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| **State Rehabilitation Council****October 30, 2013****9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.****MINUTES****Utah State Board Of Education****Main Conference Room** |
| **Conference calls: 1-877-820-7831 269450#** |
| **Next meeting: Wednesday, November 27, 2013** |
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| **PRESENT** | Kelly Boehmer | Lindsay Boerens | Sharon Brand |
|  | Carrie Dallas | Ken Gourdin | Bart Hill |
|  | Susan Loving | Debra Mair | Karim Mardanlou |
|  | Kent McGregor | Travis Morgan | Louise Ogden |
|  | Amy Powell | Maree Webb | James Whitaker |
|  | Rylee Williams |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **PHONE** | James Sterzer | Richard Eversull | Merina Pope |
|  | Paula Seanez | Tammy Wood |  |
| **EXCUSED** | Ronald Campbell | Jan Quinn Carter |  |

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| **USOR STAFF** | John Woeste | Kyle Walker | Michael Shoemaker |  |
|  | Ginny Henderscheid |  |  |  |
| **GUESTS** | Kris Fawson | Ralph Glathar | Robyn Chidester |  |
|  | Interpreters |  |  |  |

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**WELCOME**

In Ron Campbell’s absence, Sharon Brand, Vice Chair, conducted the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Kent McGregor volunteered to read the Mission Statement.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Sharon asked for approval or amendments to the August Minutes.

Kent McGregor submitted the following amendments:

Under Executive Director Update; Page 2, middle of page, the paragraph, “Under Support Employment.”

Correction: “Under Supported Employment.”

Under Executive Director Update; Page 3, the sentence, “Russ said the awards will be announcement.”

Correction: “Russ said the awards will be announced.”

Last page regarding Annual Meeting Dates: Correction date of the annual meeting from Wednesday, September 24, 2013, changed to Wednesday, September 25, 2013.

Susan Loving requested an amendment on page 3: Regarding the Promise grants the sentence, “We will receive $32.5 million.”

Correction: “We would receive $32.5 million.” Susan noted, at the time of the meeting the grant had not been approved.

Council member Tammy Wood requested to amend her name on the attendance to omit the “s.”

**MOTION:** Susan Loving moved to accept August minutes with amendments. Kent McGregor seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Sharon asked for approval or amendments to the September minutes.

Bart Hill requested to amend that he attended by phone and was not present at the meeting.

Susan Loving requested to amend Page 4, regarding a cover letter from the auditor. Russ spoke on a recommendation and “give factual and sensible reasons.”

Correction: “gave factual and sensible reasons.”

Kent McGregor requested to amend Page 2 “Office of Federally Contractor Compliance Program.”

Correction: “Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Program.”

Susan Loving requested to amend the word “over-site” in the minutes with the correct spelling.

Correction: “oversight.”

**MOTION:** Kent McGregor moved to accept September minutes with amendments. Louise Ogden seconded motion. All voted in favor. None opposed.

**USOR SUCCESS STORIES**

Kyle related a client success story regarding an employment outcome from one of the Independent Living Centers. This client spent 15 years institutionalized and was released to the community to start life over. Without knowledge of how to get into employment, the client contacted IL. With their extensive support and job coaching he has been employed for the past two years with Jorgensen Car Dealership, cleaning and detailing cars. He is now independent, self-sufficient and working. This success story ended with a round of applause. The second success story was an individual who started with the VR program and attended SLCC Applied Technology and is now working for GE HealthCare. He is now a Field Service Quarantine Test Technician, working a very technical job repairing circuits. He has worked with GE HealthCare now for two years and is off all benefits. Everyone agreed it was great hearing these two success stories.

**EXECUTIVE UPDATES Kyle Walker**

Kyle announced this year’s client closures count was 3,665 individuals getting employed. Kyle stated this was the most successful year in history since 1921. With the client satisfaction survey completed this year, an over-all rating showed approximately 80% satisfaction. Kyle felt this was attributed to the Rehab Way transformation. Kyle went on to say that, VR served more clients this year than ever before with 30,884 clients served.

Legislative Update - Kyle and Russ met with Lt. Governor Greg Bell and the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget. They presented the VR building block request for 2014 Legislative session. They asked for $666,000 to fund for rehabilitation technician positions and a one-time million dollar building block. Kyle mentioned there was $120 million dollars excess of one-time income tax money to be used by Education. Kyle remarked this tax money may be the funds to support the building block. While at this meeting, Lt. Governor Greg Bell related some good experiences he had with the VR program and expressed whole heartedly that he supported VR’s request and would forward this recommendation to Governor Herbert.

Sharon and Kyle spoke about the Governor’s Committee Golden Key Awards. They related how people were impacted by businesses hiring individuals with disabilities.

Kyle spoke about the recent Government Shutdown that involved VR and all federally funded organizations. Kyle stated that VR tried to make sure there were no disruptions in the service. Kyle related other issues that could have had a larger impact on VR clients if the Government Shutdown was extended. Kyle emphasized the importance of SRC advocating to the national leaders to understand this was not academic and that it has real impact. He said the effect could have been far worse.

Kyle reported on Senate Bill 1356 Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. A meeting was held at Senator Hatch’s office with Dianne Browning and Linda Gibbons to discuss the provision in Senate Bill 1356. Specifically, there was a concern about the move of RSA from Department of Education to Department of Labor and the downgrade of VR counselors’ qualifications. The concern was that VR has a specialty area in counseling with a huge domain of expertise. Downgrading counselors with non-qualified staff would be detrimental to the client. Even though VR is about employment, there is more to the VR program. Kyle said VR gave their concerns to Senator Hatch’s office and thought there may be some amendments regarding the qualifications of counselors.

Kyle mentioned that Executive Director, Russ Thelin, along with Carol Ruddell, Sara McCormick, and Dr. Cathy Chambless were attending the kick-off of the Department of Education’s PROMISE Initiative – Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income. The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation received one of six five-year PROMISE awards on behalf of a western consortium of states including; Arizona, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah. The award for all six states is $32.5 million. Kyle also said while at the conference, Russ was able to meet with the Department of Education and Senator Harkin’s office and they were very interested in the grant that Utah received.

Kyle reported on the Second Annual Transition Conference presented by Rachel Anderson and Aaron Thompson. It was a huge success with VR building valuable partnerships. Kyle named Cheryl Thomas, Counselor, from the Valley West District office, as receiving the Transition Counselor of the Year. She was nominated by other VR transition counselors and her partner school district,

Kyle reported that Gordon Swenson, VR Field Service Director, was attending the UDOWD Summit meeting this week. Kyle commented that by that partnering with Correction and Workforce services, VR is making a huge impact on individuals released from the Utah State and Federal prison system and seeking employment.

**POLICY REVIEW**

**Transportation Policy**. The auditor’s reported they reviewed 15 vehicle purchases and modifications. The auditor’s felt some of the purchases were not warranted and necessary. Kyle reported that VR felt they were necessary and appropriate and that a major obstacle between the client and employment in each case was the need of a modified vehicle. Kyle noted that it was just a case of VR not documenting the cases clearly and the appropriate reasons why the purchases were necessary. The recommendation was that counselors needed to document clearly, not only for supervisor’s reviewing, but for auditor’s viewing, showing the reasonable and unreasonable options.

Susan Loving asked to review and discuss, Page 2, 29.3, Section D, Client Owed Vehicle Modification, e). This section was regarding VR counselors documenting that a conversation was made with the client explaining USOR was not responsible for future equipment, removal and restorations. Susan Loving asked the definition of ”accepted documentation.” Kyle answered a narrative in the IRIS system. Susan asked if would be more effective if the client signed or initialed this notification. Kyle reported that an USOR-53 Receipt of Equipment form was in place and the client does sign this form, but noted that this language was not on that form. Kyle said this language will be added to the USOR-53 Receipt of Equipment form.

Susan Loving asked to review and discuss Page 6, 29.4, **Necessary Client Notifications on Vehicle Purchases.** This was regarding client understanding of their personal responsibilities. Kyle again, stated this language was not on the USOR-53 form but should be added to the form as well.

**MOTION:** Kent McGregor made the motion that the Council approves the Transportation Policy as explained with the added language of the policy to the USOR-53 Receipt of Equipment form as proposed. Susan Loving seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed.

**CHAPTER 5 ELIGIBILITY**

I-9 ELIGIBILITY

Kyle reported on Chapter 5 Eligibility, Page 4, stating that a paragraph has been inserted that all VR counselors will verify that the individual must meet I-9 eligibility. Counselors will obtain copies of documents from a USOR designated list and copies of these documents would be included in the client record.

A question was asked about items in the policy manual and if they were available to the public. It was noted that the manual was only accessible to USOR staff. Members asked if this was something that could be considered for public viewing. Kyle stated he will take steps to get this accomplished.

A question was asked to review Page 9, Section 5.13, Annual Review of Ineligibility, asking when reviews were done. Kyle stated VR was not required to annually review all cases where applicants were determined ineligible. [Note: An Annual Review of Ineligibility only applies in the rare instance when the decision is that the individual is not capable of achieving an employment outcome. The majority of ineligibility determinations are on the basis of (1) No existing medical or psychological evidence to determine a significant disability or (2) No verification that the disability results in a substantial impediment to employment].

Kyle reported on one case review the auditor covered. VR helped a client with four-years of training, and at the end, the client was not eligible for employment. Kyle noted that on Page 4 an insert was made that requires counselors to verify I-9 eligibility at time of application to alleviate this problem. No further questions were asked.

**MOTION**: Lindsay Boerens moved to approve the I-9 Eligibility policy. Kent McGregor seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed.

**MEDICAID RATES**

Kyle said the auditors reported and felt that VR was paying too much for medical services. Auditor’s recommended to the Legislature that VR should accept the Medicaid fee schedule rate. Kyle further explained there was an exception to this policy granting VR Counselors to negotiate a rate starting at the Medicaid rate and working toward the maximum rate of 170% (which was increased recently from 150%). Kyle did state the Counselors were to document the exceptions and reasons for the selected rates for client’s record.

Kyle went on to say that upon this recommendation a decision was made that VR would voluntarily take the Medicaid fee rate and keep precise data to note the effects it might have on client services. Kyle also stated that district offices are collecting lists of vendors (in their areas) that accept Medicaid rates so that clients have informed choice.

A Council member felt this decision was cause for concern. A former VR client now a Council member related how difficult it was to find medical services at the Medicaid fee rate and other members sited concerns that services could be disrupted severely. One member mentioned that it is SRC role to look out for VR clients and wondered if using the Medicaid fee rate might be a deterrent to the client. More concerns were related and the discussion ended to gather detailed data so that SRC can develop a position.

**MOTION**: Susan Loving moved to table the Medicaid fee rate for six months to review actual data gathered to evaluate. Lindsay Boerens seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed.

A website for Medicaid codes are accessible to view at <http://health.utah.gov/medicaid/stplan/lookup/CoverageLookup.php>

**DIRECT CLIENT AUTHORIZATION**

Due to deficiencies in controls identified in a recent state audit, DRS is restating and clarifying policy regarding direct client authorization of funds. DRS Policy is that the preferred method of obtaining the necessary, appropriate, and least possible cost paid services for VR Clients is through authorization to a third party vendor. A district director approval has been put in place for direct client authorizations.

**MOTION:** Lindsay Boerens made a motion to approve the Direct Client Authorization policy. Kent McGregor seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed.

**OPEN DISCUSSION/AGENCY UPDATE**

Susan Loving, Special Education, announced UCAT Technical Support Specialist, Craig Boogaards’ retirement party held today at UCAT from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Current data for a post school survey has been done. This survey shows what students were doing after a year of school

Louise Ogden, Utah Parent Center, said the Center was receiving calls from several parent calls saying that more VR counselors are attending IEP meetings and more are involved in the transition program. Louise introduced and welcomed Robyn Chidester, to the meeting. Robyn is steering the Currier project, meeting families and parents and teaching them about the VR program. Louise mentioned she attended the Transition Annual Conference at the Davis Center and said it was excellent.

James Whitaker, Assistant Deputy Director with DWS, spoke on Veterans Employment.  James reported that Utah's overall unemployment rate for 2012 was 5.7%, which was well below the national average.  But the unemployment rate for Utah Veterans was 7.2%.  DWS is working with businesses and other agencies to find more jobs for our Veterans. James mentioned that, as part of the overall effort, a Veterans-focused Job Fair is being held today at the South County Expo Center.

Lindsay Boerens, Disability Law Center (DLC), said the HUD grant that DLC applied for was approved. The HUD grant will allow DLC to pursue complaints against landlords who discriminate against applicants based on disability or any other protected class status.

Paula Seanez, Navajo Nation, 121 Program, indicated that transitioning students is a priority in the Navajo VR grant. OSERS is working with schools on transition efforts by negotiating MOUs and sponsoring a transition conference located on the Navajo Nation. Since there are a number of school districts, the program is beginning with Window Rock Schools, Central Consolidated School and will meet with San Juan School district in southern Utah. The Fall CANAR Conference is being held this week in Portland, Oregon with a spring CANAR Conference being held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in April. The CANAR President, Treva Roanhorse, is organizing the conference program and is inviting Utah Office of Rehabilitation and the SRC to be involved. The Navajo Nation and other tribes negotiated and received their Grant Award Notification beginning October 1, 2013. The Navajo program is funded through 2015. This is the second year in a row in which there was no Request for Proposals (RFP) for grant application under the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Projects. American Indian VR programs are funded on a competitive grant basis.

John Woeste mentioned that the SRC Annual Report is in draft form and will be reviewed at the November’s meeting. USOR has changed their website. If anyone is interested they can look at <http://www.USOR.utah.gov> . John also said that within the USOR website you can find a link to UCAT website.

**SUMMIT READING GROUPS FOR EXCELLENCE (SuRGE)**

Michael Shoemaker, Program Evaluation & Planning Specialist, introduced Dr. Darlene Groomes, PhD, CRC, LPC, Associate Professor Human Development and Child Studies Oakland University attending by teleconference call. Dr. Groomes gave a summary of the Summit Group by saying this is a group evolved from people exchanging information on topics of evaluation. It now is an online learning community that generates knowledge, information, and practices for the VR community. The goal is to improve VR practices bent toward program evaluation. Darlene mentioned that Michigan SRC, Oklahoma, and Colorado SRC have been involved and that the input was invaluable from SRC. Darlene ended by inviting SRC members to join and thanked members for their time.

Meeting adjourned 11:56 A.M.

Minutes submitted by Executive Secretary, Ginny Henderscheid