

NH State Rehabilitation Council

NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MINTUES

June 27, 2019

21 SOUTH FRUIT STREET, ROOM 100, CONCORD, NH

Attendees: Charles Saia, Chair, Holly Cadwallader, 1st Vice Chair, Chris Purington, 2nd Vice Chair, Kimm Phillips, Lorrie Ripley, Mike Rudis, Courtney Lockwood, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Nancy Rollins, Jo Moncher, Ann Ackerman, Brent Cote, Theresa Wilkomm, Dawn Breault

Members Excused: Peter Darling

Staff: Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Ella McAllister, Jim Piet, Michelle Lapointe, Dee Clanton, Sue Roma, Tina Greco, Debra Orman

Interpreters: Laurie Meyer and Karla Caldwell

PCA: Jeanne Keith

Prospective Members: Laurie Jean Pevear

Guests: Frank Edelblut, Commissioner of Education, George Copadis, Commissioner, Department of Employment Security, Pamela Szacik, Administrator, Employment Security, Vilay Skidds, Senior Audit Manager, Legislative Budget Assistant Office

Member of the Public: Matthew Richards

The meeting was called to order by Chair Saia at 12:35 pm. The agenda was reviewed and Introductions of those attending today's meeting were made.

APPROVAL OF MINTUES: The minutes of the SRC meeting of April 25, 2019 were reviewed and approved unanimously as written.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR: Lisa Hinson-Hatz updated the Council on the current status of the OOS wait list. The decision was made to release another 100 individuals from Category 2 (coded SD). Category 1 (MSD) is totally open. After this release, there remains 488 in Category 2 and 64 in Category 3. Lisa is very pleased with the progress made but at this point we may need to slow down and calculate future releases in order not to overwhelm staff due to the many plans needed to be written as well as the numbers of individuals coming in to be served. All in all it is good news and counselors are working really hard.

The Human Services Research Institute has been contracted by VR to assist in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) process. Work will be ongoing during the summer months, with completion by the end of September. The Institute will be asked to report the assessments findings, recommendations and objectives at the SRC Retreat in October.

A meeting has been scheduled between Lisa and Jo Moncher to look at updating the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Ed and HHS. The SRC will be updated at its meeting in September on progress made on this agreement.

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Federal Audit Update: The audit conducted by RSA began in March and ended in May. Three areas were looked at: (1) pre-employment transition services, (2) fiscal and (3) progress in implementing joint requirements under the WIOA legislation. Lisa feels that overall the audit went well. We are waiting for their recommendations and findings, but this may take at least a year to be delivered. In the interim, the agency will be looking at strengthening several process areas, such as financial reporting, time allocation, delegation of authority, internal fiscal controls and the agency contract monitoring process. We are hoping to have updates in place to these procedures before the formal report is received.

State Audit Update: Vilay Skidds, Senior Audit Manager with the LBA office is in attendance at today's meeting and gave an update of what has been happening with the State audit. Currently they are in the planning phase, developing methodology and identifying areas to be reviewed. The auditors have been given access to the AWARE program and will be visiting the Regional Offices to talk with staff. Once their work is completed, a draft report will be developed. An exit conference will be scheduled to review the draft report, where changes, if warranted, will be made before the final report is developed and disseminated. The SRC will be kept advised as the process moves along.

COMMISSIONER UPDATE: Commissioner Frank Edelblut began his update to the SRC by stating how excited, but nervous, he is about the June release of the OOS waitlist. He, along with VR staff, will watch it closely to stay on top of these cases.

The Commissioner also returns to the SRC today in response to Nancy Rollins request to help the SRC do a better job of connecting with those in the business community. He is proud to report that since the last SRC meeting, at his direction, VR Customers who have an active email address within the AWARE system are now receiving email blasts about scheduled job fairs in their areas. He has also invited the Commissioner of Employment Security and Commissioner of Business and Economic Affairs to attend today's meeting to discuss barriers that are making the employment market less accessible for persons with disabilities. George Copadis, Commissioner of Employment Security is in attendance today. Commissioner Caswell from the Dept. of Business & Economic Affairs could not make today's meeting, but will be invited to a future SRC to continue the discussion of connecting our customers to employment venues.

Commissioner Copadis attended today to listen to SRC concerns relative to connecting VR customers to various employment markets. He suggested that VR/the SRC consider holding a symposium or workshop at a future ES sponsored job fair. As an example, the job fair at St. George's Greek Orthodox Church in Manchester is expected to have at least 140 employers in attendance. This would be an excellent opportunity to get VR's message out and connect those customers to employers who are looking for workers. He suggests holding the symposium later in the day at a smaller job fair. If it goes well and is favorably received, branch out to the larger fairs scheduled later in the year. Commissioner Copadis believes now is a good time to develop these symposiums as the unemployment rate is so low. Many employers are looking for workers and VR can be the bridge between employers and job seekers with disabilities. Several SRC members voiced interest in shaping the symposiums along with VR staff.

An additional challenge voiced that currently exists is getting business partners to become members of the SRC. Currently, the statute requires that at least four representatives from Business & Industry be

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included in membership. Commissioner Copadis and his staff will work to identify some businesses who may be interested in joining the Council. It would be great having a cross section of employers throughout the state. ZOOM meetings are possible for those employers interested in joining from the North Country.

It was suggested to Commissioner Copadis that it could be helpful to staff of Employment Security to attend a future *Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE)* training to better understand the needs of workers with disabilities. Commissioner Copadis agreed to consider this and asked that a schedule of trainings be forwarded to him so he could identify staff within Employment Security who could benefit from attending.

Governance/Membership: Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre and Kimm Phillips reported that this subcommittee has met numerous times over the last several months, specifically on updating the SRC bylaws, which were last updated in 2010. The suggested changes to the document were reviewed at today's meeting. Additional suggested updates will be made by Isadora and a final draft of the document will be sent to Council members within the next few weeks. Members are encouraged to review the final draft and be prepared to adopt via vote at the next Council meeting in September.

CAP Update: Lorrie Ripley updated the Council on activities of the Client Assistance Program. New rack cards are available for distribution to VR customers. SRC members were provided a copy.

Old Business/New Business: Dee Clanton reported that "Visor Cards" will soon be available to deaf and hard of hearing residents of New Hampshire. Visor cards will be useful to this population in interactions with police as it will quickly alert them to a hearing disability where the driver cannot hear/understand their orders and instructions. The cards are currently in the process of being printed. Dee will provide Council members with a copy as soon as they are available.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 pm.

The next meeting will be:

September 25, 2019

1:00 to 3:00 pm

21 South Fruit Street, Room 100

Concord, NH, 03301