



WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

9:00 am to 11:00 am

Present: Jen Cole, Parent Advocate, Everett.
Peggy Frisk, Community Rehabilitation Provider, Lake Stevens
Rob Hines, DVR Director, Lacey.
Jerry Johnsen, Customer Assistance Program, Seattle.
Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespelam.
Tania May, OSPI Representative, Olympia.
Justin Poole, Council Vice-Chair, DVR Customer Representative, Yakima.
Kathy Powers, Council Chair, Business Representative, Auburn.
Ivanova Smith, Disability Advocacy Representative, Tacoma.
Michele Stelovich, Labor Representative, Bellingham.
Sheila Turner, SILC Liaison, Pasco.
Erin Williams, Business Representative, Seattle.
Erica Wollen, Workforce Training Representative, Olympia.

Members

Absent: None

Council Staff: Shelby Satko, WSRC Executive Director, Lacey.
Mari Heusman, WSRC Executive Lead, Lacey.

Visitors: Alveshere, Don – DVR Planning & Evaluation Program Manager
Bean, Jennifer – DVR Regional Training Specialist
Boston, Kelly – DVR Senior Manager, Olympia
Born, Lynn –
Dunphy, Lesa – DVR Counselor
Gellerson, Becky – DVR Counselor
Goard, Allesandria – DVR Chief of Field Services
Jaline, Jere – DVR Counselor
Johnston, Carl – DVR Region 2 Deputy Administrator
Knue, Alan – WATAPP
Kutch, Teresa – DVR Region 1 Administrator
Lystad, Amy – DVR Transition Consultant
Martin, Ann – Region 2 Administrator
McConaghy, Michelle – DVR Counselor
Merritt, Angela – DVR Supervisor
Peterson, Lauren – DVR Counselor
St. Lawrence, Robert – DVR Policy Manager
Vertrees, Paul – DVR Interim Chief of Field Services, Olympia
Villegas, Cassi – DVR Community Program Manager
Wright, Marika – DVR Counselor
Yajima, Tomoko – DVR Regional Training Specialist
Zawisza, Kristina – DVR Performance Management Analyst
Conner, Kimberly – SILC Executive Director
Hicks, Shawnda – PAVE
Hopkins, Laura – Healthcare Fund

Kuhnel, Stephanie – Tyler Technologies
Norden-Paul, Jeremy – DDC
Meyers, Debbie – SKCAC Industries & Employment Services
Ramsey, Jolie – SILC Executive Lead
Williams, Courtney – Community Employment Alliance

Call to Order Housekeeping, review agendas, introductions – Chair – January 2020 Meeting Minutes

- Meeting called to order by Kathy Powers – Chair
- Tribal Land Acknowledgement
- Review WSRC Purpose, Vision, Mission
- Members not available today:
- Vote: Approval of January 2020 quarterly meeting minutes
 - 1st Erica, 2nd Jerry
 - No corrections or edits

Executive Director & Executive Committee Report – Kathy Powers – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Welcome to Michele Stelovich
- WSRC Advocacy during COVID-19
 - CRP
 - DVR Contract
 - CARF
 - Partner call with Missouri to learn about their innovative practices
 - National advocacy with RSA – flexibilities & waivers
 - Special Legislative Session
 - DVR needs to be still in the spotlight and how council can advocate
- Committee Updates – provided in pre-meeting packet for member review
- Elections – August 2020
 - Interested in serving as Chair or Vice-Chair? Great opportunity! Please let Shelby know if you are interested or have questions. Deadline is July 1st.
- Strategic Planning: Review Pre-Meeting Prep
 - Timeline (PowerPoint visual)
 - Since we were unable to have in person meeting this quarter, our timeline may need to shift. Plan to continue work in June/July committee meetings in preparation for meeting in August.
 - Deadline in September.
 - Goal is to digest this at the August Meeting.

DVR Updates – Rob Hines – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- COVID-19 Response
 - Telework
 - Less than 5% DVR Staff teleworked at any given time in the past. Now at 95%. Went from a 2-year plan to a 2-week plan.
 - VRCs, IT, everyone had a great response to the new modality.
 - It'll never be the same after this. This is a "new normal."
 - Lobbies closed to public in March. Only essential staff work in-office. Some offices, staff just go in periodically to check mail.
 - Impacts to performance, timelines, expenditures
 - Time to plan is 90 days. Tough without technology to get signatures, so timelines are impacted.
 - Concerned about being able to expend Pre-ETS set aside
 - This will be an issue this year.
 - Measurable skill gains will be impacted. DVR trying to mitigate.
 - Order of Selection
 - Paused release in April, then started releasing again in May.

- Waiting to see what the impacts will be – thought to keep things moving forward but waiting to see the data around this.
 - Release timeframe to plan is 77 days, which is better than the 90-day maximum.
- Staffing Updates
 - Chief of Field Services – Allesandria Goard started March 16th
 - Deputy Director – submitted to HR for approval on May 18th
 - Don't know if this will be able to be filled, due to the austere times, but will see.
- Fiscal Updates – see presentation slides
 - Asking RSA for flexibility for all the big items.
 - Balance of 6 million from the 8 million for Pre-ETS still not spent.
 - Purchasing curriculum and having conversations with Educational Service Districts.
 - Tough scenario – 6.89M left of the 8.05M set aside.
 - DVR does not see this changing due to COVID and customers not being in school.
 - Social Security (SS) Reimbursements
 - DVR has assigned staff to just work with Ticket Tracker software to get SS reimbursements.
 - Re-allotments – DVR has received all the money they asked for in each of the last 3 years.
 - In discussion to see if they'll request this year.
 - Proviso from the Decision package to spend 500k for support of most significantly disabled.

Chief of Field Services Update – Allesandria Goard – DVR Chief of Field Services – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Remote work by Region – to make sure each VRC had their technology. All staff can now work remotely and has the technology they need to work efficiently.
 - Now shifting attention to customers, both youth and adults, to make sure they have the technology and resources to get services.
 - The push is to amp up communication with customers. What are their needs, barriers, and how can DVR reach out to them?
 - This looks different for everyone.
- Ethical dilemmas with “essential jobs” and safety
 - Providers – some customers were continuing to work in essential jobs, i.e. grocery stores, healthcare, manufacturing, driving, delivery.
 - What does that mean in terms of customer safety?
 - DVR added facet to Service Delivery Outcome Plans to address safety and health concerns.
 - CRPs also have responsibilities to check in with employers on safety protocol.
 - Now counselors are looking and discussing this with customers.
 - Customers need empowered to make this decision for themselves.
- Future employment and new changing customer goals
 - DVR is discussing all the ways in which services are possibly going to change?
 - Asking counselors to continue to communicate and discuss with customers.
 - The goal from 3 months ago might not be the appropriate choice now.
 - COVID is affecting everyone. Need to figure out what the future looks like for each individual.
- Governor’s phases to reopening.
 - Each phase can take a couple weeks. DVR is taking it one phase at a time while still supporting the foundation of telework and reducing as many barriers as we can.
- Questions:
 - Tania – What is happening with the requests, and particularly the latest press releases from Secretary DeVos, on the potential flexibility in pre-ETS spending.
 - Answer: Rob – In general, states have asked for flexibility. Signals from RSA there is something in the works.
 - It's complicated politically as some advocacy groups and disability groups oppose any flexibilities.
 - CSAVR submitted to legislators in DC the impacts for opposing those flexibilities.
 - Jen – Regarding Pre-ETS, are there any recommendations from DVR for how schools and DVR can be more intentional about partnering? This is great opportunity to strengthen collaborative relationships. Technical Assistance (TA) centers, WATAP, WINTAC, and National Clearinghouse released a bunch of

technical assistance for how Pre-ETS can be delivered during COVID-19. Are DVR counselors taking advantage of this? What has DVR done to support this?

- Answer: Rob – TSAT results from school survey are being interpreted and Tammie Doyle from DVR is discussing this with Educational Service Districts (ESD).
- Additionally, conversations are happening around providing remote Pre-ETS. There have been one or two webinars with schools and ESDs to talk about services DVR can provide and how to collaborate.
- Tammie Doyle has been engaged in intensive TA and rolling things out within DVR.
- Answer: Allesandria- connecting Transition counselors and Transition regional consultants have been adding virtual services and tools to use. This has been difficult as the school staff have been having issues connecting with students. DVR has consequently had challenges connecting with school staff.
 - Contractors are trying to figure out ways to connect with and provide services for students over the summer.
 - DVR is communicating with schools and contractors.
- Justin – ideas for DVR to think about – a lot of people with disabilities are at higher risk for this virus. As far as preparing for the new normal, is DVR changing policy or exception to policy for things like electronic signatures. This should be a priority.
 - Mail isn't great to use right now, i.e. post office boxes in public places.
 - Public transportation isn't safe for customers when needing to get DVR documents signed.
 - Being able to allow different types of meetings like Zoom. ASL and captions and sharing documents back and forth. This could create a lot less hassle.
 - Answer: Rob – agree with all points.
 - DVR is working on electronic content management and e-signatures. Trying to go paperless. Expediting and trying to get this up and running.
 - Mail has challenges; it is slow and maybe not the safest, but sometimes it's the only option for a customer. DVR needs to meet people where they are.
 - Want counselors and CRPs to get creative with services.
 - DVR can make these decisions as long as they're careful to conform to the policies. All divisions of DSHS are having the same challenges DVR is.
 - Answer: Tania – OSPI is tracking information on families reached and/or served. There is an attempt to try and understand the scope of this. Are there greater levels of access and where is the difficulty in connecting with families?

Presentation Feedback and Discussion – Kathy – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Kathy – Talked to other SRCs and another state DVR about pre-ETS. There are a lot of questions about a possible fall resurgence of the virus with no vaccine. Will kids go back to school in September? How does DVR learn from other states in trying to figure out how to provide Pre-ETS services, i.e. remote services, assessment, discovery?
 - Answer: Tania – OSPI has placed enormous priority on opening schools in the fall. The conversation is, what does that need to look like to do it safely? Possible hybrid models of school with priority going to those who need access to the building and flexibility for those who don't need the physical building.
 - Answer: Rob – what DVR is doing to ensure we're successful to deliver services given that it won't be easy, with lots of barriers. DVR is looking at things that haven't thought about before. Stimulus money for WA State 1.6B. DVR has submitted request for technology for students and how to do that with partners like schools, OSPI.
 - It's difficult to project where we'll land with COVID. Leaning on services to get technology to customers and students and providing training so they can use it.
 - Talk more with partners with solutions to make sure they'll work.
 - Answer: Kelly – DVR is looking at options and taking time making these decisions. Difficulty as there's no data can't understand patterns. Trying to gather information needed to make good decisions.
 - Kathy – What types of data is DVR looking at?
 - Answer: Kelly – for CRPs, DVR is looking at new authorizations and expenditures.

- The complicating factor is expenditures went up in March and April as CRPs often lag in their billing and starting making sure they were up to date.
 - DVR can't see the new trends in data to understand what services look like in this environment. Trying to understand the picture that is changing frequently.
 - How to identify who needs relief and help. Don't want to over or under support.
- Jerry – took on a project to call 15 DVR offices to see what kind of information they would get.
 - Majority of offices had recordings that we'll get back to you.
 - The offices they did make contact with – Spokane, Beacon, Seatac, North Seattle, and Richland – were overwhelmingly very positive, informative, and welcoming. Client Assistance Program (CAP) staff were very impressed.
 - Rob – thanks for the positive feedback. In some locations, it doesn't make sense for anyone to be in the office, however all locations have staff checking messages multiple times every day.
- Jen – wondering related to data collection during this time.
 - Jen - OSPI – Superintendent Chris Reykdahl is clear in how COVID-19 is highlighting and exacerbating some disparities that were present prior to COVID-19, i.e. communities of color, low resource communities like rural, and students with disabilities.
 - The conversation is now, “we can't go back to the old normal” because it's not equitable. As far as language access students, and students with disabilities, how does this intersect with pre-ETS, transition planning, graduation, and post school planning?
 - Need community and family engagement and students and customer feedback to inform the whole system. What will DVR learn from this time? Reflections or thoughts about how things need to be different and more equitable for all customers and students in the future?
 - Answer: Rob – equity, diversity, and inclusion – this crisis is a different spin as DVR is seeing inequities magnified. DVR also has a lot of questions, but not lots of answers. They will look to the data that comes out of this.
 - The piece DVR can see and learn from is the ability for customers to access communication, technology, and services for the skills to be able to use it.
 - DVR will want to identify the gaps in services by looking at the data coming from this and looking at it through an EDI lens.
- Kathy – DDA is practicing flexibility during this time and allowing providers to bill things that typically aren't, i.e. professional development and training time for staff. Discussion groups and education. DVR needs to message with providers – DDA has been super flexible and DVR has been unwilling to adjust beyond or outside of contract. What is holding DVR on the tract they're on with CRPs?
 - Answer: Rob – There is more that DVR can do and should be doing.
 - DVR has provided flexibility with payment of 50% without an outcome and telling CRPs to catch up on their billing.
 - RSA - other regions who have different RSA teams have very different experiences with flexibility.
 - Our region is not providing flexibility. They think there is enough leeway through Dept. of Education to assuage fears of missing performance and timelines.
 - Looking to other states to see what they're doing while proceeding cautiously.
 - These are trying times, no matter what DVR does, it won't be enough.
- Kathy – CARF is going to do virtual surveys and is only offering 15% discount for virtual surveys. CEA did a survey and found that 30 providers paid 250k for CARF. DDA has made exception for CARF right now. Is DVR going to do anything like this? Rob will be getting invites for work groups from CRPs in terms of finding positive solutions that meets DVR and CRP needs.
 - Answer: Rob – DVR utilizes CARF because DVR doesn't have capacity to monitor CRPs. CARF provides assurances CRPs are providing quality services and certain practices. CARF is expensive. DVR is taking a deep look at this.
 - Community Program Manager at DVR has been working on solutions – not a lot of outside solutions for CARF. Looking for an option, solution, to provide relief to CRPs.
 - DVR has suspended CARF requirement for current contract solicitation and new CRPs have 2 years to get accredited.

- Erica – how flexible is RSA going to be as far as waivers and moving around money? With the Workforce Board, Feds are being flexible and indicating flexibility to reallocate money. VA, Dept. of Education and Dept. of Labor have been flexible and quick with making decisions.
 - Answer: Rob – RSA hasn't proactively addressed waivers like the Dept. of Education, but they have new leadership, so still being hopeful.
- Michele – Is DVR able to bill for virtual job coaching and virtual meetings with customers? Especially for transition students?
 - Answer: Rob - Yes, DVR is allowing to bill for certain virtual services if it's provided in a way that's effective and is safe.
 - For any specific questions about customers and their plans, speak with their assigned counselor as sometimes there are extenuating circumstances.
 - Answer: Allesandria – also check with Cassi in terms of what specific billings are allowable since these decisions are made on case-by-case basis.
- Justin – have there been any holds on customer case closures during this pandemic?
 - Answer: Rob – DVR has taken a look at the different angles and questions around case closures. They have decided to keep in place the normal process for case closures as it does make allowance for flexibility. Due to Washington Administrative Codes and Codes of Federal Regulations outlining timelines and processes, DVR is still required to follow the law. However, a guidance did go out to staff to do due diligence including and have good faith efforts to not prematurely close cases.

Public Comment – From 10:45-11:00am

- Stephanie, from Tyler Technology, a company only serving the public sector, how is Washington preparing for the extensive changes to the federally mandated RSA PD-19-03 reports.
 - Answer: Don Alveshire, DVR Planning & Evaluation Program Manager – a lot of work has been done on the internal case management system behind the scenes and has been synced up to the new elements of the RSA reports.
 - There is a group working at the state office to identify needed training for staff for consistency in interpreting the new elements and so they are aware of the elements that will go away.
 - This is set to be put into place by July 1.
- Kim Conner – the WA State Independent Living Council has published a survey for youth and young adults. This is meant to include people over 18 receiving services.
 - It's in English and Spanish and will be open through the fall, depending on what happens in regards to opening schools.

ADJOURN 11:00am

- Kathy – Usually the Council breaks at the end of day one to have a local customer focus group around DVR services, which is why we travel throughout the state. The Council will do a visit and incorporate customer feedback at some point when it is safe to do so.