

**Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
State Rehabilitation Council**

**January 10, 2006
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

**RI Department of Labor and Training
Center General Complex 73 (Main Conference Room)
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920**

Meeting Minutes

Present from State Rehabilitation Council: Janice Belasco, Raymond Carroll, Edward Costa, Domenic Di Orio, Robin Dolan, Susan Donovan, Linda Deschenes, Kathleen Ellis, Joseph Ferreira, Steven Florio, Jeanne Giroux, Elizabeth Graves, Margaret Hoye, Lucille Massemينو, Catherine Sansonetti, Rev. Robert A. Shaldone, J. David Sienko,

Present from Agency: Stephen Brunero

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS - The Chair called meeting to order at 4:05 P.M.

2. OLD BUSINESS – J. David Sienko

1. Additions or deletions to the Agenda:

M. Hoye asked for a discussion on materials presented at the meetings.

J. Ferreira asked for a discussion regarding R. Greene.

2. Approval of minutes

Motion

D. Di Orio made a motion seconded by J. Belasco and unanimously accepted to approve the minutes from the November 7, 2005 meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS – J. David Sienko

1. Review of draft letter to Secretary Spellings – J. Drew

Tabled

2. Follow-up to question posed at the last meeting regarding conflict of interest for the Chair. After advisement regarding this situation, it should not be a problem. It is not unprecedented. It will be left as an open item.

3. D. Di Orio commented about the length of discussions by some members at the last meeting. The Leadership Committee would like to remind all members that the Council has a limited time to achieve its meeting objectives. He suggested that some time limits placed on discussion might be appropriate. J. Belasco added that perhaps reading the Mission statement at each meeting would help keep the focus of the Council. These suggestions will be looked at further at the next Executive Leadership meeting.

4. Reports to Council - M. Hoye reminded the Council that reports need to be sent to N. Baker in time for her to make appropriate alternative formats. If materials are not accessible for all

members, they cannot be brought up for discussion and will have to be postponed until the following meeting.

5. SRC Schedule

The schedule was finalized up until the summer break. All members have been given the schedule.

The Chair presented a draft template for the SRC's yearly schedule, for Council input. The goal is to create a foundation based on what work the SRC needs to do, the annual milestones, and the member's survey. Every meeting will have standard agenda items. There would also be a Committee highlighted at each meeting, profiling that Committee's responsibilities and accomplishment.

Motion

D. Di Orio made a motion seconded by S. Donovan and unanimously approved to accept the proposed Annual Meeting Schedule, and open up a discussion.

Decision resulting from discussion:

- Day of week to hold meetings resulting in a decision to have some flexibility, allowing for changes in the future, but for this upcoming year to hold the meetings on Tuesday. (exception-June meeting is on a Monday)
- Change of date for August Executive Meeting, pushing it to September allowing for a summer break.
- Move the finalized SRC Annual Report to January meeting.
- State Plan – move up the public hearing to March allowing for more input from the Council.

Motion

J. Ferreira made a motion seconded by D. Di Orio and unanimously approved to accept the Annual schedule with the noted changes.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

For the sake of time, the Chair will send a reminder for the Committee chairs to send reports to N. Baker in time to be accessible to all members. Review the Needs Assessments and look at how it can help template your Committee's program for the upcoming year.

Nomination and Leadership

There will be an interview meeting for two new candidates.

5. ORS DIRECTOR'S REPORT – R. Carroll

- Orientation for New SRC Members
In addition to the members manual, ORS would like to coordinate an orientation session. It would combine a power-point presentation, which gives an excellent over-view of SRC history, personalized Counselor experiences that humanize the program, and the requirements under the Law.
- 2005 Accomplishments
Comprehensive Needs Assessment.
Customer Satisfaction Survey

Strategic Plan: Was put together after meeting at Alton Jones to get a flavor of what the themes and issue are for ORS to address.

SRC Annual Report: Is behind schedule. As soon as the SRC reports come in we can draft it for review.

- State Plan Hearing:
We will try to schedule that hearing for March 14th.
- Staff Resources
ORS has one vacancy and once this is filled it will be historic; having a full compliment of staff. The caveat to that, ORS has hired a number of people who are now on leave.

G. Wier and S. Shapiro's positions have not been filled.
- Budget
In August, instructions from the Governor to start our new cycle, arrived. The Department of Human Services needed to reduce twenty one (21) million. Until the Governor submits his budget, later this month, we will know the outcome. The State Audit was completed and there were no specific findings.
- RSA
The Federal Partners come in for a week and do an on-site monitoring report in which the SRC assist. They last came in 2005 and we learned of the impending closings of the Federal Regional offices. ORS viewed the RSA regional office as a safety net. Having a good rapport with them, when we had questions and concerns they were there. On December 28th, via email, ORS received the results from the 2005 visit, from the new RSA office.
- The Rehab Act
No agreement has been reached. Because VR is a mandatory program, every year there is a cost of living increase, however, nothing including funding should be taken for granted. Closing the RSA regional offices was not a message validating this Program. At a National meeting last November the major emphasis was geared to redesign or re-engineering the VR Program, pro-actively refocusing it for future.
- Outcomes – S. Brunero
At the last meeting a graph was distributed with last year's outcomes. It was the first time ORS had more than two thousand (2000) applicants. ORS surpassed all the Federal Standards and Indicators becoming one (1) of only eleven (11) States to accomplish this.

6. ADJOURNMENT – The Chair thanked everyone for participating. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy L. Baker, Staff
State Rehabilitation Council