

Approved Minutes
VERMONT STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
Annual Retreat
Thursday, October 13, 2022, 9:30 AM – 2:30PM
Virtual Meeting

Meeting called by:

Asher Edelson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

Members Present:

- Andrea Bacchi
- Asher Edelson
- Bill Meirs
- Cara Sachs
- Cari Kelley
- Courtney Blasius
- Diane Dalmasse, ex-officio, non-voting
- Emily Marie Ahtúnan
- Gina D'Ambrosio
- Helena Kehne
- Laura Flint
- Marlena Hughes
- Nancy Richards
- Nick Caputo
- Robin Ingenthron
- Rocko Gieselman, non-voting
- Sarah Launderville
- Sherrie Brunelle

Members Absent:

- Ana Kolbach
- Sarah Sterling (Excused)
- Calla Papademas (Excused)

Interpreters:

- Mary Stys
- Marcus Gunter

Honorable Guests:

- Martha Frank, attending 9:30-10

Presenters:

- Tara Howe

- Doe Hibbard

SRC Liaison:

- James Smith
- Amanda Arnold

SRC Coordinator:

- Janice Leonard



1) **Introductions** (Asher Edelson, Chair)

a. Discussion:

Those in attendance introduced themselves via chat

b. Conclusions:

Thanks to everyone!

c. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

2) **Approval of Agenda** (Asher Edelson)

a. Discussion:

Asher asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. Martha moved to accept the agenda and it was Emily seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 13-0-0. During lunch the agenda was adjusted, times shortened to ensure all remaining topics will be covered.

b. Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted

c. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

3) **Open for Public Comment** (Asher Edelson)

a. Discussion:

No Public Present

c. Conclusions:

d. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

4) **Welcome**

a. Discussion:

Asher and Diane welcomed members

Diane thanked the AOE Committee who advocated to get a waiver during COVID to help deal with staff shortages.

Diane thanked the two Board members who have reached the maximum time that they can consecutively be on the Board. Their time and commitment is so appreciated.

1. Martha Frank
2. Rose Lucenti

b. Conclusions:

The Vermont State Rehabilitation Council is so lucky to have the volunteers that we have. Thank you to everyone!

c. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

5) Getting to Know You

a. Discussion:

Three rounds of paired conversations were had. In each round participants discussed one of the following questions:

- *What's your favorite autumn activity?*
- *What brought you to the SRC?*
- *What's one talent, skill, or driving value that you bring to this work?*

b. Conclusions:

The group were broken into pairs three times to discuss the above questions.

c. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

1) Accomplishments – Moved to this agenda item here, due to time commitment of presenter.

a. Discussion

i. Rebranding

Hib Doe, Field Services Manager and has various projects. He is our point person for the rebranding effort. Hib presented to a large group of VR Managers in Rhode Island. It was so well received. He has been instrumental in making this happen.

Hib: Rebranding has been in the works for a couple years. March started the rebranding materials.

- Videos for six participants
- Radio advertising
- Social Media increased
- Broadcast Television

- Present perspective of how it works on employment / VABIR side. (Showed Video)
 - Reaching out for services with a click on Website
 - 150 reached out July – September, and there were 10,047 website visits

What's Next

- Target Individuals with chronic health conditions who don't know they are eligible for services.
 - Videos, print materials, poster for PC Offices
 - Turnover is high, so target Rehabilitation offices
 - VCAP- apprentices, pre-apprentices
- We will put all of this: videos, PowerPoints, etc. on our website. Diane/Hib will send to Janice

- ii. **Summer Career Exploration Program (SCEP)** Tara Howe presented this next section to us. Tara is the Transition Program Manager. This program ran for the second time this year.

Provide students with disabilities with paid work experience in their career of interest. Paired with curriculum piece/ classroom.

Tara reviewed the data and improvements from last year to this year. Employer feedback was great. Variety of employers and positions. There were many who reported on long term employment. This program is being a success.

b. Conclusions:

c. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Put the Rebranding materials on the SRC Website. Diane / Hib will send to Janice to put on the website, 10/31/22.

2) The Role of the SRC and Members

a. Discussion:

The Council was to Prep for retreat by reviewing State Rehabilitation Council and Independent Commission Resources | Rehabilitation Services Administration (ed.gov)

James Smith spoke to group about the history of the SRC. There was a time about 15 years ago that the SRC became very productive and helpful. This started with a retreat that looked at the roles, purpose of the group. This was when the three core committees were formed. This helped to Clarify the work and mission.

We broke out into small groups and discussed the following questions & highlights of conversations were shared with the large group. Some of the comments are listed below.

- **What makes for a strong SRC?**

- Team Players

- Supportive Legislators

- Meet and Participate

- Able to see and assist other committees

- Agency values the SRC & seeks input from SRC

- **How do you see yourself contributing to us having a strong SRC?**

- Happy to do more around the work that's happening between meetings.

- More vision & mission in front of us.

- **What is one or two things you would like to see the SRC change or do more of?**

- How can we assist those not comfortable with talking out, feel safe to talk out?

b. Conclusions:

c. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

***Agenda was amended during lunch, times shorted, to ensure all areas will be covered.**

3) VR's Big Priorities in the Year Ahead

a. Discussion:

i. VCAP

Got a grant to help improve this program. We'll partner with CCV & Tech Centers. Partner with labor related programs including DOL.

Career Pathways will be individual. Areas include:

1. IT
2. Construction
3. Financial
4. Health Care
5. Advanced Manufacturing

ii. DEIA

We realize we want to make a serious commitment to diversity equity and Inclusion. This is a journey. We have a two year RFP with a company that is working on this initiative. They will complete surveys, participant interviews, focus groups with staff and participants.

At the end, they will offer recommendations for next steps

iii. Opioid Pilot

We got the funding for two pilots. Very important work and we can learn a tremendous amount of information on this to move forward.

b. Conclusions:

c. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

4) Committee Breakouts

a. Discussion:

Committee chairs facilitated breakout discussions. Participants read through committee descriptions and accomplishments and discussed questions from the participant packet. They provided the following report outs to the large group:

b. AOE Committee,

What would you like the priorities of your committee to be in the year ahead?

- Last year, great to work in collaboration with other organizations to get H.266 passed
- State has an accessibility page, AHS staff only.
- Collaborative Approach with Economic Services
- Our Time is Now Project Collaboration
- Bill under consideration by congress, info to come
- Transportation goals need to be developed
- To be continued next AOE Meeting

What are the goals and action steps to get there, and what should be the roles of committee members?

c. PR Committee

What would you like the priorities of your committee to be in the year ahead?

- Review of Needs Assessment (rest may be part of Needs Assessment)
- Connecting/ Sharing information with core partners and stakeholders
- How do we engage with those not using the services who are eligible
- How many unplaced people are still out there
- Peer Committee- strengthen connections with HirAbility and others
ie: Corrections

What are the goals and action steps to get there, and what should be the roles of committee members?

- Be present, participate and follow through
- Great presentations, continue this to help understand programs
- Member education, improve knowledge of the work we do.
- Share roles, bring in more information from existing goals (data, employer prospective, etc.)

d. P&P Committee

What would you like the priorities of your committee to be in the year ahead?

- Make sure in compliance with regulations
- Update chapters
- Separate spending guidelines from the Policy
- Ensure inclusive language
- Confidentiality
- Revise Chapter on Self- Employment

What are the goals and action steps to get there, and what should be the roles of committee members?

- All give perspective on how presented: is it understandable, does it need clarification, is something missing?
- Work on how to get input from each member.

5) Closing Thoughts (Group)

What are you feeling energized about in terms of the work of the SRC and your role in the year ahead?

- Great Retreat meeting structure. Loved the "getting to know you" exercise and the small group discussions
- The goals of the committees are exciting
- Policy evaluation more accessible and meaningful to council members
- Self-Employment Policy Revision and the feedback from committee and the council.
- Learning more about the VR Programs
- Rebranding

- Support around Self-Employment. Relationship between policy and practice.
- HireAbility potential for everyone who qualifies to receive training
- Career Focus for People, needs assessment, needs are and how HireAbility can help clients get certifications
- Priorities of VR. Including Opioid
- New to group, great to meet everybody.
- What AOE priorities will be and what we can do. Get behind Our Times and getting the word out.
- Constellation of SRC is committed, varied background, collaborative group.
- The group, wealth of knowledge and passion brought to SRC. P&P Priorities are exciting.

a. Conclusions:

b. Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

6) Adjournment

Asher called the meeting adjourned at 2:32 pm. Sherry moved to close meeting; Laura seconded. All in agreement.

Meeting Action Items, Person Responsible and Deadlines:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Janice Leonard**, 10/31/22
- Draft minutes emailed to SRC members, **Janice Leonard**, 10/31/2022
- Put the Rebranding materials on the SRC Website. Diane / Hib will send to Janice to put on the website, **Janice Leonard**, 10/31/22.