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7 STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND

8 BIMONTHLY MEETING

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14 2200 University Avenue

15 St. Paul, Minnesota

16 Thursday, June 1, 2023

17 5:30 p.m.

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1 APPEARANCES:

2 REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND SSB STAFF

3 Corbb O'Connor, Chairperson Dave Andrews

4 Daniel Ashman Jennifer Beilke

5 Frank Eller Jon Benson

6 Samantha Flax Rob Hobson

7 Ryan Haenze Brianna Holeman

8 Tom Heini

9 Catalina Martinez

10 Michael O'Day

11 Kristin Oien

12 Jennifer Points

13 Judy Sanders

14 Ryan Strunk

15

16 ALSO PRESENT:

17 Natasha Jerde, Director of SSB

18 Susan Kusz, State Program Administrator

19

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22 Whereupon, the following proceedings

23 were duly had and entered of record, to-wit:

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1 MR. O'CONNOR: We will go ahead and
2 get started with this June 1 meeting of the State
3 Rehabilitation Council for the Blind. I'm Corbb
4 O'Connor, our Council chairperson, and would like
5 to start with a quick roll call of who on the
6 Council is here. And then we will ask those who
7 are in the audience, including our guests, for some
8 introductions.

9 So we will start our roll call with
10 Frank Eller.

11 MR. ELLER: Frank Eller, here.

12 MS. FLAX: Samantha Flax, here.

13 MS. MARTINEZ: Catalina Martinez,

14 here.

15 MS. HAENZE: Ryan Haenze, here.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Tom Heintl.

17 MR. HEINL: Tom Heintl, here.

18 MR. O'CONNOR: Rob Hobson.

19 MR. HOBSON: Rob Hobson, here.

20 MR. O'CONNOR: Catalina Martinez.

21 MS. MARTINEZ: Catalina, here.

22 MR. O'CONNOR: Michael O'Day.

23 MR. O'DAY: Michael O'Day, here.

24 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you.

25 Kristin Oien. I don't see Kristin just

1 yet.

2 Jennifer Points.

3 MS. POINTS: I am here, Jennifer

4 Points, here.

5 MR. O'CONNOR: Judy Sanders.

6 MS. SANDERS: Judy Sanders, here.

7 MR. O'CONNOR: And far away from a

8 microphone, but Judy is here.

9 Ryan Strunk is absent this evening.

10 Trevor Turner.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. O'CONNOR: Is Trevor here?

13 MS. SANDERS: I'm here.

14 MR. O'CONNOR: Judy is here, but

15 Trevor is not yet here.

16 Okay. Kyle Van Acker.

17 (No response.)

18 MR. O'CONNOR: All right. So we have

19 a couple of folks who have not joined yet that are

20 on the Council, if any of them should join, kindly

21 throw your chair a bone and let me know.

22 Let's go next to those that are in, we

23 will try to do this with some sense of order, let's

24 go to the in-person folks that have not yet

25 introduced themselves.

1 MR. ANDREWS: Dave Andrews, staff.

2 MS. KUSZ: Susan Kusz, staff.

3 MS. BEILKE: Jennifer Beilke, staff.

4 MS. DUNNAM: Jennifer Dunnam, adding

5 to the Jennifer caucus.

6 MR. JACOBSON: Steve Jacobson.

7 MR. O'CONNOR: Great. Anyone else in

8 the room?

9 (No response.)

10 MR. O'CONNOR: All right. Let's go

11 next to our SSB staff members that are virtual.

12 MS. JERDE: Natasha Jerde, SSB.

13 MR. BENSON: Jon Benson, SSB.

14 MS. HOLEMAN: Brianna Holeman, SSB.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: All right. And

16 everyone else on Zoom, quick everyone say your

17 names at the same time. No, I'm just kidding.

18 MR. ELLER: Frank. Ha, ha, ha!

19 MS. SANDERS: No, Frank, you are not

20 on Zoom.

21 MR. ASHMAN: Daniel Ashman.

22 MS. DEVORE: Wendy Devore.

23 MS. O'CONNOR: Briley O'Connor.

24 MS. BURKE: Jessica Burke.

25 MR. O'CONNOR: Graham, are you still

1 with us?

2 MR. SISSON: Yes, I am. I was trying

3 not to interrupt. Do you want me -- tell me when

4 you are ready for me to introduce myself.

5 (Strange noise).

6 MR. ELLER: What the hell?

7 MR. SISSON: What is that?

8 MR. ANDREWS: Sounds like my cat.

9 MR. ELLER: Sounds like the

10 Teletubbies.

11 MS. JERDE: Poor Corbb. Corbb, your

12 technical difficulties make you sound like Minnie

13 Mouse.

14 MR. O'CONNOR: This is the third
15 microphone, how's this?
16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's better.
17 MR. O'CONNOR: Now we can have some
18 fun. All right. Graham, I will let you go.
19 Anyone else on Zoom that hasn't
20 introduced themselves?
21 (No response.)
22 MR. O'CONNOR: Excellent, great. Well
23 thank you everyone, I am glad that you are here.
24 This is Corbb. We are going to go ahead and go
25 through our agenda in a bit of a different order

1 today. We've got some folks who need to drop off
2 early, so beg your forgiveness as we go outside our
3 usual custom.

4 Rocky Hart is here, glad you are with
5 us.

6 We want to start this evening with a
7 couple of folks that are senior management
8 consultants for the State of Minnesota and that's
9 Jessica Burke and Joshua Hill, if Joshua is with
10 us. Either way, Jessica will carry the show.

11 And these are the folks, that I will
12 let them do a deeper introduction, but we have
13 brought aboard at State Services for the Blind to

14 do some evaluations and some outreach to members of
15 the communities.

16 Jessica.

17 MS. BURKE: Thanks, Corbb. It is just
18 me, my colleague Josh is not joining me today.

19 I am a senior management consultant
20 with Management Analysis & Development. We are
21 part of Management & Budget at the State of
22 Minnesota. We are basically an internal consulting
23 agency for the state so we can come in as a neutral
24 third party and help out other folks at other state
25 agencies or any publicly funded entity really.

1 And so what we are doing with SSB is
2 part of the larger kind of reimagining the VR plan.
3 We are starting with -- what we are hearing is kind
4 of trying to identify barriers that customers are
5 facing and trying to find ways to either reduce
6 them or eliminate them.

7 The project started a couple of months
8 ago, we are going right now through the end of
9 September, I believe. And what we are doing is a
10 series of interviews and group discussions. We
11 talked to supervisors, we are having a group of
12 people from advocacy groups and a group of vendors
13 and community partners that we will be talking to

14 and then after that a group of current and former

15 SSB clients.

16 We are going to take everything that

17 we've heard from those conversations and interviews

18 and try to, like I said, identify barriers. We are

19 going to take that to SSB's supervisors and staff

20 and work with them to identify kind of what falls

21 under the SSB influence. There are probably going

22 to be barriers that come up that we really can't do

23 much about because of rules or policies, but there

24 are almost certainly things that are going to come

25 up that we can influence. And we will work with

1 staff to try to figure out ways to remove those
2 barriers to make the SSB customer experience
3 better. And that is basically it in a nutshell.

4 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
5 you, Jessica. What questions or additional context
6 would anyone like to provide at this point?

7 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha.

8 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Natasha.

9 MS. O'CONNOR: Briley.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Natasha, and
11 then we will go to Briley.

12 MS. JERDE: I just have a kind request
13 that if Jessica does reach out to please be

14 responsive and help us out. I know she has reached
15 out to some folks without any response, and
16 likewise, if you aren't being reached out to but
17 have some feedback you would like to share that
18 could really help SSB be better and do better,
19 please do so as well.

20 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
21 you, Natasha. And Briley.

22 MS. O'CONNOR: Are there particular
23 areas of focus that you have? Is it just general
24 client experience or are there specific focus
25 areas?

1 MS. BURKE: That's a great question.

2 We are not looking at any real specific areas, we

3 are going to kind of -- we are going to see what

4 people say and I think that will, you know, help

5 where we see themes developing or, you know, hear a

6 lot of consensus about problems people are having,

7 that's kind of how we will tackle, you know, those

8 barriers.

9 Because we don't -- you know, we came

10 in not really knowing much about the barriers that

11 customers are facing, so we are coming in with

12 fresh eyes to see what people who are actually

13 working with us are saying. And I will put my

14 email on the chat if anybody wants to reach out.

15 MS. FLAX: Samantha.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Samantha.

17 MS. FLAX: So I read somewhere with

18 the Minority Outreach Committee and then also on

19 the Needs Task Force for next year and one of the

20 things that has come up a lot for me is thinking

21 about how to really find out who we are missing or

22 who -- like which customers aren't being helped or

23 which customers who are out there that we don't

24 know about. But I am curious because a lot of

25 times these barriers exist, I'm wondering how you

1 are addressing the fact that the barriers exist

2 with any outreach?

3 I don't know if that is a clear way of

4 putting essentially what are the inclusive methods

5 that you are using to get information from

6 customers to make sure that you are getting an

7 accurate reading on what barriers exist, because I

8 find a lot of time those questions have barriers

9 within them.

10 MS. BURKE: That is another great

11 question. We are, you know, we -- it's hard to

12 reach people who we are not aware of. We are, you

13 know, we are relying on Natasha and Jon for a lot

14 of our -- amongst the people that we are contacting
15 because we don't, you know, we don't have like a
16 master list of folks.

17 So if you have any ideas about, you
18 know, populations we might be missing, I know
19 language access has come up in some of the
20 conversations we have had already as a barrier that
21 folks are facing.

22 But yeah, if you have any ICUs about,
23 you know, who we might be missing or that might be
24 overlooked, feel free to reach out to me and we can
25 talk about that. The customers that we talk to

1 will be -- we are going to do a random sample.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: So this is Corbb. I

3 would encourage members of -- I think there were

4 several committees who have identified gaps in the

5 ways that we reach out to customers to make those

6 known to Jessica. So, for example, I know that we

7 have done some attempts at email surveys, as an

8 example. The response rate on email is terrible,

9 the response rate to our surveys via email is even

10 worse. And so that's as much about tech access as

11 it is about email as a mechanism and spam filters

12 all alike.

13 So if you can think of other methods

14 where we could reach people better, text messages
15 has been one that's come up more so than phone
16 calls. If there are groups that meet on a regular
17 basis that we can leverage together or there are I
18 call them second party outreach, so it could be
19 that a group could reach out to its members or
20 another agency reaches out to folks on behalf of
21 Jessica and team. Those are some of the options
22 that come to mind immediately.

23 As councilmembers have those ideas I
24 would ask you to surface those to Jessica and let's
25 find ways to make sure, to Sam's point, that these

1 are the most inclusive outreach that we can do,
2 this is the time to break the norm with how we have
3 operated in the past.

4 Any other questions or comments for
5 Jessica and the MMB team?

6 MR. O'DAY: This is Michael.

7 MR. O'CONNOR: Michael, go ahead.

8 MR. O'DAY: I was wondering, Jessica,
9 is MMB's role largely to kind of interview people
10 and come up with a report and then SSB kind of
11 takes it from there? Or does MMB actually assist
12 SSB staff with implementing or following through on
13 some of the recommendations?

14 MS. BURKE: We are definitely
15 gathering the information, creating the report.
16 There is a chunk of our contract that is reserved
17 for either implementation or staff development.
18 It's kind of an open chunk of time that we will,
19 you know, once we identify the barriers and figure
20 out what needs to be done, we will either, you
21 know, it will either help with implementing those
22 or, you know, hooking staff up with development.
23 And I was requested to read my email
24 aloud, it's Jessica, j-e-s-s-i-c-a, dot burke, b as
25 in boy-u-r-k-e @ state, dot mn, dot us. You can

1 also Google Management Analysis & Development and
2 go to our staff page and get my email there too.

3 MR. O'DAY: This is Michael. I would
4 like to ask a follow-up. You mentioned something
5 about September being kind of a I don't know if
6 that's when the report would be done, but do you
7 have a sense of kind of a timeline of when the
8 report is done and when your work is completed
9 altogether?

10 MS. BURKE: Like I said, I believe the
11 contract ends at the end of September, but that
12 doesn't mean the work will be done. We have a
13 pretty -- we extend our contracts a lot through a

14 lot of amendments, so you know, if we are running

15 behind we may end up extending it.

16 And this is one part of the larger

17 reimagining effort at SSB, so there might be -- you

18 know, this is just one part of it, we might end up

19 doing more work after September, we might end up,

20 you know, being involved in the process at

21 different points along the way. But there will be

22 something -- you know, we provide that to you, Jon

23 and Natasha, and then they decide what they are

24 going to do with it.

25 MR. O'DAY: Okay. Thank you.

1 MS. BURKE: Yeah.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. I would
3 say you know certainly the more that we can provide
4 that information to Jessica now, the better. So I
5 would say don't fear sending an email that is a
6 sentence or two long with your ideas, it's enough
7 to get started. And then I'm confident that
8 Jessica and team will reach out and find ways to
9 make this an easy process.

10 I also wanted to share that this data
11 is available, will be available for us to use in
12 the Comprehensive State Plan. So while the timing
13 will be maybe a little different, we can, as

14 Natasha told me earlier, double dip on the
15 information and find ways to incorporate the two
16 together, even though it's not strictly being
17 formulated with the Comprehensive State Plan
18 document in mind.

19 Jessica, thank you for your time. I
20 appreciate you joining us. Look forward to working
21 with you in the next little while.

22 MS. BURKE: Thank you.

23 MR. O'CONNOR: So this is Corbb. We
24 will turn next to a presentation and a discussion
25 about the National Coalition of State

1 Rehabilitation Councils. This is the NCSRC and for
2 some more information on that we asked Graham
3 Sisson from Alabama's Department of Rehab, who is
4 also currently the president of NCSRC, to give us
5 some information. And I know that this topic has
6 come up before at this council meeting and so I'm
7 sure there will be some questions for Graham.

8 I also want to make clear that we are
9 not making any decisions this is evening about
10 membership or how we want to proceed on that at
11 this point. This is really about information
12 gathering, getting questions addressed and concerns
13 put out for a broader group discussion.

14 So to start I turn this over to you,

15 Graham, thanks for joining us.

16 MR. SISSON: Sure, thanks for the

17 opportunity. I will give you some other

18 background. I am also, I believe, the SRC liaison

19 for Alabama and I've been in that position since

20 1996, so I've got a lot of experience with state

21 rehab councils and I was also on the Institute on

22 Rehabilitation Issues, on the operation of SRC.

23 So why do you want to become -- why

24 should you all become a member of the National

25 Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils? One

1 reason is the Minnesota general agency is a member,
2 so you got to get on the bandwagon, you don't want
3 to get left behind by other agencies. So I say
4 that kind of tongue in cheek, but they've been a
5 member for a while. And to become a member you
6 need to sign a resolution.

7 And one thing about the SRC also, we
8 have no dues. We have training and we are
9 basically a training organization and a best
10 practices organization for state rehabilitation
11 councils. And we have a website, our website is
12 being redone, we got another domain name and we got
13 another web person, so we are working on it, but

14 our website is nsrc.us.

15 So it's a pretty simple website to

16 find, but we are trying to make it screen reader

17 capable and accessible. So if there is anything

18 when you go to that that you are not able to

19 access, we try to put our documents, we have a lot

20 of informational documents on that website. And

21 then we also try to share information on them

22 during our training.

23 Our biggest trainings are in the fall

24 and in the spring. In the spring we have it at

25 Bethesda and then, of course, in the fall it

1 varies, but this fall it's going to be in Savannah,
2 Georgia. And our training is for Saturday -- it's
3 always on a Saturday and a Sunday and it's right
4 before the Council of State Administrators and
5 Vocational Rehabilitation's three-day conference.

6 The NCSRC has been around since about
7 2005. A group of us got together because there
8 really wasn't a national organization that was
9 helping provide information to state rehabilitation
10 councils. And the Rehabilitation Services
11 Administration, which is a federal agency which
12 monitors and provides assistance, technical
13 assistance for the state VR agencies, they really

14 had not provided much information.

15 State Rehabilitation Council, you

16 know, came about in 1992 and so for maybe ten years

17 after 1992 there wasn't a lot of information. So

18 we try to provide clear information on operational

19 best practices for the State Rehabilitation

20 Council.

21 Let's see what else. I can give you

22 some ideas of topics that we've had at different

23 meetings, okay, and we are going to develop on the

24 website a separate section for members only so to

25 access all the information you need to be a member,

1 the State will need to be a member. All but 18 of
2 the 79 State Rehabilitation Councils are not now
3 members of the NCSRC, making us basically 61 member
4 states or territories strong.

5 So let's see what else I can tell you.

6 But some of the topics that we offered training on
7 are selecting new members and getting appointments.

8 A lot of you have trouble getting appointments
9 because the governor's office sometimes delays
10 that.

11 Duties of the chairs and officers,
12 planning orientation. We always have an
13 orientation in Alabama for our new members.

14 Structuring council meetings and what information
15 should state rehabilitation councils have from the
16 agency, best practices on the internet, what are
17 the eight mandates and review of the law for State
18 Rehabilitation Councils.
19 Under Section 105 of the Workforce
20 Innovation Opportunity Act, which applies to the
21 State Rehabilitation Council, it lists eight
22 mandates. So the dynamics of developing bylaws,
23 you know, and good thing about having member
24 states, you can look and see what other states are
25 doing as far as bylaws and adapting those to meet

1 your needs.

2 What are the roles of your liaison and

3 the Client Assistance Program? Creating a budget

4 or resource plan. We got a lot of information, do

5 you need to have a budget or is the resource plan

6 affected? And right now we are working on a survey

7 to get information about what the difference states

8 are including in their budgets and in the resource

9 plans.

10 Again, sometimes we have SRC 101 or

11 basic training on a Friday night before the

12 Saturday and Sunday, just depends on what kind

13 of thoughts we get while we are developing the

14 agenda. But we try to -- and the training, that is
15 a training agenda, so we are trying to go through
16 and make this responsive to what people said they
17 needed during the conference, so.

18 Let me think what else. And we have
19 several books, okay, we have a new book, the SRC VR
20 partnership under WIOA, it's something you can get
21 on Amazon. And another helpful book is the SRC
22 Guidebook for Chairpersons, Liaisons and Members.
23 And I think these are also on our website or will
24 be on our website. So I think they will be
25 downloadable.

1 And then also we have had SRC training
2 modules. Right now the VR attack on employment, I
3 mean on quality management, has -- the NCSRC in
4 conjunction with them developed some new training
5 modules and we provide information on how to access
6 those, but it's a good way to train all your
7 members on the duties of SRC members and kind of
8 the background of the SRC.

9 So a lot of good information, I think,
10 with the training modules that were done by the VR
11 tech, those you can even get a certificate to show
12 that you've been trained.

13 So I've given you a little bit of

14 information about what the SRC does, but something
15 else members have, we have a listserv among the
16 different member agencies, so if somebody has a
17 question you can send it out over the listserv and
18 it's a good way to share information even further
19 beyond the fall conferences.

20 So again -- and we also have national
21 calls, during COVID we had national calls only
22 because obviously for health, you know, reasons,
23 but sometime we may start instituting some more
24 national calls that would provide further
25 information also, in addition to basically the

1 training in the fall and spring. And we have --
2 RSA comes to our meetings, gives us further
3 information, we always have Steve Whitterson from
4 the Cal State Administrators Vocational
5 Rehabilitation give us information updates, so it's
6 just a really good way to get information.

7 And the model that we have always used
8 is to emphasize the positive relationship between
9 the SRC and the agency or the VR agency. Working
10 together works, so that's the way we try to put a
11 good positive spin on it.

12 So I gave you information about some
13 of the stuff we can provide, some things you can

14 get as a member and really it's not a large

15 business to become a member. You know, you attend

16 trainings, you get information, you share ideas.

17 The board, we have a seven-member

18 board. We are trying to get new board members so

19 we keep this -- you know, we are all volunteers, we

20 are unpaid, we just take registration fees from our

21 conferences to pay the expenses like interpreters,

22 you know, food and materials and other things.

23 So that's about it. I gave you the

24 quick down and dirty overview of some things, why I

25 think it would be a good idea. We would very much

1 welcome your group to become a resolution signing
2 member. And we have -- I think there's copies of
3 the resolution on our website or we are going to
4 have those on the website, I don't have one in
5 front of me because I am at home this evening so I
6 don't have all my materials with me. But I can get
7 that to you later and I can give you my email
8 address if anybody would like to email me with
9 other questions in case you are too shy tonight.
10 But from what I have heard it doesn't sound like
11 y'all are a very shy group so that's good.

12 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
13 you, Graham, for that really helpful overview and

14 listing some of the resources that you have.

15 What questions or comments or comments

16 do we have?

17 MS. FLAX: Samantha.

18 MR. O'CONNOR: Samantha, yes, just one

19 second. This is open, just to be clear, to anyone

20 in attendance. Go ahead, Samantha.

21 MS. FLAX: I have a few. First I

22 wanted to know what are the requirements for being

23 a member? What are the expectations to ensure that

24 members are representing the best interests of

25 advising these rehabilitation councils? What is

1 required to be a member?

2 MR. SISSON: To be a member of the

3 National Coalition of State Rehabilitation

4 Councils, that you sign, that your SRC signs the

5 resolution. And again, you can give as little

6 input during meetings or trainings, I mean, there's

7 not really requirements. I mean, like I said

8 before, it's not a heavy lift to join.

9 MS. FLAX: Okay, thank you.

10 My next question is about your

11 training. So something you said to me that really

12 sort of jolted me a little was when you mentioned

13 your website and the attempt to make it screen

14 reader capable. That was really concerning to me
15 because when I think of an organization that is
16 advising agencies on how to work with Blind people,
17 how to work with people with disabilities, I would
18 expect that those organizations have best practices
19 themselves.

20 And so I am wondering if you could
21 talk a little bit about that, a little bit about
22 the example you said on your website, what efforts
23 are being made to make that site accessible as well
24 as what is the content of these trainings you have?
25 What is the advantage of these trainings and what

1 kinds of ideas about blindness these trainings are
2 perpetuating?

3 MR. SISSON: Okay. Obviously I've
4 answered some of your questions already, but I will
5 repeat some of the information I've already given.

6 One thing that I did mention, obviously we are
7 redoing our website so your comment that, you know,
8 that we need to -- I agree that we need to set the
9 example for other entities to follow, so we have
10 always been a very inclusive, but again, some of
11 the documents we have in multiple formats, we have
12 not only pdf, but we have it in Word document. And
13 we don't -- I think that most of our website is

14 just pure text to make it more screen.

15 But, I mean, I am not an expert on

16 screen readers, okay, but we do -- I would welcome

17 anybody to come to our website to test it out and

18 give us comments on it, so you know, we are willing

19 to make whatever changes. I mean, we are still in

20 the process.

21 We had one of our long-time board

22 members die suddenly and she did a lot of work on

23 the website and had a contact, so we had to find

24 another web design person to help us and get in the

25 institute a contract with them. So that person is

1 helping us and assisting us in redeveloping. So we
2 are still -- it's still under development. So
3 sometimes developing a good website takes some
4 time.

5 And then you said what about some of
6 the content on the trainings? Well, I mentioned
7 some of them where we had like operational best
8 practices for the SRC, like how to get your
9 appointments from the governor, you know, bylaws,
10 you know, what are good examples of bylaws, what
11 are some things they'd want included in bylaws.

12 Then another thing that we've had a
13 topic on is the State Rehabilitation Council and

14 Report. At the last training we had a good deal of
15 discussion on that. And a lot of times what we do
16 for discussion is we have round table discussions,
17 we have different people, we combine people from
18 different states and place them at different tables
19 and each table is given a topic to discuss and
20 share information on how their state or states, you
21 know, do a particular topic. And then they report
22 out to the whole group and it's a good way to share
23 best practices that way.

24 So each of the trainings that we do
25 vary from time to time. This time we are actually

1 sending out a call for presentations or so that we
2 can get some outside views. Because normally each
3 person on the board is a subject matter expert on
4 State Rehabilitation Council, but for variety we
5 are trying -- one comment that was made was can you
6 all get some outside speakers. And we've had
7 outside speakers, but they wanted more outside
8 speakers. That was some of the input that we
9 received at the spring conference in Bethesda in
10 April.

11 And I'm trying to think what was your
12 other question? I think you had like four
13 questions. Did I miss any of your questions and

14 sorry if I forgot one of them. Do you have another

15 question, I believe there was another question?

16 MS. FLAX: Yes. I would say related

17 to your comment about training is you mentioned

18 repeating, and I would encourage you to think

19 about, I am a neurodivergent person and so

20 sometimes hearing things in a different way or

21 asking for repetition is a means of being able to

22 understand things in different ways and to get more

23 information. Because I had heard you mention some

24 of the topics that you talked about and as a member

25 of this Council who advocates for members with

1 multiple disabilities, I think when I think about
2 these trainings I think about how are these
3 trainings being given in a way that is beneficial
4 to those members. So when I think about what makes
5 a good bylaw or what makes something meaningful for
6 the Council to say, it's not just about how do we
7 get that across, but what is the content of that
8 information and that's what I was trying to get at
9 with my question. How is the content of your
10 trainings helpful for us, that would be people who
11 are Blind.

12 And so how are your trainings helping
13 the positive ideals of disability, about things

14 like that. So I wanted to reiterate that having
15 you repeat was a means of getting more information
16 and to encourage you to think about the fact that
17 people who are neurodivergent might benefit from
18 that in your future talks.

19 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Let me
20 just jump in here before you, Graham.

21 MR. SISSON: I didn't know you were
22 neurodivergent, that might have been helpful. And
23 that's fine, I don't mind repeating stuff, but I
24 know that I have a limited amount of time, that's
25 why I need to limit my comments.

1 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. I am

2 going to jump in front of you for just a quick

3 second, Graham.

4 MR. SISSON: Sure.

5 MR. O'CONNOR: Something I've heard

6 that's related to Sam's question, maybe it would be

7 helpful phrased this way is there are, as you are

8 well aware, the councils that are for the general

9 agencies and for the blindness agencies and I think

10 one of the questions that came up from this group

11 that sounds very similar, maybe, to Sam what you

12 were getting at, is: Is there content that NCSRC

13 is putting together that is specific to councils

14 that are serving blindness specific agencies as

15 opposed to general agencies?

16 MR. SISSON: Well, I think some of the

17 content is not necessarily specific to Blind, the

18 Blind agencies, you know, still have the same

19 mandates. So I don't know, but we would be willing

20 if there were content that you want as specific to

21 Blind SRCs or SRCs that are for, you know, for

22 Blind agencies that just serve Blind folks, we

23 would be willing to take those comments.

24 But again, I don't think we have

25 content that specific, because operational

1 practices -- I'm not sure that all the operational
2 practices would be different. I mean, when you
3 look at the mandates for the SRCs, you know, there
4 is different formats, I guess, that a report could
5 be put in to make it more accessible to folks who
6 are Blind and, you know, there might be operational
7 practices, you know, particularly in getting, you
8 know, materials in formats that are useful by all
9 members and delivering information in a way that
10 all members can utilize it no matter what their
11 abilities are.

12 So I don't really know, you know, that

13 there's content specific, but I think there is

14 content that would be useful for Blind agencies,

15 for SRCs that arises from Blind agencies.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Sounds good. This is

17 Corbb. Thank you, Graham. I saw a question from

18 Rocky in the chat about if members of the NCSRC are

19 required to join their state rehabilitation

20 councils, and I just want to clarify that

21 membership would be the Council as an organization

22 joining as a member, it's not individuals joining.

23 The second question Rocky raised was

24 does the NCSRC have any DeafBlind representatives

25 at this point, at this time?

1 MR. SISSON: Again, it's an open
2 membership but, you know, people have to come
3 forward, okay. Because we are a volunteer group,
4 we certainly -- I think that we've had some
5 DeafBlind folks attend some of our trainings.

6 MR. O'CONNOR: Great. This is Corbb.
7 Thank you, Graham.

8 Other questions?

9 MS. KUSZ: This is Susan. Do you have
10 to be a member to attend the conference?

11 MR. SISSON: I think we'd prefer that
12 you are a member to attend the conference, but we
13 won't exclude somebody if they are not a member.

14 MS. KUSZ: And then the other comment
15 that I have is I think with the conversation around
16 what Samantha was talking about and so forth, I
17 just think that, you know, like nowadays with the
18 diversity, equity and inclusion stuff it would be
19 important for, you know, your organization to
20 really look at being more inclusive about the stuff
21 that you are doing.

22 So like when you are talking about --
23 I think it's good that you are looking at the
24 accessibility to your website, this is something
25 that moving forward, like I think it's important

1 like the plain language and making sure documents
2 are accessible so that everybody can, you know, get
3 into your website. Like these are things that
4 actually every organization should be doing, even
5 though they don't. So I appreciate Sam's comments,
6 that's all.

7 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb --

8 MR. SISSON: Sure. I --

9 MR. O'CONNOR: Oh go ahead, Graham.

10 Sorry.

11 MR. SISSON: And I definitely

12 appreciate the comments, too, but I think people

13 get maybe a tad defensive. We are an inclusive

14 organization, we -- you know, when people have
15 asked for accommodations we've always tried to
16 provide those accommodations for people to attend.

17 And the way people attend our
18 conferences it's primarily, you know, that's in
19 y'all's realm who you decide attends our
20 conferences. So we have never turned anybody down,
21 so I think that we are definitely very inclusive.

22 MS. DUNNAM: Jennifer D.

23 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Go
24 ahead, Jennifer Dunnam.

25 MS. DUNNAM: Just very quickly. And

1 if the answer is if it's better for me to just read
2 the resolution on the website, that's fine, but it
3 would be great, I would like to love to know what
4 the resolution that you are mentioning that the
5 councils are to sign, what it sort of binds a
6 member to, what are the provisions in that
7 resolution just in a nutshell?

8 MR. SISSON: Well, I think that we --
9 I think it talks about the mission of the NCSRC but
10 again, I'm not prepared, I can send y'all a copy of
11 the resolution, okay, so that you can look at it
12 yourself and determine if it's too strict for you
13 or if it has too many -- it would be too invasive

14 for you to sign or agree to, but a lot of states

15 have already, and I think it's a way to unite

16 people, to unite all the SRCs and national

17 organization too.

18 And by signing, you know, basically

19 signing the resolution just means that you are

20 dedicated to the mission of the NCSRC. And again,

21 our mission is on our website but I can get all

22 that stuff to Corbb and he can feel free to

23 distribute it.

24 MS. DUNNAM: Thank you.

25 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. That

1 would be helpful, Graham. Yeah, just a quick
2 search and found that resolution as well, so thank
3 you. I will definitely get that distributed.

4 What other questions are out there?

5 Pausing for just an extra moment as folks get to
6 their mute buttons.

7 (No response.)

8 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. Well what I

9 would like to suggest we definitely can get those

10 documents and resources shared with the Council and

11 let this be an ongoing discussion for us and maybe

12 something to take up at our next meeting.

13 So if anybody is feeling particular

14 energy on this topic one way or another, definitely
15 encourage you to get in touch with me and we will
16 find the best way to have that conversation as a
17 group.

18 Graham, I appreciate you staying on
19 the line with us a little later than planned. And
20 sorry, it sounded like you might have something to
21 add there.

22 MR. SISSON: I wanted to keep within
23 y'all's time limits, so hopefully I gave you some
24 good information and I certainly, you know, want to
25 encourage you to join if you can and certainly try

1 to -- we try to be inclusive and certainly -- but
2 we are open to input. And I think -- and as a
3 person with a disability myself it's incumbent of
4 people with disabilities if they have accommodation
5 needs to make those known. Even people with the
6 same disability, I would dare say that it is people
7 that are neurodivergent that know two people that
8 are neurodivergent who have the exact same needs.
9 So a lot of the accommodation is very specific to
10 the individual. So that's why we try to not do one
11 size fits all, but we try to meet the needs of the
12 individual so he or she or they can participate.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Yeah,

14 thanks, Graham, I appreciate where you are coming
15 from on that. I think what I heard from what Susan
16 and Sam and myself have had to share so far this
17 evening is that we are folks who are very committed
18 to the principles of universal design and universal
19 access. And I am not by any means implying that
20 you or the NCSRC are not. But what I would share
21 is they think that that -- for example, if there's
22 going to be a pdf distributed, this to Susan's
23 point, if there is going to be an organization of
24 any time that distributes a pdf, that pdf should be
25 tagged and accessible and conform to relevant

1 accessibility standards rather than an individual
2 needing to request that a document be tagged.

3 So I think that may be some of what
4 you are picking up on. And I would hope that we
5 would all be in agreement with that, but I just
6 wanted to summarize for those who may have missed
7 some of that. We really appreciate your time.

8 MR. SISSON: And we are --

9 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead.

10 MR. SISSON: We were trying to make
11 the -- provide documents in accessible formats,
12 that's why I made that statement. But yes, I mean,
13 I'm talking about if you are coming to the training

14 conference, you know, if you need accommodations at
15 the training conference. So yeah, that would be
16 the Word documents, probably, to make those as
17 accessible as possible.

18 MR. O'CONNOR: Fantastic. Well,
19 Graham, I appreciate you staying on the line with
20 us after-hours for you in Alabama and also for
21 joining our meeting tonight. Look forward to
22 connecting in person with you, hopefully at one of
23 these upcoming conferences and definitely know that
24 our group will be in touch with you. Thank you
25 very much.

1 MR. SISSON: Thank y'all and I look
2 forward to meeting y'all too and I appreciate the
3 opportunity. Thank you.

4 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. I know
5 that our agenda says that we are behind schedule,
6 but I encourage you do not fear, we will probably
7 still end right on time. Got some tricks up our
8 sleeve, if you will, with folks' reports for this
9 evening.

10 So let's move next to a quick one and
11 that is the approval of minutes from our April 6,
12 2023 meeting. Do I have such a motion?

13 MR. ELLER: Frank Eller motions.

14 MS. FLAX: Second.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: Frank moved and

16 Samantha seconds, thank you. Is there discussion?

17 MS. SANDERS: Judy Sanders. Is this

18 working? Oh hi.

19 MR. O'CONNOR: Hi.

20 MS. SANDERS: I have two corrections

21 to offer. One is that when we -- in the April

22 minutes it says that we have approved the minutes

23 for February 2022, so I think that's probably just

24 a typo and it needs to be 2023.

25 And then the other one is in the

1 public comment area where Steve Jacobson was
2 talking about scholarships for the NFB of Minnesota
3 and it was said to go to the website to apply for
4 them, it said go to NFB.org and it should be
5 NFBmn.org, those two things.

6 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
7 you, Judy. I am going to assume that there is no
8 opposition to those changes so if that's not the
9 case holler. Are there other comments or
10 questions?

11 And I will say, I know this is weird
12 after I just asked if there are comments or
13 questions, for those who are not speaking, if you

14 wouldn't mind muting please, we are picking up on

15 some background noise and coughing.

16 Are there comments or questions?

17 MS. OIEN: This is Kristin. Just a

18 spelling error, there is no E in my first name.

19 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Kristin. I

20 am noticing a pattern, Kristin, I apologize.

21 Other comments or corrections?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. With those three

24 edits to the minutes we will go ahead and take a

25 roll call to approve those and we will start with

1 Frank Eller.

2 MR. ELLER: Frank Eller, yes.

3 MS. FLAX: Samantha Flax, yes.

4 MR. HAENZE: Ryan Haenze, yes.

5 MR. HEINL: Tom Heinl, yes.

6 MR. HOBSON: Rob Hobson, pass.

7 MR. O'CONNOR: I don't believe

8 Catalina is here.

9 MR. ANDREWS: She was.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Michael O'Day.

11 MR. DAY: Michael O'Day, yes.

12 MS. OIEN: Kristin Oien, yes. Oh, did

13 I go out of turn?

14 MR. O'CONNOR: No, you are good.

15 Kristin yes. Thank you.

16 Jennifer.

17 MS. POINTS: Jennifer Points, yes.

18 MS. SANDERS: Judy Sanders, yes.

19 MR. O'CONNOR: Ryan Strunk is absent.

20 Trevor Turner, have you made it on yet?

21 (No response.)

22 MR. O'CONNOR: And Kyle Van Acker.

23 MS. MARTINEZ: Catalina Martinez,

24 pass.

25 MR. O'CONNOR: Catalina passes. Thank

1 you. Kyle Van Acker is not here and Corbb

2 O'Connor, yes. So with two abstentions the minutes

3 are approved. Thank you very much.

4 We will look next, then, to a quick

5 report from me. We've gone through a lot of those

6 points already. In a few minutes we will be

7 discussing and then voting on our committee

8 structure for a term that starts in September and

9 runs through the following August. And so with all

10 that I would like to encourage everyone who wishes

11 to serve on a committee and those who maybe would

12 like to chair to make their requests known to me by

13 July 15. You are welcome to email, call or text me

14 and know that I will probably be reaching out to

15 you as well.

16 In that document you will see all the

17 charges for each of our committees and the makeup

18 of the membership that we hope to be able to

19 achieve. If you are currently serving on a

20 committee I do need to you reach out and raise your

21 hand again so that we know that you are still

22 interested in continuing to serve.

23 I don't believe that there are any

24 other report items -- oh, one other. We had a

25 scheduling conflict with the presentation that was

1 so helpfully coordinated with our Professional
2 Development Committee and this is going to be a
3 representative from the Helen Keller National
4 Center who lives here in the Twin Cities and will
5 join us at the October meeting. So while we won't
6 make it in time for DeafBlind Awareness Month, we
7 will nonetheless have them here for Disability
8 Employment Month and Blindness Equality Achievement
9 Month as well, so looking forward to that
10 presentation.

11 We also in our -- no, I'm sorry,
12 that's a later item. We will turn now to our
13 Director's report and for that we turn to Natasha.

14 MS. JERDE: Excellent. So my trick
15 for getting us out on time is I do have an
16 abbreviated Director's report, I'm sure much to
17 everyone's enjoyment, but I apologize for not being
18 there in person today. You can probably tell my
19 allergies, they have been awful and you don't want
20 to see me blowing my nose or coughing and hacking
21 on you. And for that reason I also have an
22 abbreviated Director's report, but we do have a
23 number of really important and exciting
24 announcements to share.

25 And the first announcement that I'm so

1 excited to tell you all is that we have received
2 the \$4 million biennium increase to our state
3 appropriations. The governor signed it last week
4 and it will start on July 1. This is an increase
5 to our base budget, it's not one-time funds, and as
6 a result of this increase we are going to be able
7 to meet our state matching requirements for our
8 federal award without having to use dollars from
9 other programs. We are going to be able to fill
10 long-standing, vacant positions and increase staff
11 in those areas our customers need us the most.

12 Likewise we also received a \$4 million
13 one-time appropriation for the biennium to create

14 the pilot Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund.
15 Like I said, these are one-time funds that will
16 allow us to determine if the Employer Reasonable
17 Accommodation Fund program makes a positive impact
18 on the hiring of people with disabilities.

19 This program will be set to launch by
20 September 1 and we are currently working on hiring
21 two temporary positions to implement it. In
22 addition, we are beginning the development of the
23 policies, procedures, forms and website.

24 And while they are -- oops, I lost my
25 report.

1 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb.
2 Natasha, can I trouble you just to back up maybe
3 four or five sentences, it might be my audio but I
4 feel like I might have missed an important part
5 after you talked about the positions.

6 MS. JERDE: All right. And I
7 apologize.

8 (Inaudible.)

9 MS. SANDERS: You are breaking up
10 some.

11 MS. JERDE: Accommodation fund and I
12 see some (inaudible).

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Good, I'm glad it's

14 just not me. Natasha, do you want to try calling

15 in?

16 MS. JERDE: (Inaudible).

17 MR. O'CONNOR: It's still shaky. This

18 shall be remembered as our shaky audio Zoom

19 meeting.

20 MS. JERDE: How is this? Is this

21 better?

22 MR. ANDREWS: Yes.

23 MR. O'CONNOR: For now.

24 MS. JERDE: Okay, for now. Let me

25 know and I can switch up -- (inaudible).

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's still

2 breaking up over here.

3 MS. JERDE: Let me do a quick call in.

4 Jon, can you carry on while I switch over my audio?

5 MR. BENSON: I certainly can do that.

6 MS. JERDE: Thank you.

7 MR. ANDREWS: You need some bigger

8 strength.

9 MR. BENSON: No, just break the glass

10 and I will come out and help out a little bit here.

11 All right. So let me review the

12 reasonable accommodation program section that I

13 think was starting to fall apart. So this program

14 is set to launch by September 1, we are currently
15 working on hiring two temporary positions to
16 implement it.

17 In addition, we are beginning the
18 development of the policies, procedures, forms and
19 websites. We are basically building it from ground
20 up.

21 Looking at ending the Order of
22 Selection. While there has not been a waiting list
23 for services since September 2019, SSB's VR program
24 is still on an Order of Selection. Being on an
25 Order of Selection means that at any time we can

1 institute a waiting list for services. State
2 agencies who remain on an Order of Selection are
3 reported to Congress via an RSA report. It is a
4 list that we don't want to be on anymore,
5 therefore, today I am proposing our plans to end
6 Order of Selection. We are on a great budget
7 trajectory, especially given we just received an
8 increase in our appropriation.

9 The process to end it is actually
10 fairly straight forward. It requires us to do an
11 amendment to our Combined State Plan which does not
12 require public meetings and SRC-B involvement. We
13 could do it in one of two ways.

14 First, we can wait and do it as part
15 of our new Combined State Plan or my preference,
16 that would be Natasha's preference, is we initiate
17 the amendment now with RSA, hold a public virtual
18 meeting to solicit comments and thoughts and be
19 done with it by the end of the summer.

20 I will pause here to solicit any
21 questions or comments from the Council. Well, I
22 will do my best.

23 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
24 you, Jon. And Natasha says she is back with us on
25 her phone.

1 MR. BENSON: Oh, just in time. Take
2 it away, Natasha.

3 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Whose
4 got questions for Natasha/Jon?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. O'CONNOR: I think I might have
7 interrupted you Natasha.

8 MS. JERDE: No, I was just going to
9 say any questions. And also I would appreciate any
10 comments on what option you all would prefer us to
11 take, if you want us to wait or you want us to move
12 forward with let's get this done or if you are
13 curious about ending it.

14 MR. HOBSON: This is Rob.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Rob.

16 MR. HOBSON: I don't have any

17 concerns, I just want to know like what would the

18 process be for getting back on that if we needed to

19 get back on that Order of Selection? I don't

20 recall what it was like seven or six years ago, so

21 maybe you could just explain a little bit about

22 that. Otherwise I think it is a great thing.

23 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha. The

24 process is not easy to get back on purposely, there

25 needs to be multiple public hearings, there needs

1 to be a commissioner's office and oftentimes
2 governor approval here in Minnesota to approve it.
3 We need to submit a lot of information to the feds
4 on why we are going on Order of Selection.

5 And really, it's not an easy process
6 and we also have to amend the Combined State Plan,
7 but it's a lot easier to get off of it.

8 MS. SANDERS: This is Judy. I think
9 the shortest -- whatever the shortest road to get
10 off of it is we should take.

11 MS. OIEN: This is Kristin, I agree
12 option 2 would be great.

13 MR. ELLER: Frank Eller concurs.

14 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Just
15 for the sake of expediency, is there anyone with a
16 different opinion about how we -- that would prefer
17 the more administrative route to ending the Order
18 of Selection?

19 MR. O'DAY: This is Michael --

20 MR. HEINL: Tom Heinl.

21 MR. O'DAY: Oh sorry. Go ahead, Tom.

22 MR. O'CONNOR: Michael, go ahead.

23 MR. O'DAY: Okay. I agree with the
24 others about getting off of Order of Selection as
25 quickly as possible, my question actually was

1 around the accommodation program. Could you talk a
2 little bit about that in terms of kind of what it
3 is about, is it for outside employers, I mean, they
4 should be accommodating people as it is now, so I'm
5 just wondering if you could talk a little bit about
6 that particular piece?

7 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, this is Corbb.
8 Michael, if I can put your question on hold for
9 just a moment. Tom, is your question related to
10 Order of Selection?

11 MR. HEINL: Yeah, I'm just wondering
12 what the negative is about staying on the Order of
13 Selection? It sounds like it's a hassle to get on

14 it if there is no detriment to staying on it,

15 what's the difference?

16 MS. JERDE: This is Tasha. There is

17 actually a big detriment for staying on it, this

18 information is actually reported nationally to

19 Congress and Congress monitors, not in the sense

20 they are coming in and auditing us, but they look

21 at what states are on Order of Selection and what

22 are they doing to actively work to get off of it.

23 Being on Order of Selection is like

24 not a badge of honor, it is the opposite of that.

25 It puts you under the microscope and when you give

1 funds back and you are on Order of Selection that's
2 50 times worse. So it's actually a detriment to
3 stay on.

4 MR. HEINL: Okay. Thanks for your
5 information. I do think that if we go off of it we
6 might as well go off of it as soon as possible
7 also.

8 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Rocky
9 put a question in the chat of can you describe the
10 Order of Selection?

11 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha. So order
12 of Selection is a process we can do if we don't
13 have enough funds or not enough staff to serve

14 everyone at once. When we go on Order of Selection

15 we then prioritize the people with the most

16 significant of disabilities and anyone who doesn't

17 meet the criteria we have in place sits on a wait

18 list.

19 Some agencies have their wait lists

20 going on for years and people never get off of it

21 to receive services. So an Order of Selection is

22 just prioritizing who we can serve and when.

23 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Is

24 there any other comment, questions on Order of

25 Selection? Otherwise sounds like we are united in

1 an expedient end.

2 MS. JERDE: That makes me very happy

3 and our commissioner's office is behind us

4 100 percent. And in fact, if we were to get off

5 this summer there is actually going to be probably

6 some big press releases around it because it is

7 very exciting to get off Order of Selection, it is

8 big news.

9 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Maybe,

10 Tasha, if we could go back to Michael's question

11 about a further understanding of the reasonable

12 accommodation program.

13 MS. JERDE: Absolutely. So the

14 Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund is really
15 geared towards small to medium size businesses,
16 it's not geared toward the 3Ms and the Target
17 corporations of the world, it's really geared
18 towards the mom and pops, the very small business
19 folks who may not have the funds available to
20 provide reasonable accommodations.

21 We also know there is this perception
22 about the cost of reasonable accommodations, even
23 though the majority of them will cost less than a
24 thousand dollars.

25 So the Reasonable Accommodation Fund

1 allows those small to medium sized employers to
2 make accommodations and then request reimbursement
3 through this program for those accommodations.
4 It's capped, an employer can't request a
5 reimbursement more than \$30,000 a year. We do
6 track it, but it can be used for interpreting
7 services, captioning, a wheelchair ramp,
8 implementing JAWS or purchasing a Braille display
9 and they can get reimbursed for that.

10 And the fun part of ERAP, as I'm
11 calling it, is not the actual reimbursement, but
12 that the staff who are going to be implementing it
13 will be able to provide technical assistance and

14 consultation to employers for free about what is
15 reasonable accommodations, what are your
16 obligations under ADA, how do you help the
17 individual in implementing that accommodation or
18 finding the right accommodation for the job?
19 And we will be providing training and
20 technical assistance as part of this. It's not
21 just here is my invoice, give me my money for
22 reimbursement, not at all. And it's a pilot to see
23 does this help? Does this help change perceptions
24 of employers? Reimbursement is great, you know,
25 money can help, but we are also working on

1 educating employers on those misperceptions of
2 hiring people with disabilities.

3 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
4 you, Natasha. Are there other questions up to
5 point in the Director's report?

6 MR. HEINL: Tom Heinl.

7 MR. HOBSON: This is Rob.

8 MR. O'CONNOR: Tom first and then
9 we'll go to Rob.

10 MR. HEINL: Okay. Is there a maximum
11 cap per individual on this program? You had
12 indicated \$30,000 per employer, is there -- if he
13 has three people is there any kind of a cap per

14 individual?

15 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha. No, it's

16 by employer and, in fact, we are not going to

17 collect information on the individual, we are going

18 to keep that information private. They don't need

19 to submit the names of the individuals, but it's

20 \$30,000 per employer per year.

21 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. And

22 Rob.

23 MR. HOBSON: Yes, so two things. One,

24 I wanted to go back and clarify that when I said I

25 think it's a good thing, I meant I thought that

1 getting off Order of Selection is a really good
2 thing, so. And option 2 obviously looks like the
3 most expedient option.

4 The other question or statement really
5 is that I think that this may open up a lot of
6 doors for people who may otherwise, like, not be
7 able to get a job. So I'm really excited about
8 what opportunities this will provide for our
9 customers and other people with disabilities. So
10 that they can work and be employed and feel like,
11 you know, like they finally accomplished, you know,
12 their dreams. Because I think that's one of the
13 biggest challenges that Blind people and other

14 people with disabilities face. So I'm really
15 excited about this program, I think it is going to
16 be very helpful.

17 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
18 you, Rob.

19 Natasha, I think we can move on.

20 MS. JERDE: Excellent. And I will say
21 that I think this is the first of its kind in the
22 country, so we are pretty excited about it.

23 Next I want to talk a little bit about
24 state fiscal year 2024 new round of OKRs. And
25 there really are department OKRs. And if you

1 remember, an OKR is an objective and key result,
2 it's a goal setting process.

3 And so our department has established
4 new OKRs that will go from July 1 of this year to
5 June 30 of next. SSB will not be creating our own,
6 we can build off the ones we were working on, but
7 we do not want to add to anyone's plates right now,
8 there is a lot going on.

9 However, the three OKRs that the
10 department has established, we do have a lot of
11 involvement in it, especially how it relates to how
12 people who are Blind, visually impaired and
13 DeafBlind can help solve the workforce shortage

14 issues.

15 So the first OKR is empower Minnesota

16 to create an economy rooted in equity across every

17 race, entity and ability. And the key results have

18 to do with implementing a standardized demographic

19 questionnaire for our economic development program

20 and aligning that with the demographic data

21 collection for workforce development programs,

22 looking at the grantees that we work with more for

23 our employment and training programs and make sure

24 that they are able to identify who are their end

25 users and are they targeted groups?

1 There is going to be a quarterly
2 engagement plan with our new office of public
3 engagement director to make sure that we have
4 proactive outreach, enhancing DEED employees'
5 awareness of language access, responsibilities,
6 resources and requirements for translating and
7 interpreting information for customers, and
8 achieving and sustaining a workforce that matches
9 the representation of Minnesota's diverse
10 communities, specifically regarding race and
11 ethnicity by July 2024. I would have like to see
12 disability in there, but I was not part of this
13 specific key result.

14 The second objective we have is to

15 drive growth that puts Minnesota at the forefront

16 of innovation in technology, high tech

17 manufacturing, and health and wellness. And our

18 key results include increasing the bigger

19 development pipeline, establishing new partnerships

20 in collaboration between businesses, higher

21 education and other partners, featuring 25

22 businesses within target sectors at our various

23 events and increasing participation by 20 percent

24 through relevant outreach channels. And this one

25 is a lot less to do with us, it really is more

1 geared towards like our trade programs that are
2 business development.

3 But the third objective is what I'm
4 most excited about, mainly because I am the lead on
5 this, but really because there is an opportunity to
6 address the workforce shortage and ensure people
7 with disabilities are included. That objective is
8 to meet the moment for Minnesota's historic
9 workforce shortages with collaborative efforts
10 towards high wage jobs with strong growth
11 potential.

12 And we have four key results for that.

13 The first is that all of our workforce programs,

14 which includes SSB, will increase by 5 percent the
15 number of people we serve who come from the most
16 vulnerable populations and areas of the state. And
17 we are using something called the social
18 vulnerability index where we can map out where are
19 the high need areas and then we need to really
20 proactively do our outreach planning to reach those
21 people who we are not serving but who need us the
22 most.

23 The second is that 80 percent of
24 people or of businesses that are recipients of the
25 Job Creation Fund, hire at least 20 percent of the

1 people we serve from our programs, which means more
2 job opportunities and better connection to our
3 customers to those businesses.

4 The third is that we are going to be
5 training all of our staff, people who get grants
6 from us and our partners in the local workforce
7 development areas. We are going to be providing
8 training on how they can assist job seekers in
9 learning more about and entering into occupations
10 and demand and the drive for five sectors.

11 And Drive for five is a governor
12 initiative that targets like manufacturing, caring
13 professions like personal care workers. So we want

14 to help our staff help our job seekers get into
15 those jobs, which are often very high wage and high
16 demand.

17 And the fourth one is through the
18 workforce digital transformation project we are
19 going to implement better system integration and
20 technology that supports us in creating a better
21 customer experience for individuals and employers.
22 Could include things like better access for job
23 seekers to our various systems, making Workforce
24 One a lot more seamless and easy to use through the
25 Workforce One Connect app and just a whole variety

1 of things that I think will have a positive impact
2 on the people we serve.

3 So I just want to give you the high
4 level of those OKRs. We are working on our
5 strategies now and I see a lot of places where the
6 Council could be of assistance. And I will talk
7 more about that in August once we really nail down
8 our strategies. But the biggest thing is the
9 outreach we do through the Diversity, Equity and
10 Inclusion Committee I think.

11 Corbb, would you like me to pause
12 before I get into the last portion?

13 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. That

14 would be great. What questions or comments are
15 there on this section of Natasha's report?

16 MS. FAGER: Hi, this is Sue Fager with
17 PACER Center. I haven't been appointed yet, I
18 don't think, to the SRC, but Tasha, I am wondering
19 if this information about the OKRs is available
20 online somewhere I would really like to share it
21 with colleagues.

22 MS. JERDE: Absolutely. This is
23 Tasha. I think it is now posted on our DEED
24 website, I will find that and get that out to all
25 of our councilmembers and future councilmembers.

1 MS. FAGER: Thank you.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Sue.

3 This is Corbb. Are there other

4 questions or comments from anyone?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. This is Corbb.

7 We will --

8 MS. JERDE: I --

9 MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, sorry. Who is

10 this?

11 MS. JERDE: This is just Natasha, I

12 was just saying all right.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead.

14 MS. JERDE: And I apologize if you
15 hear squeaking, the dog found a little dog toy that
16 squeaks.

17 So onto projects and notable news.

18 These are really more quick hits. So first of all

19 I will start with some community partner

20 highlights. Our next community partner forum is

21 going to be on July 11 from 10:00 to 12:00. A

22 notice with the Zoom link will either be coming

23 soon or if it came out.

24 At that meeting we are going to be

25 providing an update on the Employer Reasonable

1 Accommodation Fund, a lot more specifics around
2 that because we want our partners to be able to
3 tell employers they are working with about it when
4 they are doing job placement.

5 We will also be presenting an updated
6 employment training that we will be offering to our
7 employment community partners. Anyone, any partner
8 who is providing employment-related services will
9 have access to this training.

10 And then our staff ATB training
11 contract with Vision Loss Resources has been
12 executed and there are two more contracts that are
13 near completion. We cannot share who those other

14 two vendors are because it is confidential.

15 We currently have three contracts

16 being negotiated for Adjustment to Blindness and

17 Pre-ETS services. We are processing two amendments

18 and we have one pending application. We have a six

19 month request for proposals for our community

20 partners, for ATB and employment and Pre-ETS, that

21 will expire on June 30, but we still have a need so

22 we will repost it with minor revisions and updates

23 for another six months. So if there are any

24 partners in the room and you were thinking of

25 applying or something and it disappears from the

1 site, don't panic, it will be back.

2 And our contract for court reporting

3 expires June 30, 2023. As you know, court

4 reporting is a valuable part of our State Rehab

5 Council meetings. We've been preparing a quick

6 call targeted solicitation which goes out to about

7 three vendors at minimum and one of those vendors

8 must come from a specific targeted group which we

9 call TGEDVO, which is targeted groups economically

10 disadvantaged and veteran owned vendors. So we are

11 hoping we will get a court reporter contract ready

12 to roll by the next time we need our court

13 reporting services.

14 Onto some Pre-ETS and transition quick
15 hits. Summer is our busiest time and many of our
16 students are engaged with programs and work
17 opportunities. There are 22 students going to the
18 summer transition program and many, many other
19 students attending a variety of programs from our
20 community partners.

21 BEP quick hits. Our elected committee
22 chair, Mike Colbrunn, and our BEP director, John
23 Hulet, have started meeting with the Rehab Services
24 Administration to review the current BEP policy and
25 procedures and the BEP rule to identify

1 opportunities for enhancement.

2 Onto the Communication Center

3 technology updates. We published a request for

4 proposals for our recording software in March after

5 delays. We got the results back and we have one

6 valid bidder. We hopefully think that they are

7 going to meet our needs.

8 And the Go Live date for moving our

9 Braille unit to the new software system, KLAS, was

10 supposed to be May 10, but for a number of reasons

11 we postponed the implementation. There are still a

12 number of issues. We are making progress, but we

13 have not yet set a new date.

14 Senior Services quick hits. So
15 exciting news, our Aging Eyes position is now
16 permanent. It was a three year temporary position,
17 but with our state appropriation increase we were
18 able to make Stacy Shamblott's position forever
19 part of SSU.

20 And we will be hiring a second staff
21 member for Rochester, given the popularity of the
22 Mayo clinic work we definitely need a second
23 person.

24 We are on pace to serve more than
25 4,000 seniors. Ed believes this will be a record

1 year and we might, just might, get close to beating

2 California next year.

3 And we are working with the Senior

4 Committee to plan a possibilities fair. And our

5 Blind rehab specialist, Barb Klein, is now back to

6 work part time and she is out of St. Cloud.

7 And then I will do a workforce

8 development unit data snapshot. I don't have a ton

9 of announcements there, but I want to give you some

10 high hits on some data.

11 So since July 1 we have received 233

12 applications for services. We are currently

13 serving 662 individuals. If you looked at that

14 number about seven years ago that would be over a
15 thousand, but the last couple of years we have been
16 hovering around 585, 600, so we are seeing an
17 increase again in our applications. We had 69
18 successful closures and 99 unsuccessful closures.
19 The average caseload size is 39 people per
20 counselor, the lowest caseload is 19 and the
21 highest is 54.

22 Typically our customers are working
23 with us around an average of three years and five
24 months and the, let's see, that is it, that is it
25 for my WDU snapshot. Maybe I will take a moment

1 before I go into my last section on staff updates
2 for any questions.

3 MS. OIEN: Natasha, this is Kristin.

4 I just want to let you know there are 21 students
5 signed up for the summer transition program.

6 MS. JERDE: Oh, it's no longer 22, so
7 that must have changed since Sheila let me know
8 about a week or two ago. Thank you.

9 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. And one
10 thing you probably don't have in front of you,
11 Natasha, I was just perusing our goals, the goals
12 and priorities document for the year. Do we have
13 any updates that we can share? It may not be the

14 numbers but just anecdotally or someone to follow

15 up with on measurable skill gain improvements and

16 data over the last year?

17 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha. That is

18 a great question. We will actually have a better

19 number in August because all of the measurable

20 skill gains are rolling in for this school year,

21 since most people are graduating within the last

22 couple weeks. So I will have a much better picture

23 for you all in August.

24 I do know we have had, at least in

25 December, we are showing considerable improvement,

1 but I will make sure we can report on that in

2 August or as soon as we have the data.

3 MR. O'CONNOR: And there was a

4 question in the chat about can you discuss which

5 vendors you are using for ATB, you are negotiating

6 for ATB contracts?

7 MS. SANDERS: You are going away.

8 MR. ELLER: Fading.

9 MS. SANDERS: You are fading.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Fading. Well, that's

11 not something I want to do yet.

12 There was a question from Rocky in the

13 chat can you comment on which ATB training centers

14 you are currently negotiating new contracts with?

15 MS. JERDE: We cannot until they are

16 signed, sealed and delivered it is a confidential

17 process.

18 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Are

19 there other questions at this point for Natasha?

20 MS. FLAX: Samantha.

21 MR. O'CONNOR: Yes, Samantha.

22 MS. FLAX: I was just curious mostly

23 about, I guess, the level of different amounts of

24 caseloads for different counselors, I was wondering

25 is that geography or is that something that is

1 going to be redistributed? I am just curious
2 because it seems relatively unequal and I'm
3 guessing that's not anyone's fault or anything, I
4 was just curious whether there was anything to be
5 done about that or whether it was not a problem or
6 anything, but I want more information on that.

7 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha. I think
8 caseload distribution is a constant balance and I
9 don't think there is ever the perfect caseload
10 complement size. Lower caseloads -- I believe the
11 19 is actually because we had a new counselor come
12 on and they slowly start adding and I think that's
13 our Pre-ETS counselor. Out Pre-ETS caseloads tend

14 to be smaller because they are a little bit more

15 intensive.

16 Greater Minnesota does have a higher

17 caseload, depending on the region because, you

18 know, we can't always control how many people are

19 in that given region, but we are constantly looking

20 at distribution and equity and we can never get

21 fully equitable, but we are really looking at

22 making sure it can be as equitable as possible.

23 So, yeah, it is never a perfect

24 balance and I know staff have struggles, have

25 shared their struggles with us that we are taking

1 very seriously.

2 MS. FLAX: Great, thank you.

3 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Not

4 hearing anyone else jumping for questions, is that

5 the end of your report, Natasha, or did you have

6 one more?

7 MS. JERDE: One more section, it's

8 actually perfect timing because it's is all about

9 staffing.

10 So my staffing update. So we are

11 excited to announce that Brent Benson, one of our

12 metro VR techs, accepted the first job coaching

13 position. We are in the process of hiring two

14 additional job coaches. Brent already has jumped
15 into his new role and is assisting a student
16 already whose doing a janitorial work experience up
17 in Isanti. It wasn't anticipated a job coach would
18 be needed, as the customer had previous experience
19 doing the work, however, the employer expressed
20 some concerns and a job coach would be beneficial.

21 We reached out to community partners
22 but there was no one available to help this
23 individual, so Brent jumped in and is helping with
24 the job coaching for the next few weeks.

25 We are working on hiring a few

1 additional VR technicians, including filling the
2 vacancy left by Brent. We are still working to
3 hire the low vision trainer and we did have a
4 repost of that position. We are in the process of
5 posting an outreach coordinator that will assist
6 Lisa Larges in communications and outreach. They
7 will also be responsible for coordinating our
8 Combined State Plan.

9 We will be hiring two temporary
10 positions to support the Employer Reasonable
11 Accommodation Fund, one will be a program
12 coordinator and one will be a financial
13 administrative support specialist.

14 As I mentioned, we will be hiring an
15 additional SSU specialist to serve Rochester. We
16 will be backfilling Jeff Bail, who is the audio
17 services supervisor, his former position as a
18 quality technician, that position remained vacant
19 for funding reasons. And we are also going to be
20 hiring a broadcaster in Radio Talking Book, again
21 this is a vacancy left unfilled due to funding
22 concerns.

23 And that concludes my abbreviated
24 Director's report.

25 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank

1 you, Natasha.

2 Are there any final questions about

3 anything we have heard so far in the Director's

4 report?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. O'CONNOR: Hearing none, thank

7 you, Natasha, very exciting about our budget

8 allocation, very exciting about all of the open

9 positions at SSB and even more so about the Order

10 of Selection. So thank you very much for your

11 report tonight.

12 Before we jump into a break I did want

13 to share as well, speaking of open positions, this

14 Council is looking for a few positions so if you
15 know of anyone who would be interested in these.
16 The ones that are currently open are the American
17 Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Project's
18 position; an industry representative, so somebody
19 representing the business community; a recipient of
20 voc rehab services; a PACER representative, I think
21 we are just waiting for some paperwork on that one;
22 as well as a representative from the community
23 rehabilitation program services.

24 Some of these positions already have
25 folks who have applied and waiting on the

1 governor's office, but nonetheless, decisions
2 haven't been made. So if you know of folks who
3 would be interested in joining us and serving,
4 please encourage them to apply on the Secretary of
5 State website.

6 Speaking of changes, again right
7 before we go to a break, Kristin did you want to
8 share your news with this group?

9 MS. OIEN: This is Kristin, yes. I am
10 also leaving. I will be leaving Minnesota on
11 June 28. My husband and I are going to be moving
12 to Virginia Beach, Virginia to be closer to our
13 daughter and family and the ocean and extended

14 family up and down the East Coast.

15 So it's been a pleasure to be on this

16 State Rehab Council in the past and also for this

17 very short time. So I will work fervently to find

18 another MDE representative, but thank you so much.

19 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Kristin. I

20 appreciate your patience waiting to be appointed

21 again and also continuing to join, nonetheless,

22 while you were a member of the public. We

23 appreciated MDE's presence through you. And we are

24 bummed, I for one, to see you go for the

25 contributions you've made so far and I'm confident

1 we will get to hear more about those contributions
2 in just a few minutes.

3 Say, it's 7:17, I would propose we
4 take a ten-minute break, come back at 7:27. Talk
5 to you all in 10 minutes.

6 (Break taken from 7:17 to 7:27 p.m.)

7 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. This is Corbb,
8 we will go ahead and get started. Kim, are you
9 ready for us?

10 COURT REPORTER: Yes, I am.

11 MR. O'CONNOR: Fantastic.

12 I want to welcome us back, this is
13 Corbb, welcome us back to the second part of our

14 meeting and I want to take a moment and pause. Is

15 there anyone who has joined after we did

16 introductions that could introduce themselves,

17 whether in the room or on Zoom?

18 Jan Bailey, I saw your name in the

19 chat or in the participants' list, I want to make

20 sure we give credit where credit is due for those

21 who joined later on. Anyone else?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay, great. So we

24 will move, then, to a report from the Budget Task

25 Force is what the agenda says. However, the Budget

1 Task Force is still waiting on some revised data
2 from our fiscal services team. There were a number
3 of expenses that were miscategorized in the latest
4 financial report and as such we don't really have a
5 great picture of where we stand, except for a total
6 number on our budget which is not a concern in
7 terms of having enough dollars to do what we need
8 to do, but nonetheless, it would be good to get
9 those items in the proper categories.

10 I present that from Ryan who sent that
11 to me via email and chairs our Budget Task Force so
12 I imagine that group will continue to meet probably
13 just in time for our next budget.

14 Are there any questions, comments on

15 that?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. Moving, then,

18 again this is still Corbb, moving to a report from

19 our Council Committee Structure Task Force and

20 committee that was chaired this year by Kristin

21 Oien.

22 MS. OIEN: All right. This is

23 Kristin. So a small but mighty group of us met

24 yesterday early in the morning. Corbb and Daniel

25 and Samantha and Susan. We reviewed and pulled

1 together all of the committee information which was
2 sent out to you folks, so the only thing that we
3 actually need to vote on today is the name change
4 of one of the committees from Minority Outreach
5 Committee to the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
6 Committee. And also to find out if there are any
7 comments or suggestions from any of the Council
8 members regarding the committee information that
9 was sent out.

10 MS. SANDERS: This is -- oh.

11 MR. O'CONNOR: Judy, I hear you, we
12 will pause until you get to a mike.

13 MS. SANDERS: I have the mike, it's

14 the hard things, turning it on.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Judy.

16 MS. SANDERS: Okay. I have a couple

17 of things that document on the first line where it

18 says SRC-B, actually it says SCR-B I think, so

19 that's just a small thing to fix.

20 But I also have a question, I don't

21 know if I got it exactly right. I think in the

22 very beginning it talks about it says and are

23 encouraged, you want to encourage people to seek

24 chairmanships of committees. And it looked to me

25 the way it was worded as if you volunteer to say

1 you want to be chair of a committee that it's a
2 given that you will be. And so I wanted to suggest
3 that maybe it reads something about you are urged
4 to make your preferences known and volunteer for
5 chairmanships through the Council chair so that the
6 Council chair, whoever it may be at the time,
7 can -- you know, they may have choices about who is
8 volunteering for things.

9 So I don't know if that can be a
10 little clearer or if I am the only one who is
11 misreading it.

12 The other part is I think it says to
13 refer to the website for staff names of people on

14 committees, but they are in there anyway. It lists
15 them, so I'm not sure whether it needs to say that.
16 I think that's all I noticed.

17 MS. OIEN: Okay, thank you. I
18 actually like the wording that you mentioned prior
19 regarding the chairpersons and also we just wanted
20 to get this in a resource form for you folks to
21 review. All of this information actually lives on
22 the website, on the -- Susan, is it the orientation
23 packet page of the website?

24 MS. KUSZ: That is correct.

25 MS. OIEN: Yeah. So we were just

1 trying to pull this for this review.

2 MS. SANDERS: Oh, I didn't know if it

3 was going to turn into a permanent document or

4 something.

5 MS. OIEN: Yeah, I don't think it is,

6 because all of this information is actually on the

7 website.

8 MS. KUSZ: This is Susan. So this

9 used to be, just for clarification for everyone,

10 the new member orientation packet used to be this

11 big huge long 100 million trillion page document

12 that we divided up and we put into different

13 sections on the website and the committees is one

14 of the pieces of that.

15 And so we -- this is what this

16 particular task force does is we go through every

17 year and we look at the language on it and see if

18 it's still applicable and try to update it. So the

19 actual SRC-B thing that you mentioned at the

20 beginning, Judy, is not actually on the website, it

21 just says committees. That's something that

22 Kristin had added in because I think she wanted to

23 make sure that when it got sent out to everybody

24 that it was clear that this was the State Rehab

25 Council for the Blind committees that we were --

1 the document we were talking about.

2 But yeah, this is not going to be like

3 a separate document or anything, it's staying on

4 the website where it has been. So we just wanted

5 to update it.

6 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. So just

7 to clarify, when this is posted to the website what

8 we will have is the document that you can see and

9 has been sent out and it will list the staff

10 liaisons who are assigned to each of the committees

11 in line with what you received here of the

12 committee charges and the ideals of who would serve

13 on that committee. And then after August when they

14 are appointed we will list folks' names all in the

15 same place.

16 MS. OIEN: This is Kristin. Corbb, I

17 think your sound went out there. But yes, once all

18 of the members are actually appointed, then also

19 the members will be listed on the website

20 underneath the SSB staff.

21 MS. KUSZ: This is Susan, that is not

22 correct. They are in two different places. So

23 committees, the list of committees, lives in one

24 place where this lists what the charge and the

25 membership is and the actual like this particular

1 document that we were updating, that's on the new
2 member orientation part. What you are talking
3 about and what Corbb is going to be taking people's
4 names for now, there is another committee list
5 where it lists out who actually is on the
6 committees and that's on a different page.

7 So I see you are on your computer
8 Kristin, I'm gathering you are looking to find out
9 where exactly I'm talking about.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: So this is Corbb. What
11 I will say, it sounds like this is a pretty easy
12 thing for us to streamline offline, so we will get
13 that all organized and Kristin, thank you for

14 dropping the link into the chat. We will get that

15 all organized, make sure that it is all pointing

16 the right way.

17 Judy, fair concern to raise, I'm glad

18 you did and we will find a way to make this very

19 straightforward on the website.

20 MS. OIEN: So this is Kristin. Are we

21 okay to call for a motion to approve the committee

22 name change from Minority Outreach to Diversity,

23 Equity & Inclusion Committee?

24 MR. ELLER: Frank Eller motions.

25 MS. FLAX: Second.

1 MR. O'CONNOR: And so just to make
2 sure I heard that motion correctly, Frank, what I
3 heard you moving was that we were accepting the
4 report from the Committee Structure Task Force and
5 that part of that includes renaming the committee
6 formerly Minority Outreach to Diversity, Equity &
7 Inclusion? Is that the motion that I probably
8 heard?

9 MR. ELLER: Yes.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Great, wonderful.

11 MR. ELLER: Thank you.

12 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Kristin. I

13 needed a good laugh there.

14 Are there any other comments or
15 questions on the committee structures document?
16 There was one or two other changes, Kristin, I
17 wondered if you wanted to just mention those
18 briefly?

19 MS. OIEN: Okay, and this is Kristin.
20 Some of the wording on the membership portion of
21 each committee we decided to go with every effort
22 shall be made to the extent possible to include at
23 least one person representing each of the following
24 or to say every effort shall be made to the extent
25 possible to include at least, and then we listed

1 the suggested members.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: And then the one other

3 thing that we added was the Transition Committee

4 include -- ideally would include a member who is of

5 the transition-age group.

6 MS. OIEN: Correct. This is Kristin.

7 I forgot that. So we also added a parent on the

8 Transition Committee and a transition-age youth,

9 someone who was 14 to 21. Thank you for reminding

10 me that.

11 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. And I

12 will just amend very briefly, members of that

13 committee thank you to Kristin for chairing, with

14 Ryan Haenze, Rocky Hart, Daniel Ashman and Susan

15 Kusz serving as our liaison.

16 Any other comments on the structures

17 document?

18 MS. SANDERS: This is Judy. Now you

19 can think about if the student and the parent are

20 from the same family on the committee.

21 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb, wouldn't

22 that be great, make it a family affair.

23 Any other comments, questions?

24 MR. O'DAY: This is Michael.

25 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Michael.

1 MR. O'DAY: Yeah, assuming this motion
2 passes we will probably or I guess Susan will have
3 to go through and do like a search and replace,
4 because I'm sure the Minority Outreach Committee
5 appears in all sorts of documents and places on the
6 website. So if we go ahead and make this change we
7 probably will have to -- she will probably have to
8 do a search and replace the Minority Outreach
9 Committee with the DEI Committee.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
11 you, Michael, good flag. We will make sure that
12 gets done.

13 Any other comments or questions on our

14 Structures Task Force?

15 MS. OIEN: This is Kristin, I believe

16 Rocky has his hand up.

17 MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, thank you, I missed

18 that. Rocky, go ahead.

19 MR. HART: Yeah, thank you.

20 I think, Judy, you raised a very

21 legitimate issue and I think it's a question worth

22 asking. If we appoint a Transition Committee and

23 we appoint both a transition student and a parent,

24 does anyone see there being a potential conflict if

25 the student and parent are from the same family?

1 MS. FLAX: Samantha.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Samantha.

3 MS. FLAX: I think it potentially

4 could. I would be concerned that the parent would

5 be sort of calling the shots and that the beliefs

6 of an actual student wouldn't be coming across,

7 however, I think that that would maybe just be

8 something when appointing the committee to look

9 into, it's sort of an individual person thing.

10 I don't think having a policy on it --

11 I think it's so unlikely to happen that I think as

12 long as we address it if it comes up and as long as

13 whoever applies for the committee, as long as

14 that's discussed with the family involved, you
15 know, the student is talked to, make sure that, you
16 know, they are truly getting to express their
17 opinion. I think it would be ideal if the parent
18 and student are different, but I don't think it's
19 gonna cause enough of a problem where we need to
20 prohibit it or anything like that. But I do see
21 where Rocky is coming from and I had the same
22 thought.

23 MS. OIEN: This is Kristin. Would you
24 folks like us to put in parenthesis preferably not
25 from the same family?

1 MS. SANDERS: This is Judy, no, I'm

2 sorry I said it.

3 MS. OIEN: Judy, I know you were

4 joking and then Rocky and I are like but what about

5 the children?

6 MR. O'CONNOR: So this is Corbb.

7 Jennifer, I saw you --

8 MS. POINTS: Yeah, just playing

9 devil's advocate. I've got a 17 year old and I

10 will say when he was younger sometimes kids

11 actually feel more comfortable speaking their mind

12 when their parent is there.

13 So, you know, sometimes actually if

14 they are from the same family they might feel more

15 comfortable saying their opinion or their thoughts

16 if somebody that they are familiar with is there.

17 So it can actually go either way, it depends on the

18 kid.

19 MR. HART: Rocky Hart.

20 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Rocky.

21 MR. HART: Yeah, I definitely

22 understand what you are saying, having been

23 involved in different transition activities. I

24 just think transition is a developmental stage and

25 so if we are dealing with -- you know, it's one

1 thing if you have a 17 year old who has a parent
2 who is also serving on the same committee or task
3 force versus if you have a 21-year-old transition
4 student who also has their parent on that task
5 force. That student is in an entirely different
6 developmental stage and I think if the issue comes
7 up, and I agree with what Samantha was saying, that
8 we probably shouldn't make a big deal out of it.
9 but I do endorse the idea of having that in
10 parenthesis, you know, preferably not from the same
11 family. Because that could be an issue because,
12 you know, if you have a 21-year-old student they
13 may not want their parent influencing the decisions

14 of the committee.

15 You know, it's something I think we

16 need to make sure that we keep in the back of our

17 minds. If we don't address it in the policy, I

18 think -- I'm just saying as a transition student

19 myself, we need to at least make sure that we have

20 an awareness about it.

21 MS. FLAX: Samantha.

22 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb.

23 Samantha, I wonder given that there's some

24 consensus I'm hearing, is there any opposition to

25 adding this parenthetical statement about

1 preferably not from the same family other than Judy
2 who may regret bringing this up? Nonetheless, I
3 hear the consensus of the majority of the group, I
4 want to make sure there is not opposition to that.

5 MS. KUSZ: This is Susan. This is a
6 different question.

7 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. Hang on one
8 second, Susan.

9 MS. KUSZ: Okay.

10 (No response.)

11 MR. O'CONNOR: Not hearing anyone
12 opposing that, so we will go ahead and make that
13 part of the motion.

14 Samantha, have I stolen your thunder.

15 MS. FLAX: Not really. I think one

16 thing that we might want to specify and I think it

17 may not be worth putting in a parenthetical, is

18 that I would strongly believe that if the student

19 is under 18 and particular, that then it's even

20 more preferable that the parent is of a different

21 family, I would be concerned that then the

22 student's beliefs wouldn't be coming across at all.

23 MR. O'CONNOR: Got it. This is Corbb.

24 Thank you very much. That's sage advice for the

25 person who would be appointing -- recommending the

1 committees before they are appointed by this

2 Council.

3 Susan.

4 MS. KUSZ: This question is for

5 Kristin because I believe she has the document

6 right there. Can you tell me in the membership for

7 the Transition Committee was the parent already

8 part of the membership? Because when we were going

9 through this I thought all we added was the child

10 or student and upped the membership by one; is that

11 correct or am I wrong?

12 MS. OIEN: Actually, this is Kristin,

13 I actually believe it did say parents of Blind or

14 visually impaired children, so that was already in

15 there.

16 MS. KUSZ: Yeah, okay.

17 MS. OIEN: So we only added

18 transition-age in parenthesis, 14 to 21 student.

19 MS. KUSZ: I just wanted to clarify

20 that because I was pretty sure that's what it said.

21 I remember back when there was a parent that was on

22 the Council and she was on the Transition Committee

23 and I thought when we had our conversation we were

24 only adding the student. So I just wanted to make

25 sure that I had this correct and we were only

1 adding one more person to this committee. So thank
2 you.

3 MR. O'CONNOR: Further comments or
4 questions before we move to a vote on this
5 structure?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. O'CONNOR: I see this is one of
8 the more consequential things that we look at, so
9 I'm grateful for the discussion because it really
10 sets up what we view as our priorities as a council
11 and the things that we want to take for offline
12 discussion and bring back as recommendations. So
13 thank you for the active participation.

14 Hearing nobody jumping for further

15 comment or questions, we will take this to a vote

16 and I will start with Frank Eller.

17 MR. ELLER: Frank Eller, yes.

18 MR. O'CONNOR: Samantha.

19 MS. FLAX: Samantha Flax, yes.

20 MR. HAENZE: Ryan Haenze, yes.

21 MR. HEINL: Tom Heinl, yes.

22 MR. O'CONNOR: Rob Hobson.

23 MR. HOBSON: Rob Hobson, pass. Sorry,

24 I tried to find the mute button, it moved.

25 MR. O'CONNOR: Catalina Martinez.

1 MS. MARTINEZ: Yes.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: Catalina Martinez votes

3 yes.

4 Michael O'Day.

5 MR. DAY: Yes.

6 MS. OIEN: Kristin Oien, yes.

7 MS. POINTS: Jennifer Points, yes.

8 MS. SANDERS: Judy Sanders, yes.

9 MR. O'CONNOR: And I'm double checking

10 that Ryan Strunk, Trevor Turner, and Kyle Van Acker

11 are still not with us this evening?

12 (No response.)

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Corbb O'Connor votes

14 yes, so we have a unanimous vote from those present

15 and voting. Thank you very much.

16 Before we move to our committee

17 reports this evening we have one committee report

18 that really is, I guess, just jumping ahead in line

19 and that is our Employment Committee that is

20 reporting on the status of successful closures.

21 And for that we turn to our Employment Committee

22 chairperson Daniel Ashman.

23 MR. ASHMAN: Thank you very much,

24 Corbb. Just a quick mike check as we have had

25 audio problems tonight.

1 MR. O'CONNOR: You're good.

2 MR. ASHMAN: All right, perfect. I'm

3 gonna go over this fairly quickly and I'm gonna

4 read it as a successful number first versus the

5 unsuccessful closure for the month that's gonna be

6 identified. I'm gonna start with a July and August

7 of 2022, 15 successful closures to 31 unsuccessful

8 closures; September of 2022, 6 to 7; October, 2 to

9 20; November, 7 to 9; December 12 to 10. Which

10 gives the 2022 total of 42 successful and 67

11 unsuccessful closures.

12 Starting in 2023, January 6 to 10;

13 February, 2 to 2.; march 9 to 7 and April, which is

14 the last month that I have to date, 1 to 4 which
15 leads 2023 January to April 18 successful closures
16 and unsuccessful closures. The fiscal year will
17 close out on June 30, I should have the May numbers
18 here in a few days and then in July I will have the
19 June numbers which will close out the fiscal year.

20 Are there any questions for me

21 regarding those numbers?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Maybe

24 this is a Natasha, Jon, Brianna question. I'm

25 curious what, if any, context you would provide to

1 that data in terms of the unsuccessful being a
2 larger number than successful as compared with
3 maybe how that looks in years past?

4 MS. JERDE: (Inaudible).

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Natasha, I
6 can't hear you.

7 MS. JERDE: (Inaudible.)

8 MR. O'CONNOR: That was a request for
9 Jon if you are on the line to take it?

10 MR. BENSON: Yes, I am, thank you. So
11 this is Jon. This is the perennial question and
12 this is a question that has been raised, I would
13 say, for decades, which is the higher rate of

14 unsuccessful closures versus successful.

15 We've, I think just recently, we've

16 had other small groups and committees, OKRs,

17 councilmembers themselves and their own committees

18 continually look at the issue and ask the question

19 why is that? The reasons for the why are

20 persistently the same as well, it's primarily

21 people, they drop out for any number of reasons,

22 but they choose to not continue or they are unable

23 to be found and so forth.

24 So it's always been a very challenging

25 thing to reverse that trend. And I don't know

1 that, you know, I can't think in my memory at least
2 of when we've had a reverse where the successful
3 closures have significantly outnumbered the
4 unsuccessful closures.

5 I think Natasha may have been trying
6 to say, and I don't presume to speak for her, but
7 this is an issue for all rehab programs, whether
8 they are the general agencies, combined agencies or
9 Blind agencies. And this has been on the agenda of
10 the professional group meetings, the CSAVR, the
11 NCSAB meetings, this has been on the agenda of the
12 regional groups that meet.

13 And I can only assure you that we

14 continue to chew on it and see if there are other
15 ways we can overcome it, but to date it has not
16 been at a -- it has not been a success. And part
17 of that I think is recognizing that we work with
18 people and people get to choose. And sometimes
19 they choose to not participate. And so -- and
20 there are other reasons too, obviously, people can
21 drop out because of medical issues or other kinds
22 of life changing issues, but yeah, it's kind of a
23 hard reality that exists in our world.

24 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
25 you, Jon. Sorry, no one else was going for the

1 microphone.

2 MS. JERDE: This is Tasha if I may.

3 Can you hear me okay now?

4 MR. O'CONNOR: We can.

5 MS. JERDE: Good, good. I will say

6 while it's still important to look at closures both

7 successful and unsuccessful, the great thing about

8 WIOA is even if someone leaves our program

9 unsuccessfully, we can still gain credit

10 performance wise, because our performance as a VR

11 agency is not based on whether someone gets a job

12 or not, solely it's based on a number of factors

13 and if someone left, let's say they went to

14 college, they got services and then they

15 disappeared, which happens.

16 If they get a job four years down the

17 road, this might sound creepy, but we can find them

18 and we actually can still get credit for them

19 getting that job because we did provide services,

20 it was not for naught. If that makes sense.

21 So it's still important to look at,

22 but it's not the end all be all for the VR program.

23 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank

24 you, Natasha.

25 Any other comments or questions on the

1 Employment Committee's report?

2 MS. OIEN: Yeah, this is Kristin.

3 MR. HOBSON: Yeah, this is Rob.

4 MS. OIEN: Oh, sorry.

5 MR. O'CONNOR: I heard Kristin and

6 then Rob, we will start with you, Kristin.

7 MS. OIEN: Okay. I'm hoping that --

8 we met with Jennifer Beilke and we talked a little

9 bit about the combined plan and the customer

10 satisfaction and we talked about the need for a

11 survey that would help glean some of the reason

12 why. And I'm hoping that either MMB or whoever

13 develops the survey will consider questions like,

14 you know, if you did drop out trying to explain
15 why, was it because you got a part-time job? Was
16 it because you were frustrated with the resources
17 or timing?

18 But I think we need to try to tease
19 out the why and we may be able to do that through a
20 survey. And hopefully longitudinally you will be
21 able to look at the data and if you can tease out a
22 little bit more of why those unsuccessful closures
23 are happening, then you can address those needs.

24 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
25 you, Kristin.

1 And I think probably a data point for
2 our consultants that we heard from at the top of
3 the meeting as well, so I encourage everyone to
4 share those thoughts.

5 MR. HOBSON: So my --

6 MR. O'CONNOR: I heard Rob.

7 MR. HOBSON: Yes. So my question for
8 Natasha, or whoever can answer this, do we get a --
9 when we do poll from somebody who has previously
10 had services with SSB, is there a way to capture
11 that data so we know, like, who that person is tied
12 to or that customer or a way of kind of amending
13 our numbers?

14 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha. Could
15 you clarify, you mean people who left our program
16 but were still getting credit performance wise?

17 MR. HOBSON: Yes, correct, I'm sorry,
18 yes.

19 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha. I will
20 have to ask Courtney, but a lot of our back end
21 data that we pull from unemployment insurance, we
22 are not actually able to see it, it's all in the
23 background because of data privacy issues. So I
24 don't think we are necessarily able to tie those
25 after the fact, but what we can do is when we get

1 reimbursement through the Social Security
2 Administration, which we can get maybe, you know,
3 someone might have been closed ten years ago, got a
4 job, worked up their benefits and we got
5 reimbursed. We know who that person is and we can
6 take it back to a counselor and really give, you
7 know, a lot of kudos for that. But if we pull it
8 through UI that data is really locked down.

9 MR. HOBSON: Okay, thank you.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Any
11 other questions for the Employment Committee?

12 MR. O'DAY: This is Michael.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Michael.

14 MR. O'DAY: Yeah. This question is
15 actually more for Natasha. You know, this issue
16 has been coming up for, as you say, for a long,
17 long, long time and we kind of keep hearing the
18 same thing that people disappear, but it's my
19 understanding that, and correct me if I'm wrong,
20 that we actually do more poorly in this area than
21 some of our peers in other rehab organizations for
22 the Blind.

23 And you would think that this should
24 be kind of a random kind of thing that every agency
25 would experience roughly the same number of people

1 that kind of disappear or they find jobs or they
2 are disillusioned or whatever, so maybe you can
3 talk about how we stack up in comparison to other
4 Blind agencies with regard to unsuccessful
5 closures.

6 MS. JERDE: This is Natasha. That's a
7 great, great point. And in the past we have not
8 stacked up well and that's for several reasons.
9 One, you know I think that, you know, legitimately
10 I think we have some struggles with our services
11 and how we approach it that can be improved. That
12 I think people go into our program expecting one
13 thing and then realizing it is not what they were

14 expecting at all.

15 I do know, and not to speak poorly of

16 other states, but there is a lot of data

17 manipulation that happens, meaning people will hold

18 cases so that -- and not close them until the start

19 of a new year so that they can change and

20 manipulate their retention rate.

21 We've had some states, they call them

22 cataract states, that actively pursue individuals

23 who need cataract surgery so that they can pay for

24 the surgery and then close their case successfully.

25 So while it is important to compare to

1 our other agencies, we also look at how do they
2 approach their VR program. And there are ways we
3 absolutely can do better and I think we need to
4 continue looking at our unsuccessful closures as
5 part of our Evolve VR work and talking to customers
6 who have been closed and why. But there are some
7 states who I think might approach it in a way that
8 we don't feel comfortable approaching it. Yes,
9 there is some sneakiness there, absolutely,
10 Kristin.

11 MR. ANDREWS: Dave Andrews.

12 MR. O'CONNOR: I heard Dave Andrews

13 first.

14 MR. ANDREWS: Somebody else talked
15 too, but I may be totally off base here when I
16 throw this out for pondering. I think, you know, I
17 am in contact with people from lots of other states
18 and Minnesota is probably, by reputation at least
19 if not by fact, probably a little more generous and
20 liberal in technology and services than some
21 states.

22 So I wonder if we don't get people who
23 come here and shop and get stuff and go away. We
24 may be a victim of our own success. I throw that
25 out to think about.

1 MR. ELLER: Interesting.

2 MS. BAILEY: Jan.

3 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb.

4 MR. BAILEY: Jan.

5 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, I hear you Jan, I

6 just wanted to check really briefly if there was

7 any comment or response anybody wanted to give to

8 Dave's comment?

9 MS. JERDE: (Inaudible.)

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Natasha, you are under

11 water or sounding like it.

12 MS. JERDE: (Inaudible.)

13 MR. BENSON: We can't hear you

14 Natasha, you are just really, really breaking up.

15 MS. JERDE: I will put it in the chat.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Natasha, if you can

17 hear us, if you want to put that in the chat I

18 would be happy to read that.

19 MR. ANDREWS: Tie a note to your dog

20 and send her over.

21 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay, so this is Corbb.

22 We will go to Jan's question while Natasha is

23 typing. Jan Bailey.

24 MR. BAILEY: Yes, can you hear me now?

25 MR. O'CONNOR: Yes, we can.

1 MR. BAILEY: It's been a long time
2 since I had to fill out these forms, but it seems
3 to me we had to put a reason why did you close the
4 case. And I don't remember what they all were, but
5 if you are going to analyze this it seems to me the
6 fair way to do it is to find out what were the
7 reasons. So how many left the state or how many,
8 you know, refused further services?

9 I know if you can't locate somebody
10 that's one reason and another one was that they
11 whatever I just said, I don't remember all the
12 reasons. But if you really wanted to look at it,
13 that's what you need to do is to look at what the

14 reasons were, not individually and give people's
15 names, but so many left the state, so many refused
16 further services, so on. Then you might have a
17 little bit better idea what's going on. Just my
18 comment.

19 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
20 you for that comment, Jan, and I do know that we
21 have reported on some of those statistics in
22 meetings past. And what I would suggest is that
23 the Employment Committee consider maybe for its
24 August meeting to dig in a little bit, the meeting
25 that will happen between now and August, dig into

1 this a little bit, maybe for those who are
2 interested, have a discussion around those.

3 And Natasha has put two things in the
4 chat. I will say the second one first. We do
5 extensive analysis on the information such as the
6 aggregate and on an individual level. And to
7 Dave's point, Natasha writes, you could be right, I
8 don't know how often that happens but it is
9 possible.

10 Rocky, I apologize I did not see your
11 raised hand until this moment. Do you have a
12 further comment or question or was that maybe from
13 earlier?

14 MR. HART: Yeah, Corbb, this is Rocky.

15 I just lowered my hand, I neglected to lower it.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Okay, no problem. This

17 is Corbb. So I would like to move on unless

18 there's something really pressing.

19 MS. FLAX: I had one question, Corbb,

20 if that's okay or I could hold off with it.

21 MR. O'CONNOR: Go ahead, Samantha, we

22 will let this be the last question.

23 MS. FLAX: Okay. My question is for

24 the Employment Committee. I know that we've given

25 SSB a lot of feedback on, you know, we need to find

1 out this information or, you know, we want to know

2 why these case closures are not successful.

3 I'm curious if the Employment

4 Committee, based on this data, has any

5 recommendations to the Council or any ideas on this

6 information like what should happen? Because I

7 agree, I think -- I understand why this isn't the

8 only data point we should be looking at, but it

9 does concern me, and I'm curious whether the

10 committee has addressed this at all.

11 MR. ASHMAN: This is Daniel. We have

12 about begun to look at creating a list of questions

13 to be able to get into counselors' hands and a

14 better way to look at successful closures versus

15 unsuccessful.

16 While that's just a snap point of what

17 information we have access to, it's the most

18 information that we do have access to. We can talk

19 about total case sizes, we can talk about the

20 average amount of money spent per person, the

21 average length of time, but really what we are

22 trying to get at is what is driving the higher rate

23 of unsuccessful to successful closures. The hope

24 and expectation is that there will be questions as

25 well as a vetted list of ideas to start circulating

1 around by the next SRC-B meeting.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb.

3 MS. FLAX: Thanks, Dan, and thanks,

4 Corbb, for letting me ask.

5 MR. O'CONNOR: For sure.

6 Natasha has put one more thing in chat

7 and I'm wondering if somebody can beat me to it and

8 doesn't mind reading that aloud.

9 MR. ASHMAN: This is Daniel. Natasha

10 wrote: I would say we do case by case closure

11 analysis each quarter. In fact, we have reverted

12 case closures, reopened cases because we found that

13 we did not do our due diligence in working with

14 someone. I would recommend including Courtney
15 Wanick and/or Ashlyn Cahill if you all want to dive
16 into this more.

17 Our two reasons people leave are
18 unable to locate/contact, as well as refuse
19 services or are no longer interested. And that is
20 listed in our notes that we receive on the monthly
21 is what truly defines an unsuccessful closure as
22 well as a successful closure. And I probably
23 should have prefaced that before I read the
24 numbers, so thank you, Natasha, for bringing that
25 up.

1 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you Employment

2 Committee.

3 Jon.

4 MR. BENSON: Yeah, I was just going to

5 say very quickly, in our meeting tonight we do, in

6 fact, have a rehabilitation counselor who might be

7 able to speak more fully to this committee or

8 perhaps another counselor as well. So that would

9 be Rob, of course, and I'm not here to put Rob on

10 the spot, but clearly Rob has had successful and

11 unsuccessful closures over the course of this past

12 year. And not necessarily tonight because of time,

13 but it might be interesting for Rob to give some

14 impressions on what he has experienced.

15 Again, Rob, I don't want to put you on

16 the spot, so. That's not my role here.

17 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Jon. I am

18 sure the Employment Committee will take note of

19 that.

20 Let's move on to our other committee

21 reports and we will start with our State

22 Rehabilitation Council. If we have anyone wishing

23 to give a report from that group. Don't see that

24 chair on the meeting tonight.

25 How about our State Independent Living

1 Council.

2 MS. SANDERS: Hello, this is Judy.

3 And we had a good time in May, we met in Marshall,

4 Minnesota and we did -- it was an overnight trip

5 and we do this usually -- I think it's usually once

6 a year, maybe we've done it twice, where we visit

7 one of the Centers for Independent Living and take

8 a tour of it and then we meet there and invite the

9 people from a particular center to join us for the

10 meeting. They get to know us better, we get to

11 know them better and so that's what we did in

12 Marshall. And there are some great restaurants

13 there, I got to tell you.

14 Anyway, so it was very insightful to
15 visit these centers. And they usually don't know
16 much about us, so it's a good activity. I think
17 that's probably the main thing that I would say
18 about that.

19 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. I'm
20 going to keep us moving, I figure if you have
21 questions or comments for each committee you will
22 jump in at the end of their report. Thank you,
23 Judy.

24 We'll turn next to the Communication
25 Center, Steve.

1 MR. JACOBSON: Good evening everybody.

2 The Communication Center Advisory Committee met on

3 May 25 and besides receiving reports from and

4 discussing updates in all the various sections of

5 the Communication Center we took a fairly deep dive

6 into what DAISY is. Those of you who may not know,

7 DAISY is a format used by audio services of the

8 Communication Center, as well as by the National

9 Library Service and Bookshare and other places that

10 adds structure to books so that a person can

11 navigate through books by chapter, sometimes even

12 page, other levels of heading and so forth.

13 And Dave Andrews and others gave us a

14 real thorough report on the history and how it's
15 implemented here. It doesn't just happen, it takes
16 work to make it happen.

17 We tentatively set September 28 as the
18 date of our next meeting, but there could be
19 different chairs and different committee members so
20 that's a tentative date. Thank you.

21 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Steve and
22 Communication Center Advisory Committee.
23 Customer Satisfaction, Goals and
24 Priorities Committee.

25 MS. DUNNAM: There has been no

1 activity since the last meeting and that's
2 expected, this is kind of our lull period, but we
3 are about to get involved again with the State Plan
4 activities, et cetera. So hearing from us in the
5 future.

6 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
7 you, Jennifer.

8 DeafBlind Committee, anyone wishing to
9 give a report on that group?

10 MS. KUSZ: This is Susan. DeafBlind
11 Committee's next meeting will be next June 13.
12 That's it.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank

14 you, Susan.

15 At the risk of opening the floodgates,

16 Employment Committee, do you have any further

17 report?

18 (No response.)

19 MR. ASHMAN: The Employment Committee

20 will be meeting next on July 17. We had a very

21 short meeting due to the chair's forgetfulness on

22 sending out an email reminder. And most

23 information will be sent out by email predating

24 that meeting to get all of the questions and

25 everything to begin vetting the process that we

1 just discussed.

2 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Daniel.

3 We have a Minority Outreach Committee,

4 though we've asked -- we co-named it through the

5 year the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

6 and I regret to inform you that the chair stepped

7 down from that role, given the short time between

8 now and when the committee is reappointed it didn't

9 make much sense for me to appoint a new chair,

10 however, I did hear that Briley O'Connor will be

11 facilitating the next meeting.

12 Is there anything else that committee

13 wishes to report at this time?

14 MS. O'CONNOR: Not at this time.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: Do you have a date for

16 that meeting yet Briley?

17 MS. O'CONNOR: We do. Friends, it is

18 the second or third Thursday of June. I go where

19 my calendar tells me. The third Thursday.

20 MR. ELLER: This is Frank Eller. I'm

21 also a member of the Diversity Committee but I

22 haven't been receiving any emails to meet, so I'm

23 not sure if it is my email address or what is going

24 on, sorry.

25 MS. O'CONNOR: I've seen you on the

1 invites, Frank, so we can figure that out. I have
2 seen your name on them.

3 MR. ELLER: Okay, thank you.

4 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. I would
5 say the staff liaison for that committee is Lisa
6 Larges, Frank, so I would encourage you to reach
7 out to her.

8 MR ELLER: I will.

9 MR. O'CONNOR: The next meeting, just
10 for clarity, I have written as June 15 in the late
11 afternoon.

12 MR. ELLER: Thursday, right, June 15?

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Thursday, June 15.

14 MR. ELLER: Great, thank you.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: Senior Services, Judy.

16 MS. SANDERS: Yes, hello. We have met

17 and we've gone through several stages in what we

18 think we should be doing. We started out wanting

19 to make sure that we found a way to reach out to

20 ophthalmologists and optometrists and while we were

21 figuring out how to do that, we were informed by Ed

22 Loecher that all of a sudden we are getting all

23 this request for service and then we thought well,

24 maybe we shouldn't be doing this because if we

25 can't handle what we have, especially with all the

1 activity with the Mayo Clinic providing office
2 hours for people going through eye trouble there at
3 the clinic and SSB being involved in that. So then
4 we thought all right, maybe we needed to do an
5 outreach to the people that are getting services
6 somehow or something.

7 And that's when we remembered that
8 it's been quite a while since SSB partnered with
9 the NFB of Minnesota to do a possibilities fair and
10 so we brought up the idea of suggesting that maybe
11 that could happen again.

12 So towards that end I then approached
13 Steve Jacobson to see if the NFB would be

14 interested and then if SSB staff would be
15 interested. And so we are still working that out,
16 but then we will, you know, it involves a lot of
17 letting people know about the event, finding a
18 place to have the event, who is going to pay for
19 what, and so there is a lot to figure out.

20 But anyway, we are still trying to
21 figure out if we should be talking to the seniors
22 about getting better services or talking to
23 somebody else about now what do we do that we have
24 all these people. That's it.

25 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank

1 you, Judy, and Senior Services Committee.

2 Transition Committee, Wendy.

3 MS. DEVORE: Yes, hello, this is Wendy

4 DeVore and we just had our most recent meeting on

5 May 12 and the project that we are currently

6 working on, the committee is most interested in

7 reviewing the data of how many students that are

8 with SSB have dropped out after their first year of

9 college and in trying to identify the reasons for

10 doing so, was it due to -- like what may be some of

11 the barriers, was it due to technology? Maybe O &

12 M skills, math or science or any of the programs?

13 And then ILS skills or feeling isolated? Things

14 like that.

15 So we are working with Courtney and

16 she said that this data is a little bit tricky to

17 retrieve and so she is hoping to pull this

18 information together for us by -- for our next

19 meeting which is on September 8. And she's

20 thinking that it could be that -- so either two

21 things are happening, that maybe they are not

22 pulling the right data or there just really isn't a

23 significant issue of students dropping out. So she

24 is hoping to get more information for us by our

25 next meeting.

1 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Corbb. Thank
2 you Wendy and Transition Committee.

3 Our final committee for a report this
4 evening is Vendor Outcomes and Measures.

5 MR. ASHMAN: Vendor Outcomes and
6 Measures has not met since our last meeting. We
7 are going to be meeting June 28 at 4:30 p.m.
8 virtually.

9 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Daniel.

10 And Jon Benson has just put in the
11 chat a shout out to Courtney who has been filling
12 in as a data analyst.

13 As we consider public comment I

14 encourage those folks to get to the microphones or
15 their mute buttons.

16 Our next meeting will be on August the
17 3rd and I am optimistic that more of us will join
18 in person which will result in fewer technical
19 glitches and a happier court reporter.

20 Is there any public comment?

21 MS. OIEN: Corbb, this is Kristin. I
22 wanted to mention something regarding the
23 Transition Committee.

24 MR. O'CONNOR: Yes, please.

25 MS. OIEN: I just wanted to share that

1 the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Educational
2 Data System or SLEDS now collects data and breaks
3 it down by disability categories. So they collect
4 education and workforce data on high school
5 graduates, college students and adult education
6 students. And it's as long as the numbers are more
7 than 10, you can go to their website and do your
8 own digging. So I thought some of the
9 councilmembers might want to explore that.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you, Kristin, at

11 SLEDS.mn.gov.

12 Is there any public comment?

13 (No response.)

14 MR. O'CONNOR: Hearing none, is there

15 a motion to adjourn?

16 MR. ELLER: Frank Eller motions.

17 MR. O'CONNOR: Is there a second?

18 MS. SANDERS: Judy Sanders seconds.

19 MR. O'CONNOR: Frank moves, Judy

20 seconds, we'll go to a roll call vote. Frank.

21 MR. ELLER: Frank Eller, here.

22 MS. FLAX: Samantha Flax, yes.

23 MR. HAENZE: Ryan Haenze, yes.

24 MR. HEINL: Tom Heintl, yes.

25 MS. MARTINEZ: Catalina Martinez, yes.

1 MR. DAY: Michael O'Day, yes.

2 MS. OIEN: Kristin Oien, yes.

3 MS. POINTS: Jennifer Points, yes.

4 MS. SANDERS: Judy Sanders, yes.

5 MR. STRUNK: Ryan Strunk, yes.

6 MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, Ryan is here,

7 great. And Corbb O'Connor, yes.

8 MS. SANDERS: He came to adjourn.

9 MR. O'CONNOR: Thank you everyone.

10 MR. HOBSON: Rob Hobson, pass.

11 MR. O'CONNOR: We are adjourned.

12 (Matter adjourned at 8:20 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF MINNESOTA)

2) ss.

3 COUNTY OF HENNEPIN)

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7 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

8

9 I, Kimberly K. Evavold, do hereby

10 certify that the above and foregoing transcript,

11 consisting of the preceding 112 pages is a correct

12 transcript of my stenographic notes, and is a full, true

13 and complete transcript of the proceedings to the best

14 of my ability.

15 Dated: June 10, 2023

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KIMBERLY K. EVAVOLD

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Court Reporter

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