



**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 May 17, 2011**

**8:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.**

Radisson Hotel Warwick 2081 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

**Present from Council:** Janice Belasco, Rocco Bruno, Stephen Brunero, Wheeler Clemmons, Kelley Conti, Cynthia M. Cote, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Jeanne Giroux, Paul Harden, Micheal Hazard, Margaret Hoye, Anne LeClerc, Sandy Lupovitz, Jeffrey D. Machado, Aracelis Maria, Lucille Massimino, Doreen McConaghy, Ronald Racine, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Juan Troncoso, Willa Truelove, Mary Wambach, Kim Wennermark, Nancy Baker, Laurie DiOrio, Kathleen Grygiel, Sharon DiPinto, Lynn Paola, Linda Deschenes

**Guests:** Judi Hammerlind-Carlson, Denise Corson, Fran Daly, Domenic DiOrio, Liz Graves, Lisa Labitt, Sandra M. Powell, Lezlee Shaffer, Allen Parent-Wetmore, Elizabeth Nadolski, Kristen Marotto

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

- Recognized Domenic DiOrio for his service to the SRC. Presented an award of accomplishment from the Governor.
- Recognized Nancy Baker as being back as the Facilitator for the SRC.
- Federal Level – Kathleen Grygiel went to D.C. for the RSA & Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation meeting focusing on Transition initiatives. She met with Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse. The end of ARRA (stimulus money) is near. ARRA money was used in RI for summer work experience program for youth with disabilities to provide internships, and ORS procured a new case management system allowing our Counselors to work in real time with consumers whether they are at an IEP meeting, meeting in their homes, or office case records and services can be provided instantly. The Commissioner of RSA, Lynnae Ruttledge, is coming to RI later this summer or early fall and may attend the Employer Honor Roll Awards Ceremony. The Chair, Kate McCarthy-Barnett, is working for FEMA in the south providing services for people with disabilities who were affected by the tornados. Department of Health and Human Services is providing relief expansion for Medicaid recipients who are affected by the tornados. Social Security Administration has a freeze on hiring; this affects our Disability Determination unit. President Obama has initiated a 24 member committee called the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, it is an advisory body.
- Rhode Island – Budget deficit is challenging. ORS continues to negotiate to keep our lease on Fountain Street. Slow down on hiring. Bill initiated by the Governor's Commission on Disabilities for Disability Business Enterprise to help them procure State Contracts. Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) Bill - that provides increase opportunities for people with disabilities to procure work. The PCA Bill – AG's office will provide oversight and background checks on Personal Care Attendants in any working environment. Home Modification Loan Program Bill. ORS' Public Hearing for the State Plan for VR and Supported Employment is this Thursday from 1 – 3 P.M. ORS' Worksite Wellness Program has been recognized as a Superior Worksite Wellness Awards Program. Dare to Dream Conference on May 24<sup>th</sup>, at URI for Transition Services in RI.

**2. Sandra M. Powell, Director, DHS –** Expressed positive impression of ORS' dedication to serve those in need and provide access to consumers for employment and the additional services needed in their lives. ORS was very instrumental in partnership with Network Rhode Island and the OneStops in making them accessible to everyone seeking employment. Thanks to the SRC for the work throughout the years to create better access for people with disabilities to employment opportunities. I am looking forward to working with all of you to help champion that effort.

**3. Chair's Report -** Dr. Judi Drew reports:

**Call to Order –**Judi Drew, the Vice Chair, called the meeting to order. Quorum met.

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

**Approval of Minutes –** March 29, 2011 Motioned by P. Harden seconded by J. Machado unanimously approved.

- We have an ATAP presentation /demonstration to give us a more in-depth understanding of how the ATAP partnership assists people to live more independently.

**4. Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) Presentation -** Kathleen Grygiel - ATAP is a statewide partnership of organizations each targeting assistive technology. The program is funded by the Rehabilitation Service Administration to increase access and acquisition of assistive technology to help people function more effectively in social, work, educational, and home environments. Services provide device demonstrational, device loans, financing, equipment reutilization through our partners, leadership training and technical services, public awareness, and information referral.

Judi Hammerlind-Carlson, Executive Director TechAccess - We are in collaboration with ORS through the ATAP Project, we are a resource and demonstration center, we offer an equipment loan library and we sponsor ATAP conference for 2011, training, and technical assistance. Demonstrated how IPAD is being used for disabled folks.

Denise Corson, Program Coordinator at ATEL - Provide services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, people with speech disabilities, or neuromuscular damage or disease. They have to be Rhode Islanders and meet an income qualifier. Services are free if they qualify. Demonstrated the CapTell phone. New phone that helps folks with good speech that are deaf, re-voices person talking to them on screen instead of texting. One obstacle is income qualifier so folks working might not be able to get them for free. However we do a monthly demonstration in collaboration with TechAccess, so at least they can see how to use the devices if they choice to purchase them.

Lisa Labitt, Technology Coordinator East Bay Educational Collaborative – We are one of the 5 youth centers in RI working with people from birth to 21 years. The ATAP partnership allows us to work seamlessly with other ATAP partners to provide technology tools, evaluations with teachers, families, therapist teams; we focus on mobility, hearing, and sight. Our primary focused is our lending library, which offers devices to go out so families can make good decisions on purchasing tools. Training and support is critical for students to be productive and independent to access work and school to level the playing field. Demonstrated a writing device on an alternative keyboard and showed new APS on IPAD that are set for folks with disabilities.

Lezlee Shaffer, Program Director OSCIL - We work with people with a variety of disabilities, primarily adults and mostly seniors. Within ATAP grant we provide device demonstration mostly in their homes. We look at barriers to living alone, and other things they can utilize in their homes. Our primary clientele is older and they are not always interested in high tech, generally we use low-tech to assist in daily living activities. We also provided technical assistance with our nursing home transition program for mostly younger adults, 30-50, may have had a traumatic event and families did not know what to do but put them in a home. Once they are stabilized we try to assist them back into the community; this is time intensive. We also do public awareness and information, our website, newsletter provides information. Our staff is out in the community in senior centers and high-rises. Demonstrated a shakeup smoke detector, for deaf and blind consumers; the signal is a vibrator located under the pillow or mattress. Also demonstrated a cutting board for people with one arm.

Allen Parent-Wetmore, Equipment Program Coordinator PARI – We work primarily with the elderly community and help administer the State PCA and home modification programs. Our partnership with ATAP is the PARI-PAAT program. PARI's Affordable Adaptive Technology (PAAT) Program is an effort to provide any person of limited means with the necessary equipment he or she would otherwise be unable to obtain. Used equipment is donated to PARI; we restore it to useful condition; modify and/or adapt it as needed; and then offer the recycled product at a reasonable cost to the consumer/ family member or the community. PAAT's inventory often includes: Wheelchairs, walkers, quad canes, forearm/platform/auxiliary crutches, lap board, slide boards, tub transfer chairs, Geri chairs, bedside tables, commode frames, shower chairs, bathroom safety equipment and hearing aids.

## 5. Sub Committee Reports

**Transportation** - Dr. Judith Drew reports: 'Complete Streets' and 'Safe Streets' to create a pedestrian bike lane, make safe travel lane, better access to curb cuts, bus stops. I would like us to be supportive of this as a Council. The legislation is in the works, this is an issue of access. Talk to your state legislators if you have the opportunity think about ways to reach out to our community to get them more involved. Also the travel training program is going along nicely; the curriculum is almost set and most likely by our next meeting we may have something ready for presentation. Goodwill Industries is working with northern RI collaborative to go out into the community and show folks how to use the bus system.

**Nomination and Leadership Development** - Lucille Massimino reports: Reviewing current membership and seeking new members (ongoing). Continue to meet collaboration to facilitate public awareness program with ORS. We will be interviewing over the summer break.

**Employment** - Kim Wennermark reports: We are working within a difficult economy which is hampering placement efforts in Rhode Island however, the Federal level has the same problems, working with Veterans I am seeing it there as well. ORS is looking for input from our committee and we are thinking of narrowing that focus from general public to the human service agencies that have the client-base that should be able to benefit from ORS, we have set up another date to meet.

**State Plan, Policy & Quality Control** - Catherine Sansonetti reports: We were unable to meet prior to state plan but it has not changed much from last year, noting supportive employment, transition, data on ORS reported an increase of wages. Anyone is welcome to send comments to me; we welcome your feedback.

**6. Adjournment** - Meeting adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy L. Baker, Facilitator, SRC