

SSRC Draft Minutes
Vermont State Rehabilitation Council
ADVOCACY, OUTREACH, AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 7, 2024
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM
Virtual Meeting

Meeting called by:

Courtney Blasius called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Members Present:

- Andrea Bacchi
- Courtney Blasius, Chair
- Sherrie Brunelle
- Diane Dalmasse (ex-officio, non-voting)
- Helena Kehne
- Jacquie Kelley
- Bill Meirs
- Brandy Reynolds (non-voting)
- Nancy Richards
- Ana Russo
- Laura Siegel

Members Absent:

- Angela Allard
- Cari Kelley, excused
- Abby Levinsohn

SRC Liaison:

- Diane Dalmasse

SRC Coordinator:

- Janice Leonard

Speakers or Presenters:

- Nat Piper, Business, Legislative & Outreach and Community Manager
- Kara Haynes, Transition Program Manager

Guests:

Interpreters:

- Nicole Comtois
- Jennifer Raney

1) Introductions (Courtney Blasius, AOE Chair)

Discussion:

The group members all introduced themselves. Welcome!

Conclusions:

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

2) Approval of Agenda (Courtney Blasius)

Discussion:

Courtney asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. Sherrie moved to accept the agenda, and it was seconded by Anna. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 9-0-0

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today’s agenda accepted

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Finalize agenda and upload to SRC Website, **Janice Leonard, 9/30/24**

3) Open for Public Comment (Courtney Blasius)

Discussion:

No members of the public were present.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (Courtney Blasius)

Discussion:

Courtney asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the Minutes from May 2, 2024. Sherrie Asher moved to approve the minutes with one change noted below, and it was seconded by Helena. No discussion. Approved unanimously 9-0-0.

- Correction: Page 4 last bullet, summer career exploration program, Brandy provided overview. Move to end of all other topics.

Conclusions:

Minutes approved with the one change of moving page 4 last bullet to the end of all other topics.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Upload amended minutes to SRC website and link emailed to members, **Janice Leonard 9/30/24**.

5) Spirit of ADA Employer Awards (Nat Piper)

Discussion:

Overview:

See attached presentation for full details.

Vermont Governor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities (GCEPD) coordinates the Spirit of ADA Employer Awards. Their mission is to promote equal employment for all citizens of Vermont by advising the Governor on current issues that affect employment of people with disabilities and equally important through partnerships between business, government and individuals with disabilities. Donna Curtain is the Board Chair, Bob Burke is the Vice Chair and Katie Franco is the executive coordinator.

History of the ADA Awards:

- In 1987 Congress put together the National Disability Employment Awareness month - October
- The Annual Vermont GCEPD Spirit of the ADA Awards were created in 2014.
- Given to employers who reflect the spirit of the ADA in their employment practices.
 - Recruitment Outreach & equal accessibility
 - Use of on-the-job accommodations
 - Accessible physical structures
 - Support for the employment of worker(s) with a disability as an overall employment strategy and as a favorable business decision.
- David SAGI Memorial Award. In David Sagi's honor, we bestow this award upon an employer who makes a special effort to make the business accessible to employees with disabilities. He was a truly passionate advocate. He just encouraged and convinced. The SAGI award recognizes employers who view

accessible workplaces as the true win-win for obtaining and retaining employees with disabilities.

- Nat reviewed the names of the 2024 Awardees.
 - Customer Demonstrations Services – Colchester
 - Butterfly Bakery – Barre
 - Onion River Animal Hospital – Barre
 - Shaw’s Supermarket – Manchester Center
 - WheelPad – Wilmington
 - Lamoille Valley Veterinary Services – Hyde Park
 - Hannaford Market – Bradford
 - VINE Sanctuary – Springfield
 - Windsor County Youth Services – Proctorsville
 - Quality Market – Barre
 - Rhino Foods (David Sagi Award) – Burlington
 - Worth Repeating (Business Strategy) – St. Albans
- 2014 – 2023: 111 Total as well as the 12 this year.
- We focus on the Recruitment, Training and Advancement of those with disabilities
- Peer to Peer networking is a key to the success of this work.

How we can support this program

- Spread the word
- Nominations for the awards, there’s a small window of time now but we are moving to accept nominations year-round.
- Suggest using the Front Porch Forum to get the word out
- How do you outreach for nominees: Nat let the group know that it is primarily through the workforce partners throughout the state. Dept of Labor, Economic Services, us, etc. Nominations start mid to late June through July. The board decides who receives the awards, and has a ranking system to decide.
- In October we have celebrations. The following year, late Feb, early March, award winners go to Montpelier to talk about best practices and strategies around this. In the afternoon there is a resolution read in the legislature to recognize the business formally with a standing ovation. The Governor/ Dep governor meets with them. To discuss business strategy.
- The group looks at how do they as a Board or as a system keep the energy and enthusiasm going.
- Is the David Sagi award open to public? The awarded Business Customer is asked who they would like to invite/attend. Some businesses don’t want open to public (or don’t have the room) and some do!

- Nat will send Janice the information on the awards and she will send along to the group.
- In October, the celebrations for those recognized happen. This occurs in or out of the nominated business, the business decides. There is also a meeting in Montpelier to recognize them and the group then goes straight to the Legislature for a reading of the resolution and appreciation is shown.

Conclusions:

We are glad that there are some things that we can do to support the program and look forward to the continued success.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

6) Process and Outcomes for SCEP (Kara Haynes)

Discussion:

- Summer Career Exploration Program
- The detailed presentation is available on the attached PowerPoint Presentation.
- Participants:
 - Since 2021 SCEP has successfully supported 481 youth in classroom instruction and paid work experiences.
 - Many SCEP participants go on to additional work-based learning activities after participating in SCEP
 - 85% of participating youth remain engaged with HA a year after
 - 30% of youth are currently employed or were employed at after participating in the summer program.
- Employers: since we started, the program has resulted in partnerships with 371 employment sites around Vermont.
- Kara presented a couple of case studies.
- Kara had a list of the team member titles for SCEP. Can be found on the PowerPoint (PP)
- Information also available on the Website
- Kara presented the video on the program
- Transportation is the biggest barrier.

Conclusions:

Program is going great, need to anticipate transportation issues increasing with cuts in transportation programs.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:
NA

7) What can we do to help Long COVID Action Plan

Discussion:

Noting new to share.

Conclusions:

Pass Item

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

NA

8) Other Business (Group)

a. Agenda Setting: November 7, 2024

Discussion:

- Hear about VCDR platform and what we want to support, work on, learn about, contact person who coordinates this. Karen Lafayette. YES, sent zoom
- Laura give us an update on the bills from last session.- Nothing yet to update
- What's on DD council's legislative agenda, Kristin Murphy (executive director of DD council) or , sent
- Thursday March 13 we have the Card Room

b. **We need a SILC representative for the Board.** Sara Lauderville was filling – check with her for another name. Cari Kelly attends meetings as well as Helena. Chair is Tom Hamilton. Fred Jones is a member And director of the blind and visually impaired Chair Theo Kennedy, Tom Hamilton is exec Dir.

Conclusions:

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

9) Adjournment (Courtney Blasius)

Courtney called the meeting adjourned at 2:10.

Meeting Action Items, Person Responsible and Deadlines:

- Finalize agenda and upload to SRC Website, **Janice Leonard, 9/30/24**

- Draft minutes for this meeting, send to Committee Chair for comment then upload to SRC website, **Janice Leonard, 9/30/24**
- Finalize approved minutes for last meeting and upload to SRC website **Janice Leonard, 9/30/24**

DRAFT