

# NH State Rehabilitation Council

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## NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

### MEETING MINTUES

January 21, 2021

### ZOOM Teleconference Meeting

**Attendees:** Christopher Purington, Chair, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Vice-Chair, Lorrie Ripley, Holly Cadwallader, Dawn Breault, Kristin McGraw, Courtney Lockwood, Brent Cote, David Morgan, Lauri Jean Pevear, Kimm Phillips, Carrie Dudley,

**Members Excused:** Kristen McGraw, Ben Adams, Jo Moncher

**Advisory Non-Voting Present:** Peter Darling

**Staff:** Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Sue Roma Ella McAllister, Karen Martin-Brown, Dan Frye, Jim Piet

The meeting of the SRC was called to order by Chair Purington at 1:10 pm. The Covid-19 continuing pandemic necessitated today's meeting occur remotely via Zoom.

A roll call was made of those present and the agenda sent out to members previously was reviewed.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the SRC meeting of October 22, 2020 were approved by a roll call vote with 2 abstentions.

**Member Appointment:** Brandy Pappas, former VR Counselor currently working within the Special Education Bureau of the Department of Education, has been nominated for membership on the Council. She will be representing Special Education. The Executive Committee has reviewed her credentials and believe she will be a great asset to the Council. A motion was made and unanimously approved to forward her name to the Governor's office for formal appointment.

**Report of the Director:** Regarding the LBA audit, Lisa Hinson-Hatz would like to schedule a 1-hour meeting of the SRC in order to give Council members an opportunity to preview what the report will contain so no surprises are had for any findings cited in the final report. This will be scheduled in early February.

Lisa indicated a RFP will be developed for an entity to help us organize and enact some recommendations of the audit relative to quality assurance. She sees this as potentially a two-year process but will wait until the final report is out to develop.

**Agency Updates:** DVR is now completely paperless. Our paper files have been uploaded into an electronic format. The contract with the vendor doing the work had to be increased due to the volume of paper the files contained. This is a huge accomplishment for the agency and at the same time addresses one of the findings in the audit.

**Rulemaking:** DVR has been working on our rules for about 8 months. An initial proposal was presented and approved by the State Board of Education last Thursday. DVR will still have an opportunity to make changes if we need to. The entire process is expected to be completed by June. Lisa will have the rules sent out to Council members as soon as possible.

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**Financial:** VR still have its full 2020 grant of \$11.7 million available. Thus far, we have only received a small portion of the FY-21 grant. Due to continued resolutions, the agency has not received any additional allotments.

**Staffing:** We are in the process of hiring 7 vacant counselor positions as well as a STS position in Berlin. The counselor positions are located within our SBVI unit, Portsmouth, Concord, and Manchester/Nashua offices. The Governor's office did approve our request for waivers in order to release all these positions from the state hiring freeze.

**CSNA:** An RFP has just been completed and is ready to be sent out, most likely Monday of next week. We will have a year and a half to complete the CSNA so we won't be rushed.

We still are working on the contract for the customer satisfaction survey. This is expected to be completed by early March.

**VR Marketing Plan:** Becky Skipper and Katia Albanse from Concepts Communication are in attendance today to speak of the work they are doing to market NHVR and to get input from the SRC. They will be working with NHVR to design, develop and implement an advertising and public relations campaign to modernize NH's program. They are in attendance today to ask questions, particularly around logo and message development and to hear from SRC members in their own words. As part of the exercise, SRC members responded to 7 questions relative to their own experience with the VR agency.

- 1, How would you describe the mission of VR?
2. Who is NHVR's target audience (or audiences)?
3. What do you feel are NHVR's greatest assets (real and perceived)? What are its key strengths? Conversely, what do you feel are NHVR's weaknesses?
4. What do you feel is NHVR's reputation among external stakeholders?
5. How have NHVR's services changed or evolved over the time you have been on the SRC?
6. What trends do you feel are impacting NHVR now and will do so in the future?
7. What obstacles, if any, do you feel impede NHVR fulfilling its mission/achieving its goals?

Work on this contract is expected to continue through December. The SRC will be kept updated on Concepts Communication's work as it continues.

## REPORT OUT FROM COMMITTEES:

- **Membership:** Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre and Kimm Phillips reported out from the Membership Committee, which has met twice since the last full SRC. The committee has decided to meet monthly going forward from 9:30 to 10:30 am on the last Tuesday of the month and is open to anyone who is interested. Membership has reviewed the current membership list, attendance, who is terming off and who needs to be offered a second term. The Committee is piloting an orientation process to be offered to new members at the next meeting. Future tasks could include reviewing the bylaws for possible updates and doing focus groups for outreach purposes.
- **Policy:** Lisa Hinson-Hatz reported that the Policy Committee met once since the last meeting, where they focused on reviewing a new 2-part draft policy. The next meeting is scheduled for March. It is noted that these revised policies are much improved and detailed.

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Lisa reviewed the VR quarterly caseload data report, comparing the second quarter from program years 20 to 19.

Items of Note:

- Current caseloads are down.
- 6 vacancies exist in caseload carrying positions resulting in an increased caseload size.
- Applications, eligibilities and plans are down due to Covid. (VR agencies nationwide are seeing the same dip, especially in applications, which will lower all subsequent numbers).
- Our average days, application to eligibility, is less than 60 days, although eligibility to plan is increasing.
- Our plan to closure is average, a two-year process.
- Our successful closures are increasing, but still less than in the past due to a change in our accountabilities. It is expected that these will increase as time goes on.

New to this report is closure reason of cases closed unsuccessfully, detail of customers in training, the top IPE goals of cases served during the quarter and federal performance indicators.

- **State Plan:** Brent Cote has been communicating and working with Ella and Dawn Breault on state plan matters and is looking to increase membership on this committee. Work in the next 6 months' will include the State Plan review, specifically around the stated goals, and the CSNA. His plan is to identify data elements, with the assistance of agency staff, that committee members could review against goal attainment.

Regarding the CSNA, as mentioned by Lisa earlier, a RFP has been developed to hire an organization to identify statewide needs. The role of the State Plan Committee would be to review that organizations finished product.

Any member of the SRC who is interested in helping with the work on the State Plan committee can contact either Brent, Ella McAllister or Sue Roma. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre indicated a willingness to assist, time permitting.

Seeing no further business to discuss, a motion was made, and approved to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

The next meeting of the SRC will be:

**April 22, 2021**

**Location & Time: ZOOM, 1:00 pm to 3:00**