

**Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT)  
February 6-7, 2020  
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center  
Auditorium  
4800 North Lamar Austin TX 78756**

**Present:**

Michael A. Ebbeler Jr., Chair, Austin,  
Lisa Maciejewski-West, Vice Chair, San Angelo  
Amanda Bowdoin, Forney  
Lisa Cowart, Beaumont  
Cheryl A Fuller, Austin  
Bobbie Hodges, Fort Worth  
Paul Hunt, Vice Chair Austin  
Susie May, Austin  
Joe Powell, Irving  
Colton Read, New Braunfels  
Rodrick Robinson, McKinney  
Karen Stanfill Houston

**Absent:**

Matt Berend, Abilene  
JoAnne Fluke, Abilene  
Lindsey Geeslin, Waco  
Crystal George, Argyle  
Crystal Stark, College Station

**TWC Reps:**

Carrie Alexander, Ron Ayer, Gary Benner, Kim Berry, Shelly Caillouet,  
Commissioner Bryan Daniel, Commissioner Aaron Demerson, John  
Greytok, Carline Geiger, Lisa Godwin Commissioner Julian Alvarez III,  
Adam Leonard, Christy Lerche, Amber McGee, Tammy Martin, Scott  
McCune, Geoffrey Miller, David Norman, Brian Owens, Belinda Salazar,  
Chris Speckhard

**Guest:**

Kaki Leyens TWIC, Christina Bryant, Workquest

## Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr., Chair.

## Committee Meetings

The following committees met with their members: Policy, Procedures and Personnel Development; Membership and Education; and Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment. Commissioner Alvarez visited each committee.

## Public Comment

- No one for public comment.

## Liaison Reports

Reports were provided to the council members prior to the meeting and are included in the meeting binder.

- CAP, Karen Stanfill
- PRN, Lisa Cowart
- SILC, Colton Read
- TEA, Susan May Verbal Report only
- TWIC, Lindsey Geeslin No oral report was given

## RCT Committee Reports

- Membership & Education Committee, Bobbie Hodges, Chair
  - Membership
    - Bobbie Hodges and Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr. have been in contact with Mr. Castillo at the Governor's Appointment Office about expired terms and vacant positions.

- Current vacant positions two for Business, Industry and Labor.
- The committee is very fortunate and honored to have had Commissioner Alvarez share information and direction in membership recruitment this morning.
- Look into using Linked in for recruitment.
- Education
  - Speaker Emily Robinson, MS, Texas Education Agency, Division of Special Education has moved her presentation on the Deaf Population to August.
  - May speaker TWC will give a demonstration on Work In Texas
  - Invite a speaker Diversity & Inclusion with focus on PWD (CVS, Goodwill Austin)
  - Committee would like for RCT Members to suggest questions to ask when visiting TWC VR Office.
  - RCT to work with SILC to insure VR services are up to date at the SILC centers.
  - Membership Roles and Responsibility Training per individual member representation.
- Lisa Maciejewski-West made a motion that RCT look at the TWC website on the employer's side to insure that VR services are prominently displayed on the front page. To where any business owner can easily go in and look at information about hiring people with disabilities. This motion was seconded by Joe Powell. Karen Stanfill asked for clarification if Lisa is referring to VR Services on the employer's website or information on hiring people with disabilities.
  - **Clarification of the motion is: To relook at the TWC website to prominently display on the first page for VR services from both employer and employee. This will be a formal recommendation to TWC VR. Motion was approved unanimously.**

- Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development, Karen Stanfill, Chair
  - Comprehensive system of personnel development; CSPD Work in Texas- reported that it is much easier to navigate and use than previous system. Matt tried it and the time factor is developing a resume in the system but other than that is better.

For persons with visual impairments it is not accessible. A person who is blind cannot use the system by themselves. As a result, this also affects a VR counselor showing a person who is blind how to use the system. TWS-VRS reports the contractor is working on making it accessible but the date of when this will be accomplished was not known.

- Qualified Rehab Counselors;
  - 422 counselor positions meet the requirements
  - 70 do not meet criteria and are not in progress or working on meeting the criteria by attending college.
- Retention Rate (Unofficial report) From 9/2016 through 1/8/2020 330, terminations from TWS-VRS. This includes reasons of retirement, etc.
  - 2017 114 counselors left the agency with a turnover rate of 19.76%
  - 2018 82 counselors left with a turnover rate of 13.58%
  - 2019 124 counselors left with a turnover rate of 20.33%
  - 16 VRCs can retire this year.
  - 37% of the Counselors have less than 2 years' experience on the job.
  - Executive management has a team focusing on overall retention rate and how to improve it.
- Salary study-VR has not updated the salary structure since 2014. Therefore, a request to compare salary for counselor has been made and the results are expected shortly. This may affect the salary for counselors since they have not been raised since 2014.
- Interest list/distribution list, VR recruits at colleges and universities. We discussed developing a list of other organizations that can be contacted to send announcements of vacancies to recruit applicants. This will be shared with the RCT and TWS. Discussed benefits of developing a

distribution list of organizations for people with disabilities including businesses who have an interest in vocational rehabilitation to send information out about VR in relation to public meetings, recruiting, updates about VR.

- Goals for policy for year; Informed choice has been added to the policy manual and training has been provided. J. Kaufman shared even his department participated in the training and said it has helped them to understand why VRC's ask for more providers to be added for options for services.
- Discussed areas the committee can focus for this year. Suggestions included;
  - Guidebook for self-employment for clients
  - Guidebook for vehicle modification for clients
  - Get information out on how to find VR (interest list?)
  - How to improve timeliness of services
  - Use of consultants
  - BLR
  - VR and Ticket to work program
  - A committee member suggested to develop a video about VR that can be found on You Tube or on the TWC website. Cheryl and Carline have talked about this and we can update with Cheryl at meeting. DARS had one but it is now out of date due to the agency moving to TWC and the changes in WIOA.
- Training; Is very busy and is doubling up on training to help staff complete required training in the time expected. People are signing up for training and the classes are full.
- Customer Satisfaction Committee, Lisa Cowart, Chair
  - Gary Benner gave an overview of the 1st Quarter SFY 2020 VR Customer Satisfaction Survey Report. The full report is included in the meeting binder.
    - 3935 surveys were completed this quarter.
    - Update on the request for further research into why the numbers are so low for African Americans and female responses. These are still being looked at and TWC VR doesn't have a definitive one cause at this time they will

continue to work on the research for this request. Rodrick Robinson suggested that the research not only include TWC VR employees but also providers. To insure that there are providers in place to match the customers they are serving.

- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) 2020 Town Hall Meetings
  - Locations have been secured for all onsite Town Hall Meetings.
  - Lisa Cowart went through the list of Town Hall Meetings locations and which members would facilitate.
  - Christopher Speckhard will host a virtual training for all facilitators. The training will be recorded as well to view at your convenience.
  - There are a few minor edits to the flyer. It should be edited by close of business today. Once approved it will be sent out for Spanish translation and then will be ready for distribution.
  - RCT Members are asked to distribute the flyer. It will also be posted on TWC VR Social Media, RCT Webpage, and sent out by Gov Delivery. TWC VR Counselors will also receive the flyer to share with their customers.
  - The question was asked how the flyer would be distributed to VR providers. The answer was that providers are encouraged to sign up for gov delivery notices. It was suggested the RCT Members send the notification to providers in their area and ask them to share with others.
  - The questions that will be asked at the Town Hall Meetings are being finalized. Once they are finalized, they will be available to everyone to review prior to attending the meeting so that they are prepared to answer.

## **Planning and Review Committee Report, Carline Geiger, TWC VR Deputy Division Director of PP&S**

- RCT need to review By-Laws to add all members of the RCT are a member of this committee.
- Combined State Plan (CSP)
  - Everything is on track to bring before the Commission for approval February 25, 2020.
  - The plan is a four-year plan with a two-year amendment.

## **TWC Conference Report, Lisa Maciejewski-West**

- The conference was held December 3-6, 2019 in Dallas TX.
- First day was a Preconference dedicated to VR Services.
  - I presented the CSNA Town Hall save the date in a 3-4-minute elevator talk and distributed the flyers.
  - This session there was a lot of discussion about informed choice.
    - Even if the town you are in only has one provider and the next provider is 50 miles away you still have to give the customer the option to use the provider of their choice. So, the counselor needs to insure they are providing the customer with these options to make a choice.
    - There was talk about counselors being overworked due to vacancies and having to do training and obtaining their master's degree.
    - Four of the most interesting session I attended were
      - Job Accommodation Network (JAN).
      - Disability Solutions, Kevin McCluskey, Kentucky
      - Bridges from School to Work
      - Businesses Helping Build a Healthcare Talent Pipeline
      - I would like to see if RCT could have them speak at one of the meetings or do a virtual presentation.

## **Ad Hoc Committee Regarding Public Comment, Rodrick Robinson**

- Rodrick Robinson will head this committee, other members identified: Bobbie Hodges. Matt Berend has been invited but has not accepted as of today.
- The purpose of the ad hoc committee is to explore the options of accepting public comment virtually for the RCT Quarterly meetings.
  - Looking into onsite, written, phone and electronic streaming.
    - Options GoToMeeting, Zoom, Adobe Connect and email.
  - Insure accessibility
  - Insure comments are address to the entire council not an individual member.
  - Maybe create a link on the RCT Webpage to register for comment.
  - Check with other SRC to see if they are doing this and if so, what is their process.
  - Committee will meet once every two weeks at this time.
  - The goal is to have a plan to vote on in May 2020.

## **Bryan Daniel Commissioner Representing the Public and Aaron Demerson Commissioner Representing Employers**

- Introduced themselves and thanked the council for their work.

## **VR Division Director's Report Cheryl A. Fuller, TWC VR Division Director**

- RCT recommended that Mrs. Fuller make mandatory that all staff complete the informed choice training webinar. I have made this mandatory.
- RCT also recommended that some of the content on the VR webpage could be easier for people to find, whether employers or individuals. We are working on making update to the web content.
- VR is implementing an action plan for fiscal years 20-23. Mrs. Fuller offered to give a presentation to the RCT at the next meeting.

- Increasing Outreach and Awareness
- Focusing efforts on populations that can really benefit from VR help right now
- Engaging and Retaining Customers
- Recruiting, Engaging and Retaining Staff
- Update from RSA quarterly conference call.
  - The flexibility guidance should come out soon.
  - Monitoring report has not been received.
- Karen Stanfill asked for a report of Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC)
- The full VR Division Director's Report was provided in the meeting binder.

## **Performance Update, Adam Leonard, TWC, Director of Division of Operational Insight**

Adam presented a PowerPoint presentation that was handed out at the meeting.

## **Robert's Rules of Order Training, Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.**

- Michael held a training that included interactive discussing with the council.

## **Unfinished Council Business**

- Review the To Do List
  - Tabled, RCT to review By-Laws:
    - Add all members of the RCT are members of the Planning and Review Committee.
    - Add the word Committee to Planning and Review.
    - Replace RSA113 report with just Reports.

## Council Business New

- Budget Report Lisa Godwin, travel balance \$31286.51 and operating expenses \$8,308.40.
  - Lisa Godwin is working with Cheryl Fuller for clarification of what RCT funds are to be used for.
  - Lisa Godwin will prepare a budget for 2021 by February 28.
    - November meeting in San Antonio
    - All members attending NCSRC in San Antonio November
    - Possibility of a RCT work session
- Approve November minutes, Colton Read made a motion to approve the November Minutes, Karen Stanfill seconded. All approved, November Minutes approved.
- **Karen Stanfill made a request to Mrs. Fuller to provide further breakdown of the client services budget to see how those monies are distributed by region and expended by region.**

## Adjourn

Lisa Maciejewski-West made a motion to adjourn. Colton Read seconded. All approved.