



State Rehabilitation Council
to the
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services



January 15, 2014

Webinar

Attendance

Present:

SRC Officers: Jim Quick – Chair, Jan Hasenjager – Treasurer, & Tom Boudreau - Secretary

SRC Members: Marisel DeCordova, Michele Fontaine, Roberta Hurley, Bruce Stovall & Victor Xavier.

BRS Staff: Evelyn Oliver Knight & Kathy Blewett

Webinar Technician: Khampasong (Kim) Khantivong, BRS.

Excused:

SRC Officer: Ellen Econs – Vice Chair

SRC Members: Mary Pierson Keating, Gary Prushko, Larry Robinson, & Miriam Torres-Thorburn.

BRS Staff: Ex-officio - Amy Porter.

Absent:

SRC Members: Warren Stamp

^Volunteers – Persons interested in the SRC, but not appointed as Members are considered Volunteers. Volunteers may attend meetings and work on committees, but may not vote on any action. When new members are sought for the SRC, Volunteers can be considered for membership.

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Minutes:

A review of the minutes took place. Marisel moved to accept and Jan seconded. It was approved unanimously with Tom abstaining.

Budget Review:

Jan reviewed the budget and explained the only expense was toward transportation services. Michele moved to accept and Roberta seconded and accepted unanimously.

SRC Chairperson Update:

Jim shared his report with thanks for all the hard work and support.

- There is a new disability representative appointed by Governor Malloy - Jonathan Slifka, a cabinet-level position advocating on behalf of the disability community. Jim shared that he has met him before but does not know much about him. There was discussion about the appointment with the hopes he will be working with all the groups who support the disability community. He is housed under the governor's office and will work closely with DORS. Jim will send a letter to the new advocate and introduce himself/the SRC and invite him to the March 19 meeting.
- On 1/21/14 there is a meeting of the NCSRC. The review of information about the Denver conference (will be posted on the website). Details will be shared as information becomes available.
- Jim shared the importance of sharing information. The goals we have, we need to ensure that what we are sharing the information we gather as well. He is wondering that as information is taken in, gathered and elements are completed – how it is then being disseminated and what exactly is being shared. Although there is restructuring of DORS, how do we get the information and how it is disseminated may need to be looked at more – Jim offered to look into this and bring what he discovers back to the SRC.
- Jim asked about Connect-Ability and what the process has done with DORS being in place – the grant was to improve services, increase marketing and getting consumers involved. Jim discussed intentions to become more informed – however some elements related to the Grant are over due to the time period of the

grant has ended. Kathy shared that the information about the Connect-Ability can be accessed through the website and recommended Jim talk to Kerri Fradette.

BRS/SRC Update – Evelyn Oliver Knight:

Amy was not available due to out-of-state travel.

- Evelyn shared that the State Plan begins in October and goes until September. We are currently in the 2014 State Plan year and the SRC needs to prepare for the recommendations it will make to BRS which will be included in the next State Plan in the spring – no questions were raised.
- Evelyn reviewed Attachment 4.11 (d) – State’s Strategies of the State Plan. This section highlights a number of objectives and strategies that will be used to expand and improve services for people with disabilities (see attachment 4.11 (d) – State’s Strategies). BRS will enhance the Distance Learning Modules (online courses) to assist consumers in preparing to find employment (some members expressed that people have used them with great success and training opportunities). The modules are related specifically to consumers, the system tracks people who take the courses and the courses are free.

Evelyn reviewed the broad range of AT services and devices through the CT Tech Act. There is a loan program for money and devices and the AT consultant can help with information. An EXPO is planned for 4/1/14. The CT Tech Act Project can serve people even if they are not BRS consumers - for AT needed at home, school, work and in the community.

BRS will identify people with disabilities who are minorities, and with most significant disabilities. BRS will look at outreach and trying to incorporate case management including people with ASD (autism spectrum disorder), mental health concerns, and understanding of given cultures is a priority.

To improve CRPs within the state, BRS will develop and implement better services and increase better systems.

Each VR program is measured by specific performance indicators. BRS will strive to improve the performance indicators with particular ways and processes that are listed.

To improve connections to the Statewide Workforce Investment System, BRS will develop a MOU with workforce boards and seek a representative to become a SRC member.

Evelyn shared that she wanted to ensure that everyone was aware of the goals so that as recommendations are brought forth that they align with what has been established. All recommendations are included in the SRC section of the State Plan and Amy responds to the recommendations with an explanation as to the status. As the state plan moves forward and cycles around, recommendations should be considered in the context of this information.

- RSA monitoring was completed last year. It is scheduled every three years. Evelyn e-mailed the Draft Monitoring Report dated December 3, 2013 to SRC members on December 5th. Presented was an initial draft “Appendix A: Agency Response” that addresses the Corrective Actions with an Agency Response. BRS can respond in a number of ways: agree with a finding, agree in part with a finding, or disagree with a finding. BRS can provide explanations for any disagreements and should provide plans to address the concerns. BRS may also ask for technical assistance. RSA can then assess original findings and the final report **may change** based on agency response. Amy will also be able to address any questions or concerns later.
- Kathy reviewed the findings and added background context to help SRC members better understand the issues/concerns. Of the five findings, BRS disagreed with one and provided an explanation for the disagreement. BRS agreed in part with one finding and fully agreed with the remaining three findings. BRS provided steps that will be taken to address the concerns and requested technical assistance for three of the findings.
- The finalized report will be shared with the SRC when it becomes available. The components are very complex and it was agreed we need to better understand them.

SRC Annual report:

- A review of the report was completed. Evelyn expressed her thanks to everyone for their help. The Governor’s office and RSA received the report electronically. Evelyn will submit an electronic copy to NCSRC to be posted on its Website and

it will be posted on the BRS Website. Evelyn will get a small number of copies printed for SRC members and BRS use.

- Evelyn is pleased with the participation of the SRC members and their interest in learning so they can be effective, with the understanding that the council meets only five to six times a year making targeted involvement difficult but people have been asking questions and making connections with the information.

BRS Recruitment/Staffing& DORS Update Kathy Blewett

Kathy shared – BRS is looking to hire an Education Service Specialist to address a coordinated effort for quality assurance to be put in place.

- There are two positions in Middletown with transfers occurring. There are three openings in New Haven. There is need for a bilingual secretary (East Hartford). The process is very slow and posting will take place as it moves along. BRS still struggles with the Interpreter Assistance positions – no candidates have been qualified and there are only two available for the state... still looking to solve this matter. Interpreter Assistants are now required to have a bachelor's degree; there are not many with this degree who are willing to be Interpreter Assistants. The Bureau Chief position will be open in April due to Kathy is retiring (Congratulations!) IT has been hired for DORS along with a Director of Planning and Emergency Readiness.
- The final structure of DORS remains in flux. There is a current organizational chart in place on the SRC report but the chart is most likely going to look different once the DORS structure has been finalized.

Committee Updates:

Business Partnership

- Roberta shared that the group did not meet but group members continue to make presentations about BRS; more information will come at the next meeting.

Consumer Satisfaction

- Jan attended the New Haven meeting, which allowed her to meet the staff and be aware of the challenges being faced. Multiple agencies and groups are discussed (plus there is food available), she is hopeful to go again and meet staff at another meeting. Jim encourages people to attend when they can and he expects to attend one soon, as well.

InterCouncil/Nominations

- There were four new members: Marisel DeCordova, Gary Prushko, Bruce Stovall, and Miriam Torres-Thorburn. There is no more news to report.

Legislative Policy and Planning

- There is no new information to report.

Consumer Issues:

Jim brought up the topic of JAWS. Governor Malloy shared that this program was helpful and Jim was wondering about licensing and availability for people: how can people get this for them? It was suggested to look at CT Tech Act program but are there other ways for this to occur? Perhaps look at the loan program for this ... it was suggested that if anyone knows resources that perhaps they could share the information - otherwise they should contact the CT Tech Act.

NEXT MEETING: March 19, 2014; 1:00-3:30 PM

Location is Office of Protection and Advocacy in Hartford (Sub-committee meeting may begin at noon – but other meetings and contact is suggested). There were hopes to dedicate a full hour to work on the State Plan and invite the new advocate, Jonathan Slifka, to speak.

Meeting was closed at 3:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Boudreau – SRC Secretary