

**DRAFT Minutes**  
**Vermont State Rehabilitation Council**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE**

Thursday, November 7, 2024

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

**Meeting called by:**

Sherrie Brunelle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**Members Present:**

- Andrea Bacchi
- Sherrie Brunelle
- Jacquie Kelley
- Laura Siegel
- Tara Shatney (non-voting)
- Emily Wagner
- Amanda Wheeler

**Members Absent:**

- Cari Kelly
- Sarah Sterling

**SRC Liaison:**

- James Smith
- Suzanne Hopkins

**SRC Coordinator:**

- Janice Leonard

**Speakers or Presenters:**

- n/a

**Guests:**

- Joy Choquette, Intern working w/ us in our St. Albans office who has an interest in policy work and the workings of the SRC in general.

**Interpreters:**

- Mareike Larsen
- Bethany Hawkins

**1) Introductions (Sherrie Brunelle)**

**Discussion:**

Joy introduced herself as well as the attending members of the committee.

**Conclusions:**

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

None

**2) Approval of Agenda** (Sherrie Brunelle)

**Discussion:**

Sherrie asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. Andrea moved to approve the agenda, and it was seconded by Emily. No discussion. The vote was unanimous 6-0-0

**Conclusions:**

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted.

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

- Finalize agenda and upload to SRC Website, **Janice Leonard, 11/30/24**

**3) Open for Public Comment** (Sherrie Brunelle)

**Discussion:**

Joy spoke about her attendance at the committee. She's an intern and as she studies social work, she wants to understand how policy works.

**Conclusions:**

She is welcome, happy to have her.

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

None

**4) Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes** (Sherrie Brunelle)

**Discussion:**

Sherrie asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the Minutes. Emily moved to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Laura. No discussion. Vote unanimous 6-0-0.

**Conclusions:**

September 5, 2024, Minutes approved.

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

- Approved minutes uploaded to SRC website. **Janice Leonard, 11/30/24**

## 5) Draft Review: Chapter 101, Confidentiality

### Discussion:

- Sherrie presented changes to the policy in the attached draft.
- In Section 1 B. Add definition of Informed Consent and Consent must be in writing.
  - May need legal to review this, there are times when verbal consent is accepted. This is explained later in policy so may need to amend this statement
- DVR is used in this policy. In statute we still use DVR.
- 3 B: 6, added or their representative
- 4 D: Added consult with Field Services Manager who will consult with DVR's legal
- 5 A: Rewording
  - Can only share info shared with HA, i.e., Psychological Evaluations, covered later
- 5 A 1: include interpreter, other mode of communication.

### Suggested language:

- Based on Multiple ways for individual to make a request. When an individual can't provide a written request it's the counselor's responsibility.
- Preferred mode of communication or language preference needs to be addressed in the initial interview.
- The counselor will document the request in the case record.
- 7 cleaned up and cleared. AHS Digital Services policy covers the other information. May not want to duplicate/reword, but refer to this? If one is received unencrypted should be addressed immediately by supervisor.
  - **Add/ Note:** Staff should follow all AHS and AHS Digital services encryption and policies. Encryption on SharePoint site.
  - There is still confusion. It automatically encrypts if it's from AHS. Maybe clarify this for staff somewhere.
  - Add a link to the policy?
  - Clear guidance may still be needed.
  - Add definition of PII
  - There is a belief that HA has broken Privacy policy. Federal RSA doesn't require us to follow HIPAA, but in Vermont, since we're under AHS, we need to follow HIPAA.
  - Complaint Information was added

### Missing sections

- Encryption

- Need to include DVR Policy for sending PII information electronically
- Breach of Security
- Complaints
- **Confidentiality notices on email:** Sherrie has entered suggested wording. Should we have this included?
  - Client information doesn't fall under VT Public information law. So, wouldn't apply
  - Need legal advice on this issue. HA would not want clients to think their personal information would be subject to public disclosure.

**Conclusions:**

**Vote on this at the next meeting.**

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

James get updated version to us for next meeting

**6) Draft Review: Chapter 312, Transportation**

**Discussion:**

A staff task force met on this policy and proposed some excellent changes. Sherrie and James have gone back and forth with comments on this. The changes are indicated in the attached draft.

- We don't have the capacity to issue debit cards for those who don't have a checking account. Currently clients without a checking account get charged for cashing checks. HA is currently working on this.
- Guidance: Travel reimbursement rates: "allowed to be reimbursed to a state employee". Rate of reimbursement not the use of a state vehicle. **Reword:** Counselors will use the state reimbursement rate.
- D. The counselor must confirm the participant has a valid current driver's license (previously said "or permit")
- What about proof of insurance? There isn't broad insurance coverage with insurance. **Add wording:** Rentals will include insurance
- Vehicle Purchase I 1: Sustainable Alternative?
  - Due to cost. We need to make sure best option for participant and all other options are explored. **Reword sentence?**

- Guidance: DVR contribution to vehicle purchases. **Not guidelines, needs to be in policy**
- **Maintenance and repairs:** Sherrie recommended repairs not to exceed the Kelly Blue Book value of the vehicle using the “sell to private party in fair condition” option should this be in guidelines?
- Guidance: DVR Contribution to vehicle purchase. \$5,000 seems low. Did we discuss this change? James said that this would represent a downpayment not the full cost. Additional funds for clients would not be realistic in our budget. Laura brought up the issue of lack of positive client credit for the purchase. Do we refer clients to someone to improve their credit score? This is all part of the conversation a counselor has with client when discussing it. Do we need to state that HA doesn’t co-sign loans and there is an expectation that the client will work with someone to address their credit. Is this part of the discussion with counselor to being able to maintain payments and work with client.
- Not family support, what if the car is a shared family card? **Include this in guidance?** The purpose is to support individuals’ employment. State intention of this. We aren’t trying to control. We do have policy in Policy for family members.

**Conclusions:**

Vote on this for the next meeting.

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

James get updated version to us for next meeting

**7) Status of Policies:** (James Smith)

**Discussion:**

Next up

303, maintenance

304, occupational tools, etc.

310, supported /customized employment with RSA notes

Audiology chapter, (We’re still waiting for Public Comment return of approval of the rate changes)

**Conclusions:**

Next week vote and 304 & 310 occupational tools and start review of supported and customized employment

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

**8) Other Business & Agenda Setting** (Group)

**a. Other Business**

**Discussion:**

Joy shared her thoughts on the meeting. Impressed with the process and sharing. Need to have patience!

**Conclusions:**

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

Janice to send Joy policy process

**b. Agenda Setting: January 2, 2024**

**Discussion:**

Next week vote and 304 & 310  
Start occupational tools and start supported employment  
Review before the meeting

**Conclusions:**

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

**9) Adjournment** (Sherrie Brunelle)

Emily moved that the meeting adjourn, it was seconded by Jacquie. Sherrie called the meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.