



State Rehabilitation Council
to the
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services



November 16, 2011 Minutes
Office of Protection and Advocacy
Hartford, CT

Attendance

Present

SRC Members: Sharon Denson, Michele Fontaine, Sarah Harvey, Roberta Hurley, Sandra Inzinga, Mary Pierson Keating, George Narvaez, Jim Quick, John F. Sims, and Victor Xavier

Ex-officio: Amy Porter

BRS Staff: Kathy Blewett & Evelyn Oliver Knight

Volunteers: Laura Micklus, Linda Mizzi, Warren Stamp

Excused

SRC Members:

Volunteers:

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 at 1:00 PM.

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

SRC Program Update: Evelyn Oliver Knight: Evelyn talked about the Technical Assistance Circular issued from RSA October 21, 2011 clarifying 14 SRC-related issues. Evelyn sent the circular in an email and it was included in the meeting packet. While everyone had been asked to review this circular, Evelyn highlighted several sections including:

- SRCs are required for states to obtain funding for the administration and operation of the VR program
- The VR director is an ex-officio member;
- SRC minimum number of members is 15;
- Term limits cannot be exceeded until a member's replacement has been appointed (as we have been doing);
- The Governor may delegate appointments to remaining SRC members to fill a vacancy once original appointment has been made

While most of the points were not news, Evelyn will seek clarification on information and will get back to us. Evelyn would like everyone to review and ask questions if they do not understand. Evelyn and Amy spoke about their concerns with the confusion of appointments as our membership number is dangerously low. This circular makes clear that the ending date of a term stated in the letter must be followed.

Sandy asked if maybe we should bring this up to the National SRC. Mary stated that she brought this up at the NSRC meeting also. Amy stated what she got from other state directors is that we were better off not pushing this. Amy suggested that we change the process so we are ahead of it.

Mary asked John his opinion of what we need to do to get more nominations. John stated that they would send out letters to people that are needed. Roberta stated that the Business Partnership Committee has as one of its goals to get business people on the SRC. Evelyn also asked everyone on the SRC to get people to come and sit in on SRC meetings. Mary said that other states ask VR Counselors to look for people to join the SRC and Evelyn stated that she already does that. Mary stated that maybe we need to step that up.

The next section of **State Plan** that SRC members should review is Evaluation and Report on Progress [Attachment 4.11(e)(2)]. This section contains a report of the items RSA requires of us and any additional programmatic successes we want to highlight.

The contract with UCONN for the **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)** is working its way through the system. Evelyn discussed the grid in SRC packet that is the timeline for the Statewide Needs Assessment. Evelyn will email the evaluations to us for review, comment and response as they become available. BRS is still in a holding pattern for the Regional Survey.

Thanks to committee chairs for submitting your committee reports for the **SRC Annual Report**. All goals for 2012 are in the packet. Any questions in the committee report please let Evelyn know. The SRC Scholarship recipient has a page. Remaining pages will include charts and data from BRS.

We normally hold election of officers at this meeting but we did not have nominations at the last meeting. Evelyn opened the floor for nominations:

Chairperson: Mary Keating

Vice Chairperson: Victor Xavier

Secretary: Roberta Hurley

Treasurer: Michelle Fontaine

Nominations can be made from the floor at the January meeting prior to voting.

In preparation for inclement weather, Evelyn proposes we do a webinar for the January meeting. Typically we do training for new members in the morning and meet in the afternoon. We need to split the day into two meeting dates as it would be a long day using the Webinar. January meeting will be on January 25, 2012. Evelyn invited everyone to the new member training and explained what happens in the training. New Member training date will be announced at a later date.

Calendar of Meeting Dates 2012

January 25th - Webinar

March 21st

May 16th

July 18th

September 19th

November 14th (cake and ice cream and orange soda for Amy's birthday)

SRC Chairperson's Update – Mary Pierson Keating

- # Mary updated us on the National meeting in Arizona. The two hot topics are school to work transition and changes to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Mary included that another discussion was about nominations be incorporate in to the Rehabilitation Act. A member may not serve on the council once the term is expired as the position is considered vacant and therefore do not have any voting authority. Discussion about having a staff person who only works on the SRC. Came up with that this should be the choice of the SRC.
- # A lot of discussion about changes to the Rehabilitation Act as they are trying to get it reauthorized.
- # Discussion about Ticket to Work and Partnership Plus. Discussion about Employment Networks and VR working together. Questions about Ticket and suggestion made to invite Nora Bishop to come to SRC to discuss the ticket.
- # www.ncsrc.net www.yourtickettowork.net
- # Mary discussed how Safeway in Arizona has been working with people with disabilities and did a video on what a benefit that was.
- # Journal of Rehabilitation July/August 2012 Volume 77 has an article about cost savings of hiring people with disabilities.
- # Mary then spoke about transition services and discussion at the conference about who is responsible for funding students. The VR folks said that the more they do then the Dept of Ed steps out. CSAVR has a position on this and Amy stated that she has the position paper on this and she will get to us.
- # Sarah explained that the State Department of Education does hold the local schools accountable for providing services to people with disabilities. Sarah explained how the Individual Education Plan (IEP) has a portion that is about post graduation and there are related goals and annual objectives around this area for transition. There has been talk about when Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is reauthorized that they may bump the age down to 14. Here in CT they have bumped up those services through the age of 21. Dept of Ed has been working with the adult agencies for many years and they do have a good working relationship.

- # Mary mentioned that the pink paper in the packet gives an overview of transition services. Mary also mentioned how important it is that people have advocacy when they are adults to receive the services they need.
- # Mary discussed how one state had a teacher internship program where teachers were working closely with VR counselors and transition counselors. This was a great program as the teachers learned about what VR did and helped them to write better goals.
- # Warren Stamp stated VR Counselors having a good relationship with the schools makes a big difference. It is difficult as this is dependent on relationships so if the teacher or the VR counselor changes then the goals change.
- # During telephone conference yesterday, there are two new training modules for the SRC's. There is also a task force for the language of the reauthorization of the act and all the states are not agreeing on the changes.
- # Jim gave the update about Accessible Taxi Permits. All 140 applications were turned down as not showing a need. Met with the governor's office at CCPA and will be taking action. This is an ADA violation as it is denying accessible transportation. MV1 is very impressive taxi cab that is accessible. This was ignited through Connect-Ability as they did focus groups to see if there was a need and Metro Taxi took it by the horns and are putting up 5 million dollars to do this. Jim sent Evelyn a lot of information. Great article in the Connecticut Mirror today that explains everything and all the contact information to get involved. There was discussion led by Amy about the article and she made the suggestion about addressing the issues that were brought up against this idea. Much discussion around this issue. SRC voted that we should be involved and Evelyn is going to send us the information so we can take action.

Treasurer Report (Michele)

Michele outlined everything on the yellow sheet and discussed funds not being spent. Michele made a motion to pass our 2011 budget and it was approved.

Amy Update

- # Not a lot of new information about the consolidation.
- # Still have Commissioner Bremley as Acting Director.
- # No closed offices.

- ✚ Finally able to post again, current postings for nine counselor positions and three more positions coming. Full support to rehire for all positions, so BRS is in the process of hiring.
- ✚ We have Video Phones in most offices!!! All staff that is deaf has a videophone.
- ✚ Enfield staff is currently working out of a conference room in Hartford office. Amy expects the Enfield staff will be moving very soon.
- ✚ Mary asked if CT put in any recommendations or positions for the new Rehabilitation Act and Amy stated that CT position is consistent with CSVAR.

Committee Reports:

Consumer Satisfaction Committee (Jim)

Jim reported that we have the results in our packet from the office visits that Jan had compiled. The committee still needs to conduct the survey of one office. Once we have that we will have the comprehensive report.

Business Partnership Committee (Roberta)

Update on goals and our upcoming Webinar with Arlene Lugo. Sharon, Michele and Laura will join us on the Webinar. Roberta will schedule time with the committee members to discuss other goals.

Intercouncil Nomination (John)

Discussion about getting more members based on the needed vacancies. Need to do outreach to agencies.

Legislation Policy and Planning (George)

The committee is working on the Bill of Rights for people with disabilities. Not in a legal manner but just to outline what is needed. Include being a member of the SRC in the Bill of Rights. Jim suggested he could put this on his newsletter that goes out to 700 members. Sharon Dennison asked the SRC to keep track of the pending PCA Legislation. A lot of discussion around this and Sharon explained it to everyone.

Next meeting date : January 25th, 2012 via webinar

Meeting adjourned about 3:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted: *Roberta Hurley*