



# *State Rehabilitation Council*

to the



Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

**Regular Meeting  
Minutes  
May 20, 2015 1pm-3:30pm  
60 B Weston Street  
Hartford, CT**

*Attendance:*

**SRC Members:** Ellen Econs, Chair; Marisel DeCardova Vice-Chair; Jim Quick, Treasurer; Tom Boudreau, Interim Secretary; Jan Hasenjager; Miriam Torres-Thorburn; Kate Travis & Kristen Winkle.

**Ex-Officio BRS Director:** Amy Porter – Commissioner of DORS.

**BRS Staff:** Lynn Frith, David Doukas & Evelyn Oliver Knight.

**Absent:** Tanisha Minnis & Gary Robinson.

**Excused:** Gary Prushko, Bruce Stovall, Warren Stamp, & Joe Wendover.

**Guests/ Volunteers:** Shannon McCann & David Morgana.

**Introductions** – Ellen welcomed everyone and introductions were completed.

- 1) Minutes** – Ellen asked everyone to review the minutes of January 21, 2015. Jim moved to approve minutes and seconded by Miriam: approved unanimously without any changes noted.
- 2) Budget** – Jim reviewed the budget. Jim moved to approve the budget and seconded by Marisel: approved unanimously without any changes noted.

### **3) Amy Porter BRS Director/Commissioner DORS –**

Amy presented a power point (PP) presentation on The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was signed into law 7/2014. The PP presentation was completed for the SRC with a focus on VR Program.

The changes to the VR program were effective upon implementation – with the law will be effective for six years. The law looked to align programs better with a unified strategic planning and a stronger emphasis on employment, career advancement and attainment of credentials (degrees/certificates, etc.).

Performance is another area of alignment with common performance measures discussed. Specific measures are completed for both Adults and Youth with disabilities and an overall emphasis remaining with a strong commitment toward supporting people with disabilities and employment.

Title IV of the Rehab Act was also reviewed. Employment is emphasized with different definitions established and with the understanding that businesses are a “customer” with the relationship being a focus – meeting needs on all levels. Students with disabilities who are graduating needing to be a focus – thus “Transition” has a new emphasis on students and youth with disabilities. The law requires VR programs to set aside 15% of the budget for specific services noted for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) such as: job exploration, inclusion into the work force, etc.

The VR state plan is going to be incorporated into a unified plan with other core partners that provide employment services and allotment dollars have allowed some flexibility. The “order of selection” may be reinstated and the SRC would be a part of the conversation if this moves forward.

Other components that will be addressed over time include: the qualification for VR Counselors; supported employment matters (can provide for service for longer periods of time); a focus on sub-minimum wage; and program transfers.

Getting an individualized plan for employment (IPE) can often take longer than the required 90-day limit. BRS must improve their record. BRS is encouraging counselors to take “risk taking” and moving forward with appropriate mini goals and amending a plan as needed, working toward the final goal.

Greater teaching and supports are required across the state with “no wrong door” – allowing people to advocate for themselves.

BRS has developed five workgroups to better prepare for the changes that will impact this VR program:

1. Performance Accountability
2. Dual Customer
3. Partnerships
4. Supported Employment
5. Transition

Discussion - It was agreed that this process is positive and a “reset” button on where we are headed as a state next. There are opportunities to be part of other programs/agencies in the state.

#### **4) BRS Updates - Dave Doukas shared other:**

- Staff updates – looking to refill most positions with three counselor vacancies noted. These are mostly federally funded positions so jobs are being filled even during the state “hiring freeze”. The Director of BRS position has been posted.
- Locations – several locations are being worked out with East Hartford being in place.
- Jim asked the question related to the different sets of policies between BESB and BRS – there are two different sets of policies. He wanted a discussion related to removal of “family contribution” piece with the college contributions around the

BESB application. It was offered that perhaps an Ad-Hoc committee between groups to address these types of matters may work.

5) **Consumer Services - CCSU Survey Services:** was reviewed. Ellen spoke about the ad-hoc consumer survey group and that the workgroups were beneficial and the final product positive. We need to send along the product developed and a larger conversation about getting something fielded.

6) **NCSRC Leadership Report** – Ellen opened up the conversation about the conference she attended. She mentioned that there was an emphasis about the membership and our need to add new members and look to strengthen the SRC. She shared that SRC state representatives spoke about concerns that related to their own states and we want to remain focused in a positive manner; we as a state are far along and aligned with the philosophies of WIOA.

7) **BRS/SRC Update** - Evelyn shared elements of the SRC and reviewed the new member training held earlier that morning. There is a need for a new Secretary. Tom nominated and Jan seconded Kristen Winkle (with a unanimous approval) to take on the responsibilities of Secretary next meeting.

Committees were discussed (all members to be part of a committee). The SRC By-laws will be reviewed (and may need to updated) by the Policies and Procedures Committee – forwarded by Evelyn.

8) Committee Updates:

#### *Business Partnership*

- There is no update for the committee did not meet. Kate Travis offered to be the chair of this committee and seconded by Marisel and appointed unanimously.

#### *Consumer Satisfaction*

- Jim – shared that the consumer survey will continue forward. The workgroup was able to come up with multiple questions and it was agreed that the survey should be continued.

#### *InterCouncil/Nominations*

- There is no update for the committee did not meet. Miriam Torres-Thorburn offered to be Chair and seconded by Jan.

There was a discussion about the need for members and diversity. There was a discussion about an invitational/recruitment special meeting so that current members could suggest/consider people that could come and share what the SRC is about – and then let them come to meeting following (June 17<sup>th</sup> is the next meeting with location to be determined). The 6/17 meeting will have a 12-1 pre-meeting and work group meeting (if needed) with hopes to recruit members (a review of the qualifications for the SRC was completed).

#### *Legislative, Policy and Planning*

- Marisel is the new chair – she reviewed elements of the goals and objectives to be addressed. There is no new information to report. The SRC By-Laws will be reviewed. Continue to monitor elements for tracking of what we have accomplished.

#### **9) Consumer Issues:**

Discussion – Durable medical equipment (DME) on reimbursement rates and services was discussed. The DME companies do not have weekend services. The SRC (Roberta) was trying to connect elements about DMEs and BRS (as it related to employment).

FYI - Three emergency readiness and preparedness trainings are occurring with UCCED. Evelyn will be forwarding the information.

**NEXT MEETING:** June 17, 2015; 1:00-3:30 PM

The location is to be determined.

Meeting was closed at 3:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Boudreau – SRC Secretary