



# State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

## State Rehabilitation Council Meeting ZOOM Meeting December 8, 2020

### Draft Meeting Minutes

*Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under “Master Calendar” at least 5 days prior to each meeting.*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lonnie Berger, Crystal Booker, Michael Bursaw, Lindy Foley, Chris Gaspari, Gayle Hahn, Theresa Hayes, Deanna Henke, Susan Madsen, Cody McEvoy, Tobias Orr, Diane Owen-Downs, Mike Tufte

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jerry Bryan

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Sarah Chapin, Angela Fujan, Brigid Griffin, Sandy Hamm, Ashley Hernandez, Mary Matusiak, Victoria Rasmussen

**VISITORS:** Brad Meurrens, Margie Propp, Ben Sparks

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:00 a.m. public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education website.*

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Michael Bursaw asked for public comment from members.

No public comment was shared.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chris Gaspari moved and Crystal Booker seconded the motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

#### **MINUTES APPROVAL**

Chris Gaspari moved and Crystal Booker seconded a motion to approve the October 13, 2020 & May 12, 2020 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Meeting participants introduced themselves and shared their connection to the council.

## **FOLLOW UP OF LAST MEETINGS ACTION ITEMS**

### **Council Membership**

Michael Bursaw welcomed new member, Michael Tuft. Angela Fujan shared Michael is replacing Sandy Peterson from PTI. Michael Bursaw reported the council is in need of new members; particularly two business representatives and a community rehab program representative. Angela discussed the council has membership requirements that must be met and several members termed out so the council has a need to recruit new members. Members discussed the need for representation from different business industries and areas of state. Angela Fujan shared if anyone has member suggestions she can reach out to them with an introduction as well the membership application is available on the SRC webpage. Crystal Booker asked if members can be recruited from the businesses currently working with VR. Mary Matusiak shared that yes, those businesses can be reached out to, sharing a few current members joined the council this way.

### **Election of Officers**

Angela Fujan reported currently Michael Bursaw is serving as vice-chair and has voiced interest in filling the role of chair, Chris Gaspari moved and Gale Hahn seconded the motion to approve Michael Bursaw as council chair. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

Angela discussed the need for a vice-chair and explained the role and asked for any volunteers. Crystal Booker volunteered for the position of vice-chair. There were no objections.

Angela shared an additional member is needed on the executive committee stating a representative from the consumer committee is needed, Gayle Hahn was nominated and accepted.

Angela shared a representative from the transition committee could also be utilized on the executive committee. Theresa Hayes was nominated and accepted.

Chris Gaspari moved and Gayle Hahn seconded the motion to approve the new executive committee. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **Approval of 2021 meeting dates**

- February 9, 2021
- May 11, 2021
- August 10, 2021
- October 12, 2021

Gayle Hahn moved to approve the proposed dates, Susan Madsen seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR**

Michael Bursaw asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members.

Chris Gaspari discussed an individual she has been speaking to with brain injury issues whom was previously a VR client and was wondering if she would be able to reapply for services. Council members shared yes, she is eligible and should apply and could be served by VR. Angela shared VR applications can be completed by phone or Zoom and signed electronically or through the mail. Michael Bursaw asked if an individual does not have internet access, how can they be served by VR? Angela shared they can complete things via phone as well as mailed hard copies of documents.

Cody McEvoy asked with the strange year of Covid have their been successes and/or challenges. Angela shared she will be sharing the success stories for senator outreach of clients even throughout Covid. Lindy Foley shared she keeps up with Jerry Bryan and any potential complaints with CAP. Lindy stated she feels VR staff has done an exceptional job putting clients in the driver seat. Lindy

reported they have been able to increase participation in meetings such as IEPs with saved driving time. Mary Matusiak shared she believes they have strengthened relationships with businesses during this time with additional opportunities for work from home. Brigid Griffin shared in terms of Project Search that 13 of the 14 sites are in operation at the business sites. A new business advisory council (BAC) was established fully virtual.

No additional feedback was shared.

### **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS**

Members were asked for feedback on the written reports provided from ATP, NSILC, NYLC and the Client Assistance Program.

Dea Henke shared a summary of the NSILC report. Dea reported the executive director is retiring sharing they are forming an employment committee to move forward with a new hire. Dea reported there are two new SILC members stating one is Chris Gaspari. Dea said they could take on two additional members living with disabilities and they would like to have them represent the western portion of the state. Dea shared it has been a little tricky meeting but they have been able to hold their meetings virtually. Dea reported from Give to Lincoln Day they were able to purchase masks and donate them to individuals with disabilities.

Tobias Orr of ATP summarized his written report. Tobias reported the enrichment foundation grant has been renewed, sharing the grant helps individuals living in the Omaha metro with home and video technology. HHS program is still moving along. Education has been very busy over the last 12 months sharing they have held a lot of webinars. Tobias reported the ICanConnect and VR partnerships are still moving along.

Brigid Griffin said there is not a lot of updates for the NYLC sharing they do continue to meet virtually and they maintain close connection as a council playing games etc. Brigid reported they have speaking engagements coming up and they continue to be involved presenting virtually. Brigid shared that leadership opportunity and the virtual aspect is a benefit that has arisen through Covid. Cody McEvoy summarized his written report for the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Cody shared they are working on an enrichment grant some of which was postponed due to Covid. Cody discussed he is excited about a training called CDI, certified deaf interpreters working with hearing interpreters as a team. Cody discussed they have worked on voicing concerns regarding the presidential debates where transcription was delayed and individuals can not distinguish who is saying what when people are speaking at the same time. Cody reported they are encouraging the use of ASL interpreters in such events like with the state Governor's press conferences.

No additional feedback was provided.

### **SRC ANNUAL REPORT**

Sandy Hamm shared she is working on compiling the information for the report which is due at the end of the month. Sandy asked new members to submit a photo for the report and council webpage. Sandy shared the committee chairs are asked to submit a yearly report so to keep in mind the work of the committee throughout the year for that report. Lindy Foley shared her thanks to Sandy for her work on this report and shared all past years' annual reports can be viewed on the SRC webpage. Sandy stated this year's annual report will be posted as soon as it is completed.

### **SENATORS OUTREACH**

Angela Fujan discussed annual Senators Outreach will be in February the next time the council meets. Sarah Chapin summarized the new outreach format for this year due to Covid. Sarah said a save the date has been sent to state senators for a Zoom event as well as citizens are encouraged to participate. Sarah shared the official invitation will be sent in January with the names of panelists

featured from the different senators' areas. Sarah discussed last years' success sharing a thank you. Sarah discussed for the panel they have a teacher and student, identified an adult client and Mary is working on a business representative. Angela said the committee will schedule another meeting to complete the planning of this event. Sarah shared they have done quite a few panels over the last few months and she feels its much more interesting and successful when there are a variety of voices. Angela shared the February SRC meeting will start at 10:00am with the outreach panel for about 45minutes with the regular council meeting to follow. Lonnie Berger commended the committee for this creative idea and hard work, sharing he is looking forward to it. Tobias Orr clarified the council will receive a webinar link for the panel to login after which they would need to log out and after a short break rejoin a different link for the SRC meeting. Sarah shared she plans to do a press release to get the word out about the event. Lindy Foley stated this event would be a great way for potential new members to be introduced to the council and learn more about what the council can do.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Members broke into committees for discussion.

### **Client Services Committee**

Victoria Rasmussen reported the committee reviewed the year end survey and looked at the first quarter data. Victoria shared things are looking great. Victroia discussed they are seeing some individuals are working less hours but this is due to priority group one individuals coming off the waitlist are often in supported employment and they are working at the maximization of hours they can work to maintain benefits. Victoria also discussed some individuals were reduced hours or let go due to Covid, the committee suggested adding Covid as a reason for loss of employment versus listing that as "othe"r to be able to track that outcome sharing if clients are affected by Covid they need to reach out to VR for additional assistance. Victoria stated Covid will be added as a category to the survey.

### **Employer Services Committee**

Lonnie Berger shared the committee spent time discussing the Job Expos typically held in the Spring. Lonnie shared the job fair role is changing with a more local format; each ESU will be planning and running the job fairs which will allow students to make contacts for jobs in their area. Lonnie shared VR and the SRC will continue to be involved and see that they continue. Brigid Griffin shared several areas are looking at how they can do the job fairs virtually, noting Tobias Orr and ATP have stepped up with support and assistance. Mary Matusiak shared it will be nice having them broken up by region in the years to come they will be able to get an industry leads and focus of labor markets in each local region. Lonnie share the committee discussed the impact Covid has had on employers and employees. Lonnie asked regarding the statewide transitions conference traditionally held in Kearney, if it would be held this year.

### **Transition Services Committee**

Theresa Hayes reported the Transition Conference will be held virtually February 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, stating the positive is a great cost savings and particularly for teachers the sessions can be recorded and participants can participate after work hours. Theresa shared they have a lot of good speakers lined up stating information and registration will be sent out in early January. Theresa shared the RFPs went out December 1<sup>st</sup> for summer transition programs stating they will be working to review and assign those soon for next summer. Brigid shared on the VR website and NDE webpage, proposal applications are available. Brigid discussed their work with YRTC's stating they are back delivering services virtually in Kearney and working to resume services at the other locations.

## **FALL CSAVR CONFERENCE**

Michael Bursaw reported he participated in the CSAVR Conference as well as Lindy Foley, summarizing his experiences. Michael shared the overall theme of the conference was over the social issues of the time with a lot of discussion and presentation on topics such as bias, microinequities and how to best provide services to all clients no matter their background. Michael shared there were a lot of great speakers offering great perspectives and information. Michael also noted day three had a lot of focus on Veterans' needs and appreciation. Lindy Foley shared there was a lot of energy with over 700 registrants with a lot of participants noting this was about double of in-person conferences. Lindy shared the virtual format allowed a lot of additional participation with seven VR staff, herself and Michael. Lindy reported they heard from presenter Victor Armstrong who was excellent as well as presentations on data, innovative practices from employers, Cindy Otis who presented from CIA to Executive as a former VR client. Next steps will be debriefing and applying key takeaways, as well as continuing to connect with other VR agencies. Lindy shared VR is looking to be the "step-ahead" for employers, being a source of solutions for employers and clients.

## **DIRECTORS REPORT**

Lindy Foley reviewed the order of selection sharing as of this week they have removed approximately 4,000 individuals from the waitlist in priority group one. Lindy stated they have the goal to clear all of priority group one sharing currently there about 56 people on that wait list and they will assess how to keep that moving so they can evaluate when to formally open group one. Lindy reported Nebraska VR and ATP have been involved in the Olmstead Plan sharing they are very much apart of the discussions. Lindy shared in November they were asked to be part of virtual showcase. Participants of the showcase were Nebraska, South Carolina, Florida and Arizona stating the event was coordinated by Mark Schultz. Lindy shared she has provided a directors report for the annual report. Lindy shared with as many challenges they have faced over the last year they have continued working hiring 20 new great staff members, pulling people off the wait list and collaborating with schools. Lindy shared a thank you to the SRC for all of the councils support and involvement.

## **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 12:05pm.