

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

Annual Meeting Minutes November 18, 2008

4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

**Department of Labor and Training, 1511 Pontiac Avenue Cranston, RI
02920**

Present from the Council: Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Janice Belasco, Rocco Bruno, Susan Donovan, Jeanne M. Giroux, Joseph Ferreira, Linda Deschenes, Joe Ferreira, Anne LeClerc, Gary Levine, Lucille Massemino, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Lorna C. Ricci, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, J. David Sienko, Juan Troncoso, Mary Wambach, Herbert Weiss,

Present from the VR Agency: Laurie DiOrio, Kathleen Grygiel, Ronald Racine

Guests: Kelley Conti, Cynthia M. Cote, Roger Iannetta, Sandy Lupovitz, Joan Vendetti, Anna Liebenow

Cart Reporter: Shelley Deming

1. Call to Order – the Vice-chair, Joseph Ferreira, called the meeting

to order at 4:05 P.M. It was noted that the Chair would be arriving shortly. Introductions of membership and new candidates followed.

2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda – none.

3. Approval of Minutes – the minutes were approved for the October 10, 2008 meeting.

4. Nominations and Leadership Committee

Slate of Officers - L. Massemينو presented the names for the Slate of Officers for the Council membership to vote on; J. David Sienko for Chair, Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett for Vice-chair, and Catherine Sansonetti for Secretary. She asked if there were any other names to be placed for nominations in accordance with Robert's Rules, there were none.

Motion

H. Weiss made a motion that was seconded by S. Donovan and approved, with abstentions from officers, to appoint the Slate of Officers.

The Chair, who arrived before the motion, thanked everyone for the faith in the Officer's abilities. He complimented both the Vice-chair and Secretary for their hard work and dedication to the Council's mission.

New Candidate Appointments - L. Massemينو presented the committees recommendations for appointment of the following to their first full term; Kelley Conti, Cynthia M. Cote, Roger Iannetta, Anna Liebenow (Vice for Rick Costa), Sandy Lupovitz, and Joan Vendetti,

Motion

S. Donovan made a motion seconded by A. LeClerc and unanimously approved, to accept all appointments for consideration by the Governor.

Re-appointment of Council Members - L. Massemينو presented the committees recommendations for re- appointment of the following to their second term; Jeanne M. Giroux, Dr. Judith L. Drew, and Lucille Massemينو.

Motion

J. Ferreira made a motion seconded by S. Donovan and approved, with abstentions from members being appointed, to accept all re-appointments for consideration by the Governor.

The Chair thanked L. Massemينو and the Nomination and Leadership Development committee for their thoughtful selections and continuous forward-looking efforts for the Council.

5. Chair's Report – J. David Sienko

SRC/ORS Annual Report - we are reaching the deadline for the committee Chairs to get their reports to N. Baker. They need to be in within the next week to ten (10) days so everything can be put together and sent over to Sharon DiPinto for formatting.

S. Brunero is at a meeting of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation. But I received an encouraging email from him regarding some of the vacant positions in staffing being filled or posted. This is good news when we have not had much lately.

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) is posting training materials on line. We will get you more information on this so you can sign in on line and utilize them. It is a good orientation and training tool.

**Link to home page (NCSRC)-
<http://www.ncsrc.net/index.php?q=node/21>**

Once there you will find a navigation list, in that list are links for the training modules - <http://www.ncsrc.net/index.php?q=node/23>

You'll have to register to access the training modules at - www.eRehab.org to register.

There is also a NCSRC LISTSERV that anyone is welcome to join it. N. Baker is already on it and send materials from RISRC to it already.

All the training modudles are also available to members from N.

Baker on CD.

Open Chair Positions – both the Policy and Employment committees are losing their Chairs. The executive committee will discuss filling these openings at our next meeting. We will then present our recommendations to the full Council.

6. The Council's Recognition of Our Departing Members - J. David Sienko

The Chair spoke on behalf of the entire Council when he expressed his deep gratitude to Susan Donovan and Joe Ferreira for their years of dedicated service to the causes of the SRC and people with disabilities in our state. The Council presented both with certificates of achievement recognizing their service on the Council. It was an emotional moment for everyone. Several people spoke with praise for both and heartfelt gratitude. They will be dearly missed and it is hoped that they will continue to keep in touch with the Council and keep us up-to-date on their future activities.

J. Ferreira spoke poignantly of ORS' working with him over the years. He had high praise for the Agency and its personnel. He said that they (ORS) have always been there for him, and have done so much to better the lives of people who have disabilities. He thanked his committee peers and said it had been an honor to serve on this Council with such dedicated and compassionate people.

I am very sorry for being so emotional I promised myself I wouldn't but I did. 50 years ago as I reflect on my life when the doctor said that I would never walk and that was a shock to my parents. My family gave me the ability the find within myself to bring out the best in everything I did. For the most part I tried to do the best for my peers and myself, being born with a disability was the best thing that ever happen in my life because no matter where I go, I always have a shoulder the lean on. In closing I just like to add that ORS gave me the tools to succeed in life, and now I have to remind myself to share the same tool with people who are struggling with their disabilities. Only if they knew what a blessing it is to be disabled.

7. ORS Director's Report – R. Racine

Personnel – in the past few days we have been able to post twelve (12) positions. It looks like we are going to get close to filling our open slots. The reason we are getting some relief is that the State looked at the levels of Federal funding, if it was seventy five (75) percent or more, they are allowing jobs to be filled. We may be filling many of the thirty (30) vacant positions we now have. Ten (10) of those positions are Counselors. For now, that is what we are looking for but as you all know, this could change.

Order of Selection - we had been talking about instituting the Order of Selection but we hope to be able to avoid using it. Obviously a lot

depends on how short handed we are and for how long it continues. We'll have to see what happens with filling the vacancies before we make any determinations on this policy.

The Chair gave a brief explanation of Order of Selection; A State vocational rehabilitation agency is required to implement an order of selection when it anticipates that it will not have sufficient fiscal and/or personnel resources to fully serve all eligible individuals. An order of selection consists of priority categories to which eligible individuals are assigned based on the significance of their disability. Under an order of selection, individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. If you have higher needs you would be seen first. We have a lot of kids, for instance, coming out of school and many of them do not have significant disabilities and we were looking at many of them being limited from getting services. As a Council we might have to advocate for consumers if this should happen.

C. Sansonetti added that the Policy committee has also taken a legal look at this and spoken with K. Grygiel; because we feel this might not be something that could even be done.

R. Racine reassured the Council that as we move forward with the hiring, ORS will have a better idea about this and will keep you up to date.

D. Sienko was concerned that these personnel shortages are going to negatively influence the data in the upcoming year. For this year's Annual Report we have met our targets but what about this upcoming year? I would think that because of the lag time of vacancies and training of new workers, we might take a hit this year on our performance indicators. It's unfortunate that the Agency might not make the cuts due to no fault of their own.

R. Racine agreed there would be some effects showing up this coming year and added that there has only been three (3) or four (4) states that have met all of the standards and indicator performance measures over the last six (6) year period. Up until this money crunch we were doing very well with our outcomes but that is likely to show some change with the next set of numbers. We are not alone; most states are in the same fix and having trouble.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment – K. Grygiel

The assessment incorporated several surveys. We defined our target group in the State Plan. The assessment showed the need to develop a quality assessment. There was also an employer needs assessment and one of the highlights that came out of that was employers wanting more info on Assistive Technology (ATAP). We will be working to facilitate this. The Vendor survey identified we need to do outreach to those working with under-served populations specifically we would do vendor development with them. We would like to try and identify one vendor. We need to sit down with the Policy committee to

get more input. We need to schedule a meeting time. We would like to design a survey that is user friendly, get to all customers who close out this year to timely utilize the data.

The Chair gave a brief explanation of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Every three (3) years we do a Comprehensive statewide needs assessment which provides an opportunity for the SRC, especially the newly appointed members to discover first hand the opinions of consumers, rehabilitation providers and employment professional regarding the delivery of VR services. The assessment's trend lines are a good indicator if things are going forward or not. It is important and very helpful because our committee goals are often formed by the needs assessment.

The Chair suggested tabling the committee quorums until executive committee meets in January.

8. Public Comment - None

9. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy L. Baker, Staff

State Rehabilitation Council