

**FINAL Minutes**  
**DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL RETREAT**  
**VA Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired**  
**Library & Resource Center**  
**397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA**  
**March 14, 2015**

**SRC Attendees**

Jeanne Armentrout, Roanoke, represents the Virginia Workforce Council; John Bailey, Fairfax, Chairman SRC, represents Business, Industry and Labor; Rebecca Bridges, Vice-Chair, SRC, represents Business, Industry and Labor; Wanda Council, Newport News, VA, represents the Virginia Department of Education; Isaac Crisp, VR Counselor, Richmond Regional Office, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member; Nicole Drummond, Falls Church, represents Virginia's Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center; Chris Grandle, Stuarts Draft, represents the Statewide Independent Living Council; Ray Hopkins, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member; Elizabeth Horn, Richmond, represents the federally mandated Client Assistance Program (CAP); Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, represents Disability Advocacy Group; Judy Swystun, Hampton Roads, represents Community Rehabilitation Services Program; Valerie Walker, Newport News, represents Business, Industry and Labor; Kim Shick, Winchester, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

**Members Absent**

Christine Appert, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Linda Broady-Meyers, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Justin Graves, Fredericksburg, represents Business, Industry and Labor; Jeanette McAllister, Franklin, represents Disability Advocacy Group; Jill Nerby, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

**Members of the Public**

Patricia Mitchell, Winchester, Ms. Shick's assistant.

**DBVI Staff to the SRC**

Susan Davis Payne, Policy and Training Coordinator and Staff Liaison to the SRC; Jessica Collette, Executive Assistant, DBVI.

**Welcome and Introductions**

John Bailey, Chair, welcomed all members and explained all council seats are occupied, except the one for a representative of an individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty or is unable to represent him or herself due to those disabilities.

Members introduced themselves and their role on the Council.

**Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

### **Adoption of Agenda**

Rebecca Bridges moved to adopt agenda, Ken Jessup seconded.

### **Approval of December 2014 Meeting Minutes**

Judy Swystun moved to approve the meeting minutes. Rebecca Bridges seconded.

### **Commissioner's Report – Ray Hopkins**

The Commissioner welcomed the Council members back to the DBVI campus and thanked them for their service on the Council.

Legislative session for DBVI was static. DBVI had only one piece of legislation that was to go before the General Assembly. However, it was pulled until more education about the Business Enterprise program can be passed along to the General Assembly members. The Commissioner welcomed the Council to invite someone involved with the BEP to present at an upcoming meeting to learn more information.

This year's budget did not include any significant changes. Within the Appropriation Act, there was a \$21,000 increase to radio reading services.

The Agency has been improving the relationships with businesses. Approval has been given to fill six workforce positions. The four Workforce Specialist positions and the Supervisor are currently on hold to ensure that DBVI and Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) have a collaborated plan for both programs to receive information about job openings and work together.

The Agency is looking at how to improve the outcomes of services. The Agency is currently in the midst of answering, "What does success look like?" Based on this answer the Agency will modify services to ensure all consumers have the opportunity for the greatest success.

Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired has changed their college assessment into a college prep program. They are working with the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) to allow students an on-campus experience through a STEM program. The students will not receive college credit, but they attend classes led by college professors which is both beneficial to the student and also provides DBVI staff with information regarding the student's readiness for their college transition. A report will be given to students and parents with advice to prepare each student for this transition period.

The Commissioner encouraged Council members to follow VRCBVI on Facebook.

The Council is encouraged to be well educated regarding legislative issues concerning DBVI in order to be articulate if they choose to speak with legislators. Rebecca Bridges asked how members can stay updated on what is occurring throughout the Agency. The Commissioner responded that in the past, he scheduled meetings with the Chair to keep the Council updated. There are certain situations that members would not be updated until the changes took place.

The Commissioner discussed the two studies that are currently underway. San Diego State University (SDSU) was contracted with the Agency for the federally required Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The consultants will compile the data received and create a comprehensive report about the services clients received.

he second study is part of a learning collaborative that began the summer of 2014 which is looking at how to improve the services of VRCBVI. The Agency wants to ensure the students finishing their training will achieve employment outcomes.

### **Deputy Commissioner's Report – Rick L. Mitchell**

Dr. Rick Mitchell entertained any questions about the Deputy Commissioner's report. Judy Swystun questioned who will be taking the SRC liaison position. The Deputy reported that the Workforce Manager will be filling the position.

Judy Swystun, also, questioned about when the reports will be given to the SRC from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the VRCBVI. Dr. Mitchell responded the CSNA full report should be received by the end of May. The study for the VRCBVI is a strategic plan, not a report. The timeframe for this plan to be finalized is June 2015.

The Employment Opportunities Training, conducted by Mr. Bill Santos, was completed in January by DBVI VR counselors. The Deputy Commissioner has received numerous reports about the positive impact the training has had.

### **VR Program Update – Susan Payne**

Susan Payne discussed the statistics that appeared in the VR Program report. Those statistics are only from the First Federal Quarter.

The New Member Orientation for new SRC members was discussed. There are currently seven new SRC members and several others that would benefit from this training. The Council can do a Video Tele Conference (VTC) or an in-person orientation at the DBVI campus, which would include tours of the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Library and Resource Center, and the Richmond plant of the Virginia Industries of the Blind. The Council decided that an onsite, with VTC capabilities, orientation would be most beneficial. The New Member Orientation was scheduled for June.... (day before the next meeting)

The Council believes it would be helpful for the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Council to provide an update at a SRC meeting. Dr. Peggy Fields, DBVI Program Director of Rehabilitation Technology Services, will continue to give a written report from the VATS council.

### **DBVI/DRS Liaison Report- Ken Jessup**

Ken Jessup discussed how DRS was able to work with over 20,000 Virginians in 2014 and that the DRS Council discusses jobs and is very active. Employment locations that were identified include the Hershey's plant in Stuart's Draft, CVS, and Wal-Mart. DRS is also active in training for individuals with disabilities working with these businesses to ensure they will be successful in their employment.

The DRS Council recently took a tour of the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. This upcoming Summer, the Council will visit Goodwill in Roanoke for a tour of the facilities.

The DRS Council sent a letter to Chris Jones of the Appropriations Committee thanking him for his efforts to ensure funding for DRS. This was a general letter to the chairman. Ken suggested the DBVI SRC adopt the same practice for any future allocations.

### **Marketing Work Group Report – Ken Jessup**

The Marketing Committee did not meet during the last quarter. The committee is looking forward to April 2<sup>nd</sup> as the next meeting. An email will be sent to committee members about exact date and time.

### **Employment Work Group Report – Rebecca Bridges**

The Employment Committee did not meet during the last quarter. Rebecca Bridges extended a formal invitation to the Commissioner or Agency designee to participate at the next meeting, which will be held on April 14<sup>th</sup> at 8 pm. If any other members are interested in serving on this committee, contact Rebecca or Jessica Collette. Chris Grandle questioned if there is a working description for each committee. Currently, there is not, however, these descriptions should be added to the State Rehabilitation Council Manual.

### **Old Business**

No old business was discussed.

### **New Business**

Ken Jessup asked to establish a legislative committee. He would train members how to contact local legislators, and the committee can talk to legislators about issues that affect the Council. Ken made the motion to establish a legislative committee whose purpose is to educate General Assembly members on issues that pertain to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Kim Shick seconded. Ken Jessup, Committee Chair, Kim Shick, Judy Swystun and Isaac Crisp are the interested members in participating on this committee.

Discussion of forming an Orientation New Member Committee commenced. The committee would help new members become acclimated to the Council. Rebecca Bridges questioned if this committee would be an “ad hoc” committee for the near future instead of a permanent committee since all current members have the option to serve multiple years. It was determined that no committee is needed at this time.

Susan Payne and Jessica Collette have worked to develop a SRC manual for members to have all pertinent information about the Council at their disposal. The deadline for edits from council members is March 31<sup>st</sup>.

The Council discussed the need of a document sharing platform to be able to post documents for SRC members to access files. The members agreed this would be beneficial. The Council appointed Nicole Drummond to work with DBVI to find the best platform before the next meeting in June.

Ken Jessup suggested scheduling an hour at the June meeting for a legislative training for all council members. A Legislative Session training will be considered as part of the working lunch during the meeting.

**Form State Plan Committee-** not needed

**Date for next meeting** – June 13, 2015

### **Adjournment**

Chris Grandle moved to adjourn. Rebecca Bridges seconded.