

**Draft Minutes**  
VERMONT STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (VTSRC)  
Thursday, June 3, 2021, 1:00PM – 3:30PM  
Zoom

**Meeting called by:**

Sarah Launderville, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.

**Members Present:**

- Ana Kolbach
- Asher Edelson
- Bill Meirs
- Cara Sachs
- Diane Dalmasse, ex-officio, non-voting
- Gina D'Ambrosio
- Kristen Carpentier, non-voting
- Marlena Hughes
- Martha Frank
- Nick Caputo
- Patricia Wehman
- Sherrie Brunelle
- Helena Kehne
- Emily Marie Ahtúnan
- Courtney Blasius
- Rocko Gieselman, non-voting
- Sarah Launderville

**Members Absent:**

- Robin Ingenthron
- Rose Lucenti
- Sarah Sterling
- Cari Kelley
- Olivia Smith-Hammond
- Brian Smith
- Danielle Dubois
- Calla Papademas

**SRC Liaison:**

- James Smith

**SRC Coordinator:**

Kate Larose

**Interpreters:**

None.

**Speakers or Presenters:**

- Liz Harrington
- Bill Sugarman

**Guests:**

- Andrea Bacchi

**1) Introductions** (Sarah Launderville, Chair)

**Discussion:**

Those in attendance introduced themselves.

**Conclusions:**

Thanks to everyone!

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None

**2) Approval of Agenda** (Sarah Launderville)

**Discussion:**

Sarah asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. Sherrie moved to accept the agenda and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 12-0-1

**Conclusions:**

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None

**3) Open for Public Comment** (Sarah Launderville)

**Discussion:**

None

**Conclusions:**

n/a

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None

**4) Approval of Minutes for April 1, 2021** (Sarah Launderville)

**Discussion:**

Sarah asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the April 1, 2021 minutes. There were none. Nick moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded. No discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 12-0-1

**Conclusions:**

[Minutes from April 1, 2021](#) were approved

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

Upload approved minutes to the SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 6/8/2021

**5) Consent Agenda** (Sarah Lauderville)**Discussion:**

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

- [AOE Committee May 6, 2021](#)
- [Performance Review Committee April 1, 2021](#)
- [Policy & Procedures Committee May 6, 2021](#)
- [Steering Committee May 6, 2021](#)
- [Coordinator's June 3, 2021 Report](#)

Sherrie moved to approve, and it was seconded. No further discussion. Vote unanimous 12-0-1

**Conclusions:**

Consent agenda items approved

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

Upload items to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 6/8/2021

**6) [Director's Report](#)** (Diane Dalmasse)**Discussion:**

Diane walked through her [June Director's report](#).

Cara asked about the hoteling concept and where that came from. Diane shared that it is coming from state HR and the office of the governor. Martha shared this is the type of model that VFN uses. James added that guidance changed this week to enable vaccinated staff members to provide in-person services in the community when following CDC and VDH guidelines. Diane added that it is likely that, with over 200 VR and VABIR staff members, there will be some who do not get vaccinated. As employers they are not allowed to ask about vaccination status but will continue to respond to this guidance on a case-by-case basis.

Marlena asked how teleworking impacts consumers and if they will continue to have in-person meetings. Diane said that they are not supporting fully remote schedules for any client-facing positions and that they found in the past year

that some consumers prefer online engagement so will also honor those preferences.

**Conclusions:**

Thank you, Diane, for the update!

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

n/a

**7) Update: DEI Work** (Liz Harrington)

**Discussion:**

Liz walked through [this overview presentation](#) of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work to date.

James added that one of the next steps is getting specialized DEI training and technical assistance in implementing this plan. To that end, he is developing a request for proposal to get bids from contractors to support VR on this work.

Martha said that this work will inform the next VR needs assessment and practices and services moving forward.

Cara said that this work sounds good and the true test will be how it is put into action. As a part time worker with a disability she has found that creating key, part time positions which are integral to the work of an organization will be important to meeting the spirit of DEI in practice.

Diane and James said they would share the RFP with SRC members when it is available so that people can share with contractors they know who do this work.

Sarah said that VCIL is in year five of a community of practice for developmental services with Georgetown University which focuses on cultural competency and she is happy to pass along the resources. Sarah said that it is also important to build in ways to protect staff who provide services (for example, ensuring that consumers respect diversity and pronouns).

**Conclusions:**

See above

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

n/a

**8) Committee Chair Updates** (Sarah Launderville)

**Discussion:**

**A. Advocacy, Outreach, & Education Committee**

Asher shared he was honored to have been voted in as the new AOE chair. Most recently the AOE committee had presentations from Karen Lafayette with VCDR as well as a panel presentation from the MyRide micro transit

project in Montpelier. More information about those presentations and May events can be found in the minutes. The next AOE meeting will be focused on priority setting.

#### **B. Policies & Procedures Committee**

Sherrie reported that the P&P Committee has moved the self-employment chapter review to later in the year. Instead, recent chapter reviews have included ensuring the chapters reflect inclusive gender identity. Chapters 201 and 202 (referral and eligibility chapters) were updated to ensure language around HIV status is relevant, that residency requirements were removed, and that substance use disorder language is consistent with the language in DSM-IV.

#### **C. Performance Review Committee**

Nick shared that the PR Committee had two great presentations at the last meeting: Linking Learning to Careers from Brian Guy as well as the impact of COVID on VR consumers and both can be reviewed in the minutes.

#### **D. Steering Committee**

Sarah said that Steering Committee meetings are primarily focused on setting meeting agendas and designing the retreat. In recent months there has also been a focus on meeting engagement and succession planning.

#### **Conclusions:**

Thank you to the committee chairs for the updates!

#### **Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

n/a

### **9) VR Regional Manager Updates (Bill Sugarman)**

#### **Discussion:**

Bill reported the following:

*What is caseload driven outreach, and how is it positively impacting youth in the summer program?*

Bill walked through [this document](#), a sample spreadsheet from the summer youth employment program, that is used in their consumer driven outreach work to showcase how they approach these conversations at team meetings. The difference with consumer-driven outreach is it is working with an individual's own job search to meet their individualized needs and goals and making specific matches. Simply put, it is a list that drives our conversations and keeps us focused to make great matches.

Rocko added that this is happening while there is transition on the transition teams themselves, and that BAMs around the state deserve a round of applause for their hard work and flexibility and they see it resulting in positive consumer outcomes.

**Conclusions:**

Thank you, Bill, for the updates!

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None

**10) Presentation: [Vermont Labor Market](#) (Kevin Stapleton)**

**Discussion:**

Kevin is an economist at the Vermont Department of Labor. He walked through [this presentation](#) and also highlighted data and charts from [this website](#).

Nick asked how inflation might impact employment. Kevin said that—traditionally—economists would say that, given all the money put into the system in the past year, we should see inflation. But unlike past Federal Reserves, this Fed wants to wait and see if inflation happens before taking preventative or responsive measures. But we have seen that the stimulus funds have saved businesses and stabilized unemployment because the framework of the system has been preserved. He added that we have also already seen inflation in housing and commodities, just not consumer goods.

Diane said that VR has made a shift over the past four years since WIOA, moving from the focus on consumers getting jobs to getting careers and the slide Kevin had on highly skilled positions and wages was reaffirming of the importance of that shift.

Emily asked about the increase of pandemic related unemployment for people with disabilities. She wondered if they have data about people no longer working due to increased risk of COVID exposure to people with disabilities, or if that job loss was more attributable to the types of jobs and industry they were working in. Kevin shared that there is a national source of data that may be able to provide more information and he will investigate.

**11) Paired Discussions**

SRC members were asked to take a few quiet moments to reflect on all they've heard today, and think about the following:

- *What questions or ideas does this spark for you in terms of opportunities on the horizon for VR, Vermonters with disabilities, and the work of the SRC?*
- *What are some ways these can be moved forward in the work of our committees?*

SRC members were broken into pairs to discuss these questions, and the following highlights were shared with the large group:

- Nick said they wondered what metrics could be used in terms of job flexibility or how to identify positions that are going to become more flexible.
- Diane said her group was wondering about how to promote flexible options with employers, especially working from home.
- Gina also wondered about health and safety concerns about coming back to work, and Diane thought there could be some opportunities in the consumer satisfaction survey to capture some of that data.
- Cara underscored how difficult it is to make the decision as a consumer to keep benefits or try to go off benefits. She hoped that the AOE committee could help with advocacy to eliminate the benefit cliffs so people are not forced to make hard choices that could negatively impact them.

## **12) Update: Succession Planning** (Sarah Launderville)

Sarah shared that SRC membership is healthy and robust with all required positions filled and a majority of members being people with disabilities. To ensure that this continues, the Steering Committee has recently been focusing on both new member recruitment as well as succession planning for leadership positions such as committee and council chair positions. Anyone who is interested in exploring a chair position in the future is encouraged to reach out to Kate or Sarah.

### **Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

SRC members should reach out to Kate or Sarah if they are interested in exploring leadership positions with the SRC, or if they know of potential SRC members.

## **13) Round Table** (Group)

### **Discussion:**

Based on the ideas shared in your paired conversations, what are some topics or agenda items you'd like to see included on a future SRC or committee meeting agenda?

- Ana wondered about the types of skills needed to work remotely or in hybrid positions, and how can we set people up to successfully work remotely.
- Andrea added that there are several barriers to working remotely such as misconceptions about what remote work consists of in terms of

accountability (many people think you're sitting around watching TV all day, etc.)

- Emily wondered if the work/learn from home demographic is one that can be incorporated into VR marketing roll out.

#### **14) Adjournment** (Sarah Launderville)

##### **Conclusions:**

Sarah called the meeting adjourned at 3:31pm

##### **Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 6/8/2021
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, **Kate Larose**, 6/8/2021
- Minutes approved, **Committee**, 10/7/2021
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, **Kate Larose**, 10/12/2021