WISCONSIN STATE USE BOARD MEETING

July 10, 2014, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Opportunity Development Center

1191 Huntington Avenue

Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

**Opening Business**

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Jean Zweifel at 10:02 a.m.

Introductions

Board Members Present:

* Jean Zweifel, Greenco Industries
* Nick George, Midwest Food Processors Association
* Bill Smith, National Federation of Independent Business
* Enid Glenn, Department of Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
* Helen McCain, Department of Administration (via teleconference)

Board Staff Present:

* Nadine Malm, Department of Administration

Audience:

* Ryan Tichenor, Handishop Industries
* Patty Clark, Handishop Industries
* Kirsten Cooper, Autism Society of Wisconsin
* Tami Jackson, WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
* Al Schraeder, Diverse Options
* Pam Ross, Opportunity Development Center
* Karl Schmig, Riverfront Activity Center
* Toby Johnson, Superior Vocation Center
* Jeff Leopold, Opportunity Development Center

Teleconference Participants:

* Ken Maciejewski, Opportunities Inc
* Gary Goodsell, Careers Industries
* Cheryl Edgington, Department of Administration
* Mike Duschene, Aspiro, Inc.
* Paul Thornton, Black River Industries
* Jamie Lund, Counseling and Development Center (Red Apple Industries)
* Ron Opicka, Eastshore Industries

Approval of April 10, 2014 Minutes – **Nick motioned, Bill 2nd – Motion approved**

Chairperson Report

* Nothing to report

**Continuing Business**

**Update on Drug Testing Kits** – Greenco was in discussions with Redwood Toxicologies on the shipping charges, however Redwood would not negotiate those costs. Therefore the set aside is being pulled and Greenco will not be pursuing a drug testing kit contract. Nadine asked Jean if this was correct which Jean affirmed. Jean stated the company was not that interested in working with and allowing the work center to do the work.

**Annual Report 2012** – Nadine was doing one final review of the draft report and will send to the board the following week for their review and approval.

**Fair Market 2013** – Nadine is pretty sure she’s received all of the documentation from the work centers but needs to check as a couple had said they were going to be late which Nadine received. Nadine will verify all were received and is starting to compile the information now. Nadine’s hoping to have the fair market documentation to the Fair Market Subcommittee by beginning of August. Enid asked what was fair market review. Nadine explained when work centers hold state contracts they have to submit their pricing along with three quotes from other vendors to verify they are within a fair market price. A calculation is provided and Nadine reviews them to ensure they are within fair market. Nadine added that even though the vendor provides three quotes she does obtain three more quotes to do a more thorough fair market review of the pricing.

**Annual Report 2013** – Nadine indicated work centers were to return their documentation by July 9th, 2014. Nadine wasn’t sure if all were received and would be checking on July 11th. Again a couple of work centers said they would be late, but did get them in on the 9th. Jean asked when that would be available for the board to review. Nadine indicated she was thinking it would be closer to the end of August.

**Appreciable Contribution** – Was discussed at the last board meeting. Nick requested that Nadine do a summary of steps taken in the past because of issues with how appreciable contribution was calculated. Nadine reviewed past meeting minutes to find when the calculation changed. Nadine provided a summary of the history of appreciable contribution related to State Use to all board members.

When the program was created, work centers were required to provide 50% of the value added to a commodity. Value added was determined by subtracting costs of raw materials, any post manufacturing costs and any overhead associated with the sale of the commodity to a state agency.

In 1994 there was discussion related to value added. It was agreed to be left at the 50% as 50% is the more common step approach. It appears nothing changed as no information was found in any meeting minutes.

In 1996 the board amended the policy to permit review of work center commodities when the value added was less than 50% but was converting a product from an unusable form to a usable form for state agencies.

During the 90’s the definitions of appreciable contribution and value added were blended and work centers were required to complete 50% of the appreciable contribution of the selling price which was not feasible.

Nadine added that Helen had previously asked whether the appreciable contribution or value added terms were defined in State Statutes. Nadine stated neither term is defined in Statute or Administrative Code and wanted to make sure that was noted in the minutes.

The issue was discussed again in 2005 which gave the work centers the ability present in front of the board to describe their situations if the appreciable contribution was below 50%. Currently, every work center must present in front of the board as no one can meet the 50% threshold.

The Federal Program was also reviewed and it was found they use a 50% calculation of the value added.

Nadine did not find any reference in past meeting minutes to revising the form, changing the formula or updating the form.

Nadine’s recommendation is to return to the original formula for calculating value added to commodities. Samples of the original formula and the updated formula were provided to the board members. Nadine stated that looking at the example provided by Algoma Mops, the original formula appreciable contribution was calculated by dividing the work center value added by the total value added. In the updated worksheet the formula for value added was calculated by dividing the appreciable contribution by the selling price. Work centers will never hit 50%. Nadine indicated it was the boards’ decision on what to do.

Bill stated that they have always been struggling with this to come up with something reasonable for the work centers, something that makes sense so everyone can be on the same page. Bill thought the revisions of the document, because they are not in the meeting minutes, came out of the fair market review subcommittee which reviews pricing once per year.

Bill indicated he thought they needed to try and simplify the process as he feels it’s too subjective the way they are operating currently. Bill did recall the form and updates being done at least twice. Nadine stated the last time the form was revised was in 2000.

Bill said he knows the form is something the board has struggled with and making sense of it and also not try and burden the work centers with a lot of calculations. But the review has to continue as it’s part of the statute.

Jean indicated that part of the issue is the cost of materials and transportation have gone up so much compared to what it used to be. Also they have individuals who are working within the factories so they should be looking at the hands on labor that is going into a product and minus the cost of materials, transportation in order to be fair.

Helen asked if there was some consistency amongst the work centers in what they consider overhead. Helen stated that was a big category and would need some standardization to indicate what exactly that includes. Bill agreed and stated he doesn’t think there is consistency.

Jean stated she believes the direct labor is the hands on labor that is done on the project. What isn’t direct labor is the supervision as the bigger part of the overhead. Jean asked Al Schraeder from Diverse Options if that was close to what they look at with theirs. Al stated they would actually use that overhead to include warehouse, space situations, those types of costs, utilities. What it takes to run that project Diverse Options segregate out the supervision part of the services so it’s not in the product mix.

Helen added if the board does move to change it to be fairer, it needs to be transparent and in order to be transparent that some common definitions be added as to what is included in each.

Jean stated either the board will need to come up with those definitions or get together with some work centers doing projects to look at it and come up with a plan.

Helen indicated that if this is policy, as Nadine stated this formula is not defined in statute or administrative code, than it would be policy which the board would establish. Helen thought the board would want some clear definitions and consistency otherwise the numbers would be easy to manipulate.

Jean asked if a time should be set up to work on this. Bill said he thought it should be a collaborative effort which Helen agreed.

Bill agreed with Helen on appreciable contribution that they need to define what costs go where, warehouse and shipping is separate for indirect/overhead charges and what does that all mean from work center to work center? Indirect slash overhead could be something different for each work center and believes there would be numerous definitions if asked to those in the room. Bill indicated that maybe the board should try to work through it, define and then collaborate with the work centers as the most reasonable way. Jean agreed. Then the board can come to agreement on it and have a real policy. Bill indicated he would be interested in working on it. Jean added the fair market review subcommittee would be getting together to do the review and wondered if the same committee could work on this issue. Bill indicated that was acceptable. Jean asked if all board members were okay with the idea. Enid, Bill and Nick indicated that was acceptable. Nadine asked Helen if she was alright with that approach. Helen indicated affirmatively and added that the board should reach out the work centers to have a clear understanding of what is currently out there, what their definition is and come up with a policy that’s fair to everybody.

The committee will report back at the October meeting to hopefully get in place for January 2015. Jean agrees and included that if fair market is completed at the beginning of August, the committee should be able to get together to come up with a proposal. Emails can be sent to work centers to find out what they include in overhead. The information would be needed before the committee could start reviewing. Nadine added that she could create a survey/questionnaire to send to the centers to gather the information. Bill stated that it would be necessary to have that before they meet.

Jean asked if there was anything more to add to this discussion. Bill reiterated he believed no information was found in meeting minutes due to it evolving out of the fair market review subcommittee.

**Recertification 2014** – Nadine indicated that at the last meeting she had stated she thought the forms had been updated, but found they weren’t. Updated were completed and Nadine intends on getting the documentation to the work centers the following week. Nadine was going to ask the purchasing associate in her section for assistance to complete this since the state use purchasing associate position is still vacant.

**New Business**

**Officer Uniforms –** Nadine received a letter from Headwaters, Inc. who partners with Black River Industries (BRI) to provide the Department of Corrections (DOC) officer uniforms. These two work centers have a partnership with Elbeco. Headwaters is cancelling their part of the contract. BRI will be taking over the products Headwaters was producing. BRI will be providing all parts of the uniform contract (Shirts, Pants, Jackets, Caps) to DOC. DOC is currently working through some processes and will need to rewrite the contract. The contract approval cannot wait until October for the contract to be signed so DOC was hoping that the Board would be willing to have a conference call to approve that contract. Jean stated that should be fine. Jean asked what this would affect for employment numbers at Headwaters. Nadine indicated Headwaters has a lot of opportunities in the local area that they wanted to push towards, but said this contract was hindering them to get any other work. Nadine included that there were issues with the value added as well as they were doing “pass-throughs” sporadically, which would have needed to stop.

Jeff Leopold asked about the fulfillment part of the contract as previously DOC toured their facility, Opportunity Development Center (ODC), to possibly warehouse the uniforms and ship to the appropriate locations. Nadine stated DOC has not made a decision and would need to be asked of them again as she did not know where they stand or how they plan on doing the fulfillment. Nadine added that at this time DOC would proceed as is with BRI holding the inventory and shipping to the DOC locations.

Nadine stated DOC was trying to develop an ordering system, with order points to make it easier on the work center. Nadine was not familiar with the development or decision of DOC.

Jeff again stressed that ODC would still be interested in providing the fulfillment part of the contract and believes they could offer a solution to the problem. He indicated he knew a concern was who owns the inventory when sitting in the warehouse and wanted it known that they would still be interested if those issues were addressed. Nadine stated she did inform DOC of the work centers continuing interest.

Helen asked how the switch in the uniforms would impact this. Is the work center going to start with the new uniforms? How’s it going to work? Nadine stated DOC completed a Request for Bid to fulfill the old style pants from the old contract. The pants will be the first item changed. When BRI takes over with the new contract they will be providing the new style pants. Shirts will not be changed for another year. BRI will still be supplying the old style shirts to DOC. Nadine asked Paul Thornton on BRI if that was correct which he affirmed.

Nadine asked Helen if that answered her question. Helen indicated partly, but added that there would need to be language included in the contract regarding the change to the new style so the work center is not getting stuck with old uniforms. Helen stated it was very important for DOC to come up with an ordering system that was just-in-time so that BRI doesn’t build up a huge inventory of shirts which couldn’t be used with the switch to a new style. Nadine said she thought DOC was working on that based on the last conversation we had at the meeting in Medford. DOC is purchasing the additional inventory sitting at Headwaters and is aware that they cannot just dump that on the work center. Helen indicated that was okay.

**Site Visits -**  Nadine stated she visited and toured Lakeside Packaging in Neenah. Lakeside was a new center to the State Use Program last year. They have two locations – Oshkosh and Neenah. The Oshkosh location is larger than the Neenah facility. They service approximately 200+ clients. Between the two locations they have about 50,000+ of square footage in their buildings. The provide assembly work and fulfillment services. They weren’t sure about janitorial services. Nadine asked them specifically because of the state office buildings in the Fox Valley area. The work center indicated that they didn’t think they had enough individuals who could provide that type of work. And those that could are already working outside the center. They also offered a pre-vocation program. Nadine added they have a nice facility, and is hoping that at some point they are able to bid and receive a state contract.

Nadine also visited and toured Black River Industries in Medford to see what type of projects they were doing including the officer uniform contract. They have a nice set up to be able to watch all clients at the same time.

Enid asked if Nadine does site visits regularly. Nadine indicated that she should be doing at least 5-6 per year, but depends on how often I can get out to tour them. Enid then asked if it was just Nadine who did the visits which Nadine answer affirmatively. Nadine added if she’s able to tackle two in a day she will, just so she’s not staying overnight someplace to save the money for the State.

**Suggested Updates to the State Use Program -** Nadine introduced Kirsten Cooper and Tami Jackson who wanted to address the board about some suggested changes to the program.

Kirsten indicated she’s with the Autism Society of Wisconsin and have been looking at other disability groups around the state regarding employment, …(some garbled conversation) and then talked about working with Disability Rights of Wisconsin. She indicated the State Use Program was started in 1989 and has not been updated. So they wanted to provide some suggestions to modernize the program.

Tami stated she was with the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) and work in partnership with several disability groups. She stated she was filling in for Lisa Pugh who was out of state. Tami stated there were a few things they could suggest to bring it in line more with other state agencies and include employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Tami indicated one recommendation was to align the definitions of the State Use Statutes to what is in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Tami stated it would be good to have the definitions align across programs so everyone is speaking of the same thing. She also included that this would make it easier to partner more with DVR and would be easier to implement that partnership.

BPDD secondly stated this would be a good way to connect DVR with work center clients to create more opportunities and to assist them into moving into different positions. Tami stated she thought the State Use Program was created to train the clients in order to move them into the workforce. She indicated that a bit more a direct path to DVR was ideal.

For Tami’s third point, she indicated she understood almost all work centers were making minimum wage, but would be a great gesture that those clients working on state contracts are making minimum wage. People look at states as model employers and this would be an easy way to bring all up to that level with not much impact on the centers.

And lastly, Tami added as work centers work in the community and develop partnerships with private businesses, BPDD feels that opening up the State Use Contracts to private businesses who employ disabled individuals furthers those partnerships to get more clients invested and provide those opportunities for people with disabilities.

Tami indicated that she’s aware that a lot of states were looking at their programs and are taking a lot of different paths to change their State Use Programs. Tami stated Kirsten was at a DOA meeting where they addressed that other states were looking at making changes to their State Use Programs and some recommendations were to close work centers and dissolve the State Use Program. That is not what BPDD wants to do. They are making these recommendations to modernize the program, to have the state contribute and continue to do good work, but not the path of closing the centers and their programs entirely. Tami again stressed that is not what they want to see happen.

Jean questioned why she or someone from the board was not involved in this discussion that took place earlier with DOA rather than just hearing about it that day. Jean stated to Tami that Tami had indicated they had a meeting earlier with DOA to discuss these proposed changes and why was the board not represented in that meeting. Helen addressed Jean’s question and indicated that it was a very preliminary meeting to get a feel for what types of changes they were considering. Helen stated prior to meeting, she wasn’t quite sure what was going to be discussed at that meeting. During the meeting it became apparent that the changes coming in to play would need to be brought before the board to share the information with them because it is the board’s program.

Helen wanted on record that she has some very strong issues with opening up a contract to employers who “employ people with disabilities”, there would need to be very stringent definitions about how many people they’re employing. Helen feels it would be extremely hard to administer, DOA does not have the people/staff to police those contracts. Helen added the board knows the clientele the work centers serve because they’ve seen them. Helen thinks expanding contracts to employers like Walmart or Walgreens, who may employ some fairly high functioning people with disabilities, would create problems for DOA and the policing of the contract. This would be especially hard to police if the State were to maintain the evergreen part of the contracts. Helen indicated from her perspective there are still many things that would need to be worked out.

Helen did add that she thought the first step was to get the two groups to speak to the board about what they would like to see changed and get some input from the board.

Jean stated she agreed with what Helen was saying about the opening of contracts to private employers. She also felt that the individuals who wanted to make these changes should really visit work centers and involve work centers in the process to find out what the centers are doing instead of each group doing their own little thing. It should be a collaborative effort, people work together instead of one person doing their own idea.

Jean added again she agreed with Helen and that they have seen the warehousing of people in the warehouses at places like Walgreens. Yes, they’ve hired a lot of disabled individuals, but they have segregated them from other staff by placing most in the warehouse. Jean indicated that this was another issue.

Kirsten stated that their recommendations are not all or nothing. These were things they’ve discussed and wanted to share with the board and open a dialogue on what the board sees happening and how the groups can work together to bring about some changes for people with disabilities.

Nick stated he thought the board should take a look at the recommendations as he not aware of the definitions and such. Bill agreed with Nick as they were both around when the law was written and should discuss the recommendations and maybe some things not even on the list. Bill relayed a story he read in the Lincoln Times about a work center (he believes), or some kind of business that would employ individuals with disabilities was cancelling a project because a member of the common council questioned why he would not be paying minimum wage. He was not sure how many individuals with disabilities were affected by not obtaining a job but stated it was a lost opportunity to work for those people. Bill stated the goal of the State Use Program was to maximize opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities, not minimize them. He was concerned because of the nonsupport shown by the council indicated in the article to paying a subminimum wage. He does not want to see that happen with this program. He would like to see what could be modernized in the State Use Program, but not take steps backwards at the same time.

Jeff Leopold from ODC indicated he agreed with Bill’s comments and also agreed with Jean’s comments of including the work centers in the discussions. Jeff said if you were in the work centers day to day you would see the subminimum wage is not taking advantage of individuals, it is what they (work centers) need to do to continue to operate to provide a product or service to the community or a customer to include the skills available from individuals with severe disabilities, but would lose the individuals with severe disabilities if minimum wage was enforced. He also said they would be able to create some models for the high functioning individuals. But if the subminimum wage was removed, based on rough estimates of numbers they’ve run, they would lose approximately two thirds of their staff. 400 out of 600 individuals would be out of work. Jeff reiterated that both Bill and Jean made very good points that he appreciated.

Pam Ross of ODC added that someone would have to pay for it, the employer or the state, as the product has a fair market value. The wage is commensurate, is pro-rated and fits with the fair market value and the productivity of the people. If it’s a fixed market price and ODC was forced to pay all employees minimum wage, the contracts would go away as they wouldn’t be able to pay that.

Jean stated there would be no question that the work would go away for the severely disabled if minimum wage was enforced for state use contracts.

Bill added that was the story the article was about and how upsetting it was. He stated he thought about what the State Use Program does and thought what the common council did to the vendor was going backwards to make a political point as it was. He felt that some of the current issues were getting caught up in the same type of movement of minimum wage and employment in the private sector. He also thought it was entirely inappropriate for this program. Jeff stated fair does not mean equal and what it boils down to.

Jean indicated that in most of the work centers, at least at Greenco, there are individuals that are capable of earning and there are some that aren’t capable of earning minimum wage but are close and employers have taken them on. But to say all individuals in the work center or 99% of them will be able to work at minimum wage or greater, Jean asked that they come tour her facility.

Tami added from their perspective, Jean is correct that there are a lot of discussions out there, but that’s not what these changes are about. Tami said they are asking for relatively small changes to smaller programs. Not asking for statewide changes to how workshops are run and how they pay all people with disabilities who are working within them. But state use contracts are one thing work centers do, and thought the average wage for individuals working on state use contracts was approximately $6.91 per hour that Tami read in a report from Pam Ross which is below minimum wage. Tami added they are talking about a small proportion of individuals in the work centers, not everybody in the center.

Jean then said that is only until the minimum wage gets changed. The reason they are making $6 plus dollars on hour is not based on minimum wage. It is based on whatever the prevailing wage is in the industry. Greenco bases wages on prevailing wage and every six months they do the prevailing wage. If minimum wage changes they do it more often. Prevailing wage is much higher than minimum wage and varies (depending on job) at Greenco from $9.00+ - $13.00+ per hour. Greenco’s time studies are based on this. The opportunity for individuals at Greenco to earn minimum wage is very easy if they are capable of it and would only have to work at about 50% depending on what job they are doing and will meet the minimum wage. Jean said they are being fair.

Pam added they she felt that sometimes the data has to be broke down. When it’s all averaged, it appears that each individual is making the same, but in reality a person who could be working on a RAM (Rest Area Maintenance) Service Contract, could be making $8.00 or $9.00 per hour. Whereas an individual with severe disabilities in a work center working on a product could be making far less. Pam felt these are the individuals that will be harmed as there is no feasibility for the center to continue the contract which would go back to private business, and who would not higher these individuals if they were to pay minimum wage. Pam stated it all goes back to private business as they are not going to higher two or three individuals to do the job, they will automate or something else instead. Pam indicated the State Use Program was designed to open up opportunities for individuals with disabilities and feels that this change would close those opportunities back up. Not all contracts, probably not the service contracts, but most likely the product contracts would be cancelled.

Jean stated they used to do Family Care every three to four months but now is every six months. It is mandated that every person is reviewed to see if they are ready to be recommended to DVR, are they ready to work out in the community, what else would the individuals want and what else can they do. That is all looked at and discussed with the individuals and the guardians at least every six months. Pam and Jean both indicated they are moving people through and always have, and it’s not new to the program except now it’s mandated. Everyone in the state has to talk about it. It’s not like they can put someone in a corner and look away for twenty years.

Ryan Tichenor from Handishop Industries added that he thought the focus should be more on the service type contracts. Because looking at the most severely disabled individuals who are operating (in their case) at 30% it’s going to take them 70% longer to do the job than someone functioning at a normal rate. When looking at the 30%, that will add additional costs, labor, supervision, going back and redoing several times. So for the service contracts that should be kept in mind that the centers are doing what they are able and would drastically affect the quality, frequency of the service or the duration. So you wouldn’t get the same product at the same cost. Jean asked how many people in business can afford to higher twenty or thirty people functioning at 30% or 40%.

Ryan indicated he has a brother with Downs Syndrome who would not be working if not for being able to work at a work center. On a job that he loves to do and works well at, the best he functions at is 30%. There’s no employer, as he’s been in employment agencies for short terms, when they find out he’s working at 30%, they are not training them. Unless they have a personal connection to him, the job does not last long term. He’s been able to increase his rate since he came to work center. Prior to that he was around 20% and has gained that increase. It’s not that that the stagnant is 30% and we maintain that and not just in one area, it’s about the continual growth. That’s a personal impact on him.

Jean added her biggest concern is if the opportunities are taken away from people, if they don’t maintain what they’ve learned, it’s use it or lose it. If they quit working, their production goes way down while waiting to get into a factory with the hope someone hires them. By the time they get hired, if they get hired, what they were able to do, would decrease immensely. It’s use it or lose it, same as education.

Al Schraeder from Diverse Options added all the points brought up are good, but we all have to realize that in the end it is the choice of that person to work in the community. They may wish to enroll with DVR to get those services. That is their choice. Al indicated there are many people they serve in their organization, like ODC or Handishop and other centers, the people *choose* to come to the work center daily. Al spoke of one individual who’s 79 years old. The individual lives in Waupun, gets up every morning, packs his own lunch and gets on the bus to go to work at the center in Ripon. Al stated this individual only produces at 29%. This individual wants to be at the center to work. When transportation is not available due to inclement weather, the following day this individual will tell Al they could have made it to work because they have good drivers. Al reiterated, it is the individual’s choice to work at the center. If they want to do something else, the work center or someone else will help them realize the choice and that dream.

Al indicated that as he walked through the production area the day before, he did not see one chain or shackle – not one person was chained to a table that did not have a choice to do whatever they wanted to do and all have a choice to be there or not. That needs to be remembered as we move through this world that we are operating in.

Ryan added that his brother likes to work with his peers just like we like to work with our peers. Ryan’s grandparents live in a senior center around people their age and same backgrounds. It’s human nature to associate with people similar to you. It’s not a force, it’s not segregation, it’s not placement in the community. It’s a choice to be with people like you, that you can relate to and that you can call a peer. Again, the people aren’t forced to go to a work center, it a choice to be with people he can relate to which helps him relate with his own struggles.

Bill felt it was a good discussion and mentioned that they had just received the letter dated July 3rd. Again reiterated it was a good discussion and felt there were some things to be looked at and seriously consider. Bill encouraged the disability groups to stay in touch and if they have other thoughts or ideas to send them as it opens up good discussion.

Tami stated they would be happy to continue working with the board. Tami said discussions regarding policy come around and drafts are created and to test the waters, and they would like to bring more items that have more form to them and discuss with the board to possible modernize the program and to align with some other things going on in the state. Also, the changing expectations of some younger families with children with disabilities. Tami volunteered to sit down with the board and provide information of what is going on in other states and how they have approached similar programs.

Nick added that the State Use Program does participate in SUPRA and does get information from them but discussions are good.

Enid stated she wanted to support what Bill said. Discussions are good, including all parties involved and not talking about them when they are not present, but added that this discussion was a good start. Enid said it is a difficult conversation they’ve been having. She knows as she’s worked for DVR for over 25 years, but what everyone has in common is the individual. Everyone’s focused on maximizing the employment outcomes, choices and possibilities for the individual and their families. Enid reiterated that having these open and honest discussions are good and should continue. Enid wasn’t sure of the form it would take in the future and guessed it would have to be addressed by the board which Jean agreed. But is glad that this is an open discussion happening in a collaborative way and hopes it continues.

Jean stated they have in the past. Work centers are notorious for placing people than any other organization in the state. They are way above for placing people in the community and have been hand-in-hand with DVR all the time and have been for years. Jean added it’s a discussion in choice, to give people a choice. Everyone here got choices of where we work and what we do. Why shouldn’t the disabled people get those same choices.

Bill said he agreed with comments from the two members of the Board and doesn’t want anyone to misunderstand that he is not supportive of examining the 20 year old law, he does think it needs to be reviewed. Nick told Bill they should remind everyone why they are on the Board.

Nick said he and Bill were appointed to the Board a long time ago because they represent the private sector. And their concern was the workshops might unfairly take jobs away from people in the private sector. Their position was to criticize, question and keep everything on the level and to ask those questions to ensure no one gets taken advantage of. Nick added that is what they are there for. To ensure these contracts are done in a proper, equitable, and measurable way.

Bill said Senator Buettner the author of the law empowered the Board to provide the necessary oversight to make sure there was no disadvantage created in the private sector. Small businesses were concerned as well. That’s why the Governor felt it appropriate to have business representatives appointed to the Board but also to have people in the programs with this population. We all want to make sure to maximize the opportunities. Bill reiterated he thought it was good this discussion about the law was brought up and that it should be reviewed. He also thanked Tami and Kirsten for sharing their ideas.

Kirsten respond in kind and added that she was happy to hear that the Board was open to listening to them and them looking at proposed changes.

**Old/Other Business**

No old business.

**Public Comment**

Jean asked if there were any public comments including from people on the teleconference line. Mike Duschene from Aspiro said he had six words of advice to share in regards to employment policies. One size does not fit all.

Ron Opicka from East Shore Industries wanted to point out a couple of things. Ron said there’s a lot of social reengineering going on around the impetus of what a community rehabilitation program does. He thinks sometimes the policy makers and the associations that are supposedly representing people with disabilities are not really representing these people anymore, but representing an initiative to shut down the rehabilitation program. An example is the mandate of minimum wage for state use contracts. He understands there’s been conversation to be careful, but in the end a subsidy is created; a subsidy that does not exist in economics. It does not exist and you’re creating one which will be paid be one of two people. It will be paid for by agencies of the state who buy the product or will be paid for by the agencies or CRP’s that employ the person with a disability. Ron indicated that is the truth and doesn’t believe state agencies will be willing to pay more than fair market value for that premium that will be created. Ron stressed that individuals are paid fairly based on their productivity. He indicated people need to get in the real world of economics and what’s going on. And he hopes the agencies that are to represent the people with disabilities is getting the whole picture and representing all of their needs not just some of them. And not just some social enterprise that someone thinks is a good idea.

Future Meetings:

* Thursday, January 8, 2015 10am – 12pm, Opportunities Inc., Madison WI
* Thursday, April 9, 2015 10am – 12pm, DATCP
* Thursday, July 9, 2015 10am – 12pm, DATCP
* Thursday, October 8, 2015 10am – 12pm, DATCP

Adjournment – **Nick motioned, Enid 2nd and approved.**  Adjourned at 10:55 a.m.