to improve efficiency and streamline processes. They are working to read, not print, emails and then archive these messages electronically instead of via hard copies to save time and resources. As part of their morning routine, they choose a word to reflect on with

the others on the team, such as “motivation” or “respect.” This has been good for team building.

Bend VR is one of the partners working collaboratively on the Business Resource Network in this area. The Network holds meetings once a month to help employers meet their needs. The office is also looking forward to hosting a new intern later this year.

Bob Stevens described Bend’s annual “disabled for a day” awareness raising event to the Council. This year’s focus was on engineers and architects, so some of the people designing homes and buildings got to experience some access issues for themselves. These types of events, along with the efforts of OVRS and others have resulted in new concrete everywhere in downtown Bend, which include curb cuts for greater accessibility.

### **Needs Assessment Update**

Travis Wall reported that things are progressing with the needs assessment. VR has selected a company to work with to conduct the assessment and the survey will be posted within the next week or two. They will be holding focus groups to discuss need and unmet need and will be concentrating on areas of unmet needs.

## **BREAK**

### **Committee Report Summaries**

#### Executive Committee Report:

Cynthia Owens reported on the recent meeting between Bill Bethel (RSA Fiscal Unit), Stephaine, Tina Treasure and members of the committee regarding the bubble money issue. RSA is still working with the DHS financial unit to locate and review documents that hopefully will track how the money was spent. Cynthia announced the SRC will be sending a plaque to Sara Kendall in Texas for her work managing Oregon’s Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. She also noted that Stephaine had received the Sylvia Mann Capper Memorial Award from the ARC of Oregon, which is the highest honor they award.

#### Business/Employment Committee Report:

Liz Fox was not at the meeting but this committee will be talking to Joe about an employment conference for next year.

#### Legislative Advocacy Committee Report:

The committee will be putting together a fact sheet to share on legislative visits. They have brought up the issue of legislative coffees (opportunities for legislators

to meet informally with constituents), round table discussions in libraries, etc. The topics for such sessions could be any disability and/or employment-related issue. They are considering such topics as TBI or DD and will try to encompass cross disability issues working with organizations such as the National Association for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), etc. Sherry Stock has joined this committee.

#### Membership Committee Report:

Scott Hatley updated the Council on Membership Committee activities: The Council will be voting on Sherry Stock's membership application today. The committee is focusing on recruiting a veterans representative. To date, about 800 veterans have returned to Clackamas County with acquired disabilities; statewide the number is about 3500. The committee continues to keep the goal of maintaining over 50% disability membership on the Council as it carries out recruitment efforts. Guy Goode's and Bob Craft's terms end in November 2010. While Guy's VR Counselor spot has been filled by Renata Beck, the committee is looking to fill Bob's business position

#### Policy Committee Report:

Guy Goode reported they have been working with VR in developing policies and recently completed a case closure policy. The rules have been written for some of these policies but have not yet been reviewed by the entire group. The self-employment policy is the next to be tackled and will be very challenging; they will need to create a policy that can be understood by clients as well as by staff. After they have finished with self-employment, they will probably work on medical restorative services for clients, equipment, etc. It's going to be a long-term process, one the committee will be working on for at least the next year. The closure policy process generated 10-12 drafts of the final draft by the time it was actually finalized. The policies get worked on by a small workgroup, then routed to the VR executive team, then routed to the larger, full workgroup for continued change, with a final approval from the VR executive team before they come to the SRC for review and comments.

#### Program Effectiveness Committee Report:

Ted gave information about the committee's involvement in the upcoming comprehensive needs assessment. The committee is preparing to conduct on-site staff visits and looking at how they have been done in the past. VCON is a new option to use with offices where travel might be an issue. Right now the tentative schedule is to take up the coordination of these visits after the needs assessment in November and to hopefully start the visits in January 2011. Such visits are not mandated but it is common for SRCs to visit VR offices. They will try to have a team of 3-4 for each site visit, with at least 2 participating on all visits for

consistency. It was suggested that a local SRC member also participate when available.

Program Strategies and Budget Committee Report:

Gary Lanctot reported the State Plan is done and has been submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). They spoke with Stephaine about how DHS budget issues are impacting VR and whether the SRC needs to do some advocacy work in that area. For the most part VR was held harmless for these first cuts but there is still some concern about the next biennium when cuts could go to 30%.

**Consent Agenda**

The vote on Sherry Stock's Council membership passed unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

The Council noted an amendment to the draft minutes from April 2010 quarterly meeting; a typo on page 11 was corrected from "Medicare Infrastructure Grant" to "Medicaid Infrastructure Grant." Becky Simpson made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Scott Hatley seconded the motion. The consent agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

Housekeeping: The next SRC Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for November 5, 2010 in Newport.

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.