

**DakotaLink Advisory Council**  
**Quarterly Hybrid/Zoom Meeting**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**June 18, 2024**

**Members Present In Person:** Eric Weiss, Amy Scepaniak, Kayla Kane, Matt Cain, Lyle Cook, Sarah Rush, Jordan Trumbo, Blaine Jemming

**Members Present Virtually:** Richard Moeller, Beth Schiltz, Bill McEntaffer, Mollie Keating, Sandy Neyhart

**Members Absent:** Mary Sjerven, Kendra Gottsleben, Gloria Pluimer

**Staff Present In Person:** Page Hudson, Brett Crosby, Alex Ramirez

**Staff Present Virtually:** Brett Burden, Andrea Steele

**Guest Present Virtually:** Jessica Sehnert

**Meeting Start**

Richard called the meeting to order at 9:02 am MT, 10:02 am CST.

**Agenda**

There were no corrections to the June 18th draft meeting agenda. Amy motioned to approve the agenda. Sarah seconded.

**Meeting Notes**

There were no corrections to the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting notes. Eric motioned to approve the notes. Amy seconded.

**Council Member Updates**

Richard Moeller is eligible to term out, however, he will serve a second term as Chairperson. Eric's term is up. Eric appointed Jordan Trumbo to be the new representative for the Division of Rehabilitation Services which is within the Department of Human Services. Gaye Mattke retired June 8. Sandy Neyhart replaces Gaye as the new representative for the Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired.

**Nomination for Member at Large**

Matt Cain nominated Jordan Trumbo to be the new Member at Large. There were no other nominations.

**Vote for Member at Large**

Matt Cain motioned to approve the nomination of Jordan Trumbo. Lyle Cook seconded. Everyone else on the council approved with all yeses.

### **More Council Members Needed**

The council needs two more people with a disability in order to meet government standards. People may find the council member application on our website or contact Page Hudson.

### **Referral, Assessment, and Services to Completion**

Page explained the information DakotaLink needs to receive when a referral is sent. He went over referral examples that are received from the Department of Rehabilitation and the Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired. Other companies' referrals are slightly different but mostly include important contact information such as: name, address, phone number, and reason for the referral.

Brett explained the information DakotaLink records in assessment reports and then also equipment and services reports. These reports help keep track of what was covered during all interactions and the dates of each interaction.

Lyle mentioned that tribes have different funding than the state. Brett explained that if trips can be combined, that is what DakotaLink strives to do. Meeting at one of the DakotaLink offices is also an option to save companies and people on travel charges.

### **DakotaLink Low-Interest Loan Program**

Page discussed the complications on getting people to use the low interest loan program. Matt, the executive director at Independent Living Choices, says he refers people DakotaLink's way. Page expressed that when he has visited with other divisions in other states, the consensus is, several other states are having trouble as well.

Eric asked what the reason could be. Eric mentioned maybe it is because people do not have the money to pay a loan back.

Brett mentioned he receives several calls regarding two different categories. One category is vehicles. Most callers want a grant for an accessible vehicle. Not many people want a loan that they must pay back. Matt agrees that people are more apt to take assistance if it is a grant instead of a loan.

Brett said the other category is for a request for financial assistance on purchasing an inexpensive item. These people usually pay for it some other way instead of filling out an application for a loan.

Richard asked, as a potential loan applicant, if he could use the loan to buy a vehicle. The answer is yes. The loan will help purchase a handicap accessible vehicle. If the vehicle is not a modified vehicle, then the loan would not be available.

### **Access Technology**

Amy commented that a new key word in the blind field is "Access Technology." She is wondering if DakotaLink has looked into changing their terms from assistive technology to

access technology. She explained that handicapped people just need access to technology. Handicapped people are saying that they don't need assistance with technology they just need access to technology. Over time terms change and maybe DakotaLink would be interested in changing their approach.

### **Surveys**

Sandy asked if all DakotaLink consumers have the option to take surveys. Brett explained any consumer that supplies their email address has the option to receive a survey link via email. Sandy is wondering if there is a better way to track the outcome of services that DakotaLink provides. There was discussion on ways to increase the response rate on surveys. Sandy mentioned that maybe the council could go over the outcome of the surveys that DakotaLink is collecting.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be a zoom meeting. It is scheduled for Tuesday, September 10, 2024 at 1:00 pm MT, 2:00 pm CST.

### **Meeting End**

Matt motioned to adjourn the meeting. Eric seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am MT, 11:00 am CST.

Notes taken by Andrea Steele