

NH State Rehabilitation Council

NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

MEETING MINTUES

June 24, 2021

Room 100 – Walker Building/Zoom Teleconference

Attendees: Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Vice-Chair, Lorrie Ripley, Holly Cadwallader, Kristin McGraw, Courtney Lockwood, Bret Cote, Kimm Phillips, Carrie Dudley, Ben Adams, Lisa Gerrard, Brandy Pappas, Andrea Kaneb

Excused: Christopher Purington, Laurijean Pevear, Dawn Breault, David Morgan

Staff: Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Sue Roma, Ella McAllister, Karen Martin-Brown, Dan Frye, Tina Greco, Dee Clanton, Jim Piet

Interpreters: Maura Fay, Rebecca Mallory-Patten, Denise Gracia (CART)

Chris Purington, Chair of the SRC has been excused today. The meeting was chaired by 1st Vice-Chair, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, who called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm. Today's meeting is the first in-person meeting since the Covid 19 pandemic began. A ZOOM option was made available for those who wished to participate remotely.

A roll call was made of those present and introductions made for the benefit of the new members present today, Maureen O'Donnell and Andrea Kaneb.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the SRC meeting of April 22, 2021 were approved with the following correction: Kristen McGraw should have been listed as "excused" and not listed as being in attendance.

Report of the Director: Lisa Hinson-Hatz updated the council on several key agency areas:

- **Financial:** We are nearing the end of the state fiscal year. NHVR has met and exceeded match requirements and will be able to carry over the entire FY-21 grant received last year. Late last month, Chris Purington sent a letter to Senator Shaheen seeking an extension for NH's grant period for both FY-20 and FY-21 due to inability to spend down the dollars due to Covid-19. Without the extension NHVR is at risk of sending back 2.7 million dollars. Other states are in the same situation and have written to their Senators seeking extensions as well. As of this date, we have not heard back from Senator Shaheen's office.

Several states have not met match and will be sending back money. This money will be redistributed to other states who can use additional dollars through the reallocation process. At this point in time, Lisa does not think that NH will need to ask for additional dollars. She is working on several contracts with outside agencies to spend down carryover money.

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- **Staffing:** We are in a good place relative to staffing with the hiring freeze lifted. We currently are recruiting for 3 rehab counselors (Concord/Berlin/Nashua-Manchester). The positions have been posted and are being filled now. In addition, we are looking to fill 6-part time placement staff working in the North Country and Lebanon/Hanover area.

Approval is being sought for hiring 3 full time/temp staff working to support the transition program and contract management. These will be one year positions that can be continued year to year as long as the funding and work are there. Finding and hiring qualified people is the challenge right now.

Contracts:

- **Quality Assurance**, a two-year \$600,000 contract to help the agency resolve our audit findings, has been awarded to The Stephen's Group. The CEO, John Stephen, is a former NH Health and Human Services Commissioner. The activities this grant will cover will entail a lot of work and all staff will be involved. The kick off meeting is scheduled for next week. Lisa will provide a brief update at future SRC meetings on accomplishments under this grant.
- **Customer Satisfaction Survey:** This has been awarded to the University of Massachusetts, Boston and will survey two years of our closures. Agency staff will meet with the U of Mass team in about two weeks. As several members of the SRC had expressed interest in being part of the survey instrument development, Lisa will make sure to invite the SRC to the kick off meeting.
- **CSNA:** This has not yet been approved by Governor and Council. It is scheduled for the July 14th meeting. An update will be made at the September SRC meeting.
- Work is underway with Mental Health centers and area agencies throughout the state to have funding supports of \$80,000 each for a two-year contract to fund certified work incentive counselors. We are hoping to have these contracts finished in time for the July 14th Governor and Council meeting. Lisa will provide an update at the next SRC meeting. It was suggested that Stable account training be part of the staff training planned for the newly hired work incentive counselors.
- **Marketing:** VR staff are working with project staff from Concepts Inc. on the agency's marketing initiative. Next steps will be to look at and redesign the agency's website to include videos of our process and updated outreach materials.
- Other contacts include the Governor's Commission on Disability for SILC support and work on a few two year contracts for IL Part B services.

CAP UPDATE: Lorrie Ripley gave an update on CAP activities. Although she has no fair hearings on her radar at the moment, there is a handful of people they are monitoring. She mentioned that customers who contact her come back from time to time as they think about what options may be available to them. She takes a lot of calls from the public for clarification on issues. As CAP takes on several forms, she sees the office as a public resource. Lorrie was an organizer of the Northeast CAP conference, which was held via ZOOM. Her continued work on STABLE NH accounts takes much of her time. She asks that her fellow SRC members send people her way if they feel she can be of help, especially around STABLE NH. For those interested in the statistics of the prior year of the CAP program, Lorrie mentioned that her 2020 report is filed on the RSA MIS website for public viewing but will send out a copy to the membership next week.

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REPORT OUT FROM COMMITTEES:

- **Membership:** Kim Phillips reported out from the Membership Committee, which meets each month on the fourth Tuesday. At the last meeting, an orientation was conducted for the 3 newly appointed SRC members. It was noted that a representative of the SBVI Advisory Committee is needed and Dan Frye was asked to identify someone from the committee who would be willing to serve on the Council. Other topics discussed were revisions to the by-laws to include a provision of allowing hybrid access to meetings, as well as reaching out to the business community for increased business representation. The plan is for Membership to continue meeting during the summer
- **Policy:** Ella McAllister gave a recap of activities around policy revision that occurred during the past year. The current policy was written in 2007. Since that time, the agency has undergone many changes including upgrade to its MIS system, WIOA legislation and entering an order of selection. A work group was assigned to look at Parts 1 and 2 of the policy manual. These sections have been completed and reviewed by the SRC policy committee. We are going live with these updates on July 1st, with staff training to follow.
- **State Plan:** All is quiet on the State Plan front with no formal update. Lisa will send Bret the measureable data points that were developed by her leadership team.
- **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:** Elections for SRC officers will occur in the fall. Chris Purington has indicated he is interested in another year as Chair. Isadora is interested in continuing as 1st Vice Chair. Laurie Jean Pevear has expressed an interest in running for 2nd Vice-Chair. If anyone is interested in running as a member of the Executive Committee, please submit your name to Lisa or Sue Roma before the September meeting.
- **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:** None noted.
- **SCHEDULING OF FUTURE MEETINGS:** Due to the late hour, Sue Roma was asked to check the availability of Room 100 for scheduling of meetings for the coming year. These dates will be finalized at the September meeting.

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:

TBA

Location: TBA