

~DRAFT~

DakotaLink Advisory Council
Quarterly Zoom Meeting
Meeting Notes
December 8th, 2021

Members Present: Steve Stewart, Matt Cain, Ted Carrell, Jeff Kisecker, Richard Moeller, Eric Weiss, Gaye Mattke, Deb Brinkman, Tim Neyhart, Melissa Bothun was present for Linda Turner

Members Absent: Mary Sjerven, Sarah Rush

Staff Present: Patrick Czerny, Page Hudson, Andrea Steele, Brett Burden

Guests Present: Jessica Sehnert, Jordan Trumbo

Meeting Start

Ted called the meeting to order at 9:00 am MT and 10:00 am CT. There were no additions to the draft agenda. Jeff motioned to approve the agenda. Matt seconded. Page informed the council that Linda Turner permanently appointed Melissa Bothun as the new Department of Education council member representative.

There were no additions or corrections to the September 8, 2021 draft meeting notes. Steve motioned to approve the September 8th meeting notes. Richard seconded.

DakotaLink outreach efforts

Page mentioned that the new employee, Brett Crosby in Sioux Falls has been going to places to reach out to others and remind them of DakotaLink services that are available. This is possible right now since DakotaLink is in their slow season.

Brett Burden informed the council that DakotaLink purchased a 30 second ad that ran through November. Then there was a 7-minute KELO Living segment that aired twice. New banners were purchased for conferences and each office received a set. One banner highlights grant activities and the other highlights fee for services activities. The banners are a great overview of what DakotaLink does.

Steve commented that he saw the KELO living segment and 30 second commercial on the DakotaLink Facebook page. Steve also thinks DakotaLink should reach out to a variety of organizations and agencies. Steve made a motion that the council make some suggestions on agencies that they think DakotaLink should reach out to. After DakotaLink reaches out, they should report back to the council on their progress. Eric suggested the paralyzed veterans of America and parent connection. Tim suggested the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program which is part of DRS. Steve suggested adjustment training centers. Jeff suggested the Veterans Affairs. Melissa said she is currently

working with her coworkers on how DakotaLink could be more involved with school districts.

Annual Progress Report

Page submitted DakotaLink's Annual process report to Pierre for approval. Then Washington DC will approve it. Eric suggested that Page share the draft report with the council. DakotaLink will include this report on their website after it is approved.

Build Back Better Act

Page mentioned there is currently \$10 million dollars for the Assistive Technology Act Programs in the Build Back Better Act. There may be an opportunity to get some extra funding for DakotaLink from this bill. Eric pointed out that this would be a onetime amount of money and DakotaLink needs to be careful what they chose to spend it on. Melissa asked if there was an expiration date on when the money had to be used by. Page did not know of an expiration date. He will know more after his meeting with the ATAP organization. Steve mentioned that the council should discuss how to use this money if DakotaLink gets any. There is much more that can be discussed here but it all depends on if DakotaLink is awarded any money.

Technical Services Transition Plan Update

Patrick mentioned that DakotaLink is fully staffed now. He thinks a combination of the virus and the lack of employees may have affected the business over the last year. Patrick and Brett met with DRS and SBVI on August 9, 2021 to discuss the Transition Plan and Referral Process.

Patrick shared a pie chart on the computer screen so council members could see the number of consumers this year compared to last year. Patrick applied to be a Medicaid waiver provider for the Hope Waiver Program and would like to work with some of the other ones. More technology is universally designed and some of this is replacing assistive technology. This could lead to a decline of DakotaLink services over the years. DakotaLink needs to continue to be involved with universally designed products and can play a role in the delivery and set up of these products as well as assistive technology. Patrick explained how environmental controls and other assistive devices have become universal design products. Brett and Patrick just did a presentation demonstrating how to set up and use off the shelf environmental controls at the fall conference. It was very well attended.

The transition plan is going smoothly. Brett will carry 90 percent of Patrick's duties after the first of the year. Over the next 2 months, Patrick would like to focus on promoting the MERR Program along with training to Page and Ron.

MERR Update

The MERR program has provided \$72,000 worth of equipment since May 1, 2021. It appears the program is on target to meet their goal. There is \$116,000 worth of

equipment in inventory. The warehouse is full of power wheelchairs. The MERR program has been operating for 6 years. Ron, the manager of the MERR program, will weed out 8-10 old wheelchairs. Steve asked when the program will expand statewide. Patrick responded that the MERR program delivers equipment statewide on a limited basis. There has not been enough business to justify opening another MERR facility in the state. The department secretary came to Sioux Falls MERR program to visit. She seemed very interested in the program.

By-Laws Subcommittee Updated Report

The by-laws subcommittee consists of Page, Steve, Gaye, and Jeff. There was a long discussion of what to add and delete from the by-laws. The council went through the document line by line making additional changes. Page will send two versions of the draft. One showing all the changes and one clean version of the proposed draft. The goal is to vote on the revised by-laws next meeting.

The council would like the council member application and Annual Report on the DakotaLink website.

Meeting End

The next meeting is set for March 9, 2022 at 9:30 MT and 10:30 CT. A motion to adjourn was given by Jeff. Richard seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 MT and 11:46 CT.

Notes taken by Andrea Steele