

NH State Rehabilitation Council

NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

MEETING MINTUES

June 25, 2020

ZOOM Teleconference Meeting

Attendees: Charles Saia, Chair, Holly Cadwallader 1st Vice Chair, Chris Purington, 2nd Vice Chair, Lorrie Ripley, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Theresa Wilkomm, Dawn Breault, Kristin McGraw, Courtney Lockwood, Brent Cote, Benjamin Adams

Members Excused: Lauri Jean Pevear, Jo Moncher, Kimm Phillips

Advisory Non-Voting Present: Carrie Dudley, Peter Darling

Staff: Daniel Frye, Dee Clanton, Sue Roma

Guests: Christine Brennan, Deputy Commissioner of Education

Interpreters: Aimee Stevens, Brianna Cameron

The meeting of the SRC was called to order by Chair Saia at 1:10 pm. The Covid-19 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.

Lisa Hinson-Hatz is not present today due to personal reasons. Daniel Frye, Administrator of Services for Blind and Visually Impaired is attending today's meeting and will be presenting the agency update.

COVID Update: Since the national lockdown in mid-March, VR offices have been open on a limited basis. There are a minimum of two people in each regional office every day of the working week. All persons coming into the offices are asked to follow CDD guidelines. Personal protection equipment (PPE) is being provided to all customers coming into the office as well as staff. Staff are required to meet with those coming in into the office in the largest offices in order to social distance. After each meeting a deep clean is done of the area.

The Commissioner of Education has scheduled an announcement on Monday relative to a gradual return to work by staff. The plan is that those returning to the office coordinate it so that it be done in a phased in manner. Customers, of course, can continue to elect to meet remotely.

We believe the agency has learned a lot in how to be productive in a telework environment.

Agency Update:

Financial: Our Business Administrator, Pauline Doucette, shared specific dollar amounts to for this meeting. Broadly rounded, 2019 and 2020 grants are being spent down. At this point we have almost the entire 2020 grant left, having another year to spend down. The 2019 grant needs to be spent down by the end of this fiscal year. Both grants are being spent timely and consistent with the rules of our federal partners.

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VR's spending plan includes dollars to enhance services with area agencies and mental health providers in job development, placement and supports. Also included are several contracts under the Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Unit for visually impaired students.

An RFP has been let for a marketing plan for the entire VR agency. The two proposals received in response to this RFP are currently being reviewed by VR staff, after which references will be sought before awarding the contract through the G&C process.

Several waivers for hiring have been sought under the emergency hiring freeze. The agency currently has several vacancies in the regional offices which could impact services to customers.

Administrative Rules Update: Dan Frye has been working diligently with a team at Londergan Hall to adopt rules that are consistent with the passage of WOIA in 2016.

Rulemaking Update: DOE rules are being reviewed to make sure they are consistent with WOIA and taking into consideration what the audit team brought to the Department's attention. Once the rulemaking draft is reviewed at the State Board meeting in August, the Council will have an opportunity to comment. The SRC will be kept in the loop as the process moves along.

Policy Data: As the quarter does not close until the end of June, our quarterly data is not yet available. The data will be brought forward for review at either the retreat in September or October regular meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Chair Saia has termed off the SRC. Christopher Purington has indicated an interest in chairing the Council for the coming year. Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre has also indicated interest in serving as Vice Chair. Holly Cadwallader has announced that due to challenges to both her time and resources, she is not able to continue on as first Vice-Chair.

Hearing no other persons interested in running for office, a motion was made to accept the slate of officers as presented. The slate of officers was accepted through a unanimous poll through the ZOOM application, with no opposing votes.

A second poll vote was taken for the election of Chris Purington as chair of the SRC and Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre as Vice-Chair. Both were elected to their respective office with no one opposing.

Chris Purington took over the meeting as Chair at this point and made a motion that Charles Saia stay on the Executive Committee as Immediate Past Chair consistent with the SRC By-Laws, with Kristen McGraw seconding. This motion was approved via a roll call of the SRC with no dissenting votes.

Christine Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, thanked Chuck for his many years of service to the SRC. She is looking forward to working with Chris and Isadora in the coming year.

Karen Martin Brown has been nominated to replace Michelle Lapointe as Rehab Councilor representative to the SRC. Karen has a significant background with VR and will do an excellent job. Her resume will be forwarded in the coming days to the Governor for official appointment.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A roll call vote for approval of the minutes of the SRC meeting of April 23, 2020 was conducted. The minutes were approved with 0 opposing.

Chris Purington announced that GSIL has been awarded a federal CARES Act Grant to help provide relief for persons with disabilities from COVID 19. Details regarding the grant are still being worked out, but it is expected that assistance could be given to eligible individuals for transportation, food, household expenses and other needs they may have in their dealing with the virus. Those interested may contact Chris directly or GSIL for more information.

A motion made to adjourn the meeting was made at 2:17 pm.

The next meeting will be the SRC Retreat:

September 23, 2020

Location & Time: TBA

Discussion will occur in the coming weeks to map out of format, time and location of the retreat. SRC members are encouraged to send any ideas they have relative to format or possible agenda items to either Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Chris Purington or Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre. If the meeting is scheduled as a ZOOM meeting, calendar invites will be sent out.