

Draft Minutes
SRC POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 5, 2020
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
via Zoom

Meeting called by:

Sherrie Brunelle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Members Present:

- Helena Kehne
- Kristen Carpentier
- Sherrie Brunelle
- Patricia Wehman
- Rocko Gieselman

Members Absent:

- n/a

SRC Liaison:

- James Smith

SRC Coordinator:

- Kate Larose

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. Helena moved to approve the agenda and it was seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous 2-0-0

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

3) Open for Public Comment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

No one from the public was present.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Minutes for September 3, 2020 (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the [minutes from September 3, 2020](#). Sherrie requested an edit under the PSE agenda item in the first paragraph to add language to the sentence so it reads, "We then move in to spending guidelines which has a \$3k allocation for *PSE education training programs leading to a credential...*" Helena moved to approve the minutes with that change, and it was seconded. No discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 2-0-0

Conclusions:

September 3, 2020 minutes were approved with the edit above.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Approved minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 11/10/2020

5) Draft Review: Setting Priorities for 2021 (Group)

Sherrie highlighted the chart below that was included in the meeting packet. She noted that current work includes updates to Chapter 308 (self-employment) and that new language for beneficiaries of SSI/SSDI will be included in Chapter 107 (Ticket to Work). She asked committee members to share what other chapters feel like priorities at this time.

Chapter Number	Name	Year Last Reviewed
107	Ticket to Work	n/a
311	Training & Post-Secondary Education	2020
313	Audiology Services and Hearing Aids	2020
102	Informed Choice	2018
205	Post-Employment Services	2018
209	Casework Practices Under WIOA	2018

105	Appeals Process	2017
202	Eligibility	2017
203	Individualized Plan for Employment	2017
204	Closure	2017
206	Placement	2017
307	Pre-Employment Transition Services	2017
310	Supported Employment	2017
106	Order of Selection	2016
104	Division for the Blind & Visually Impaired	2015
207	Authorization & Approval Expenditures	2015
208	Expenditures in Status	2015
301	Counseling & Guidance	2015
305	Personal Services	2015
101	Confidentiality	2013
103	Comparable Services and Benefits	2013
314	Services to Groups	2011
201	Referral & Application Process	2009
302	Health Services	2009
303	Maintenance	2009
304	Occupational Tools, Licenses, Equipment, stock & Supplies	2009
306	Rehabilitation Technology Services	2009
308	Self-Employment	2009
309	Services to Family Members	2009
312	Transportation	2009
Appendix A	Spending Guidelines	2009

Kristen wondered about Chapter 201 (referral and application process) given the way we are increasingly utilizing technology to do business virtually. James agreed and shared that Chapter 306 (Rehabilitation Technology Services) was last updated in 2009 so needs to be updated as well, citing that there are now three VR staff that provide assistive technology services.

Rocko said that we are increasing capacity in all VR offices through the addition of transition counselors given the growing percentage of youth being served. Having the same counselor be able to support youth from high school through to their 25th birthdays helps keep people engaged and suggested we should look at Chapter 307 (Pre-Employment Transition Services). James said this chapter largely reflects federal statute.

James shared that we have not looked at Chapter 312 (Transportation) recently and—given the changes from VTrans—there may be some scope for updating. Helena echoed the importance of looking at this chapter. James added that Zoe, a VR Business Account Manager, has been closely involved with some of the recent transportation initiatives. Sherrie added that perhaps the funding limits need to be looked at to differentiate between people who live in areas with

access to public transportation versus people who live in more rural areas and must rely on personal vehicles for transportation. She wondered if additional guidance about tying this to employment goals would be useful and shared that we used to have access to car coaches in Vermont. Rocko shared that they would find this useful in their work. Sherrie asked if there were others beyond VR counselors at the state level who would be a resource to this committee and shared that—if so—Helena could do some pre-work with them. Patti shared that transportation is a big and important issue and she would like to see this addressed as well.

James shared that VR wants to update Chapter 107 (Ticket to Work) to include benefits counseling and other issues, much of which are highly technical information that does not lend itself to group writing. He suggested that he, Alice, and Betsy work on this and bring it back to the committee when ready.

The committee agreed on the following level of priority:

1. Self-employment (308)
2. Rehabilitation Technology Services (306)
3. Referral and Application Process (201)
4. Transportation (312)
5. Ticket to Work (107)

Conclusions:

See above.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Work with Alice and Betsy on Chapter 107: Ticket to Work and share with committee when ready, **James Smith**
- Think about opportunities to connect Helena and other committee members to people doing work on transportation, **James Smith**

6) Survey Responses (James Smith)

Discussion:

James provided an overview of the survey results shared in the meeting packet. He stated that in each chapter there are spending guidelines as well as conditions to exceed the guidelines (such as managerial approval). VR staff are periodically surveyed to see what might need attention. The response rate of the most recent survey indicated that it was completed by the majority of VR counseling staff.

Sherrie made a list of areas that were noted as being too low (including self-employment, transportation, and tutoring services). She suggested that we review the Spending Guidelines separate from chapter reviews.

James noted that they are looking at how to pay minimum wage as stipends for work experiences. They are currently looking for a vendor that could help process these payments.

Kristen wondered if, under questions 24 and 55, the definitions were well understood by the respondents. For example, respondents indicated that more funds were needed for mental health services, but under the psychologists question the majority said they thought the spending guideline was just right. Rocko wondered what examples of some of those mental health services might be (for example, in-patient vs. out-patient). James thought it would be unusual for VR to pay for this directly given Medicaid coverage. Rocko said this is the case for youth in transition. Kristin said she would like to know more about what respondents were thinking of under these questions. For example, does this include licensed drug and alcohol counselors?

Sherrie wondered if the question about stipends (24) and work experience (55) were one in the same. James shared that, historically, we had avoided paying a wage as it would count against SSI/SSDI and we wanted to avoid paying FICA. But now we want to move towards paying a minimum wage for work experience (but not job shadow) so will need a payroll agent. Sherrie said that she sees paying a minimum wage as a positive motivation for consumers. James said that this might impact the number of work experiences we could do as it will cost more, so VR may need to be more discerning in the future.

Sherrie said that she has heard from VR counselors in the past that getting tutoring services for the rate of reimbursement was difficult, as well as PSE rates being too low. Kristen shared that she worked with a consumer a few years ago who needed doctorate level tutoring and it was a bargain at \$25 an hour.

Patti wondered what "just right" meant. Was it just right because that is what VR counselors had in their budgets to spend? And in cases when it was "too low" what did that mean for the consumer in terms of outcomes? Patti also shared that security deposits (20 and 21) is low for Chittenden county at just \$750 and she wondered if this is because that amount is considered what can be spent after all other resources have been exhausted. She noted that for consumers, navigating and piecing together state, federal, and community resources often feels like a full-time job.

Sherrie and Patti shared that they were also interested in learning more about telecommunications and the definitions, including the ability to have access to internet and devices to meet with their VR counselor. James said that VR is working on creating a set-aside during COVID for consumers to purchase these items.

James said he would like to take this input back to the VR leadership team and asked for a summary of those items. Sherrie that they included the following:

- Transportation
- Housing
- Stipend for work experience

- Tutoring services and reimbursement for PSE
- Telecommunications

Conclusions:

See above.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Share questions at the general counselors meeting, **James Smith**, 1/4/2021
- Share committee input with the VR leadership team, **James Smith**, 1/4/2021

7) Other Business (Group)

A. Agenda Setting – January 7, 2021

- Self-employment (308)
- Rehabilitation Technology Services (306)

Carry forward list for future meetings include

- Referral and Application Process (201)
- Transportation (312)
- Ticket to Work (107)

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Work with James to see which VR staff should be invited to the January meeting, **Kate Larose**, 11/9/2020

8) Adjournment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Helena moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded. Vote unanimous 3-0-0

Conclusions:

Sherrie called the meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 11/10/2020
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, **Kate Larose**, 11/10/2020
- Minutes approved, **Committee**, 1/07/2021
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, **Kate Larose**, 1/12/2021