

NH State Rehabilitation Council

NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

MEETING MINTUES

October 26, 2023

21 South Fruit Street, Room 100, Concord, NH and

ZOOM Teleconference Meeting

Attendees: Lorrie Ripley Chair, Ben Adams, Natalie Fortier, Heidi Duprey, Andrea Kaneb, James Ziegra, Marcia Bagley, John Richards, Jessica Laurie, Pam Stiles, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, alternate for DRC, Scott Lagios, Dawn Breault, Carrie Dudley

Members Excused: Brandy Quinn-Richards, Lisa Gerrard, Vice Chair

Staff: Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Sue Roma, Ella McAllister, Beth Keller, Joy Sabolevski

Guest: Christine Brennan

Interpreters: Laurie Meyer, Diane Aseltine-Grzyb, Denise Garcia, CART

The meeting of the SRC was called to order by Interim Chair Ripley at 11.45 am.

A roll call was made of those present, and the agenda was reviewed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Susan Roma presented the slate of officers and asked the membership if there were any additional nominations. As there were none, a motion was made to approve the slate as presented for the SRC officers for the coming year: Lorrie Ripley as Chair and Lisa Gerrard as Vice Chair. This motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the SRC meeting of July 13, 2023, were unanimously approved.

Report of the Director: Today will be Lisa Hatz's last meeting with the SRC. Her report will be more retrospective than those previously given. She gave the background of her time with VRNH, beginning as a counselor in the Nashua Regional Office coming from the Maryland VR program. In 2010 the field services administrator opened, and she was hired to lead the field. During that time, Paul Leather became Deputy Commissioner of Education and for six years Lisa was acting director of VR. In 2016, Mariellen McKay, who was Chair of the SRC, led the charge to hire Lisa as the permanent VR Director.

In 2018, the Order of Selection was pivotal for Lisa, and she considers that to be one of the hardest times in her career. VRNH has since come out of the OOS and Lisa is grateful for the support and technical assistance she received from staff and the Commissioner's office around the order. Although we are now currently serving everyone coming into the program, we are experiencing staffing challenges. Lisa and staff are working on new and creative solutions to minimize the staffing hurdles.

Lisa's next adventure will take her back to the mid-west where she grew up. She will become a regional director in Southern Minnesota managing 13 VR offices. She looks forward to getting back into the field offices working directly with persons with disability and being closer to her family.

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As she takes her leave, she wants to thank her staff, especially Ella McAllister for working on the state plan committee for many years. She feels she is leaving the SRC in good hands with Christine Brennan, Lorrie Ripley and Lisa Gerrard.

Christine Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, will be acting director of VRNH until a new director is hired. Christine was present today and spoke of the HR process the Department will follow in effecting a hire. Per the Division of Personnel rules, the position will be posted internally and then externally if internal candidates are not selected.

Christine is inviting SRC members to contact her via email or phone to offer any input into the search for the new VR director.

EMPLOYMENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS: Lisa mentioned that the Department did a press release on the recent Employment Leadership Awards held at the Puritan Restaurant on October 12th. This was a well-attended event. For 2023 the 5 employers selected for recognition were: AVI Foodsystems, CVS Health, Jakes Old Fashioned Ice Cream, Taylor Community and Win Waste Innovations.

UPDATE ON VRNH QA EFFORTS: Chantel Hagan, VRNH's lead person on quality assurance, is ill today so her presentation will be postponed till the January meeting.

CAP UPDATE: Lorrie Ripley announced that effective today, New Hampshire is no longer a part of STABLE Ohio. Work began a year and a half ago to move NH to a better platform offering more benefits to NH Citizens. The ABLE Savings plan in NH is now part of the National ABLE Alliance. Account holders can transfer their savings into the new accounts or leave them in their current savings plan if they wish. ABLE has a robust website where viewers can review FAQs about the program. 19 states, including NH have made to move to ABLE. Those interested in reviewing the specifics of the program can access the website at www.ablenrc.org

Lorrie is working on the CAP end of year report, which will be available for viewing on the RSA MIS at the end of the year. She is seeing an uptick in calls to CAP. Tuition is a large issue, especially this time of year when customers are returning to college.

REPORT OUT FROM COMMITTEES:

- Policy: Ella McAllister reports that the agency is working on revisions to 3 policies which are hoped to be ready for implementation in January of 2024. The 3 are:
 1. Strategic Direction
 2. Transition Services
 3. Pre-Employment Transition Services

The revisions in the strategic direction amends the agency's mission, vision, and values. Updates to both the Transition Services and Pre-Employment Transition Services adds hyperlinks to the Bureau of Special Education's interagency agreement and streamlines for easier reading.

There will be a meeting on Monday, October 30th of the State Plan Committee at 11:00 am and ZOOM. Anyone interested is invited to attend. Ella is still looking for members to work this committee.

In July we sent to the SRC the stakeholders memo detailing the Strategic Planning project, along with RSA's state plan instructions. VR's section begins on page 33 of the OMB document. We are going

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to be working to put the pieces together for the combined state plan and meeting with TPMA later in the month to help complete it. The first draft needs to be completed by December 8th. The timeline will be tight given the upcoming Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving holidays.

Andrea Kaneb had a question regarding the timelines in the Strategic Plan draft relative to the goal on strengthening VR's presence and services in the deaf and hard of hearing community. Ella agreed to look at her concerns and get back to her after today's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:

Lorrie Ripley wants SRC members to feel free to pass any idea/thoughts about future agenda items for meetings onto her.

Lisa Hatz was thanked for her service to VRNH and wished well on her new endeavor.

SRC members were invited to stay for a reception after today's meeting in honor of Lisa.

There being no further business on the agenda, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:35 pm.

The next regular meeting of the SRC will be:

January 25, 2024

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Room 100 Walker Building & ZOOM option

21 South Fruit Street, Concord, NH, 03301