



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 Annual Breakfast Meeting - Minutes May 12, 2015

Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick (Airport)

801 Greenwich Ave, Warwick, RI 02886

Present: Christina Battista, Margaret Benz, Christine Botts, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Linda Deschenes, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Monica Dzialo, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Liz Graves, Yohann Greaves, Maryellen Hagerty, Paul Harden, Barbara Henry, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, JoAnn Nannig, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Ronald Racine, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove, Marilyn Walaska

Excused: Laurie DiOrio, Kathleen Grygiel, Mr. Kim Wennermark

Guests: Sharon DiPinto (ORS), S. Bastianelli, Jeni Mowry (Miriam Hospital/Project Search)

1. Call to Order: Jeffrey Machado called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. Quorum met
2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda: None
3. Approval of Minutes

Motion

Gail Lawson made a motion seconded by Jeff Machado and unanimously approved to accept the January 13, 2015 minutes. (vote – approved - Christina Battista, Margaret Benz, Christine Botts, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Liz Graves, Yohann Greaves, Maryellen Hagerty, Paul Harden, Barbara Henry, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove, Marilyn Walaska)

4. SRC Report and Introductions- *Jeffrey Machado* thanked everyone for attending the annual breakfast meeting. Introductions, then brief presentation on SRC topics.

* **ORS/SRC Annual Report-** Copies of the report were available for those who had not yet gotten them. The report is the annual collaborations between ORS and the SRC and this year's was exceptional.

* **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** – The changes involved with implementing the new reauthorization are in progress. The SRC had to cancel our last meeting due to the fact that we did not have our usual work to do on the State Plan because of these changes. At this time we are waiting for the state to put together a comprehensive plan. Our State Plan and Policy committee will start to work with ORS on this in the fall. We are working on comments to the RSA on changes in the WIOA.

* **National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC)** - *Gail Lawson* spoke about the national coalition, the two leadership training conferences that they sponsor in collaboration with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). *Gail* attend the last two, one in Miami and one in D.C. One is always in D.C. allowing for a 'Hill Day', a chance to meet with representatives. The other is rotated around the country. The conferences serves two main functions. One, the education of the SRC and their staff. Some topics are provide an overview of the SRC Mandates, modes of operating the SRC along with tips on getting the work done. The conferences are a very good environment for SRC to share information and help with training. And the other is for the rehabilitation administrators to meet. During this time, both groups work together to further education on best practices for VR and the SRC. We want to have two people from our council attending these conferences. One member of leadership and our facilitator should be going to all these events. The facilitator especially to give the council a constant resource of information since that position transcends terms. Most of the states in attendance have two, three and some more attending the events; we needs to work on this with ORS to provide funding for us to send two people.

(Attachments to minutes information from conference - (6 - RSA Fact Sheet - STATE PLAN HIGHLIGHTS APRIL 2008 & 8a - MEMBERSHIP DEV ANNUAL ACTIVITY CALENDAR)

5. ORS Report – Ronald Racine.

* **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** - We were waiting for more guidance from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), but they were unable to give us guidance on advice of their attorneys. We were able to get some sort of idea of the main concerns from others administrators; by the questions they asked, that Transition requirements is a big issue under the new legislation for many of them. The WIOA mandates that 15% of the VR budget be spent on Transition services. Many states do not come close to this. We spend far more than that already on transition so we are not concerned with the percentage, however, the services have to be accounted when the student is under an IEP; but we want expenditures to include post-secondary education, job training, and job services as well. The development of the State Plan has always been individual departments; ORS did our plan separate but now it will be a collaborative effort with DLT. DLT has taken a step back in working on the joint plan due to a new Director who is doing some reorganization in the department.

At this time we are not sure what the final unified State Plan is going to look like. One thing we do know is there will be entususes on employment; so if a client is already working, and needs assistance for their job, we don't have to make them wait on Order of Selection.

* We had a program improvement plan and have reach our goals with RSA so we are no longer on probation.

6. Project Search - JoAnn Nannig

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a unique, business led, one year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. It was in other states with an 80% employment rate, and we wanted to bring it here to Rhode Island. In order to do this ORS became a licensed partner on this and Providence agreed to be the first school system to participate. Monica Dzialo and reached out to Miriam hospital, a lot of the programs are at hospitals,

The goal of the program is for students to be employed once they leave the school system. They have about an 80 percent employment rate. We're hoping to have that in Rhode Island,

This has been such a successful program, and we want to recognize our key partner at Miriam hospital, **Jeni Mowry**. Jeni has set high standards for our students, but has always made it possible for them to achieve. She believes in them and instills that belief in her staff. The hospital greets our students by name, which shows how well it is integrated. The program has truly made a difference in these student's lives, helping them achieve independence through respect. Currently, Jeni is helping us establish the program in other businesses, one being Memorial Hospital, who is visiting this week at Miriam. We asked Jeni here today so we could honor her commitment and thank her for the dedication she has shown.

Jeni Mowry was presented with an honors award from ORS and the SRC. She then spoke a little about Project SEARCH.

Jeni Mowry - Miriam lends itself to our clients to grow and develop. Our staff and my manager really embraced this opportunity. I manage customer services at Miriam and it is a perfect environment to work with these seven students. The independence and life skills that they have shown and further developed are tremendous. One of the students has been hired already and two more are in the works to be hired. One of the requirements is they have to have the ability to get their own transportation, and all of our seven are now mobile. Our staff has shown great interest in working with the student and we feel is helps our staff and our environment in a remarkable way. As much as it helps the students grow outside of our job program, it grows our staff.

Questions from Council. What are the rotations for the student? - Each student rotates through 8 to 10 week jobs. They get a broad base of jobs to put on their resumes.

Are there plans to expand? Yes Cranston with Blue Cross and Pawtucket with Memorial Hospital.

Links to Project Search

<http://www.projectsearch.us/OurPROGRAM.aspx>

<http://www.turnto10.com/story/28774289/health-check-project-search>

7. Election of Officers - Rocco Bruno

Rocco reminded everyone that at our last meeting the Council already nominated the following people, Gail Lawson for Chair, and Jeff Machado for Vice-Chair. He nominated as Co-Secretaries, Lea Colardo and Jack Ringland. The nomination was seconded by Cynthia Cote. There were no nominations from the floor for Chair, Vice-chair and Secretary.

Motion

Rocco Bruno made a motion seconded by Cynthia Cote and approved with abstentions from Lea Colardo and Jack Ringland to bring forth for nomination as Co-Secretaries, Lea Colardo and Jack Ringland. (vote – approved - Christina Battista, Margaret Benz, Christine Botts, Rocco Bruno, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Liz Graves, Yohann Greaves, Maryellen Hagerty, Paul Harden, Barbara Henry, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove, Marilyn Walaska)

Are there any other names to be brought to the floor for the Chair's Position? (There were none)

Are there any other names to be brought to the floor for the Vice-chairs position? (There were none)

And are there any other names to be brought to the floor for the Secretary position? (There were none)

Three separate votes taken with candidates abstaining from their own vote.

Motion

Rocco Bruno made a motion seconded by Cynthia Cote and approved with abstentions from Lea Colardo, Jack Ringland, Gail Lawson, and Jeffrey Machado, to elect the Slate of Officers as presented; Gail Lawson as the Chair, Jeff Machado to Vice-chair, and Lea Calardo and jack Ringland to Co-chair Secretary. (vote – approved - Christina Battista, Margaret Benz, Christine Botts, Rocco Bruno, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Liz Graves, Yohann Greaves, Maryellen Hagerty, Paul Harden, Barbara Henry, Diana Kriner, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove, Marilyn Walaska)

The Slate of Officers appointed with unanimous vote are as follows.

Gail Lawson as the Chair

Jeff Machado to Vice-chair

Lea Calardo and Jack Ringland to Co-chair Secretary

8. Membership Training Committee Mission – Jack Ringland

The Membership Training Committee is charged with the interviewing, orientation, and training of new members including disseminating materials and planning an annual training event; establishing, maintaining a mentoring program for new members for their first year on the Council.

Goals:

1. Create an application for the SRC
2. Establish interview, orientation, and training protocols
3. Implement a mentoring program
4. Design a membership package containing all training materials for each member on the Council

9. New Business

Distinguished Service Award Discussion – Jeff Machado & Gail Lawson

We have been talking about establishing an award for members of the council based on their service to it. Margaret Hoyer and Dom DiOrion's names keep coming up as candidates for this award. But we need to try and establish the criteria for such an award first.

Questions brought up in discussion included the following:

What would the benchmark be for such an award? If so we would have to get their approval.

Would we name it after them or just call it by some other name?

Should it be people who have been on the council and contributed in a variety of capacities?

Quality and longevity?

Would it be for distinguished service as opposed to longevity?

Council will finalize its decision first meeting in fall.

10. Adjournment

Motion

Jeff Machado made a motion seconded by Gail Lawson and unanimously approved to adjourn. (vote – approved - Christina Battista, Margaret Benz, Christine Botts, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Liz Graves, Yohann Greaves, Maryellen Hagerty, Paul Harden, Barbara Henry, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove, Marilyn Walaska)

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy L. Baker, SRC Facilitator