

Full State Rehabilitation Council Meeting
Thursday, June 6, 2019 from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Waterbury State Office Complex
ASH Conference Room
HC 2 South, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT 05671

Meeting called by:

Sherrie Brunelle, with the SRC Chair and Co-Chair not being in attendance, agreed to chair the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 12:39 p.m.

Members Present:

- 1) Courtney Blasius
- 2) Jessica Brennan (VR), non-voting
- 3) Sherrie Brunelle
- 4) Maria Burt (VR), non-voting
- 5) Diane Dalmasse (VR), ex-officio, non-voting
- 6) Marlena Hughes
- 7) Cari Kelley
- 8) Sam Liss
- 9) Michelle Paya

Members Absent:

- 1) Max Barrows
- 2) Nick Caputo
- 3) Martha Frank
- 4) Robin Ingenthron
- 5) Christopher Kane
- 6) Sarah Lauderville
- 7) Rose Lucenti
- 8) Bill Meirs
- 9) Calla Papademas
- 10) Brian Smith
- 11) Olivia Smith-Hammond
- 12) Deb Tucker Boyce

SRC Liaison:

James Smith

SRC Coordinator:

Debra Kobus

Interpreters:

Elizabeth Fox

Eliza Goodhue

Speakers or Presenters:

1) Mark Ciociola

2) Amanda Kohle

3) Laura Lawson

4) Will Pendlebury

Guests:

None.

1) Introductions (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Those in attendance went around the table and introduced themselves.

Conclusions:

Thanks to everyone!

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None.

2) Approval of Agenda (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. There were none. Sam moved to accept the agenda and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 7-0-0.

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None.

3) Open for Public Comment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

There was no public comment.

Conclusions:

None.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None.

4) Approval of Minutes for April 4, 2019 (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the April 4, 2019 Full SRC Minutes. There were none. Sam moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded. No discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 7-0-0.

Conclusions:

April 4, 2019 Full SRC Minutes were approved.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Upload approved minutes to SRC website. Debra Kobus, June 11, 2019.

5) Consent Agenda (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the following consent agenda items:

- AOE Committee: March 7, 2019.
- Performance Review Committee: April 4, 2019.
- Policy and Procedures Committee: March 7, 2019.
- Steering Committee: March 7, 2019.
- Coordinator's Report: June 6, 2019.

There were none. Michelle moved to approve, and it was seconded. No further discussion. Vote unanimous 7-0-0.

Conclusions:

Consent agenda items approved.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Upload Approved Minutes to SRC website, Debra Kobus, June 11, 2019.

6) NEW SRC Website Presentation (Debra Kobus)

<https://src.vermont.gov/>

Discussion:

Debra provided a demonstration of the new SRC website and asked that everyone check it out! Please let Debra know of any suggestions for improvement that could be made as she will be enhancing it over the summer months.

Debra said the transition was very labor intensive and recognized James Smith for the additional VR support (Jim Gallagher, Wendy Madigan, and Alison Loeb) provided in order to meet the hard launch of the site which was scheduled for the end of March.

James suggested that Tela Torrey be recognized as leading this effort as the State IT Project Manager for DAIL. Sherrie made a motion to develop a letter of appreciation to Tela Torrey for her work on the SRC website and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved 7-0-0.

Conclusions:

Motion to develop a letter of appreciation to Tela Torrey for her work on the SRC website.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

A letter of appreciation be developed on behalf of the SRC to Tela Torrey for her work on the SRC website, James Smith, open.

7) Committee Chair Updates**Discussion:****Advocacy, Outreach and Education Committee:**

Sam Liss provided the update for the AOE Committee meeting.

State related:

The unfreezing of the **General Funded Attendant Services Program** did not get through the legislature despite the fact there was a \$50M surplus due to new revenue. We might have to reformulate the strategy to get this program unfrozen.

Sam gave credit to the Senate for increasing appropriations in some areas for social services programs.

Most of you know that the increase in the **Minimum Wage and the Family Leave Bill** stalled. Speaker Johnson eventually agreed to take these up next session as there were only minor differences between the House and Senate bills.

A good thing that occurred is that women who are on **Reach Up** and whose children are receiving SSI, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) requirements have been reduced.

The **recent Vermont State Supreme Court ruling** related to modifying the eligibility criteria for developmental disability services is good in some ways but may require additional funding from AHS in having to provide mandated services.

Federal related:

NCIL has two policy proposals to remove work disincentives:

- 1) **Childhood Disability Beneficiaries (CDB)** who are past or reaching full retirement age – within a year or two. We want to change SSA rules so that a CDB would have the same work rules (lack of earning restriction) that all SSA retirees have at full age of retirement. As the rules stand now, they have to continue with SSDI work rules even past age of full retirement.
- 2) Beneficiaries using the **Medicaid-Buy-In** who are approaching or passed age 65. We are proposing a change to Ticket to Work legislation to remove the current age limit (65), or at least make it full age of retirement.

The Disability Integration Act of 2019

(<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/555>)

will move forward out of the House but probably will not get passed by the Republican led Senate. This bill prohibits government entities and insurance providers from denying community-based services to individuals with disabilities that require long-term service or support that would enable such individuals to live in the community and lead an independent life.

Long Term Unemployment Elimination Act was also introduced. The other bills that we continue to follow include:

Able Age Adjustment Act, the Social Security 2100 Act, the Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (does not affect Vermont), and the reintroduction **Disability Employment Incentive Act**, all of which remain in committee.

We are waiting for Senators Casey and Portman to introduce our **National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)'s Employment Incentive Bill** for people with disabilities at retirement age. As of now there is a delay as they are waiting for Senator Grassley's approval to amend the Social Security Act.

Other:

The **Governor's Summit on the Employment of People with Disabilities** (formerly the Disability Transportation Summit) will take place on December 2 at the Double Tree in South Burlington. We are still waiting to hear from State Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr. who is also the President of the American Association of People with Disabilities. We are moving forward as to what workshops will be offered.

The **Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (GCEPD)** is modifying its process for handing out the ADA awards to employers across the state. Thanks to the new coordinator there will be a new application form. There is also a new David Sagi Award.

Policy and Procedures Committee:

Sherrie Brunelle provided the update for the P & P Committee.

After a lot of work by many, we have approved a revised **Chapter 204 on Case Closure** that provides specific and detailed guidance on how cases can be closed. There are now template letters for VR Counselors to use based on specific circumstances. A lot of training will be needed by VR Counselors on this revised chapter.

We are continuing to work on the **Self-Employment Chapter** with a team of individuals who will provide some work over the summer.

Diane has reviewed the **Consumer Handout** and supports it with some formatting changes.

In the fall, we have **Gender Identity** policy discussions on the agenda.

Regarding membership on the committee, please note that **more members are needed on the Policies and Procedures Committee**. Currently, we only have three voting members and need more people in order to have a quorum and get our work done. So, if you are interested, please reach out to Sherrie or Debra for more information!

Performance Review Committee:

Marlena Hughes provided the update for the Performance Review Committee.

At the last meeting, Amanda Kohle provided an update on the **Consumer and Employer Surveys**, a **Youth Survey** that will be performed, and a presentation on the **Central Office Case Review**. James provided an update on a new grant proposal that he submitted to **SAMSHA on Supported Employment Services for Outpatient Mental Health Clients**.

Steering Committee:

Sarah Launderville was not in attendance so there was no update provided.

Conclusions:

Thanks everyone.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None.

8) Orientation Presentation (Amanda Kohle). Presentation is here:

<https://src.vermont.gov/document/orientation-prezi-presentation>

Discussion:

Amanda thanked Sherrie Brunelle for being instrumental in having this presentation be brought to attention of the Full SRC. **Orientation** is the first step in providing a consistent message to

consumers. In most cases, Orientation is usually provided even before people apply for VR services. To view this presentation, please select the link above!

Conclusions:

Thank you, Amanda, for the presentation!

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None.

9) Director's Report (Diane Dalmasse)

Discussion:

Diane reported the following:

VR Development Team: The team led by James Smith continues to work on increasing revenue to assist more Vermonters with disabilities to join the workforce. In mid-May we submitted a **SAMHSA grant**. This grant will make Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment available to people served by Vermont Adult Outpatient Programs at three designated agencies: Washington County Mental Health, Northwest Counseling Service, and Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (HCRS). The grant is about \$800,000 per year for five years. It will support the creation of treatment teams including a case manager, VABIR employment consultant, .3 FTE benefits counselor and .5 VR counselor.

We made it to the final round for a **Kessler Foundation grant**. We are about to submit a proposal that would create two pilots in Rutland and Burlington to expand VR services to Social Security Ticket to Work participants. The grant will support teams including a VR counselor, .5 FTE benefits counselor and a VABIR employment consultant for two years. When we are successful, we plan to sustain and expand this effort using revenue generated from the Ticket to Work program.

Careers Initiative: As many of you know, with the passage of WIOA, our performance measures shifted from quantitative (how many people did we assist to become employed) to

qualitative measures (median earnings, job retention, credential/skill attainment, and employer satisfaction. We have rolled out our new dashboard which is clearly a work in progress. We established five lead indicators that we think will impact our lagging indicators established by WIOA. Our efforts currently are totally focused on encouraging and supporting our staff to do more of the five lead indicators with their consumers. The lead indicators are teaming, assessment, education and training, vocational goals with higher wages and follow along. If you remember the diet analogy: the leading indicators are reducing caloric intake and exercise will lead to the lagging indicator which is weight loss 😊.

Youth Advocacy Council/Youth Summit: Last fall we worked with other public and private organizations including VCIL, VFN, DBVI, YDP and others to put together a Youth Advocacy Council. We were successful in recruiting about 12 young people with disabilities to form the YAC and the group has met five times. One of those meetings was held at the statehouse including a meeting with Governor Scott and participation in a “Card Room” event. The year culminated in a Youth Summit at VTC with about 200 youth and adults in attendance. What has been truly amazing is the way the council has come together, established their priorities and learned to speak up about their needs and advocate for themselves. They ran the summit, introduced the speakers and co-facilitated some of the workshops. Feedback from you included: Based upon the feedback at the end of the event, everyone found meaning in the activities of the day. These include:

There was a lot of information that I did not know before;
anyone can speak up for themselves; I liked that I could be open and friendly with people and engaging with them;
Speakers were great and supportive and kind; The inclusivity... and meeting new people; [I] liked seeing lots of youth making a difference; [I liked] how positive it was because many people think negative of themselves, and; [I liked the] inspirational

conversation and speech about youth needing to use their voice.

We are recruiting for new members and the group is excited to continue their work in the next year and planning the next summit.

Transition Charter: With the passage of WIOA came Pre-Employment Transition Services for students in high school and a requirement to spend 15% of our federal funding on this population. Our 14 transition counselors with their VABIR youth employment specialists have been covering all the high schools in Vermont providing Pre-ETS services. We have been doing this work for over four years and decided it was time to take stock. Our transition counselors have done a time study. They are about to do a process mapping of their work with the VABIR youth employment specialist and students and their families. We have chosen a vendor to do a youth survey via text and include school personnel. The charge to the charter group is to determine whether our current service delivery model for students is working or whether changes need to be made.

Governor's Summit: As many of you know, we are planning to do a Governor's Summit on the Employment of People with Disabilities on December 2nd at the Doubletree in South Burlington. The theme for the morning session is "Transportation to Work". We are partnering with VTrans and others to plan the agenda. We are hopeful to have Ted Kennedy Jr. as the keynote for the luncheon that will be open to the public. He has not been confirmed as yet.

Conclusions:

Thank you, Diane, for the update!

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None.

10) VR Regional Manager Updates (Mark Ciociola and Will Pendlebury).

Discussion:

Mark Ciociola, Regional Manager of Burlington and Middlebury, provided the following update:

Mark said he has been wearing many hats over the last few weeks because of a recent retirement of an employee but has found it to be fun. They met recently with the Department of Labor (DOL). The DOL would like to learn more related to disabilities and have asked for a VR 101 training on the subject because they potential meet with a lot of our folks.

There is a new director for Vermont Adult Learning, and he will be coming to one of our staff meetings.

Over in Middlebury we have Food Fun and Your Future to recruit students to come in as well as local employers and combine it with some food.

We have seen an up tick in mature workers coming in who are unemployed and would like help in figuring out what to do. We are thinking about having a series of workshops to discuss the emotional responses of getting older and to get them involved in some work experiences.

We have some new hires and a few people shuffling around. We are recruiting for a transition counselor.

The social security pilot is very exciting to staff and is just getting off the ground.

Will Pendlebury, Regional Manager of Bennington and Rutland, provided the following update:

Will said Rutland being the second largest city in Vermont, there's a lot of opportunities. We have been working with the Linking Learning Careers Team that allows us to transition students into the work force.

We are fully staffed. We did, however, lose a VABIR manager and are interviewing for a replacement.

Aware and Ticket to Work is going well as well as Process Mapping.

James came to Rutland yesterday and provided a presentation. We work with the CWS staff as well.

At this time, Will splits his time between both offices in Rutland and Bennington.

One other thing, with the passing of WIOA, we are making sure we are partnering well with the DOL as well as Vermont Adult Learning located in Rutland. We had a good meeting at the Tutoring Center.

11) Charter Group Presentations:

1) Process Mapping (Laura Lawson).

Laura Lawson is the staff development and training coordinator and is the lead on Voc Rehab's Process Improvement Project. Laura provided a handout which will be posted to the SRC website under this meeting date.

An overall plan along with a timeline was developed in VocRehab on **Process Improvement**. Examples of work has been asked to be provided so a comparison can be made between offices. A **Process Mapping Reflection Form** was developed that evaluates a process.

We have provided:

- a clear structure,
- templates,
- and staff have been trained in White Belt.

(Note: More information about White Belt training is available here: <https://www.villanovau.com/resources/six-sigma/what-is-a-six-sigma-white-belt/>.)

Excitement and energy are building, and changes are being considered and implemented. This will allow us opportunities in clearer messaging to field staff around the WHY; more strategic and proactive processes related to an unbiased facilitator; more training for leadership team; and demonstrations/modeling.

We plan to be done with the data collection phase by the end of the year.

Diane said that it was taking a long time for people to be seen by a counselor and there was general agreement to schedule a couple of appointments for initial interviews in advance. Another decision that was made was asking all offices to incorporate a paperwork day into their week.

2) **Resource Allocation Groups** (James Smith).

James handed out some documents which will be posted to the SRC website under this meeting date:

James leads the **Assignment of Resources Charter Group** that is mixed with regional managers, counselors, and VABIR staff. They were the first Charter Group to complete their task and under budget.

One of the first things they did was look at where they were spending their resources and compared it to outcome data. One of their first tasks was to look at the VR policy on spending money to support consumers. It became apparent that because we have discretionary funds, people come here for basic needs. Although there were real needs, it wasn't necessarily appropriate for them to come to us. We developed a new policy guidance around when we spend money on basic support needs. We did some training for staff around these new guidelines.

The next big task was to look at our case service spending and make recommendations to Diane about adjusting where we put this funding. These funds are available through VR counselors based on a consumer's needs in order to achieve an employment outcome.

Another layer is "set asides" where we hold back some money for certain activities for progressive employment that we know leads to job placement, credentialing, and some other larger expenditures like van adaptation. We realized that we were spending 1/3 on transportation and another 1/3 on basic support. Recommendations were to shift some funding to reduce the discretionary funds. It was a very inclusive process from the different offices and appropriately realigns our spending that will result in improvement in employment outcomes for our consumers.

Will commented that people in general are very supportive of this shift. However, there are some that are nervous of this shift away from set asides and are concerned that this will reduce support of attending school. James will provide more communication to the staff on this as this should not be impacted.

Conclusions:

Thank you, Laura and James, for the presentations!

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Upload presentations, if available, to SRC website, Debra Kobus, June 11, 2019.

12) Other Business (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

1) Certificate of Appreciation for Alice Porter

Sherrie presented a plaque to Alice thanking her for all the hard work she has done on Aware and all the things she does every day and the SRC wanted to recognize that. Alice was very appreciative and did not expect to be recognized and thanked the SRC for this wonderful acknowledgement.

2) Sam wanted to make sure that everyone who wanted to, was receiving **announcements from the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Inc. (NCSRC)**. After a short discussion, it was agreed that if there was something that might be of interest to the Full SRC, that the SRC Chair or Vice Chair should forward to Debra requesting distribution to all.

3) Sam wanted to alert the council that **The Public Assets Institute and NCIL were partnering** in effort to get funding for performing research on the Disabled and Employment in order to disseminate the data back to the public and policy makers. More information will be provided if funds are obtained.

Conclusions:

Thank you, Alice, for all you the work you have done related to Aware.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None.

13) Round Table (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

n/a.

Conclusions:

None.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None.

14) Adjournment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Michelle moved to adjourn, and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 7-0-0.

Conclusions:

Motion to adjourn approved at 2:52 p.m.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, Debra Kobus, 6/11/19.
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, Debra Kobus, 6/11/19.
- Minutes approved, Committee, 12/5/19.
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, Debra Kobus, 12/10/19.