



**State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
September 16, 2015
1:00 PM - 3:30 PM
ACES, Hamden**

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

SRC Members: Ellen Econs, Chair; Marisel DeCardova Vice-Chair; Patrick Melfi; David Morgana, Jr.; Gary Prushko; James Quick; Bruce Stovall; Miriam Torres-Thorburn; Kate Travis, Business Committee Chair; Joe Wendover (by phone); Kristen Winkle, Secretary;

Non-Voting Members: David Doukas, BRS Director & Warren Stamp, VR Counselor

BRS Staff: Evelyn Oliver Knight

Excused: Tom Boudreau, Jan Hasenjager, and Gary Robinson

Guests/ Volunteers: Andrea Richardson, Path; Shannon McCann, Southeastern Employment Services

Introductions: Ellen welcomed everyone and introductions were completed. Evelyn Oliver Knight introduced and welcomed VR Director David Doukas, refreshments were served to celebrate his new position. He spoke about his position and prior work with BRS with Amy Porter.

Minutes: Ellen Econs asked everyone to review the minutes from June 17, 2015. Minutes were reviewed, Committee Members accepted the minutes with the change of a member's name spelling.

Budget: Jim Quick: Reviewed budget report and mileage. Confirmed that the CCSU survey for BRS has been paid half already (survey is over \$17,000.00). There is a \$,2825.00 deficit and \$5,857.00 to move to survey line item. Transportation Services will come out of today. There was a Motion to move the other line items after today and all was in agreement. David Doukas asked about the \$2825.00 and confirmed that money isn't a problem; he inquired about the Grant budget. Evelyn will contact CCSU about the documentation. David Doukas will follow up with her about what will need to be asked. He asked for an estimate of what the SRC expenditure will be for the next year. Jim Quick asked about the \$24,350.00 budget, Evelyn said that it has been replicated; committees may want to do activities with some of the money. Evelyn commented that the Business Committee may like to be a part of an event that may cost some funds. Jim Quick noticed that the survey was a big chunk of money that is why we went over the budget. Ellen Econs commented that she would like to have the money in there in case an activity comes up that we may want to do. Evelyn said that we can't compare our budget to other state's budget, Jim inquired about this. It was confirmed that the SRC has to show what we are planning to do in the fiscal year and estimate how much it will cost, specific tasks, activities. For the SRC Budget for next year, David Doukas plans to put \$15,000. from one account of Federal Funds and \$10,000.00 **from another funding?** David Doukas asked about the survey and what are SRC's intentions with the results of the survey. Jim Quick talked about the State Plan, **RRA?** Fiscal and programmatic questions were asked. Andrea Richardson added that it would be nice if projects could come out of the results. David Doukas said that he wondered if we wanted to have a consultant, in regards to the result. Gary Prushko asked about the budget, carrying over the money and David Doukas said that it cannot be done. Any remaining money would go back in the VR budget for other expensed. Gary Prushko asked about, "air marking money." David Doukas said that it has to do with obligations and liquidations periods, paying for something you already got. Ellen Econs mentioned about the importance of not having a significant amount of money left over at the end of the year.

SRC Leadership – Ellen Econs, Chairperson: Ellen Econs said that the **NCSRC & CSAVR** conferences will be held in Seattle, WA. Evelyn, Marisel DeCordova and Dave Doukas are going. Jim Quick asked about the program. National Coalition of State Rehab Councils invite SRC's to come to share information about their state and to learn how SRC's operate in other states. For example, the SRC meeting in Alaska is a 2 or 3 day event because of how big the state is. Members travel a long distance for the meeting and need hotel/airfare. Here, all meeting locations are within 2 hours. It was confirmed that all SRC's have the same guidelines. We are fortunate to have someone from the VR program to talk to us, some states don't have that interaction at all and they can share helpful information. With their states, **CSAVR**, the entire Directors of the VR's around the country's objective is WIOA. Evelyn Oliver Knight will be attending this for the week for the conference. She will learn lots of information to bring back for the VR program. Conference has grown over the years. Ellen commented that not everyone has a SRC Liaison, the geography is different. It's a great opportunity to network with others. This conference is mandatory. In April/Spring there is a NCSRC and CSAVR meeting in **Bethesda, MD**. It is an enhancement. Because of Connect-Ability, CT is in a good position. Ellen said that she thinks WIOA will enhance what we are doing.

Calendar for next year: next SRC Meeting: 11/18/15: Location TBD. Ellen asked about the day/time works for everyone. Miriam Torres-Thorburn commented about wanting to meet later due to she has to take time off from work or a conference call. Reviewed that committee meetings meet at 12:00 noon, before the SRC Meeting and this helps. Evelyn wants the meetings to rotate around the state because we need to show we are in different communities around the state and no one member has to do all the traveling. Meeting dates go on the Governor's Calendar. Keep the Wednesday the same. Talk to Evelyn if you need help finding a location for the Committee meetings. Talk amongst committee members if you have to meet at a different time, speak to your Chair Person to make arrangements. Chose the dates for SRC Meetings in 2016: 1/13, 3/9, 5/11, 6/29, 9/14, 11/9.

BRS Update – Dave Doukas: WIOA is dominating the focus of VR right now. There is a Steering Committee of all the core partners for the work done in the past six months for WIOA, in regards to reviewing the law and the implementation of it. The steering committee includes work groups to address specific issues across agency concerns: **Service Design and Delivery Work Group; Employer Engagement Work Group; and**

Technology, Data, Outcomes Work Group. For the consumer there are One Stop Centers and Employer Engagement Committee. Strategies are formulated in the community due to the many helpers and clients involved for it to be efficient and cost effective. Talked about how VR is different and related to WIOA. He and Evelyn are working on the State Plan and the need to do a Unified Plan with the State Agencies. There is a change in what was traditionally written and there are still a lot of questions. RSA is going to go further with how the law will work.

BRS developed work groups to address how WIOA would impact the VR program: Performance Accountability; Dual customer; Partnerships; Supported Employment and Transition. Some of this is new to us and it positions us to think about what we need to be mindful of, now we are in implementation stage. WIOA requires 15 % Federal funding to be spent on Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS), it has to be expended for students 16 to 21 years old. We have to align with that and have a plan. Recently, we went through the federal re-allotment (CT gets \$18 million/year, 21 % of Fed grant; req. you have to apply consistently the same to the program every year. They cut money this year. As a state, we are overmatched, when re-allotment money is available we can pursue it. We have been taking on enough money to make sure we can spend it and we are a “cash rich” program. The budget runs from Oct. 1 – Sept. 30. David predicts budget out for four years. Sustaining people is important. If states don’t meet their match they have to give back the grant. Over the last five years, we have brought in \$30 million for voc. rehab. We have had to move forward with a plan of how we will use the money.

Today notice was sent to BRS Counselors, offering a reassignment to work only in schools for pre-employment to transition (PETS). This is a shift from how funding works and it will be at the expense of other services. WIOA is for individuals eligible and those potentially eligible. With transition cases, they start earlier and last longer; therefore, they are more expensive. SRC Member brought up the concern of less BRS Counselors working with Adult Consumers due to Transition Counselors. Shannon McCann, brought up that her agency has assisted students before graduation to get them into jobs. The plan is for Adult Counselors to work with Transition Counselors for the transition of services for the hand-off of cases, we are trying to maintain Adult Services with this. This isn’t an option, we are driven by Federal money, and it provides a wonderful opportunity. Patrick Melfi mentioned what school systems are obligated to pay for, they have been inquiring about other systems to pay for it. Andrea Richardson asked if there is a filter, in regards to the population we serve and who we

have to make it available to. To be eligible consumers have to have a disability. If it is a DDS disability they would be able to assist the individual more. DMHAS and DDS are still collaborating; this gets them to work with more kids in schools earlier. We are going to look to conform to WIOA and realize the mandate of WIOA.

VR Report, successful closures, annual goal 1,409, end of August, 1,267 closures, steady climb over the years. Rehab rate, target 55.8 % get closed successfully, they are at 61.1 %. Production oriented is the number of people in the system throughout the year. Total of 8,387 growth mode, increased application, new applications 7.2 %, 31 % plans wrote. Member asked about college funding assistance, BRS doesn't usually assist with that. On-the-job training would be something they would help with. Ellen Econs said, to consider the jobs out there for what the individual wants to go to school for. Member questioned about BRS not paying for college. Dave Doukas spoke about WIOA, Education Advancement and Post Program. Talked about performance accountability, the counselors are going to say what are you going to do to advance your school. Patrick Melfi, brought up Post Employment Services, opening up some other avenues. Member asked about money for people getting a successful vehicle, Dave Doukas brought up that at Easter Seals an individual received assistance with the successful vehicle training. They found someone for Easter Seals to use as a consultant. Member brought up that if individuals live near public transportation they don't help with it. Gary Prushko brought up that that in 2008 it took a lot to get a van. Dave Doukas talked about in 2007-2008 BRS was running out of money. He said that there were major ticket items that they had to take a look at. This became where the public transportation policy was stricter. Currently there are 67 active BRS Counselors, some have an average case load of 73 or 100 consumers. Services for minorities and percentages were brought up; they are grouping two different numbers, about an 80 % ratio between the two. Minority rate passed this year. Members questioned about how many counselors are minorities, Evelyn said that may not necessarily be a factor in the outcomes, Ellen Econs commented that it could be culture or outreach. Marisel DeCardova, noted that there is a Spanish counselor. David Doukas talked about Affirmative Action and how they are diversely changed. Warren Stamp commented about how he thinks that the WIOA plans will give us an opportunity to funnel back that we can help people with training. David Doukas said that On-the-Job Training has been very successful. Leading types of Employment Outcomes for consumers, Transition Age Youth Timed Plan, requested that a plan is written in 90 days, they are at 72 % for the plan, this is progress, and was sited previously. How they are performing, note

statistics from Federal Program Goals. In regards to cases, hours worked per week 40 % of cases, 40 or more hours, 30 % 18 – 30 hrs. a week at case closing.

SRC Update: Evelyn Oliver Knight: List provided of members and contact info. Dave Doukas welcomed. The SRC is required to vote for officers. An office may be held for two terms. Nominations: Ellen Econs: Chair, Marisol DeCordova: Vice Chair, Treasurer: Gary Prushko, Secretary: Kristen Winkle.

Under WIOA, the DOL is in charge of the State Plan for us. We have to work with other state agencies have to have a Unified State Plan. Workforce Investment Board is in charge, Amy Porter will be at their meeting. We are supposed to have a member from Workforce Investment on the SRC. There was one person who was going to be a member but, it didn't go through. Evelyn will continue to pursue this. We have to be part of the meetings and get the State Plan done. A Unified State Plan is the different parties interweaving of the State Plan. Packets were given at the meeting is from the Feds. Representatives from senior partners are embracing the new State Plan. The part that we are responsible for starts on page 11, letter "a", Voc. Rehab section of this plan. State Rehab contributes to this plan. Input is needed from the SRC; it is a culmination of everything over the year and what was presented by David Doukas and Amy Porter. It is important to attend meetings and read what Evelyn sends. A while ago, there was a recommendation on signage; Dave Doukas has been following up. Information is due from the SRC by 10/13/15. Ellen Econs scheduled a meeting for the State Plan. A motion was made for the meeting to be on Wednesday, 9/30/15 at 9 AM, at CVH in Page Hall. For individuals who can't attend Evelyn will send out an email for them to give their input plan. The Unified State Plan gets submitted to the Feds March 3, 2016. She recommended following what was done before, in regards to a format. Dave Doukas, will be in the chair to respond to recommendations. Evelyn forgot mileage sheet, she will email it to those who need it. There will be a Public Meeting in January. Each SRC member needs to go to at least one public meeting **a year**.

Committee Reports

- **Business Committee, Kate Travis; Chairperson:** Last meeting discussed doing an event w/ CT SHRM- Society for Human Resources Management. Instead they will be presenting at CTBLN in Nov. 19 at CT Care, Farmington, hosted by Deb Erickson. Mark Henry & Carrie Fradette will be

attending. Warren Stamp will be attending the Step Up conference in New Milford, CT, tonight representing the Business Committee, it will be a good collaboration. Joe Wendover mentioned the ADA Legacy will stop in Windsor at Walgreens for an opportunity for individuals to walk through the bus, he noted that it is a moving monument.

- **Consumer Satisfaction:** Updates: CCSU noted that there are bad phone numbers, new numbers have been sent. They are working on report for 10/14/15. Confirmed that the CCSU survey for BRS has been paid half already (survey is over \$17,000.00). Confirmed that they are making phone calls, 180 calls have been completed. The deadline for completion of the survey is 10/14/15. They are reporting the expenses. It was brought up about receiving documentation about the work they have been doing by 9/30/15 for reporting and accounting perspective. Again, it was confirmed that money for the survey won't be an issue. Evelyn will contact CCSU about the documentation. David Doukas will follow up with her about what will need to be asked. Looking for a new chair for the committee and Jan Hasenjager's term will be up soon, too.
- **Inter Council Nominations:** Mariam Torres-Thorburn, Chairperson, Newly elected to the committee, welcomed new faces. She may have a person interested in Parent Advocacy, a minority and a business person. The committee has two new members, Patrick Melfi and Bruce Stovall.
- **Legislation:** No news to report since last meeting.

Current SRC Stats: 13: Current SRC Members; 9 Voting Members present today.

Consumer Issues: Dave Morgana brought up the issue of wheelchair vendors not open on weekends and to possibly offer emergency services. Discussed how if a wheelchair is broken, it effects the daily routine and life, in general, for an individual. Medical issues may occur for example, the individual may have to stay in bed for days, get sores, then go into a nursing facility. If a chair breaks on a Friday night, an individual can't get around and can't talk to anyone until Monday. It was mentioned that CT Rehab used to do something but, the two big companies in the state aren't doing anything. Gary Prushko said that they don't come out unless they are in your area. Jim Quick noted that Roberta Hurley brought this up, in regards to people that work and how it would be an emergency situation because,

they have to get to work. Andrea Richardson asked if there is a reason there are only two vendors and it was mentioned that there are more vendors. Shannon McCann asked about hospital avenues and it was noted in the discussion that hospital don't deal with this. Having a Consultant and Independent Living programs were brought up but, if you get a chair from a vendor then there are liability issues. Andrea Richardson mentioned maybe an incentive can be given to the vendor. It was noted that insurance usually pays the vendor. Ellen Econs brought up having loaners for chairs in a place. Dave talked about how that can raise issues. Dave asked about any legislation to vendors, Jim Quick said that Federal Aid, comes up when you can get new chairs, every five years for manual and ten years for powered. Contracts for vendors can have requirements for the vendors. Jim Quick said that insurance companies say that if Medicare denies it, insurance denies it.

Evelyn: Reported that Emma Knudson received the SRC Scholarship this summer during the CT-YLP Luncheon at UCONN, Storrs. She and Ellen attended the luncheon.

Next Meeting Wednesday, 11/18/15, 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM, location TBD

Meeting was closed at 3:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen L. Winkle – SRC Secretary