

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

Full Council Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2025
9:00 A.M. – 2:15 P.M.

WRC Attendees: Dick Straub, Liz Kennedy, Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Kyle Kleist, Alice Belcher, Jacci Borchardt, Jenny Felty, Jolene Wanek, Kathy Meisner, Alicia Reinhardt, Alan Kaltenberg, Rachael Fellers, Deborah Lee, Megan Bisonette, Alexis Riggs, Lori Karcher, Gadeen Taylor-Duke, Lindsey Kreitzman, Kevin Fortune, Meredith Dressel

DVR Attendees: Allison Gordon, Sarah Kuehn, Deanna Krell, Anna Eggebrecht, Jennifer Bscherer, Whitney Hostettler, Susan Chandek, Jenna Fogarty, Alissa Braatz, Christina Tierney, Andrzej Walz-Chojnacki

Guest Attendees: Mark Noyes (*PCG*), Ashley Fawcett (*PCG*), Maya Cox (*PCG*), Terry Donovan (*PCG*), Denise Jess (*Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired*), Rob Buettner (*Beyond Vision*)

Roll Call and Introductions

Announcements

Quorum Check

- Met quorum

Approval of Minutes – November 2024

- Correction needs to be made to the attendance as Alice Belcher attended the meeting.
- Motion to approve the minutes after the above correction – Liz, second Kyle – passed.

Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:

Council Engagement Committee

- Committee meets bi-monthly.
- Paper based and electronic copy of WRC training materials. Kay will make a paper copy for any member that requests it via email. We will provide the copies of the training materials as well as the book (NCSRC shared copies) at the WRC May meeting.
- [Link to the training materials](#) in Sharepoint. There are some issues with members accessing the documents. Meredith will look into the errors.
- A process for onboarding and supporting new members is in place; only seat currently vacant is the business, industry or labor representation.
- DVR is identifying current WRC members with the Governor's office that are eligible for re-appointment for a second term.
- The committee is asking current members that are terming off to recruit a replacement for their position.
- WRC terms end on June 30, 2025 and new terms start July 1, 2025.

- They are working with DVR Business Service Consultants to recruit the business and industry position.
- We hope to use the May in-person meeting in Milwaukee at Beyond Vision (*tentatively*) to facilitate engagement between council members, especially with new members that have not met anyone in person.
- The committee is working on some flexibility from the Governor's office to fill a full second term when they replace someone for their first term.

Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee

- Co-meet with Policy Review and Admin Committee.
- Next meeting March 5, 2025.

Policy Review and Administration Committee

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Services to Business Committee

- They met in January 2025.
- The new DVR Business Services Section Chief Jenna Fogarty introduced herself at January meeting and had a good discussion about a business representative for the WRC.
- They worked to brainstorm some goals for the Committee for 2025.
- The committee is creating a "blurb" with information about the work of the committee and how we work for and with the WRC.
- Next meeting is on March 25, 2025.

Executive Committee

- Met three times since last WRC.
- Discussed budget issues for DVR that could have required an expanded order of selection. Fortunately, DVR's budget issues are not critical, and Meredith will discuss during the Admin Update.
- Discussed recruiting new members and adjusting the term length.
- DVR is considering a re-branding process and will bring any new information to the WRC for review.
- Agreement for the Policy Review and Performance/QA committees to meet jointly that may require a by-law change to formally combine the committees. If approved, this could mean a smaller Executive Committee because we could lose a chair.
 - Kyle motioned to leave the by-laws as written in case we need to have the two committees meet separately and address this a year from now. Liz seconded. Motion passed.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report – Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Advocacy Specialist for Disability Rights Wisconsin

- Jen shared the attached presentation including stats on service request numbers and types.
- DVR areas that CAP has assisted consumers in the first quarter include: self-employment, case closure, equipment, and training grants.
- No requests from consumers on ILC issues in the first quarter.
- Share any topic areas with Jen that members would like her to cover at the May meeting.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Presentation – Public Consulting

Group (PCG) – Mark Noyes, Ashley Fawcett, and Maya Cox

- Four areas of recommendations:
 - Equitability support for unserved/underserved individuals:
 - Further understand barriers and needs.
 - Align resources to support priorities.
 - Examine and adjust policies and procedures.
 - Maximize capacity of service provider and VR staff:
 - Train and retrain VR and service provider staff.
 - Improve recruitment pipelines and collaboration offer a qualified staffing source.
 - Examine and adjust policies and procedures.
 - Review administrative process to maximize efficacy:
 - Continue service provider collaboration to streamline processes and documentation.
 - Increase consistent interpretation and application of technical specifications across offices and DVR staff.
 - Add revised case markers to capture more VR successes.
 - Enhance partnerships:
 - Continue DVR education and outreach to secondary and post-secondary education settings.
 - Explore solutions to address transportation barriers.
 - Build stronger ties with community housing groups.
- Questions were answered

Public Comment

- No comments.

DVR Administrative Update – Meredith Dressel, DVR Administrator

- Dick requested that more detailed information is added to the bulleted lists in the slides for the update.
- Discussion around the race dynamic in US and how those issues impact DVR outcomes including service provider capacity to serve underrepresented/underserved populations.

Blind or Visually Impaired Wisconsin Citizens Presentation - Rob Buettner, President & CEO of Beyond Vision, Denise Jess, Executive Director of Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

- Meredith will reach out to Denise and Rob to share this information with DVR staff.

Review Action Items and Identify Future Agenda Topics

- See highlighted area for action items.
- WisTech Presentation by Laura Plummer
- DVR response to full CSNA Report
- Deep dive into Pre-ETS expenditures – has this presentation been provided?
- Determination for OOS information
- November in-person WRC meeting – where would you like that meeting to be held in the state?

- DVR service provider selection process, contracting, communication, etc.
- Relationships with K-12 and post-secondary education including technical schools – start with a presentation at the committee level.

Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn Jacci, seconded Liz – passed.

*Public comment is limited to the time listed on the agenda. Comments can be sent at any time to: DVRWIRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

*Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting unless a specific subcommittee is listed. If a specific subcommittee is listed, comments will be sent directly to them and reviewed at their next committee meeting.

A Statement of Mission

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, working on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities, will review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to persons with disabilities.