Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
State Rehabilitation Council
Draft- Meeting Minutes
14 December 2013

10:00 a.m.-Welcome and Call to Order – John Bailey

Introductions & Designations
Members Present: John Bailey-Fairfax, VA-(Chair/Business, Labor, and Industries), Rebecca Bridges-Arlington, VA-(Vice Chair/Business, Labor, and Industries), Melanie Brunson-Vienna, VA-(Past Chair/Disability Advocacy Groups), Nicole Jeffords-Norfolk, VA-(Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, ex-officio), Wanda Council-New Port News, VA-(Representing the Virginia Department of Education- Non Voting until officially appointed), Rick Gonzalez-Springfield, VA-(Virginia Workforce Council), Richard Holley-Hallwood, VA- (Disability Advocacy Groups), Valerie Walker-New Port News, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries) and Ken Jessup-Virginia Beach, VA-(Statewide Independent Living Council/SILC).

Members Absent: Raymond Hopkins- Richmond, VA-(Director of the designated State Unit, DBVI, ex-officio, non-voting member).

Guests Present: None.

DBVI Staff Present: Dr. Rick L. Mitchell- (Deputy Commissioner of Services), Susan Davis Payne-(Vocational Rehabilitation Director), and Marcus L. Byrd, II-(Administrative Staff).

Adoption of 14 December 2013 Agenda-Action Item
John Bailey requested a motion to approve the 14 December 2013 agenda. Ken Jessup moved for approval and was seconded by Rebecca Bridges. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Adoption of 14 September 2013 Meeting Minutes-Action Item
John Bailey requested a motion to approve the 14 September 2013 draft meeting minutes. Melanie Brunson offered the following corrections to be considered: 1). Verbiage located under New Business- "Melanie Brunson withdrew her initial motion to approve the June 2013 meeting minutes and replaced it with a motion to reconsider, and Valerie Walker seconded", this language is incorrect and Mrs. Brunson explained that she never made the initial motion, in actuality she moved for reconsideration of approval and to adopt with the appropriate corrections. 2). Mrs. Brunson explained that it's unnecessary to include within the minutes that the chairperson and/or any other member of the council "entertained a motion". The motion to accept the meeting minutes as corrected was moved by Melanie Brunson, seconded by Rick Gonzalez and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Comments from the Public
None.

Commissioner's Report- Susan Davis Payne on behalf of Raymond Hopkins:
Susan Payne encouraged the council to follow all activity pertaining to reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) which includes the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, due to the potential impact on the state/federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. Specifically, if S. 1356 is passed as currently written the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) would be moved from the U.S. Department of Education and placed under the Department of Labor (DOL). If administered by DOL, the potential exists that the requirements for specially qualified staff to provide VR services within VR agencies could change or be eliminated. Additionally, one of the biggest strengths of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, is that VR services are individualized and based on informed choices made by consumers; employment outcomes are designed to facilitate careers rather just finding people jobs. These VR specific elements could potentially be eliminated by S. 1356 as currently proposed.

Melanie Brunson elaborated on the motivation behind the potential change, stating that a great number of individuals within the disability community have been dissatisfied with the manner in which RSA has conducted business. The primary forces that lobbied the Senate for change have been the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) who firmly believe that the VR program would be administered more adequately under DOL. Secondly, the change would move Independent Living programs from RSA to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The bill as proposed leaves the Older Blind Independent Living Program in RSA. All other Independent Living programs would ultimately be removed from rehabilitation services. Thirdly, the House and Senate Bill both emphasize Transition Services for students by regulating agencies to set aside 10% of VR funds to provide transition services. The National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) and the Council of State Agency for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) have objected to the legislation change because the majority served through VR are middle to older aged individuals as opposed to transition aged consumers. The House passed the aforementioned in March 2013 and is currently being reviewed by the Senate. The SRC requested that if any new information becomes available that it be circulated to all members.

In the area of SRC membership, Susan Payne explained that she has requested recommendations from regional managers, counselors, and other staff members, names of individuals who might be interested in seeking appointment to the SRC. Ms. Payne has received twelve names thus far, and has also received interest from an individual who is deaf blind. Three of the twelve names are for the Community Rehabilitation Program (CAP) vacancy. Ms. Payne requested that council members to submit persons of interest directly to her or Courtney Groves, Director of Appointments in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Deputy Commissioner's Report- Dr. Rick L. Mitchell:
Dr. Mitchell elaborated on the newly created Comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation case review instrument developed by the Services Division Management Team, which is comprised of 6 program directors, 5 regional managers, and two members from the newly established evaluation unit. The Regional Managers, Program Analyst, and VR Director will use this instrument when reviewing cases to ensure consistency in terms compliance with documentation. This instrument has been shared with VR Counselors to ensure that they understand what is being reviewed in their documentation. DBVI's administration has begun to see improvement thus far.

Dr. Mitchell explained that one of the new initiatives is to enhance the relationship between field staff and the Virginia Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) staff members by sending them into the field together. This initiative will afford VRCBVI staff members greater perspective in terms of the day to day activities encountered by field staff. Field staff will then come to VRCBVI and spend time with staff members for two days in February 2014. Dr. Mitchell and Melody Roane (Director of VRCBVI) have discussed

potentially hosting two field staff members from different regional offices and cross program areas within the agency.

Investing in our Workforce (IOW) is a program to facilitate succession planning that DBVI initiated in 2004. IOW is a two year program which involves a monthly meeting to discuss DBVI management and leadership topics via video teleconferencing (VTC). Further training is provided through the knowledge center, a web-based program that contains the Managing the Virginia Program modules. The 53 module training tool explains in detail how state government operates. In April 2009, DBIV began the first IOW program with an enrollment of 40 staff members. The number of participants dwindled due to retirements, staff members leaving the agency, and withdrawals. A cohort of 26 graduated in March 2011, and Secretary Bill Hazel of Health and Human Resources presented diplomas. DBVI is currently preparing for IOW II, beginning February 2014. Additionally, 15 total applications have been submitted and the deadline will conclude on 20 December 2013.

VR Program Update- Susan Payne:

There were no o additions to or questions about the VR Program Update submitted though the Agency Report.

Conference Report- Rebecca Bridges:

Rebecca Bridges elaborated on three conferences she attended in Denver, Colorado from November 9th- 15th, 2013. The first was the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC), which convened from the 9th to the 10th. The NCSRC is a nationwide networking group consisting primarily of SRC chairpersons. The initial session focused on leadership training, stories regarding SRC experiences provided by chairpersons, and a customer input session. The second session focused on Return on Investment (ROI) and the value in which SRC's contribute; public policy & the SRC conducted by Lynnae Ruttledge (former RSA Commissioner), and finally an RSA update provided by Janet LaBreck, the current RSA Commissioner. Mrs. Bridges explained the contrast in terms of how SRCs across the country conduct business pertaining to their level of activity and input to the agencies they support.

On November 10th – 13th, 2013, Mrs. Bridges attended the CSAVR conference. One of the main topics of discussion was S. 1356, in which a petition was created that focused on a response to the bill. The DBVI council will continue to follow-up on information from the petition that was submitted. Additionally, Mrs. Bridges explained an interesting presentation by Douglas L. Wilson, Senior Consultant, Region VI TACE entitled "10 Trends that will change the way VR does business". The session focused on employment for consumers and how agencies build and foster relationships with businesses. Mrs. Bridges explained that she would be willing to answer any further questions or concerns that council members may have.

On November 13th-15th, 2013, Mrs. Bridges attended the NCSAB conference. Commissioner Hopkins led a panel discussion on the Randolph Sheppard program pertaining to focusing on vendors. Catriona McDonald of the National Federation for the Blind Entrepreneurs Initiative (NFBEI) vendor group spearheaded a session pertaining to the Ability One Program. In addition, other topics of discussion included employment, transition, assistive technology, independent living, and blindness training.

Overall, Mrs. Bridges explained that our SRC has an opportunity to make a significant contribution to DBVI's goals. John Bailey encouraged that council members speak to Mrs. Bridges about the details of the conferences for informational purposes.

John Bailey requested that Rebecca Bridges chair an Ad hoc committee entitled the Council Action Team (CAT). The group will focus on current obligations the SRC has in the 2014 State Plan, strategies to accomplish them,

prepare for the upcoming state plan, and what part the council plays in terms of activity. The CAT will produce a report by March 2014, and will funnel information to the state plan writing team in anticipation of the upcoming report. Nicole Jeffords, Melanie Brunson, and Valerie Walker have agreed to volunteer for the committee. Mrs. Bridges has requested that the committee conduct a meeting in January 2014, and additional information will follow.

DBVI/DRS Liaison Report- Ken Jessup:
On behalf of DBVI's SRC, Ken Jessup attended the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) SRC meeting which convened on 19 November 2013. Mr. Jessup explained that the DARS SRC has experienced similar issues in terms of receiving board member appointments. It's believed that as Governor McDonnell's term draws closer to the end, he will attempt to fill each vacant board and committee seat. The DARS SRC is also concerned about the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in terms of how it impacts board members ability to conduct meetings. Interesting to note, the DARS SRC is seriously considering conducting a board meeting on the Woodrow Wilson campus, at some point in the near future. The next DARS SRC meeting will be held on 10 March, 2014 @ 1:00 p.m. (DARS Headquarters Building).

Workgroup Reports-

Approval of 2013 Annual Report- Action Item:
John Bailey asked of the group if they had any suggestions for change in the document. Melanie Brunson suggested that Michael Davis's statement in the beginning of the document be entitled "Message from the SRC Chair". Rebecca Bridges motioned to approve the 2013 Annual Report as corrected and Melanie Brunson seconded. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Working Lunch:

SRC New Member Development Update:
This topic was discussed during the Commissioner's Report

Discussion of New Member Orientation:
Ken Jessup suggested that the New Member Orientation in 2014 be conducted on the same day as DBVI's quarterly SRC meeting to assist with ensuring that attendance numbers are high. Further discussion will take place on 8 March 2014.

Planning Retreat:
The council agreed that the retreat conducted in March 2013 was very beneficial in terms of developing the SRC recommendations attachment for the State Plan. Susan Payne explained that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment survey and public comment provided valuable information to inform council members as they developed their recommendations.

During the 2014 SRC Retreat, scheduled to convene on 7 March 2013, the council will develop their recommendations for the 2015 State Plan. DBVI will provide information pertaining to customer satisfaction surveys, preliminary data/information from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment in the 2013-2015 cycle which will include a literature review, and results from internal case file reviews which focus on compliance. Rebecca Bridges explained to the council that the CAT will conduct meetings prior to the retreat and provide recommendations during the meeting.

Rebecca Bridges moved a motion to elect Melanie Brunson as chair of the retreat committee, which will also include Rebecca Bridges and to conduct the next SRC Retreat on 7 March 2014 from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at DBVI's Headquarters Building 397, and seconded by Rick Holley. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

New Business:
None to Report.

Old Business:
Melanie Brunson made a motion, which was seconded by Ken Jessup to create certificates of appreciation along with a letter from the chair to individuals who recently rotated or resigned from the council. The names are as follows: Marguerite Bardone, Michael Davis, Angie Matney, Celia Yette, and Debbie Pfeiffer. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. In addition, the aforementioned will be an action item for the meeting in March 2014.

Date for Next Meeting/Adjournment
John Bailey called for a motion to approve the proposed SRC meeting dates as corrected for 2014 as: 8 March; 14 June; and 13 September. The motion was moved by Rick Holley, seconded by Rebecca Bridges and passed by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m., the next State Rehabilitation Council Meeting will convene on 8 March 2014, 397Azalea Avenue; Richmond VA 23227 @ 10:00 a.m. - 12:40 p.m.