



**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

To work with ORS assuring that all Rhode Islanders with disabilities are able to obtain and keep meaningful and satisfying employment.

**Full Council Minutes February 28, 2012
4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.**

Department of Labor and Training ~ 1151 Pontiac Avenue ~ Cranston, RI 02920

Present from Council: Janice Belasco, Bryant Berganza, Christine Botts, Stephen Brunero, Rocco Bruno, Wheeler Clemmons, Kelley Conti, Laurie DiOrio, Joan Fino, Kathleen Grygiel, Margaret Hoye, Aracelis Maria, Doreen McConaghy, Dan Pieroni, Ronald Racine, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Juan Troncoso, Willa Truelove, Herbert Weiss, Kim Wennermark, **Guests:** Liz Graves

Call to Order - Catherine Sansonetti, the Secretary, called the meeting to order. Quorum met.

Additions/Deletions to Agenda - There were none.

Approval of Minutes – Motion to accept the October 18, 2011 meeting minutes was unanimously approved.

Chair's Report – Catherine Sansonetti Reports for Chair:

- The Chair, Kate McCarthy-Barnett, attended a conference call with Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) – RSA funds ORS and as part of monitoring the Agency they seek input from the SRC. They were pleased with the collaboration the Council has with ORS staff. They recommended increased advocacy from the SRC to help fill the vacancies ORS has. They want ORS and the SRC to do more targeted outreach for minority communities. SRC will participate in the site visit the RSA will conduct at ORS in March.
- Annual Breakfast Meeting is May 8th and we want everyone to attend. We will be inviting former members to the meeting so that they can be honored for their commitment to the Council.
- State Plan Public Hearing is on Thursday May 17, 2012 from 3:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. in the large meeting room (Rm 101) at the Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick RI.

ORS Report – Steve Brunero Reports:

- Budget – Cutbacks proposal to eliminate dental services for adults on Medicaid to save 2 million, also BHDDH developmental disabilities and behavioral health care are experiencing cut backs. There is a concerted effort to reduce government spending, and including cutback on personnel which can result in less services to consumers. Every dollar invested in VR brings back over seven into the economy; VR is a revenue-enhancing program. Advocacy from the SRC highlighting these items will be important as we move forward to continued services for those with disabilities; in the past the SRC has done this with positive results.
- ORS Office Location – ORS will stay at 40 Fountain Street in Providence. A ten-year lease has been approved. It was important that we remained at this location, near RIPTA, Kennedy Plaza, and on bus routes for our consumers and because we have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to make the building accommodating to our staff and consumers. We are also looking at possibly opening up some space on the first floor to make it easier for consumers when they arrive.
- New MIS System – Ron Racine has worked to put a new MIS system in place. We have purchased 50 laptops to connect with the system when Rehabilitation Counselors are in the field; which will help speed up service delivery to consumers. The new MIS system will allow for greater ease with tracking and statistics.
- We received unmatched re-allotment, money from the RSA; 5 million dollars, to support our programs and kick start three new Innovation and Expansion areas. 1. Asperger's Syndrome; there is a lack of vendors and community education, we had focus groups with RIPIN and other partners and we have developed a new initiative and are almost ready to send out documentation to our partners. 2. Central Fall Transition Program. 3. RI Works, ORS is working with DHS and Goodwill Industries to help consumers move towards employment with a new partnership. We are making a commitment to assign a Rehabilitation Counselor, DHS and Goodwill Industries have identified liaisons to this project, and we will pilot more cohesive ways to partner and form a coordinated comprehensive program to meet the needs of consumers moving towards employment.
- Personnel - We have lost 21 people due to retirements throughout ORS, some due to transfers and pension reform initiatives; some of our new Counselors have retired because of the pension reform changes. We did hire a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and a Case-Aid position recently. However one of them was a promotion so we still have a back fill opening for that position. We currently have two postings for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.
- Legislation – A bill for Personal Care Attendants looks to ORS to manage this program which would have a big impact on the Agency. We felt that in spirit it was a good bill but we need to have additional funding in order to meet the requirements. Another bill

for Adaptive Telephone Equipment Program – is an in house program with ORS. We would like to change the language to include consumers with cell phones because so many have them now.

- Employment First - Christine Botts reports:
Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) - Employment First is a United States Department of Labor's initiative to facilitate the full inclusion of people with the most significant disabilities in the workplace and community. Under the Employment First approach, community-based, integrated employment is the first option for employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities. Rhode Island is applying to be a mentor protégé state. Each state selected will receive funding to assist them to develop and implement their strategic plan and will have access to on-site, customized technical assistance from national subject-matter experts to help them achieve their goals. In addition the states will be able to discuss their progress with other states who are working in this area through regularly scheduled Community-of-Practice teleconference calls.
- May Breakfast –May 8th. We might have some of our staff come and talk about the Program.
- State Plan Public Hearing is Thursday May 17, 2012 from 3:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. @ the Warwick Public Library.
- SRC Training - Technical Assistance Circular. It talks about the SRC responsibilities imbedded in the Rehab Act. Among its responsibilities, the SRC reviews, evaluates and advises the Agency regarding its performance and effectiveness in the delivering of services and the effect of service provisions in the achievement of employment outcome for people with disabilities. Additionally the SRC ensures that the voice of the community of stakeholders is heard as agencies develop and implement policies and procedures that directly impact individuals served by the VR Agency. The SRC brings together a variety of individuals with disabilities, disability groups, VR professional, services providers and leaders in the community including those representing business, industry and labor.
- Discussion about disbanding Employment and Transportation committees and replacing them with Transition and Outreach to under-served populations, marketing, targeting populations we want to connect with.
- RSA will be here for 107 monitoring on March 26 for a week.

State Plan, ORS and the SRC – Kathleen Grygiel & Catherine Sansonetti report: Handouts disseminated (attached)

The State Plan, Policy and Quality Control committee will be meeting on Wednesday May 2, 2012 at 4:00 P.M. at ORS 5th floor conference room located at 40 Fountain Street in Providence, anyone not on this committee who wants to sit in can. If you cannot make it you can make comments on the State Plan before the public hearing by sending them to Catherine Sansonetti @ csansonetti@ridlc.org or Kate McCarthy-Barnett @ kmccarthybarnett@verizon.net. If you cannot make it you can make comments on the State Plan and we will incorporate your thoughts.

Every year ORS in collaboration with the SRC must update our State Plan for the upcoming fiscal year by June 30th. We want to talk about what is in the Plan. The Plan is a large document, organized in attachments and at times it can be overwhelming, so we thought it would be helpful to highlight key components. We want to highlight some of the attachments. We rely heavily on goals and objectives in the Plan that are driven by the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, which is done every three years. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment is intended to identify the needs of underserved populations so ORS can do a better job addressing them.

In particular, when we submit the State Plan draft attachment 4.2 (c), it is totally dependent on the SRC review. The SRC reviews the draft and presents concerns or questions highlighting areas of interest. The input provided by the SRC, including recommendations from the Council's Annual Report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports is then addressed in the Plan. Catherine Sansonetti gave a few examples of comments the SRC made last year on the Plan and how they were addressed. She emphasized the need for participation from all members of the Council; welcoming a fresh set of experiences and input. The SRC role can be to raise questions, highlight areas of interest or concern and then ORS can respond.

Attachment 4.11 (c) (1) - The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the Performance Standards and Indicators, and on other feedback from RSA monitoring visit. ORS priorities are to increase successful outcomes from year to year and statistical evaluation of those outcomes.

Timeline – Draft on April 23rd to SRC. Meeting to review Plan on May 2nd. Comment in by May 11th or by the Public Hearing on May 17th.

Public Comments – None

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy L. Baker

Nancy L. Baker, Facilitator, SRC