

**Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
State Rehabilitation Council**

Minutes November 14, 2006

4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Present from State Rehabilitation Council: Janice Belasco, Raymond Carroll, Linda L. Deschenes, Domenic Di Orio Jr., Robin Dolan, Susan Donavon, Dr. Judith L. Drew,, Joseph Ferreira, Steven A. Florio, Margaret Hoye, Anne LeClerc, Gary J. Levine, Catherine Sansonetti, J. David Sienko

Present from Agency: Stephen Brunero, Ronald Racine

Guests: Linda Amore, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Vincent Rossi, Herbert Weiss

1. Call to Order and Introductions - The Secretary called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

1. Additions or deletions to the Agenda – none.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion

J. Ferreira made a motion seconded by S. Florio and unanimously accepted, to approve the minutes from the October 16, 2006 meeting.

2. Old business – D. Sienko

1. State Plan and Quality Assurance merger – discussion and vote to merge the two committees

The executive committee had met before the retreat and discussed putting the two committees together for several reasons, a number of people left that were on the Quality Assurance committee, other states are merging these two committees because it seems that the delivery and the quality of services go hand in hand.

Motion

Dr. J. Drew made a motion seconded by D. Di Orio Jr. and unanimously approved, to merge the Quality Assurance committee with the State Plan and Policy committee.

There was a discussion regarding the availability of interpreters and how the subcommittee should work if one is not available for a meeting. However, with advanced notice of meetings, at least one (1)

month, this should not be a concern. The concern was that the committee did not meet unless ORS requires them to review a Policy. The timeframe for this in the past has always been a few weeks. The committee work is very deadline driven. Because the committee work is not as formality driven as the Full Council, there seems to be no inhibitors to the committee working via email or conference calls. The key for getting this done is reviewing the Policies before the actual meeting and having comments ready at that time.

2. Subcommittee's Strategic Plans

The Chair will follow-up with the subcommittee chairs and look at the crosswalks from the meetings.

2. New business – D. Sienko

1. Accessibility at Alton Jones

The Chair suggested the Council write a letter to Alton Jones to thank them and share with them some concerns encountered by the membership regarding accessibility of the facilities.

There was a question as to whether the letter should come from ORS or the SRC, or perhaps even a joint letter.

R. Carroll explained that ORS has had a long-term relationship with

Alton Jones and over time has provides technical assistance to assist in bringing that facility up to standard. Alton Jones sent ORS a satisfaction survey and we are going to go out there and speak to them about the issues. Alton Jones really wants to sell that facility and still balance it as a rustic location that is compliable with ADA standards and comfortable for all consumers.

Motion

J. Belasco made a motion seconded by M. Hoye and unanimously approved, to send a letter to Alton Jones regarding the accessibility at their facility.

A discussion regarding furthering the indicators for accessibility to all meetings took place. And it was suggested that in the future the Executive Leadership should have the authority to change the location of its meeting.

Motion

S. Florio made the motion seconded by L. Deschenes and unanimously approved, to change the location of the upcoming meetings based on the accessibility of locations.

2. Chair's Report – D. Sienko

SRC Annual Report: All committees should have their reports into N. Baker by the end of December.

3. ORS Administrator's Report; R. Carroll updated the membership on the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program.

The State Plan Update: was approved by our Federal Partner. This year, due to the changes in the Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA), the Plan will require in-depth clarification and details.

There will be an on-site monitoring visit from the RSA every (3) three years and this year Rhode Island is among the (20) twenty states scheduled for the in-depth, comprehensive assessment. With these changes, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) will have a very meaningful and significant part in the Federal Monitoring.

The 2008 Budget: begins in July of 2007. Every year since 2002, ORS has had to cut staff and resources. Once again we need to reduce, per the Governor's instructions, (38) thirty-eight million dollars. The Department of Human Services (DHS) Director, Ron Lebel, has been working with the agencies to organize a strategic plan focused on working with these cuts while still maintaining the highest quality of services.

SRC: Annual Report. We use this as a report of accomplishment and we liberally distribute it to other states. We would like to upgrade our report in form and content.

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR): is working on the National level to improve the Program.

CSAVR is actively working with business, consumers and VR State agencies to develop a national VR- Business Network. The vision is to create a coordinated approach to serving business customers through a national VR team that specializes in employer development, business consulting and corporate relations.

Right now they are circulating a draft protocol for their visit that revolves around the State plan.

Employer Honor Roll: Kathy West-Evans, the CSAVR Director of Business Relations, spoke about the VR- Business Network.

We want to thank everyone who took time out of their schedule to attend.

We took a lot of pictures at the event. CSAVR also profiled this event. Director Label also came and he was very impressed with the event.

ORS Status Report: S. Brunero reviewed the status of the ORS Program.

Vacancies – Jeannine Dionne is retiring in January and a support person will be leaving in December. We have to reduce funding and

full time positions.

Election- - With the Democrats taking over the majority in both the House and Senate there might be some movement in a more positive direction for Human Services. We are hopeful that this will be an optimistic thing for this program.

Program Improvements Plan:

In 2003 we had a program improvement plan and since then we have reached all our goals and objectives. Last year was a record year, and this year we broke those records again. The goals set for 2006 were surpassed in applications (2125), employment plans (1465), and successful closures (736).

Standards and Indicators: ORS has passed all the Standards and Indicators for the last three years.

Videophone Question: A question was raised from one of the Council members about a videophone needed for an ORS counselor serving customers in need of this accommodation. ORS administrator responded about the concerns of confidentiality in the area where the phone would be used and technical problems (firewall). All agreed that the matter would be looked into immediately and if necessary, ORS would seek assistance from outside of the agency to solve the technical problems. If further discussion is needed, it will be placed

on the next Council agenda.

4. Committee Chair's Reports

Nomination and Leadership Development

Charged with - developing leadership that is fully committed to the Council's mission, proactive in empowering consumers with disabilities, strategic in its thinking, and representing the rich diversity of Rhode Island's populations; recruitment of new members, including assessment of population sectors' representation and skills needed to fill gaps.

Election of Officers & Appointments/Reappointments – Nominations and Leadership Development committee

The Nominations and Leadership Development committee presented its recommendation for:

Reappointments & Appointments

J. David Sienko 2nd full term (Represents Department of Education)

Linda Deschenes 1st full term (Represents ORS)

Catherine Sansonetti 1st full term (Represents Client Asst. Program)

Linda Amore 1st term (Representative of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;)

Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor 1st term (Representing a community Rehabilitation Programs Service Provider)

Lorna Ricci 1st term (Representing the Governor's Investment Board formerly known as the Workforce Investment Council)

Vincent Rossi 1st term (Representative of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;)

Heidi Showstead 1st term (Represents Independent Living Council) Replacing Liz Graves

Herbert Weiss 1st term (Representing business, industry and labor)

Motion

The Nomination and Leadership Development committee made a motion seconded by s. Florio and unanimously approved, to accept the recommendation of reappointments and appointments to be sent

to the Governor for approval.

Slate of Officers

Chair – David Sienko

Vice-chair – Joseph Ferreira

Secretary - Catherine Sansonetti

Motion

The Nomination and Leadership Development Committee made a motion seconded by Dr. J. Drew and approved with the abstentions of D. Sienko, J. Ferreira and C. Sansonetti, to accept the Slate of Officers.

Employment

Charged with - increasing employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities through employer partnerships. Will be meeting after the holidays.

State Plan, Policy & Quality Assurance

Charged with - review and comment on the Office of Rehabilitation Services policies and annual State Plan updates; ORS State Plan development and compliance reviews, including the resource plan;

work with ORS regarding policy and implementation of Order of Selection; to review and analyze the scope and effectiveness of consumer satisfaction with the Office of Rehabilitation Services, via a statewide Consumer Satisfaction Survey of individuals with disabilities every three years, Public input at the SRC meetings, CAP reviews, and ORS staff surveys.

Met recently and did our annual report.

Transportation

Charged with – reducing transportation barriers.

The committee will be meeting Friday, the community planning committee is going to present a report at that time to us. Once we get that we'll have a better idea what our needs for supplementing their study will be.

3. Public Comment - None

4. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy L. Baker, Staff Asst.

State Rehabilitation Council