



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
Department of Human Services  
Office of Rehabilitation Services  
**STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**



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

**SRC Meeting October 11, 2016**  
**New England Institute of Technology Warwick, RI**  
**4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.**

Present: Christina Battista, Peggy Benz, Rocco Bruno, Cynthia Cote, Lea Colardo, Linda Deschenes, Joan Fino, Diana Kriner, Kathleen Grygiel, Gail Lawson PhD, Jeffrey Machado, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Ronald Racine, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove

Absent: Christine Botts, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Liz Graves, Maryellen T. Hagerty, Paul C. Harden, Joan Fino, Diana Marcotte, Vincent Rossi, Marilyn Walaska

Guests: Christine Yankee

1. Establish Quorum/Introductions Guests, ORS, SRC - Dr. Gail Lawson

Agenda Review/Additions or Deletions (None)

Acceptance of Minutes from May 10, 2016

*Motion*

*Jeff Machado made a motion seconded by Jack Ringland and unanimously approved to accept the May 10, 2016 Minutes (Vote Approved - Christina Battista, Peggy Benz, Rocco Bruno, Cynthia Cote, Lea Colardo, Joan Fino, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson PhD, Jeffrey Machado, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove)*

**2. Chair's Report – Dr. Lawson**

Work Update - Membership Training Committee worked throughout the summer on developing training protocols for the benchmark training meeting for membership and new members. A dry-run meeting was held to get feedback and work to fine-tune the needs for the upcoming training meeting.

Annual Report/Discussion of ad-hoc Committee – After discussion, the Council decided to keep the report combined with the [Office of Rehabilitation Services](#) (ORS) report. [The State Rehabilitation Council](#) (SRC) will provide dates for the calendar as well as seek artists for work on the cover. The Council asks ORS to collaboratively work with and inform the SRC when major changes are involved in the report.

SRC Awards Ad-hoc Committee – Jack Ringland will Chair this committee and will appraise his needs, then report out to leadership. A few members, two or three, will be needed to work on this committee. Interested in working on this committee, send email to Nancy and Jack. Most likely hold one in person meeting then do phone conferencing meetings.

SRC Resource Plan Ad-hoc Committee – Jeff Machado will Chair this committee and review his needs, then report out to leadership. Develop a resource plan to figure out what we need to run the work of the Council. Interested in working on this committee, send email to Nancy and Jeff.

### 3. Sub-committee Reports

Membership Training – Lea Colardo –The Training Committee has put together a binder and presentation focusing on the history, role, and expectations of membership of the SRC. Our last meeting was held in September to work out changes needed in the binder as well as fine-tuning for the training meeting events. We need to hold one or two more review meetings and then finish up the binders. The time for this meeting is going to be at the end of June or after July 4<sup>th</sup>. The Committee will have a few dates to offer membership at the next meeting. If members have any suggestions please send them to Nancy, Lea or Maryellen.

State Plan, Policy & Quality Assurance – Catherine Sansonetti – The Committee had a slow summer but has been informed by ORS that there will be policy reviews as the agency updates policies to comply with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

### 4. Slate of Officers Submission of Candidates – All Members

- Jane Slade nominated Judith Drew for Vice-chair, seconded by Gail.
- Catherine Sansonetti nominated Jane Slade for Vice-Chair, seconded by Willa Truelove (alternative in the event that Judy Drew withdraws since she is not in attendance)
- Jeff Machado nominated Gail Lawson for Chair, seconded by Cynthia Cote
- Jeff Machado nominated Lea Colardo and Jack Ringland for Co-Secretaries, seconded by Jane Slade.

All nominations will be sent out to the membership to allow for the thirty day notice. At the November meeting, Officers will be voted on by membership providing that a quorum is established.

**5. ORS Director's Report** – Ronald Racine – ORS is being impacted by the Department of Human Services (DHS) reorganization, which has laid off seventy two workers. Because of union collective bargaining rights, some people laid off at DHS could bump positions at ORS. It has not affected the VR staff yet, but it potentially could. The main effects to ORS have been on Social Case Worker II; four out of the five at ORS are slated to be bumped. What has helped ORS retain VR Counselors is that our Counselors must have Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling; so folks coming in have to have that degree. There are a very few in the state that have that degree. However, the bumps could impact additional staff; at this time we can only wait and see.

Update on State Plan – ORS' main concern is what will be the new performance indicators; what will count towards the reported progress numbers. ORS reports on clients differently than the Department of Labor and Training (DLT), for example, employment is defined by ORS as working for three months, but DLT defines it by the first paycheck. Right now we do not know what is going to be counted. It is important to have consistencies in this so ORS is waiting to find out what the definitions will be before locking numbers into the State Plan.

Given all of the changes, ORS will be on target with six hundred and fifty successful closures this year.

[DOJ Consent Decree](#) - Joe Murphy, ORS' Assistant Administrator for Supported Employment, is going to give us a full update at the November meeting.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Update – Linda Deschenes - There are five group surveys in, ORS staff, two from the business community sector, community rehabilitation, transition and client surveys. The committee will be meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup> at 10 A.M. to look at further strategic planning after reviewing results.

Marketing/Discussion of Ad-hoc Committee Establishment – Kathleen Grygiel – In the State Plan, one of the developed goals is to target two or three business sectors to cultivate a relationship. To help achieve this, one of the new performance measures is called 'employer engagement', but the RSA has not given ORS guidance on what this specifically means. As an agency, marketing and engaging the business community is something we do specific to each client's employment needs and not so much the employer side. ORS does not have expertise in engaging businesses, however, many of the SRC members have business backgrounds and experience engaging in the community. ORS feels that working together would, candidly, meet the needs of the agency. [Nebraska's](#) business engagement strategies offer some clues for a direction we might take. The first thing they tackled was to look at their mission statement, which like ORS' [mission statement](#), did a good job relating to clients but not the business community. Perhaps this ad-hoc committee could focus on business engagement and help ORS present itself as a partner in the employment relationship, help ORS' visibility in the business community, help restructure our mission towards both clients and companies as a partner in the employer relationship.

*Motion*

*Willa Truelove made a motion seconded by Peggy Benz and unanimously approved to establish Marketing Ad-hoc Committee (Vote Approved - Christina Battista, Peggy Benz, Rocco Bruno, Cynthia Cote, Lea Colardo, Joan Fino, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson PhD, Jeffrey Machado, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove)*

**6. New Business** – Council members sought to listen and report on the [conference calls](#) from the [National Coalition of Rehabilitation Councils](#) (NCSRC). Rocco Bruno volunteered. Nancy will send him information on this. Also two of Gail's students will be helping out with this and will be attending the next SRC meeting.

**7. Correspondence** – None

**8. Public Comment** – [Rhode Island Parent Information Network](#) (RIPIN) holding its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner. And [7th Annual Transition 101 Parent Conference](#) December 2, 2016. Informational Posters and flyers were passed out to membership.

**9. Adjournment** – Council adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

*Motion*

*Jeff Machado made a motion seconded by Dan Pieroni and unanimously approved to adjourn (Vote Approved - Christina Battista, Peggy Benz, Rocco Bruno, Cynthia Cote, Lea Colardo, Joan Fino, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson PhD, Jeffrey Machado, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove)*

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy L. Baker, Facilitator  
RI State Rehabilitation Council