

# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2024

## **ATTENDEES:**

Daryn Richardson  
David Zrostlik (virtual)  
Eva Castillo  
Lisa Schneider (virtual)  
Margee Woywood (virtual)  
Mari Brown  
Rich Phelan  
Sara Bath (for Linda Rouse)

## **IVRS Support Staff:**

Dr. James Williams  
Andrea Keith  
April Stotz  
Ashley Banes  
Bob Hendrickson  
Brandi Fitch  
Brandy McOmber  
Cara DiGiovanni  
Char Ingersoll  
Dee Schweizer  
Helen Billmeyer  
Jeff Haight  
Jenni Kimble  
Mary Jackson  
Sandy Ostendorf  
Tyler Hansen  
Vienna Hoang

## **PUBLIC/GUEST:**

Dr. Allison Levine (virtual, speaker)  
Michelle McNertney (speaker)  
ASL Interpreter Shekynah Entinger  
ASL Interpreter Danja Hirsch  
ASL Interpreter Peggy Chicoine

## **ABSENT:**

Amy Robasse  
Linda Rouse  
Susan Seehase

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductions and recognition of Daryn Richardson and Mari Brown for their time with SRC.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Daryn Richardson called the April 23, 2024 State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.

## **QUORUM**

A quorum was established at 10:32 a.m.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion by Rich Phelan, Second Eva Castillo – approved agenda for April 23, 2024 meeting.

## **APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Mari Brown, Second Lisa Schneider – approved January 23, 2024 meeting minutes

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Rich Phelan suggested members be aware during SRC meetings of the use of acronyms.
- Mari Brown discussed the May 4 Together We Can conference through Ask Resource Center, where Dr. Williams will be presenting; details can be found on the Ask Resource Center's website. Mari additionally stated Ask Resource Center is currently hiring for several positions.

## **VOTE TO SELECT SFY24 SRC CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR**

Volunteers for Nominating Committee: Lisa Schneider, Margee Woywood. Lisa Schneider requested brief time extension during meeting for discussion; granted. Dr. Williams discussed procedure for determination/nomination of SRC Chair positions.

- Nomination by Daryn Richardson of Eva Castillo for SFY24 SRC Chair
  - Passed by unanimous vote
  - Eva Castillo named SRC Chair beginning SFY24
- Vice-Chair selection was moved to next SRC meeting.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Outreach Committee (Mari Brown)**

- Survey updates discussed. Since the same survey had been used for several years, changes are being looked at such as language level, questions for students receiving Pre-ETS (pre-employment transition services), and other states' survey information.
- Several SRC member positions currently needed, including business & industry, SILC, disability advocates, disability groups, and CRP (community resource provider) representatives.
- Dr. Williams stated interested parties should apply soon, as applications are typically approved once per year.
  - Interested persons should apply directly at the Talent Bank at [talentbank.iowa.gov](http://talentbank.iowa.gov)
  - Dr. Williams and Brandy McOmber can then additionally inform the Governor's office.

### **VR Service Delivery Committee (Sandy Ostendorf)**

- Reviewed roles of committee and the need to have more SRC members in this committee versus all IVRS staff.

- Several IVRS Counselors were in attendance to observe and learn more about the SRC meetings and procedures.

#### **Business Services Committee (Eva Castillo)**

- Reviewed roles of committee, purpose and potential
- Discussed gaps and how to bridge the gaps in Iowa
  - Ideas discussed included events and videos for National Disability Awareness month in October and partnering with other entities to avoid duplication

#### **PARENT FOCUS GROUP – MARI BROWN**

- Have held meetings to obtain input from parents; discussed summer programming.
- Next meeting: 5/15/24, Dr. Levine to attend.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR REPORT – DR. JAMES WILLIAMS**

- New IVRS website was launched; fully integrated under Iowa Workforce Development's website: [workforce.iowa.gov/vr](http://workforce.iowa.gov/vr) (or [workforce.iowa.gov](http://workforce.iowa.gov), click on VR)
  - Viewers were directed to report any errors at the feedback link
  - CRPs were encouraged to add link to their websites
  - Discussion on employer view for VR/disability resources
- SRC Membership
  - SRC members were encouraged to recruit for more membership; IVRS supports but does not overstep in this area.
    - Dr. Williams explained he serves per statute, and IVRS additionally has a Counselor Representative and Brandy McOmber. For the remainder of the postings, IVRS encouraged SRC members to recruit.
  - Dr. Williams explained the Governor completes approvals once per year (June/July); applications should be received prior to that or they will not be reviewed for a year.
    - Dr. Williams and Brandy McOmber are notified of applications.
    - Brandy McOmber will maintain updated SRC member lists.
  - Ideas discussed:
    - SRC members attempt to find a replacement prior to leaving
    - Build up the number of SRC members and not run lean
    - SRC members no longer interested in serving should send a letter to the board to officially resign so the position is open for another member prior to the yearly approval, which will ensure full membership and active involvement.
  - IVRS Conference April 30 – May 1, 2024
    - Annual event; to be held in Waterloo this year, all are invited.
    - IVRS initiatives will be announced at the conference, including:
      - Task restructuring to ensure coverage of tasks VR is statutorily required to accomplish:
        - Brandy McOmber Deputy Administrator
          - Dedicated contact/manage SRC membership, support SRC
          - Oversee State Plan
          - Oversee policy
        - New team for quality improvement and quality assurance

- Sandy Ostendorf, Lead
    - Paul Fuller and Ashley Banes, team members
  - DIF
    - Support position posted to allow for above changes
- Mobile Counseling Team
  - To begin May 2024
  - Team will consist of two IVRS Counselors (Cindy Whalen, Amy Chicos) and two interns.
  - Team will start with assisting in Des Moines where there is the most need.
- Des Moines office
  - Will be assisted by the Mobile Counseling team.
  - Filling positions has been a challenge; 5-6 vacant positions
    - Moved two positions to create the remote team
    - Hired one Counselor
    - Remaining two positions to be reclassified to Rehabilitation Associate roles, which have been positions easier to fill.
- Infrastructure merge
  - Plan to merge networks/infrastructure within the next year or two to create one network connection, eliminating the need for VPN.
- Modernizing IRSS Case Management System
  - Long term plan to move toward a modern platform that is purpose-filled for IVRS; 3-5 year plan.
- Funding increases
  - Appreciation expressed to Daryn Richardson, Mari Brown, and Eva Castillo for their calls and conversations with legislators.
    - Although appropriations for IVRS were not increased this year, it did create significant discussions from legislators about future increases.
  - Conversation was held with legislators about the ISE program and potential funding increase specifically for the ISE program.

## **RSB BUREAU CHIEF REPORT – MARY JACKSON**

- Bureau Chiefs and Assistant Bureau Chief will meet prior to SRC meetings in the future to compile the Bureau Chief Report, which will be presented by any of the three.
- Changes in the oversight structure of the Bureau:
  - Bureau Chiefs' area office supervision:
    - Eric Evans: Ames, Burlington, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, Ottumwa, Waterloo
    - Mary Jackson: Cedar Rapids, Fort Dodge, Iowa City, Mason City, Sioux City
  - Assistant Bureau Chief, Lori Kolbeck, to oversee specialized programming including ISE, Benefits Planning, Assistive Technology
- Mobile Team to begin May 10, 2024.

- Burlington Supervisor accepted one of the positions, which left the Burlington Supervisor position open.
- Burlington and Davenport area offices will be combined under one Supervisor, the Davenport Supervisor (Chad Pratz).
- The open Supervisor position will be moved to Des Moines; IVRS is looking at splitting the Supervision of Des Moines into two Supervisors.
- Staff changes:
  - Council Bluffs Supervisor (Sally Rolf) retiring in June.
  - Waterloo Supervisor (Genevieve Shafer) leaving in May.
    - There will then be two Supervisor positions open.
  - Benefits Planning Resource Manager filled by Angela Young (Counselor from Sioux City office)
- CSAVR (Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation) Spring Conference
  - IVRS had several representatives at the Spring Conference in April.
  - Kochell Weber-Ricklefs (Self-Employment Business Counselor) presented on Self-Employment in Iowa; positive feedback received.
  - Dr. Williams, Mary Jackson, and Kelsey Teeter (DE Representative) presented on collaboration between Department of Education and IVRS.
- Waiting List (question from Mari Brown, answer by Dr. Williams)
  - Dr. Williams reported currently 1300 people are on the waiting list, the vast majority are MSD (most significantly disabled).
  - Plan is to release weekly beginning in June, MSD will be release first.
  - A goal of IVRS is to officially leave order of selection.

#### **PRESENTATION – MICHELLE MCNERTNEY, IWD**

- Presentation provided by Michelle McNertney, IWD Division Administrator on four Title programs and intent of WIOA

#### **DISCUSSION ON ACTIVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY – BROWN, LEVINE, MCOMBER, STOTZ, HAIGHT**

- The team met previously and discussed updates to the survey. Discussion held on outcomes from meeting.
- Considerations for updates:
  - Electronic form (rather than postcard) with link to add to emails or QR code for marketing materials
  - GReminders system
  - Transition questions
  - Feedback options for DHoH community
  - Dr. Levine discussed goals of the survey, including to ensure job candidates had a positive experience with and benefit from IVRS regardless if a job was obtained.
- Survey will be looked at further.

#### **DISCUSSION ON COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND SUBCOMMITTEE PARTICIPATION – BRANDY MCOMBER**

- Business Committee was approved and created in January; will need to determine which members are in each group. Decided:

- Outreach
  - Linda Rouse
  - Susan Koch-Seehase
- VR Service Delivery
  - Lisa Schneider
  - Margee Woywood
- Business Services
  - David Zrostlik
  - Eva Castillo
  - Richard Phelan

### **CSAVR (FALL) DISCUSSION – BRANDY MCOMBER**

- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) fall conference will be October 19 – October 25, 2024 in Seattle, WA.
- Eva Castillo indicated she would be interested in attending.
- IVRS will wait until new members are appointed this summer by the Governor to the SRC; after which IVRS will ask for a second attendee for the fall CSAVR conference.

### **COMMITTEE REPORT/UPDATES**

- **IL Contracts (Bob Hendrickson)**
  - IVRS has made the decision to step down as the designated state entity for Independent Living, with a goal to be finished May 9, 2024. HHS and IDB have expressed interest; the SILC Board will determine.
- **Financial Overview (Jeff Haight)**
  - Discussion on handouts and reports.
- **CAP Update (Lisa Schneider)**
  - Discussion on trends, questions and letters from clients.
  - CAP is now being administered under HHS. Lisa reported that questions submitted through their web forms were not getting to her; this is being worked on. Lisa will update when resolved. In the interim members were encouraged to provide her contact information to persons reaching out.
- **Other Business (Committee Members)**
  - None

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m. by Daryn Richardson.

The next SRC meeting is July 25, 2024.

Next year's legislative reception was approved for January 25, 2025.

Meeting minutes approved by the Council on this date: July 23, 2024

Signed by SRC Chair – Eva Castillo: Eva M. Castillo