



**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 March 29, 2011

4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

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

Present from Council: Aracelis Maria, Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Rocco Bruno, Stephen Brunero, Wheeler Clemmons, Kelley Conti, Cynthia M. Cote, Laurie DiOrio, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Jeanne Giroux, Paul Harden, Anne LeClerc, Jeffrey Machado, Lucille Massimino, Doreen McConaghy, Ronald Racine, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Juan Troncoso

Guest: Liz Graves, Corinne Russo, Deputy Director, DHS, Lynouse D. Saint-Louis

1. Call to Order - Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. Introductions of membership and guests followed. Quorum met.

2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda – There were none.

3. Approval of Minutes – December 14, 2010 Minutes unanimously approved.

4. Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) Administrator's Report – Steve Brunero reports:

- Recognized new members on DHS leadership team, Sandra Powell and Corinne Russo.
- Congratulated Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett on her new job with Homeland Security as FEMA's Region I Regional Director of Disabilities and Integration Specialist.
- 2010 Annual Report Complete; thanked all involved with putting it together.
- Possible government shutdown could impact Disability Determination and our capacity to drawdown federal dollars.
- Budget deficits in 44 states. Because of this, some states could not make state matches and approximately \$158 million dollars of unused federal funds did go back to other states' disability programs instead of being turned back to the RSA.
- VR waiting list is growing, 27% increase in referrals over last few years. ORS has 8 less staff positions to handle the increasing number of referrals and need for services.
- Department facing 2 lawsuits one related to interpreter services, due to this we have a consent decree to follow. The other lawsuit has to do with voter registration.
- State budget cut \$40-\$60 million dollars. ORS initially saw elimination of 2 programs, Personal Care Attendants, contract with (PARI), and Home Modification & Equipment Program, contract with (OSCIL and PARI). A 3rd program, Social Service for the Blind, had a 1/3 cut in funds. However, Governor Chafee has decided to keep those programs in the budget. Because of this ORS and our clients have not lost any money for these programs.
- In April the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation has its national conference in D.C.; Kathleen Grygiel will be attending this while I will be at a Medicaid conference in Colorado.
- Two Bills in Legislature related to Disability Business Enterprise. Not enough of these businesses are being utilized. The intent of the Bills is to give more opportunities to businesses that are comprised of at least 75% of employees with disabilities. The SRC leadership will take the lead on this and address duplication with a proposed vocational rehabilitation advisory council that is planned to form related to these bills. (Address that this would be a duplication of SRC work)

5. Corinne Russo, Deputy Director, DHS – addressed the membership, congratulating Kate on her new position and commended her and Steve for their dedication and hard work. I'm excited to be working with the SRC and Steve. We have submitted your requests for personnel; we have listened to the needs and urgency of the department.

- Gave some background on an independent aunt who was well-travelled and educated; and happened to be blind. The experiences she had with her aunt made her aware of people with disabilities from an early age.
- She related some of her priorities; it is still difficult to break the obstacles for people who are differently abled, training and transportation are still major barriers. There needs to be development of more accessibility.
- Highest priorities are all of the services that maintain people in the community. To avoid watering down existing programs, at this time there are no plans to add new ones.

6. Chair's Report - Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett reports:

- We have been reviewing materials to provide an overview of the SRC; roles and responsibilities; and committee involvement for the initial guidance to new members.
- The proposed quarterly meeting schedule for next year will be reviewed for approval at the Executive Committee Meeting scheduled for May 3rd.
- Newsletter/Email updates – Due to the new meeting schedule, we will implement additional means of communication including e-mail updates and potentially an SRC News Update
- 2010 Annual Report: The annual report was excellent and we would like to thank the ORS staff and SRC members for their dedication to a writing a successful report.
- Continue to follow National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, which now has 41 states.
- The Executive Committee will be reviewing accomplishments and proposing new goals for the upcoming year.

7. Subcommittee Reports

Transportation – Dr. Judith Drew & Anne LeClerc

- RIPTA study - we are talking with DHS, nothing is settled on the direction, debate on expanding RIDE or go with a private company, which would break apart the RIDE program. RIPTA would keep ADA; possibly deliver ADA and general public services in a better way with consolidation as the focus.
- Evacuation of shut-ins. (Might not fall under this groups priorities but we will follow-up with this)
- We want to be involved with the process. Legislative commission, run by the fiscal side of the state and we want to share our concerns with them. Coalition on Transportation Choices we have joined. Benefits people with disabilities with better designs of streets, 'Complete Streets' – make safe travel lane, better access to curb cuts, bus stops. I would like us to be supportive of this as a Council.

Nomination and Leadership Development - Lucille Massimino

- Interviewed Doreen McConaghy who works at PALS. Recommend that she be a member of the Council.

Motion

Lucille Massimino motioned to nominate Doreen McConaghy to the SRC; it was seconded and unanimously approved.

Employment – Jane Slade

- Committee met in February at ORS with Monica Dzialo and Kathleen Grygiel for some clarification on the sub-committee role. Creating new ways of marketing ORS with sensitivity towards the amount of new applications coming in already. We are open to the Council on where our efforts should be and would like input.
- Look at non-traditional employment, self-employment, technology, home-based work. Roads to Independence is providing training on self-employment; many of our staff are training. Anyone interested in this might want to contact Kathleen Grygiel.

State Plan, Policy & Quality Control - Catherine Sansonetti

- We are waiting for the initial draft of the State Plan. It will be distributed to everyone on the Council and anyone who may have comments or concerns, we welcome your feedback.
- Public Hearing for the State Plan is May 19th.

8. Public Comment

Parent Support Network (PSN) April 7, 2011 - 1st Annual Fundraiser - Roger Williams Casino, Providence, RI (Flyers handed out)

RI Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Next quarterly meeting @ Warwick public library on June 20th from 1 – 3 P.M., everyone from the SRC is always welcome to attend our meetings. Our reports will always go out to Nancy for you.

9. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 5:55 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy L. Baker, Facilitator
State Rehabilitation Council

The next Full Council Meeting will be on May 17, 2011