State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
To work with ORS assuring that all Rhode Islanders with disabilities are able to obtain and keep meaningful and satisfying employment.

Full Council Minutes November 17, 2015
4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.
Office or Rehabilitation Services ~ 40 Fountain Street ~ Providence, RI 02903

Present: Peggy Benz, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Linda Deschenes, Laurie DiOrio, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Liz Graves, Kathleen Grygiel, Maryellen T. Hagerty, Paul C. Harden, Gail Lawson PhD, Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Ronald Racine, Catherine Sansonetti, Willa Truelove, and Mr. Kim Wennermark

Absent: Christina Battista, Christine Botts, Cynthia Cote, Joan Fino, Barbara Henry, Diana Kriner, Vincent Rossi, Jane Slade, and Marilyn Walaska

1. Call to Order: Dr. Lawson called the meeting to order at 4 P.M. Quorum met
2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda: Combine working proposals with subcommittee updates
3. Approval of Minutes

Motion

Jeffrey Machado made a motion seconded by Mr. Kim Wennermark and was unanimously approved to accept the May 12, 2015 minute, with corrections. (Vote – approved – Peggy Benz, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Liz Graves, Maryellen T. Hagerty, Paul C. Harden, Gail Lawson Ph.D., Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Catherine Sansonetti, Willa Truelove, and Mr. Kim Wennermark)

4. SRC Report - Dr. Lawson Reporting

* Dr. Lawson spoke about the lack of a quorum at the last meeting causing it to be cancelled. She asked members to respond to N. Baker's RSVP for meetings to make sure we have enough people attending to meet the quorum requirements.
* Catherine Sansonetti and the Policy subcommittee worked this summer on a response to the new federal regulation; the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
* SRC attendance at the Governor's Commission on Disabilities celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
The function was held at the Eisenhower House in Newport. Several members of the Council as well as N. Baker attended. There were concerns about this location due to its lack of access by public transportation especially for individuals with mobility barriers. The SRC contacted Bob Cooper, the Executive Secretary for the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and the governor's office, to express our concerns. We were assured that in the future this oversight would be corrected.
* R. Racine, N. Baker and Dr. Lawson met over the summer to coordinate and plan the SRC/ORS work for the fall. It was planned to have regular meetings of this type to keep our work aligned. Four (4) discussion topics of note.

a. Establishing the SRC attendance at the spring and fall conferences of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). Officers of the SRC are welcome to volunteer for the upcoming conferences on an ongoing basis.
b. An operating budget for the Council was discussed. Many SRCs have an annual budget and there are advantages to having one. In Rhode Island it can be difficult and take a long time to get authorization for funding. ORS has been very good about keeping ahead of this but we don't know what guidelines the State may impose in the future. Having our own funding would allow us to budget ahead of time and plan out the year's events. For now, with reassurances from R. Racine, we will continue with the current status, but this item will be open for further discussion.
c. The SRC requested additional resources for technology, specifically a laptop, and this is currently being completed.
d. The status of the current State Plan, and the SRC collaboration with ORS in the development of the Plan, in accordance with the Federal regulations. The Council will work with ORS to move from our review- response role, into the mandated role of collaboration.

5. Working Proposals for Committees

Membership Training - Lea Colardo Reporting

The Membership Training Committee has had several teleconference meetings. The Committee is holding an in-person meeting on December 1, 2015 at 2:15 P.M., at the Sherlock Center to start compiling training materials. The Committee has a lot of materials to review and then decide if they are going to be items to give out to new members in some sort of binder, or use them at a training event, or just electronically send them out. The Committee also needs to work on when items go out to members, set some sort of schedule up so a potential member or new member gets things at the right time. Establishing this timeline for materials is ongoing.

State Plan, Policy & Quality Assurance Committee - Catherine Sansonetti Reporting

The Policy Committee works in a more reactive role in response to policy updates that includes policies ORS is developing or editing. With the State Plan, this Committee can take a more active role moving forward. There are new people on the Committee to give fresh feedback. It was helpful to the new members to be on the conference calls and to walk through the variables on policies that are changing, and we should consider doing more meetings to go over policies even if they are not being updated. Even if there are hot topics in the State, we could get together and discuss them.

On September 22, 2015 the Policy Committee received two policies; Order of Selection (115.22), and Post-Secondary Education and Vocational Training Services (115.28). Comments were provided on October 29, 2015. (*SRC comments available upon request)*

5. Office of Rehabilitation Services Report - Ronald Racine Reporting

* Personnel – Six positions will be posted in the next week. The positions are for a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf, a Supply Manager, a Rehabilitation Counselor II, a Rehabilitation Counselor I, a Case Aide Support Specialist, and a Quality Assurance Supervisor. The postings have to go through thirteen steps of approval and for a time things were moving rather slowly. We are Hopeful that the process will be quick for these hires. All postings can be found on ***ApplyRI***.

*Administrative Team – This team is currently working on the Lean Initiative. ”Governor Gina M. Raimondo’s Lean Government Initiative requires agencies to conduct process improvement reviews, establishes a training program within the Office of Management and Budget to build Lean capacity among state employees… and incorporates Lean process improvement in agencies’ strategic planning processes. There are exercises to do different processes more efficiently.” R. Racine was on the team, in phase one, to train Department of Human Services’ seven-hundred employees. ORS is in phase two of the process. ***(Lean Initiative from the Office of Governor Gina M. Raimondo)***

* Data Collection – ORS’ collection needs have increased with the authorization of (WIOA). There will be more frequent reporting to more sources. ORS must report to the Rehabilitation Service Administration, and the State requires ORS to report on their fiscal year. ORS also reports to the Office of Management and Budget. The new Management Information Systems (MIS), in its current state, cannot collect data for the new required needs. ORS is working with the developers of the MIS to update data, and train personnel for the new requirements. At this time the vendor of the MIS is waiting until all the data requirements are confirmed before writing the new programs..

* State Plan Update - Kathleen Grygiel Reporting

“The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA brings together, in strategic coordination, the core programs of Federal investment in skill development: employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth and Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by the Department of Labor (DOL) through formula grants to states; adult education and literacy programs and Vocational Rehabilitation state grant programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment administered by the Department of Education (DoED).” ***(WIOA overview from United States Department of Labor)***

There is an expectation that state agencies are working as a team to meet the needs of individuals that want to be employed. There is a commitment that state agencies supply a seamless variety of services so that all individuals have access to the training and opportunities they need to be employed in an integrated, competitive setting at a minimum wage or above. Part of what WIOA does is to look to the states to create this unified plan amongst the different agencies. In Rhode Island, the Department of Human Services/RIWorks Program, the Department of Labor and Training, Adult Education and the Office of Rehabilitation Services will design this plan to help individuals become employed. This is the first year that Rhode Island like other states is required to do this unified Plan with a due date of March 3, 2016. ORS must have a public hearing thirty days before the plan is due. The public hearing is scheduled for February 4, 2016 from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. at the Warwick Public Library.

ORS wants input from the SRC to develop the attachments to this Plan. ORS wants to start with the Goals and Objectives attachment. Historically ORS has had four or five goals but ORS wants to narrow it down to two main objectives; business relationship and services delivery to clients. ORS feels this new collaborative will let them do a better job with the business community and clients.

L. Deschenes and K. Grygiel will be the lead members from ORS to work with a sub-group of the Policy Committee. They will meet to help review and write the goals and objectives.

6. National Collation of Rehabilitation Councils, Fall Meeting Report - Lea Colardo Reporting

The weekend conference was a learning event, spending a lot of time talking about WIOA and Transition. There were consumers who gave presentations. The event was hands-on for Saturday and on Sunday we listened to RSA and Leadership presentations.

There were a lot of training materials handed out on a thumb drive, which the training subcommittee will be using as a foundation for the SRC manual for new members.
(Notes from the two day event available upon request)

J. Machado – Distinguished Service Award tabled.

7. New Business

* WPRO interviews Goodwill Industries of Rhode Island's President and CEO Jeffrey D. Machado

* J. Drew discussed transportation issue and revisiting it with the SRC as an ad-hoc committee. She spoke about a program in Massachusetts, on the Cape, using local providers to offer transportation, seven days a week until 11 P.M. There is no RIDE in Mass, they have five regional transportation areas. It may be possible to invite the person running this system to one of our meetings or conduct a forum. The SRC could be a partner in a forum but not take the lead.

J. Drew will send a proposal to Dr. Lawson for a forum about transportation in RI.

* Dr. Lawson acknowledged W. Truelove and N Baker's work with RIPTA. After consultation with R. Racine and other leadership, the Council is not able to work on this issue at the time. Members were asked to keep up with W. Truelove regarding ongoing changes in fairs for RIPTA.

8. Public Comment – None

9. Adjournment

Motion

(Jack Ringland made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Jeffrey Machado and was unanimously approved. (Vote – approved - Peggy Benz, Rocco Bruno, Lea Colardo, Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Dr. Judith Drew, Liz Graves, Maryellen T. Hagerty, Paul C. Harden, Gail Lawson Ph.D., Jeffrey Machado, Diana Marcotte, Lori Norris, Dan Pieroni, Jack Ringland, Catherine Sansonetti, Willa Truelove, and Mr. Kim Wennermark)

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy L. Baker

Nancy L. Baker, SRC Facilitator