



## 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 November 18, 2014**

**4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.**

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

Present: Christina Battista, Margaret "Peggy" Benz, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Laurie DiOrio, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Kathleen Grygiel, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Ronald Racine, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Marilyn Walaska, Mr. Kim Wennermark

Guests: Dr. Yohann Greaves, Barbara Henry

Absent: Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett (EX), Christine Botts, Dorothy Furlong, Liz Graves, Maryellen T. Hagerty, Paul Harden, Roger Andrew Iannetta, Nicole McCarty, Jessica Mowry, Vincent Rossi (EX), Willa Truelove (EX)

1. Call to Order: Jeffrey Machado called the meeting to order at 4 P.M. Quorum met
2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda: None
3. Approval of Minutes

#### *Motion*

*Gail Lawson made a motion seconded by Margaret Benz and unanimously approved to accept the October 14, 2014 minutes. (vote – approved - Christina Battista, Margaret "Peggy" Benz, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Marilyn Walaska, Mr. Kim Wennermark)*

#### **4. Office of Rehabilitation Services Report – Ronald Racine**

\* ORS is in the process of hiring four Rehabilitation Counselors I and one Assistant Administrator; we hope to have this finalized in the next week or so. We have several more positions held up for now due to the shortfall of the State budget and the new Governor's transition team; two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors I, two for Disability Determinations Services, two Support Staff, two Supervisors and a CFO position. The other position filled is Ronald Racine's position, Associate Director, which has become permanent.

*(The Council would like to take a moment to congratulate Ron and thank him for his efforts with the Council.)*

\* The Department is working on the budget for next year; there will be public hearings in the Senate and House finance committees next month for this.

\* Department of Justice

**a.** ORS is working on data collection to see what we have available and work within our MIS system to make sure we have updated and accurate information. One of the positions hired, the Assistant Administrator, will be working with the DoJ as the point person on data collection.

**b.** Benefits Counseling; we have a mandate to provide this counseling but we have a shortage of people to do this and do not have a mechanism in place to pay for Benefits Counselors other than the ones who work with ORS. We are trying to work out something with SSA and the DoJ to provide training in Rhode Island for vendors or individuals in Benefits counseling, rather than where they currently have to go, Virginia. And then set up a central place for folks to go for this counseling.

#### **5. SRC Report - Jeffrey Machado**

\* Brief update on training process and our three goals.

1. Develop a training process for new members and to mentoring for committee chairs
2. Streamline committee structure with clear goals and expectations for the committees
3. Clear succession plan for Officers

\* By-laws revision proposed to move this process forward by streamlining the committees until we have set training in place. As well as refine the membership participation. The nominations and leadership will take on more of a focus on training.

\* When we meet in January, we are going to have a better understanding of what committees will be standing and what ad-hoc committees we need to establish to assist ORS. We will also have to decide what our May meeting will be, either breakfast or retreat.

\* Discussion of Officer Selection

Jeff spoke about his role as Acting Chair and how he felt there was a lack of training in this position. Other things have come up

recently and I have turned in my resignation as Acting Chair but will stay on to help with the transition. This has been a very difficult decision for me, and given a lot of thought. I want to offer my assistance to whomever steps into the role. During this critical time in the Councils restructuring, we need to have a Chair that can offer more time to the task at hand. There really needs to be a set succession for officers and we will further work on this in January. If anyone is interested, please Bring this to the Executive Leadership. (*Gail Lawson offered on behalf of the Council gratitude for Jeff stepping into this position and all his hard work as the Chair*)

## 6. Discussion and Vote on By-laws Revisions – Gail Lawson, PhD.

After the meeting in May, where the first draft of the By-laws revisions were reviewed, the Council offered suggestions for changes, the ad hoc committee has made those changes and presented them to the Council for a 30-day review at the October meeting. Today we ask for a vote on the finalized amendments. (Documents attached)

The floor is open for discussion. (*Dr. Drew thanked the ad-hoc committee for the work and felt the changes were needed and moved Forward with a motion.*)

### Motion

*Dr. Judith Drew made a motion seconded by Catherine Sansonetti and unanimously approved to accept the October 14, 2014 minutes. (vote – approved –Christina Battista, Margaret "Peggy" Benz, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Marilyn Walaska, Mr. Kim Wennermark)*

## 7. Report on the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) Fall Training Conference – Gail Lawson, PhD

The NCSRC is run by a four-member elected steering committee interested in training and networking the SRCs so they can maintain focus on the federal mandate. We have struggled with the role of the SRC, and this group is there to focus us on the role. They run two meeting a year, one in the spring, one in the fall. In attendance were thirty-three states with 70 plus individuals from those states; most sent two or more people.

How are we different from most SRC?

- Most SRCs meet three hours or more, 4 times a year.
- Most SRCs do a Hill Day, speaking directly with representative.
- Almost all of the SRCs there run at least one public forum a year, some do it twice, some quarterly, to solicit input from consumer about the services provided in the state, which is a specific SRC function. They do tend to run them in quasi-state facilities but they are clearly a function of the SRCs. They run them, advertise for them.
- Many SRCs run at least one shared activity with the SILC. Some do collaborative training opportunities, some of them do PR activities.
- Almost every SRC has an operating budget. Federal Law mandates we have a cooperatively developed resource plan (budget) set into place with the VR agency. The other sates varied from \$18,000 to \$400,000+. Maine is close to us in population and they have a 501c3 nonprofit who serves as the fiscal agent that gets a percentage for handling the tax and fiscal responsibilities.

National Focus of the Meeting for SRCs

1. Reauthorization of the Workforce Act – the presenter believed it will be a game changer in terms of how services are delivered in the states. The biggest concern was with Pre-employment Transition Services. We would like to get Ron's perception of this. (*Ron spoke about how the VR in RI is far ahead on these requirements where many states have been lagging behind in this.*)
2. Change in the accreditation for Rehabilitation Counselors and the impacts on service delivery.
3. Executive Order 13548 – President Obama - Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities.
4. NET – National Employment Team - <http://www.rehabnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/NET-Services-to-Business-2013.pdf>

Recommendations

1. Developing resource plan with ORS that assures the SRC can complete its mandates.
2. Assure SRC attendance at both national meetings of the NCSRC. (*Ron addressed managing a 501c3 and the pitfalls. ORS however, does recognize funding the SRC activities as needed, between Nancy's salary and travel for members to bi-annual national meetings as well as focusing on the issues; we can do this rather than spend time and money on farming out services to run a 501c3. Sending more than one person to meetings could be problematic because of state procedures. Typically what we can do, is because there are three events in one, we can send one to each part.*)
3. Review section 4.2 of the State Plan.
4. Manual for how SRCs are supposed to run. State Rehabilitation Council-Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership. <http://www.iriforum.org/download/36IRIfinal.pdf>

## 5. Having regional Meetings.

**8. Annual Report** – Jeff Machado

Jeff asked members to review the reports and if there was anything needed to be added or addressed to let Nancy know.

**9. New Business**

Gail Lawson – Asked the Council to give some thought to hosting a public forum similar to the one held for the State Plan; opportunity for people to come and speak to issues that should be addressed by the SRC or VR.

Concerns about duplicated efforts of SILC, GCoD. Perhaps a collaborative effort with SILC. It could be a focus group tailored to certain issues.

*Motion*

*Kelley Conti made a motion seconded by Gail Lawson and unanimously approved to adjourn. (vote – approved –Christina Battista, Margaret "Peggy" Benz, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Kelley Conti, Cynthia Cote, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Marilyn Walaska, Mr. Kim Wennermark)*

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy L. Baker, SRC Facilitator