

## **State Rehabilitation Council**

Quarterly Meeting

Friday, September 23, 2011

Mesa Verde Community Center

7900 Marquette Avenue NE

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108

Quarterly Meeting - 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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### **Members present:**

Bernadine Chavez  
Jeffrey Diamond  
Ava Gutierrez  
Richard Dennis Jirón  
Sarah Michaud  
Rosemarie Ortiz  
Marcia Prophet  
Treva Roanhorse  
Louise Williams

### **Members absent:**

Yvonne Hart  
Andrew MacRae  
Alex Martinez  
Gilberto Romero

### **Guests present:**

Terri Douglass, Field Operations  
Andrea Valles, DRNM  
Anthony Riley, Laguna VR

### **DVR Staff present:**

Ralph Vigil  
Krista Martinez  
Barbara Michael

## **I. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Ms. Bernadine Chavez, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:25 a.m. Ms. Krista Martinez called the roll, there was a quorum. Ms. Chavez asked Mr. Anthony Riley, Project Director for the Laguna Acoma Connections, Ms. Terri Douglass, Field Operations Director for DVR, and Ms. Barbara Michael, Agency Attorney, to introduce themselves.

Mr. Ralph Vigil welcomed Ms. Douglass to her new position as Field Operations Director with DVR. He stated that he is really encouraged and happy to have Terri on board to lead the charge for rehab services as she brings a tremendous wealth of experience and knowledge. She has a passion for serving the participants that DVR serves will do a lot of justice to the disability community.

Mr. Jeff Diamond echoed the same thoughts. He stated that Ms. Douglass has a great regard from the professional community, and that everyone will enjoy working with her. Ms. Bernadine Chavez stated that she also has worked with Ms. Douglass for many years and has always found her to be a true professional, very passionate and dedicated to her work.

## **II. Action Items**

### **A. Approval of Agenda**

Ms. Treva Roanhorse motioned to accept the agenda as written. Mr. Jeff Diamond seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **B. Approval of Minutes – June 24, 2011**

Mr. Jeff Diamond motioned to accept the minutes with changes outlined by Ms. Ava Gutierrez. Ms. Treva Roanhorse seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## **III. Impartial Hearing Officer Recruitment update – Barbara Michael**

Ms. Barbara Michael, Agency Attorney, reported that New Mexico Abilities (NMA) has a current contract with NMDVR to provide Impartial Hearing Officer services. When Mr. Ralph Oropello was Executive Director, NMA thought they would not be doing another contract with DVR for Hearing Officers. Mr. Oropello is no longer with NMA and corporate staff has taken over until they could hire another Executive Director. Ms. Michael has been working with Ms. Susan Miduri, who is the Vice-President of contracts for the corporate entity for NMA. A new Executive Director, Ms. Nancy Bearce, is coming on board in September.

Ms. Michael and Ms. Miduri worked together on a contract that has already been signed by both parties. Ms. Michael reported that only one person has agreed to remain in the pool and both the Director and the Council need to discuss and approve this person. With NMA still willing to do the contract and only one person willing to serve, it is necessary to do a Request for Proposals as Federal law requires a pool of hearing officers. The current pool has been diluted by several officers being unavailable from time to time. Ms. Michael described the qualifications necessary to perform the duties of an Impartial Hearing Officer. She mentioned that at the next meeting in December, any discussion about the RFP must be in closed discussion since contracts have not been awarded yet. She announced that training will be provided in February or March of next year. Ms. Chavez clarified that if a Council member would like to be a Hearing Officer, they must choose one as they cannot be both at the same time.

Ms. Michael reported that in September, an RFP will be issued and will be advertised in the Albuquerque Journal and the New Mexico State Bar Bulletin and will also go on the NMDVR website. The RFP is quite extensive in spelling out the requirements. On November 2<sup>nd</sup> an evaluation team will meet to review any proposals received and make recommendations to the full Council at the next SRC Quarterly meeting. The Agency needs the SRC input before a contract can be awarded.

From October 1<sup>st</sup> of 2010 until the present, the Agency has received four fair hearing requests and one carry over from last fiscal year. Ms. Michael's annual report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) will reflect this data.

Ms. Bernadine Chavez stated the Agency has an obligation to provide a copy of the decisions rendered by Hearing Officers (with the participants name removed) to the SRC. She said the Council needs to discuss how it wants to look at that and what it wants to do with that information, possibly developing specific goals. Ms. Ava Gutierrez stated that the data could possibly be used for training purposes and would be beneficial information for Counselors. Ms. Louise Williams agreed that training and data analysis evaluate the current climate and determine the current issues out there and what challenges are currently being faced. Mr. Ralph Vigil stated that the Agency is happy to provide the information. The Agency would need to know what information is needed and for what purpose.

Ms. Chavez stated that since DVR services are individualized, a comparison of services provided cannot necessarily be done. Mr. Vigil clarified that everyone applying for services has the same opportunity to receive services. It could be that somebody in Hobbs got more services than someone in Santa Fe. A good Program Manager will provide training and oversight so that cases are well managed. They ensure the provision of quality services and are cognizant of cost and the fact that NMDVR employees are stewards of public monies. There are elements that are beyond the scope of what a Program Manager or VR counselor can control as each individual and counselor have different interpretations. The Rehabilitation Act is not prescriptive like an entitlement program. There are a lot of protections built in for the individual.

When an issue arises, Ms. Bernadine Chavez stated that Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM) advises participants to request a fair hearing to preserve their right for a hearing. Most of the time, the issue is resolved before going to hearing. She suggested that one of the SRC Committees, possibly the CSAOP, could discuss this topic and determine how to use and how the Council wants to see fair hearing information, ensuring it is used for a specific purpose.

#### **IV. SRC Chairperson's Report**

Ms. Bernadine Chavez, Chairperson, stated that the Council's by-laws need to be in line with what the Council's practice actually is and reflecting how it operates. The Council is working on fine tuning the by-laws and one if its goal is to make it easier for

members to be able to participate. As these items will eventually be posted on the DVR website, the Council needs to remain professional and transparent about what it does and it has to be very aware of the Open Meetings Act. She asked members to make sure they are recognized by the chair when speaking.

## **V. Director's Report**

Mr. Vigil reported on the Agency's budget. At the Federal level, due to budget concerns and discussions it has created a somewhat uncertain environment. For the first time in a few years, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) experienced a cut last year which affected training and grant programs and Projects With Industry. Some grants were zeroed out. Although Migrant Seasonal farm workers programs were not zeroed out, they were left at their level of funding with no assurance of continued funding. There are indications that there are additional cuts in store for programs across the board. A Super Committee has been formed to determine what they will look at in the way of reductions. Tax increases and further reductions in spending are being considered. The Agency gets some direct information on the various hearings from the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). The Agency is informed when there is testimony on the Hill. Programs such as VR are mainly concerned with whether or not they will sustain additional cuts. The large ticket programs such as Social Security and entitlement programs such as Medicaid are believed to be the main focus. Since VR is heavily federally funded (78.7 % of DVR's budget), a reduction in funding would significantly affect the Agency's ability to operate. Nothing definitive has been decided one way or another so the Agency will continue to operate with the assumption of having the funding needed. If there are any proposed cuts, the Agency hopes to hear about that well in advance so that contacts to the Agency's delegation and interested parties can be made to see about preserving DVR's budget. Nationally, there is a potential reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. Workforce Investment has been the program that VR has been operating under since the Clinton administration. VR is currently Title IV of that. There has been a Senate draft version of a bill that proposes that the Rehabilitation Act will be title V of that legislation. The Agency wants to preserve the integrity of VR programs to the extent that it can. This is also the charge of CSAVR.

At the state level, the Agency recently completed its State FY13 budget request. The Agency received instructions to keep the budget flat but be prepared for the possibility of budget cuts. Revenue projections have been higher than expected but funds are expected to be used for Medicaid which was previously charged incorrectly at the state level. An approximate \$87 million has been received over what was expected but it is earmarked to offset the Medicaid shortfall. DVR hopes to see the same budget which will not affect the state match. General Funded programs such as Expo New Mexico, Public Education and Tourism have experienced a Reduction in Force (RIF). The Agency met the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) analyst representing the Executive (Governor's Office) side of the budget. The Agency learned that it can go in for a more massive request than what has been done previously in order to fill critical positions. Ms. Douglass has been looking at the vacancies in the field as DVR is going

to try to fill as many positions as possible. Although the Agency cannot afford to fill every vacant position, it is going to attempt to achieve an adequate staffing level. Some offices, such as Roswell, were down to one support staff person and staff from satellite offices were utilized to help with the workload. Although NMDVR will not return to a staffing level such as what was maintained three years ago, it will be a much better situation than last year. Filling vacancies will be a challenge now that New Mexico DVR is in an Order of Selection (OOS). OOS is a measure in place to control how many people served and to track VR dollars more closely. DVR is attempting to do something that strikes a balance. As positions are filled internally, there are gaps from those promoting from within.

In terms of the State budget request just submitted by NMDVR, one difference is the resulting findings from the review of the Agency conducted by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) staff last year. One item NMDVR received as a finding is cost allocations and how the Agency has supported and administered grant and Independent Living programs. The Agency paid staff out of basic support funds to support those programs. The Agency's position is to charge an indirect cost to the various grant programs to administer them. The RSA interpretation, which is also being reinforced by the Agency's independent auditors, indicates that the Agency cannot do that. If staff are being paid with title I funds, they must be supporting title I programs. The Agency has requested an increase in general fund to support the independent living coordinator position. The Agency has also requested an increase for the Program Development and Supports discretionary grant programs so that they can perform functions for various grants not just belonging to Title I. If the Agency receives this increase, it would give some assurance that those programs could be administered in accordance with RSA interpretation. If the increase is not received, the Agency will have to look at downsizing in some of those grant areas and charging Independent Living to support that staff person who administers those dollars. The Agency will be primarily looking at filling staff positions in the field; these are the people who provide direct services. The Agency will also be looking at filling administrative positions to ensure administrative support can be provided to those providing direct services.

Mr. Vigil provided data regarding the Order of Selection as of September 2011. There are 590 participants in priority one group (people with most significant disabilities), 1,127 people in priority two group (people with a significant disability) and 108 people in priority group three (person with a disability). Currently, there are 1,825 people on the waiting list. This will be a baseline year for the Agency to collect data, take a look at what spending patterns look like and what the challenges are under Order of Selection beyond not being able to serve all of the general public. Although the Agency started out conservatively, it has increased the number of people being released each month. In the next three months, a minimum of 150 people will likely be released. The Agency hopes to create more inertia in the number of people served. One of the challenges the Agency faces is a decline in the number of people applying for services. The Agency hopes to open up the entire first priority group this year before it can start releasing from the second group, which is the largest group on the waiting list. The Agency will track expenditures closely and stretch funds as far as possible. The Agency regretted having to go into Order of Selection and tried to hold off as long as possible. There are controls in place to manage resources and not over expend and also to be proportionate to the number of staff on board. Mr. Vigil stated the Agency is also

keeping track of the people being removed from the list due to no contact. So far, 263 individuals have been released off the waiting list. The Agency needs to send out letters asking if people want to stay on the waiting list. Hopefully the Agency will get a high response rate of applicants wanting to stay on the list. Based on expenditures, the Agency hopes to have some pretty significant releases. There are people that continue in the pipeline in service status, people applying and the Agency is paying for diagnostic services in order to determine eligibility. There continue to be expenditures hitting the budget. Evaluating how the Agency is spending and how much the Agency is spending gives the Agency the tool to project how many people we are going to be bringing off.

Mr. Vigil stated that individuals should be encouraged to apply despite the waiting list. There may be a misconception since only the first priority group is currently being served but no one should be discouraging individuals to apply. With regard to transition, DVR should at least be at the table or at schools providing information about Vocational Rehabilitation and referral services. The sad reality of any collaboration is that if the individual is not in the priority group being served, they are going to be on the waiting list regardless of their age or what they are doing. Mr. Vigil stated that the biggest disincentive for him for order of selection was transitioning students. Most transitioning students, which is an important population, do not fall into first priority group. At a minimum, it would be expected that DVR counselors would be providing information and referral.

Members discussed that it is important how information is being disseminated by staff and in what language. It is critical that DVR share information regarding Order of Selection and how it impacts the individual. There is a belief that there is a misunderstanding of what is being said. Members have had conversations with clients and they think that maybe clarification, outreach and even a presence would be helpful. Mr. Vigil reiterated that the Agency has an obligation to provide Information and Referral services (I & R) so the participant can make an informed choice about whether to apply. Beyond that, DVR cannot commit to providing services.

Mr. Vigil explained that the release of individuals from the waiting list into service is based first on priority level and then on application date. This process gives the client some protection and some measure. When the initial releases were made, some caseloads received the "lion's share" of the clients being released. Currently, the releases have happened to be a little more even amongst the different offices and areas. With regard to staffing, the Agency is ramping up staffing and that shouldn't be as much of an issue unless there is a tremendous amount of turnover in one location. We may experience that again when we start serving priority level two. There we may be looking at the cases that maybe weren't managed as well, where we may have had vacancies on caseloads. So there could be a disproportionate release into those areas. Barry Jolly got his first recently.

Mr. Jeff Diamond asked if New Mexico will be one of the states applying for the waivers that will be allowed by the US Secretary of Education on the No Child Left Behind law. He wondered if any monies would be distributed to help New Mexico catch up with those individuals in priority groups two and three. Mr. Vigil stated that the money will go directly to the state Education Department and will not go to DVR. The money is allocated directly for education just as Title I dollars are allocated specifically for VR

services. Ms. Louise Williams stated that she does not have any more information from the state's Education Department but does believe that counselors should be recommending that students put in an application so their turn will "eventually come up". The application date is so critical to this process to get the applicants date in the priority listing. Ms. Ava Gutierrez stated that Counselors traditionally give their presentation to schools encouraging students to apply. Mr. Diamond stated that he has seen a huge increase in people claiming disabilities, particularly learning disabilities. The learning disability is so bad and predominant that if it were handled at the lower level as it was intended with No Child Left Behind, he believes it would be less burdensome putting people to work.

Mr. Vigil reported that the Agency has expended all of the ARRA/Federal Stimulus monies received. The funds have made a huge impact as the Agency probably would have entered into OOS up to a year before without it. All reporting of ARRA/Federal stimulus monies should be finished soon and the Office of Recovery and Reinvestment at the state level will be dismantled soon. Then the reviews, audits and follow-up will soon follow.

Mr. Vigil provided the Council with a document highlighting DVR key points. At a previous meeting, members discussed having a document to use when talking to legislators or other interested parties. The document is easy to understand and explain and can be shared on behalf of the SRC and the Agency. The document overviews the Agency and its funding sources, explains the NMDVR mission, describes the results of an economic impact study conducted in 2006 and lists how the Agency has worked to contain costs and remain efficient despite being forced to enter into an Order of Selection. The key fact is that NMDVR returns money to the state in the form of taxes paid by working persons with disabilities and reduced benefits paid to these employees. Ms. Bernadine Chavez thanked Mr. Vigil for the document. She said it is a really great tool and it helps us as Council members and our charge and responsibility about talking to people about DVR.

Mr. Vigil stated that the Agency did a series of draft revisions to the Manual of Operating Procedures (MOP). He referred to a copy of the PowerPoint presentation slides that were presented at the public hearings. He also referred to an online poster that provides the link to the sections that were revised. Ms. Terri Douglass reported that members may be aware that the Agency has been working on these revisions for over 3 years. It began with an effort to be more efficient and cost efficient and to also avoid having to go into an order of selection but it's finally just about ready and done. The public hearings that occurred throughout the state had very light attendance and light public comment. Comments may still be received and are encouraged to be submitted by September 30<sup>th</sup>. The Agency does not want to implement policy revisions that hinder its work or cause disadvantage to any of the participants that DVR serves. DVR balances those ethical principles, fidelity and justice to be able to serve as many people as possible but to do it in such a way that it is fair to each individual. Ms. Judy LeJeune and Ms. Douglass discussed minor language clarification changes to the Self-employment section that describes the three stages. The changed language proposes funding of self-employment plans at 100% up to the first \$5,000 cost of the plan, 50% from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and then 25% over \$10,000. This means the participant would be required to seek out comparable benefits. There are also some changes in that

section about doing a much more thorough evaluation of the individual and their ability to actually be able to run their own business. There is also a section that DVR will not support businesses that will not be able to sustain themselves at a substantial gainful activity level. She invited everyone to comment as DVR wants to hear what they have to say and their various perspectives on these revisions.

Ms. Chavez asked how it can it be predicted whether or not participants will be into substantial and gainful productivity. Ms. Terri Douglass stated that much work is done by DVR staff in preparation for making these types of decisions. Staff consults with people that know the business and small business in general. They must also do an analysis of the business plan itself. Before that, the individual needs to do a real thorough comprehensive assessment to determine if they are cut out to be a business owner. Then, staff needs to ask simple questions that don't always get asked: Do you balance your checkbook? What do your personal affairs look like? It is a best educated guess with consultations from subject matter experts and Small Business experts.

Mr. Richard Jiron expressed concern about receiving the notice about the MOP revision public hearings on the date of the first hearing. He stated that the public needs ample time to be able to participate and that the information needs to be communicated much better. He also went to the website as instructed on the email and discovered that most of the links work, but some did not. Information published needs to have links that work. He expressed his pride and pleasure in reading the documents, especially about the business plan, and said that they were fantastic. The years of development and thought processes that took place to bring it to its present form were evident. He heralded the agency for doing that, he read all of it and was proud. Ms. Sarah Michaud mentioned that in years past posters and flyers were distributed to the various partners. It is crucial to disseminate information weeks before an event to allow rural communities to arrange participation and transportation. Ms. Bernadine Chavez agreed that the Agency did great work but it really needs to be careful not to give the impression that no comment is really wanted.

Members discussed the format of the material presented. It was difficult for some to decipher what the original document was and what the changes were in the final draft. The PowerPoint presented at the public hearings was intended to address changes considering the complexity of the Manual of Operating Procedures (MOP) and the various levels of understanding and working with the MOP.

Mr. Anthony Riley commented that many tribal members are returning to traditional art work, pottery and jewelry making as a means of making a living and paying bills. He asked if language could be considered to recognize this as work and not be considered arts & crafts or a hobby. Ms. Douglass asked that he submit his comments to Mr. Rich Smith at DVR for inclusion in the Hearing Process.

## **VI. By-laws Review**



Ms. Louise Williams reported that the By-laws Review Committee has been working on draft revisions to the by-laws. Mr. Richard Jiron drafted a document showing the language additions and changes for the Council's review. Members discussed language changes, clarification for reimbursement to members with expired appointments, teleconferencing, proxy votes and Committee structure. Ms. Williams stated that regarding proxy votes, a member can have a representative who is not an SRC member be present to take notes but a proxy can only vote if he or she is a current member. Ms. Chavez stated that only an SRC member can vote since they have been vetted when appointed to the Council. Otherwise, any action taken does not meet the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. Ideally, the person designated will vote the way the absent member wants. The request for proxy will be in writing subject to the approval of the Chair and Agency Director.

## **VII. 121 Program Presentation**

Ms. Sarah Michaud reported that Tribal VR programs (TVR) were developed in accordance with section 121 of the Rehabilitation Act (as it was amended) to provide services specifically to Native Americans with disabilities. Navajo tribal VR was first – it paved the way for all 82 others. The grants are operated by the tribes in a culturally sensitive environment. Because they are located on tribal lands they are mostly staffed by tribal members and are therefore able to provide services that are very sensitive to the cultural needs and the language. Traditional components can thereby be easily added to service plans. The biggest difference between TVR and the state VR is that TVRs are grant programs. TVRs have to competitively reapply for funding every five years whereas the states are permanently funded. TVRs have similar performance requirements and operate at the same level as the state to provide services and close out cases and maintain successful closure rates. What makes TVRs so valuable is that they are right there and are able to do the daily outreach and it is typically done with the smaller caseloads (35-40) to be able to provide more one on one services.

Ms. Michaud welcomed comments and input from Ms. Treva Roanhorse as she is the President of the Consortium of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAAR) and has a wealth of knowledge. Ms. Roanhorse stated that her program has a competitively funded, 5 year discretionary grant which was previously a three year grant. They are 90% federally funded with a 10% tribal match. 83 tribes in 26 states including Alaska compete. Tribal VRS have MOUs with the state agencies. These are in place to outline both offices are going to work together on cases, trainings and collaborative efforts. She stated that the Navajo Nation works with the VR programs in New Mexico, Arizona and Utah.

Tribal VRs and state VRs are encouraged to work together. For example: Jemez serves three communities: Jemez, Santa Ana and Zia. They work with the Rio Rancho DVR office with Ava, John and Maxine who come out to the Jemez office to meet with clients and share those cases. Jemez VR works with Christine Fuller with deaf clients. When everything is working ideally, both offices collaborate on cases and cost share.

Together counseling and guidance is provided to best support a client in reaching their goals.

Before Jemez had a tribal VR program, 16 people to had received services from the state. Since Jemez started a tribal VR program about 15 years ago, almost 500 individuals have been served. The growth in services is noticeable and Jemez now has the ability to provide onsite and ongoing education at what disability is because disability is defined differently through every single community.

Ms. Roanhorse stated that the Navajo VR program provides services on and near the reservations and villages. The definition is defined by the tribes themselves. For her program it is a 10 mile radius outside the reservation. There is an overlap and this is why the collaboration with the state is very important. The eligibility criteria is the same, the only difference is the individual must be from a federally and state recognized tribe and they have to reside on or near the reservation. Their counselors carry a case load of about 75. A majority of the staff understands the language and can therefore successfully job place individuals. They have the translation and interpretation skills and other collaboration efforts are needed to ensure clients rights and access to services. The various tribal VR programs fall under various Department designations. The Departments of Labor, Health, Education and tribal colleges are all partners with tribal VR. Services should be culturally sensitive and are expected to perform and be accountable. There are various Memorandums of Understanding with the state VRs as they share Impartial Hearing Officers. The tribal VRs operate much the same way as state VRs except that they serve a very targeted population. The Navajo Nation must comply with 371 and 361 regulations. RSA received ARRA funding which has been used to develop technical assistance and training for tribal VR. They submit annual electronic performance reports to RSA. They partner with Region six TACE and the other TACE training centers and other entities such as CANAAR and CSAVR. The National Indian Health Board wants to look at how they work with the deaf and blind population.

Rural transportation is a major consideration as many entry level jobs pay approximately \$7.00 an hour. Considering an approximate 100 mile round trip, an entry level job barely covers gas and maintenance. Job skills training and education are critical. They are developing an employability skills curriculum with a goal of making training quarterly to make sure they are ready to be employed. This was developed due to lack of understanding about what it takes to be employed and appropriate behavior.

Navajo VR also relies on competitive employment such as a medicine man. Self-employment is considered but workforce development is also reviewed. Seasonal employment is a consideration in some areas such as Alaska and the Grand Canyon. The weather can also be a consideration in ski areas such as Taos. Cultural considerations are also reviewed in areas such as Alaska with boat making. There are Conferences to attend where they introduce the various cultures.

Employment outcomes generally are:

1. Self-employment, which is extremely common due to Tribal responsibilities which often hinders getting an outside job.
2. Security/law enforcement
3. Technology fields
4. Sports medicine/therapy

Ms. Michaud stated that transition services are very critical as tribal members have often dropped out before graduation. About 7-9 years ago it was decided to start serving younger tribal members and monitor them earlier so they achieve the credits necessary to graduate. Mr. Ralph Vigil stated that DVR does provide transition services – starting at age 16 or junior year – with the biggest population being graduating seniors depending on school area and funding.

Ms. Roanhorse stated that Vocational and psychological evaluations are contracted out to a company out of Flagstaff. Ms. Sarah Michaud stated that evaluations in Jemez are contracted out of Albuquerque.

## **VIII. Comments from Public/DVR Staff/Members**

Ms. Rosemarie Ortiz asked that for future meetings, the Council would like to see how many people are in service status.

The review of the Impartial Hearing Officer Request for Proposal responses will be held on November 2nd from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mr. Jeff Diamond, Mr. Richard Jiron and Ms. Sarah Michaud have agreed to review the proposals received.

## **IX. Other Business**

**SRC webpage** - Ms. Krista Martinez reported that she had met with Mr. Tom Gomez of the Information Services Unit of NMDVR. Ms. Martinez stated that it was her understanding that the SRC could have a page on the Agency's website where meeting schedules, agendas and other Council information could be posted. The SRC would need to decide what information they would like to see and have access to and inform the Agency so that it may be posted accordingly through a Request to Publish internal process.

## **Awards Committee update**

Ms. Rosemarie Ortiz reported that at the last quarterly meeting, the Awards Committee was assigned the task of developing a way to recognize NMDVR employees and their accomplishments. The Committee did some research and an employee of NMDVR

gave the Committee the Agency's policy and procedures. The Committee thought that the SRC could do an additional award separate from the awards given by the Agency. The Committee thought about recognizing a person or even a program/division or possibly have an "MVE" – one or several Most Valuable Employee(s). The Committee thought that the individual or group could be recognized at an SRC meeting and (with consideration of budget) possibly have a Pizza party or even award a Plaque.

Ms. Marcia Prophet stated that it is difficult for the Committee to make an award without any awareness of projects being done. The committee wants to be objective and decided to develop some criteria.

1. Unique and exciting partnerships with community
2. Creating awareness and educating people about disabilities and what DVR does
3. Empowerment and self-advocacy (not necessarily outcomes) but who have created new advocates to demonstrate model and promote VR
4. Creativity

Ms. Ortiz contributed another idea for criteria: Innovative and new ideas – considering doing more with less. The Committee considered soliciting Peer recommendations/nominations. The Committee would review the nominations and make a recommendation to Mr. Vigil. A challenge for the SRC would be how to know what people do and what they are doing.

Mr. Vigil outlined the various units in three sections: 1. Administrative Services Unit (ASU) and Information Services Unit (ISU); 2. Field Services (FSU) also known as Rehabilitation Services Unit (RSU); and 3. Program Development and Supports (PDS). Mr. Vigil suggested asking the Leadership Team to provide nominations to the SRC. He mentioned the LIFT project managed the awards process this year and the Positive Organizational Committee could potentially manage this project as they are generally "people in the know".

Mr. Vigil stated that the New Mexico State Personnel Office (SPO) is clamping down on granting Admin Leave and all requests must go through SPO and the Office of the Governor. Traditionally, NMDVR has awarded administrative leave for performance but that likely will not happen this year. The Agency will continue their regular awards and plaques such as the Roadrunner awards for high performance and a new award for VRC quality – a counselor demonstrating commitment to service excellence. No seasonal observances were granted this year by the Office of the Governor and as a matter of fact, some employees were involved in a Reduction in Force (RIF).

## **X. Adjournment**

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> in Roswell at the NMDVR office.

There being to further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

**June 24, 2011  
Meeting minutes  
Changes approved by Council on September 23, 2011**

**Item II. Action Items**

**C. Approval of 2012 NM DVR State Plan**

**Page three, Seventh paragraph, Third sentence: (underlined word)**

Changed from:

Although NMDVR will not be at an optional level of staffing, with Order of Selection they will be more in line with capacity and services will be more manageable.

To:

Although NMDVR will not be at an optimal level of staffing, with Order of Selection they will be more in line with capacity and services will be more manageable.

**Item IV. Director's Report**

**Page five, Fifth paragraph, fifth sentence**

Changed from:

The Executive has approved job fills which had been previously held up by Reductions in Force (RIFs) at the Public Education Department.

To:

The Executive Branch has approved job fills which had been previously held up by Reductions in Force (RIFs) at the Public Education Department.

**Item IV. Director's Report**

**Page five, sixth paragraph, fourth sentence**

Changed from:

Contracts were established between NMDVR and Fed Ed and Ted Mueller for technical assistance.

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Page two

To:

Contracts were established between NMDVR and the Federal Education Group (Fed Ed Group) and Ted Mueller for technical assistance.

**Item V. NM DVR and SRC reporting**  
**Page six, Second paragraph, first sentence**

Changed from:

The NMDVR State Plan with its various sections (including section 4.2 which includes comments from the SRC) is provided to RSA to provide assurance that NMDVR is meeting federally requirements.

To:

The NMDVR State Plan with its various sections (including section 4.2 which includes comments from the SRC) is provided to RSA to provide assurance that NMDVR is meeting federal requirements.

**Item V. NM DVR and SRC reporting**  
**Page six, third paragraph, third sentence**

Changed from:

Last time, service status was surveyed and this time opened and closed cases will be surveyed.

To:

Last time, service status was surveyed and this time closed cases will be surveyed.

