

# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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## NH State Rehabilitation Council Minutes

October 30, 2018

21 South Fruit Street

Concord, NH, 03301

**Attendance:** Charles Saia, Chair, Holly Cadwallader, 1<sup>st</sup> VC, Nancy Rollins, Immediate Past President, Chris Purington, 2<sup>nd</sup> VC, Dawn Breault, David Morgan, Mike Rudis, Michelle Lapointe, Courtney Lockwood, Lorrie Ripley, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Jeff Dickinson, Kim Phillips

**VR Staff:** Dee Clanton, Bill Finn, Susan Roma, Ella McAllister, Louise Belanger

**Interpreters:** Laurie Meyer and Jola Leary.

**Guests:** D.J. Bettencourt, Policy Advisory to Governor Sununu; Frank Edelblut, Commissioner of Education, Christine Brennan, Deputy Commissioner of Education

Charles Saia, Chair of the SRC, called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. Introductions were made.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the September 27, 2018 meeting of the SRC were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Nancy Rollins began discussion by reviewing what had occurred at the last SRC meeting relative to the reallocation monies received by the State in the early fall. At the last meeting, the SRC voted to draft a letter to the Governor's office indicating concern that the SRC had not been included in the decision to use the reallocation money to fund the Impactt Program. Due to illness on her part, the letter to the Governor's office was never drafted. Although never notified officially, the Governor's office had heard about the concern indirectly. Mr. Bettencourt, Policy Director for the Governor's office, is in attendance today to hear concerns directly from council members and to get a better understanding of the issues so he can be more of an advocate for the program. He gave a brief history of how the decision was made to use the reallocation money for the Impactt and Project Search program and noted that the Governor's office is willing to work to help VR get out of the OOS using the SRC as a resource. Mr. Bettencourt complimented Commissioner Edelblut's leadership in inheriting the financial situation that led to the OOS and moving it forward by creating a system where the situation does not occur again. Chairperson Saia sees this as a great opportunity to proceed and stated the SRC will do whatever it can to assist the governor's office as they reach out for priorities for funding during budget development.

**Commissioner's Comments:** Commissioner Edelblut thanked Mr. Bettencourt for attending today's meeting and spoke of collaboration of resources. He then reviewed the dashboard information contained in member's packets. The dashboard still is a work in progress reflecting the VR process and measures.

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Priority 1 of the VR agency is the OOS and how to move out of it. VR has begun the process of opening up the order, first in and first out. In an effort to deal with the shortage of counseling staff, the Department has begun to reach out to former employees of the agency, as well as working with partners, to see if they would be willing to work under contract to take care of backlogs to keep the flow moving. The current plan is to bring in 25 new customers a week. This will be a temporary situation until all counselor positions are filled. Other ideas to deal with the bottleneck is to manage the complex cases ourselves but contract customers ready for employment, as well as working with the Division of Personnel in creating a counselor "trainee" position to take care of routine tasks a counselor's time would be better spent working on complex issues. The SRC is welcome to submit ideas to VR staff to move the process along in a more expeditious manner.

**Report of the Director:** Lisa Hinson-Hatz spoke of the state of the current agency staffing. 6 positions are in the process of posting. Two offices out of the five are well staffed. The goal is to get the positions filled by the end of the year. In order to expedite hiring, we are sharing job descriptions with our partners, Linked-In and Assumption College.

As the Commissioner noted, an "Intake" unit is being established by those who know the VR process in order to establish eligibility in those offices struggling.

Since our last meeting, the Agency's Business Administrator has left. We have hired Laura Lieberman, who will take her place.

Lisa has no CSAVR update at the moment. The annual CSAVR conference is occurring in Long Beach, California this week. She will have an update at the January meeting.

## **Committee Updates:**

**Order of Selection Management Group:** Courtney Lockwood reported that this group last met on October 19<sup>th</sup>, where they strategized about current challenges. The agency has moved from needing money to provide services to counselors serving caseloads. The flow of 100 customers is opening up. The intake unit was discussed. Although this group is mainly made up of VR staff, it is nice to have both internal and external voices.

**State Plan:** Ella McAllister reported the committee has not met recently, but an update to the plan will be done for 2019-2020.

**SBVI:** Bill Finn reported for Peter Darling. This committee met two weeks ago. Patty Pelletier is the only staff person left in the Business Enterprise Program, however, she is getting some internal support within the BEP and the program is continuing to move forward. The Secretary within the SBVI unit has taken another position within the Department. This creates a void in managing the State Blind Registry for Legal Blindness, which is statutory. Tim Hindman has left his position as O&M Coordinator. He did a lot of work with VR Counselors as well as the Older Blind Program. His position is used as match for the program so we will be posting his position as soon as possible.

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**Independent Living:** The administrator position that oversaw this program remains vacant. This position also supported the SILC. On the G&C agenda for tomorrow's meeting is an agreement between the DOE and Governor's Commission to house the SILC at the commission through June of 2021. It is expected to pass. Work is underway as well to complete the three year IL State Plan.

It was suggested that at some point in the future to have a joint SILC and SRC meeting as a summit. This will be discussed at a later time.

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing:** Dee Clanton reported for Holly Rioux. This Committee last met on September 17<sup>th</sup>, where OOS was discussed, along with possibly repurposing used hearing aids. Carrie Dudley was voted in as Vice Chair. The Committee next meets on December 3, 2018.

**Governance/Membership:** This committee has not met since the retreat in September, but their work is ongoing. There will be more of an update at the next meeting in January.

**DISCUSSION ON GOALS AND PRIORITIES:** Given the late hour, discussion on this subject will be tabled until the January meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:** It was agreed that the next meeting of the SRC will be a full day meeting, with subcommittees meeting in the morning, lunch at noon with the full council meeting at 1 pm on January 24, 2019. A snow date of January 31, 2019 has been booked if needed. The top priority for this meeting is to look at membership.

Meeting ended at 3:05 pm.