



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Department of Human Services

Office of Rehabilitation Services

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 October 8, 2013

4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

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

Present: Christina Battista, Bryant Berganza, Stephen Brunero, Rocco Bruno, Kelley Conti, Cynthia M. Cote, Linda Deschenes, Dominic DiOrio, Laurie DiOrio, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith L. Drew, Joan Fino, Dorothy Furlong, Elizabeth Graves, Jeanne Giroux, Kathleen Grygiel, Maryellen Hagerty, Paul Harden, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett, JoAnn Nannig, Dan Pieroni, Ronald Racine, Jack Ringland, Vincent Rossi, Jane Slade, Juan Troncoso

Guests: Sandra M. Powell, Director of the RI Department of Human Services

1. Call to Order: Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 4 P.M. Quorum met.
2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda: None.
3. Approval of Minutes: Motion to accept the May 14, 2013 made by P. Harden, seconded by J. Ringland and unanimously approved.

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

She emphasized the importance of motivation within the subcommittees to keep the Council work moving forward especially since the Full Council only meets four times. We want to look to recharge the efforts of the subcommittees...

We are looking to place members into open co-chair positions; some committees are lacking co-chair(s) and it is important that we move people from the committees into the leadership roles as they are ready.

Kate took some time to recognize Stephen Brunero for all his efforts to help the Council keep on top of important issues for the VR Consumers. Steve's steadfast efforts to help the Council and his visionary ways to help individuals with disabilities have been unmatched and have furthered the positive partnership this Council and ORS maintain. He has been an adviser and mentor to many of us as well as a constant advocate for people with disabilities. We are all indebted for all his professionalism over the years, and thankful for his personal manor in which he set out to make the lives of those with disabilities better. The Council is very happy for Steve and his family at this time and wishes him all the best in his new endeavor. We look forward to all of our paths crossing again as we all continue to work to help all Rhode Islanders.

Director Powell thanked the Council for its dedicated members then and spoke of Stephen Brunero as a friend and colleague. She highlighted his dedication and exemplary work over the years to help people with disabilities better their lives. She then presented a plaque from the SRC honoring his services to the Council over the past decade.

Steve thanked the Council for taking time out of their busy schedules to work for equal access to beneficial employment for the VR consumers. He said it is a testimony to the leadership at DHS, ORS and the SRC to commit time towards our shared efforts and he will always be grateful for this commitment.

****Thank you Steve, the Council will dearly miss you but we hope to have you attend a meeting now and then.****

5. Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) Report: Stephen Brunero Reports:

* Fiscally - on the State level we are in good shape having enough funds to carry out the program the rest of the year. We received an extra 2.5 million this year in allotment funds, and 10 million over the past few years. This is money above our regular budget. Federal level, we don't know the effects of the shutdown if it lasts longer than a few weeks. If it continues we may ask for advocacy efforts from the Council.

* Roberta Greene-Whittemore is back. Her return is a morale booster for our team. I want to recognize her for her commitment to the SRC as liaison for the Outreach committee.

*The Department of Justice - is still working in the State to make sure community supported work is being done correctly. ADA Investigation in RI: The United States Department of Justice is looking at violations of The Americans with Disabilities Act, primarily with sheltered workshops and supportive employment programs for people with intellectual and developmentally disabilities.

*Personnel - the VR Program is 98% filled. We only have two vacancies, VRC I and VRC II and one of the positions will be posting soon.

*Innovation and Expansion Initiatives - We have a meeting this week with the RI Training School to see if we can join forces and set up a funded position where ORS could help some of the individuals at the school get services, like vocational evaluations, before they are discharged. There are also meetings going on with RIWorks another major initiative of the Department of Human Services. ORS has many referrals from our colleagues at DHS and we want to make sure we continue with the strongest efforts possible to offer evaluations and trainings. Transition, Project Search, we will work more closely with businesses to provide opportunities to seniors in high school.

*Leadership Team at ORS - I want to expressed complete confidence in the ORS leadership team of Ron Racine, who will be taking over in an acting compactly, John Microulis at DDS, Kathleen Grygiel, Laurie DiOrio, Roberta Greene-Whittemore and Linda Deschenes and all of the Supervisors, Counselors and staff at ORS.

*The reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act - the proposal eliminates some of the things we are so used to having such as the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, eliminating the Master's Degree requirements, and also moves the VR Program from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor.

6. Subcommittee Reports – drafts for the ORS/SRC Annual Report will be sent in by the Executive Leadership meeting on November 19th.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy L. Baker, SRC Facilitator