



State Rehabilitation Council
to the
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services



Minutes of the September 21, 2011 Meeting

**ACES, 205 Skiff Street
Hamden, CT**

Attendance

Present

SRC Members: Jan Hasenjager, Roberta Hurley, Sandra Inzinga, Mary Pierson Keating, Barbara Konow, George Narvaez, Jim Quick, John F. Sims, and Janette Williams

BRS Staff: Kathy Blewett, Evelyn Oliver Knight, and Amy Porter

Volunteers: Gladys Brooks, Jennifer Held

Excused

SRC Members: Sharon Denson, Michele Fontaine, Sarah Harvey, and Victor Xavier

Volunteers: Laura Micklus

Absent

Simone Mason

****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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Chairperson Mary Pierson Keating called the meeting to order shortly after 1:00 PM.

All attendees introduced themselves. The minutes of the July SRC meeting were approved.

SRC Program Update – Evelyn Oliver Knight:

1. In an effort for SRC members to well-informed about BRS, Evelyn continued her review of sections of the State Plan which had been e-mailed in advance of the meeting for review. Evelyn completed the review of Attachment 4.10 which had been started at the July meeting; the RSA IM giving instructions for the required information that needed to be included in the State Plan; Attachment 4.11c which identified the Goals and Priorities that BRS would strive to achieve in the subsequent year; and Attachment 4.11d which identified the Strategies to achieve the Goals and Priorities listed in 4.11c. Questions were asked about staffing issues that were included in Attachment 4.10. Evelyn reminded members that the State Plan is the contract between BRS and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) which gives BRS funds to run the VR and Supported Employment programs.
2. The SRC Chairperson and the Committee Chairpersons are asked to submit their drafts of the SRC 2011 Annual Report to Evelyn by October 15. Evelyn will plan to have the drafts available for review at the November SRC meeting. The Annual Report is due in December. Please see the SRC 2010 Annual Report to report progress on goals and identify issues that may have hindered progress. Please meet with your committee members to discuss goals for 2012. Goals should be tied into the SRC Strategic Plan and BRS Goals and Priorities
3. The Governor's Gender and Racial Composition Report is due October 1, 2011. Evelyn asked everyone to review the SRC Member Demographics Report so that the Governor's report would be accurate. Information on the Demographics Report was pulled for individual applications at time of appointment.
4. The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) is scheduled to be completed in March 2013. BRS is developing a contract with the Center on Aging at the UCONN Health Center to conduct the CSNA. Following RSA's guidance for information to be included, target areas have been identified for UCONN to solicit feedback: consumers whose cases were closed without successful employment, counselors, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs); and key informants. SRC members will also be a target audience in a focus group and will be asked to review and evaluate all survey tools used to solicit feedback from the target audiences. This

work will be conducted between October 2011 and March 2013. In addition, UCONN will review information gathered from the Medicare Infrastructure Grant (MIG) for Connect-Ability and any other surveys or reports that can be included in the CSNA. SRC members are asked to stay tuned for these opportunities to review and evaluate.

5. BRS is planning to participate in a regional survey being led by Maine. Active consumers will be asked questions about their satisfaction with services in the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. CT will also plan to ask some state-specific questions. This will be an opportunity to compare results to a survey last conducted in CT in 2003 AND will be an opportunity to compare answers to consumers from other states in the New England region. The climate for VR is different from the climate in 2003 and current VR issues and solutions can be compared across the region. This information is also timely as we prepare for the CSNA mentioned above.

SRC Chairperson's Update – Mary Pierson Keating

1. Mary & Evelyn participated in the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) teleconference on September 20. Strategy was discussed on the best way to use time at the two national conferences when SRC leaders join with the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). An extra day has been added to the October meeting for the NCSRC to meet with RSA.
2. RSA has posted the monitoring results of 10 states on www.rsa.ed.gov. Members may review this if they want to see the kind of evaluation included in the Site Monitoring.
3. The NCSRC wants to use the 36th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues: The State Rehabilitation Council-Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership to improve the SRC/VR partnerships. Evelyn distributed copies to SRC members that had just been purchased.
4. Mary shared her frustration with the response to her attempts to secure an accessible room at the hotel for the upcoming NCSRC/CSAVR conference. Sandy shared some issues she had encountered and believes educating the staff about the different disabilities and the ways to accommodate them all are needed for each location.

Treasurer's Report – Michele Fontaine

1. Michele was not in attendance but had reviewed the budget prior to the meeting. As of the September report, the fiscal year will end September 30 with the SRC using 49% of its \$24,350 budget.

2. Amy reminded committees to develop plans and a budget tied to the goals of the SRC and BRS in order to spend wisely, not just spend because funds are available.

BRS Update –Amy Porter

1. Amy stated that no director had yet been designated for the new **Bureau of Rehabilitative Services**. However, BRS has had meetings regarding the structure of the new agency and will assume interim supervision of smaller entities joining the new Bureau. BRS may consider a name change to avoid confusion with the new Bureau of Rehabilitative Services. Amy answered questions about the upcoming merger to the best of her ability with limited information.
2. The Middletown and Stamford offices did not close because the budget passed with the unions. Enfield staff is temporarily working out of the Hartford office. They were previously housed with the DSS staff which moved to a smaller location. Amy anticipates this situation will be corrected.
3. BRS is seeking approval to fill vacant positions, including nine counselor positions. AS BRS positions are federally funded, Amy does not foresee any reason these positions will not be filled.
4. Rather than tackle a full-blown Prep Rally, staff in the Western Region opted to host hiring events where consumers spend the morning revising resumes and preparing for interviews. Employers with actual jobs were invited to interview for consumers who were deemed ready. One event took place in Stamford and one was scheduled for Torrington.
5. BRS will also have Employment Partnerships with Home Goods Distribution Center, Lowes Distribution Center, the Mohegan Sun Casino, and Walgreens Retail to hire VR consumers. Three CRPs (Community Enterprises, Quinnebaug Valley, and Southeastern Employment Services) are also involved in this partnership.

Committee Reports

Business Partnership Committee – Roberta Hurley:

Roberta reported this committee would work on a new goal of connecting with vendors through Arlene Lugo and look at customer service and staffing needs for emergency services.

Consumer Satisfaction – Barbara Konow:

Barbara reported that she is retiring after 30 years of state service. ☹️☹️☹️☹️

The committee is waiting for the final office survey from Norwich. In general, areas of concern included the following: Bridgeport – directional signage and automatic door; Stamford – no signage, not enough parking for accessible parking; Danbury – signage, parking was confusing, no accessible parking, first floor entrance, but counselor has to come down, distributed brochure that was poorly produced. Discussion about lack of signage and Amy stated that hopefully this would change when they became a new agency. Discussion about space and being co-located in the DSS and CT Works offices. John stated that this has been an ongoing issue and Amy said that hopefully with the new universal design being proposed by DSS we would see some changes. Jim offered to assume the chairperson duties for this committee.

Nominations – John F. Sims:

Evelyn reported that appointments are still pending from the Governor's office and distributed a report indicating all the anticipated vacancies. John will work with Evelyn to develop a plan to recruit new members. Sandy indicated that the November meeting will be her last meeting. Mick Posner has withdrawn his name from consideration for appointment to the SRC as the VR counselor; Warren Stamp will attend the November meeting to see if he can fulfill this role. All committees need more members.

Legislative, Policy, and Planning – George Narvaez:

George plans to work on the State Plan and the CSNA and may outreach to policy makers and legislators. He is also interested in connecting with other SRC and to get the word out about VR and the importance of the SRC. He is interested in posting a "Consumer Bill of Rights in the VR offices as a way to publicize about SRCs. He will work with Evelyn to follow-up on this idea.

Consumer Issues:

There were no consumer issues.

Other:

- Sandy presented information about the Connecticut Association of the Deaf and the upcoming conference. She had hoped the SRC would sponsor a booth, as we had done previously. However, as no one was available to staff the booth, the SRC voted to buy a full-page ad (\$75-\$125 depending on availability of targeted pages). Evelyn will draft the ad to recruit new members and process the request for payment. The event is October 14-15, 2011.
- Sandy asked Kathy about the status of the video phones for BRS staff to communicate with consumers who are deaf. Kathy reported there are still technical difficulties, but they are being addressed. Since DMHAS has recently installed video phones, Kathy is hopeful that their success can be shared with the IT department to enable BRS to be successful as well. Sandy offered to draft a letter to DSS Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby about the video phones as this is Deaf Awareness Week.
- Jan announced the Joy of Art fundraiser for the Hospital for Special Care, New Britain Thursday, September 29th, 6-8 PM. There will be a juried art show, food, beer, wine, soda & a great time! RSVP by 9/26/11 @ 860-827-1958 x5220.
- Mary and Amy presented a certificate to Barbara Konow to acknowledge her contributions to the SRC as her retirement from work also retires her from the SRC. Barbara was the Client Assistance Program representative to the SRC. In her job, she helped consumers who had questions about actions/decisions taken by BRS. Congratulations, Barbara!

Meeting adjourned about 3:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted: Roberta Hurley

FYI: The next meeting is November 16 at the Office and Protection & Advocacy, 60B Weston Street, Hartford.