

FINAL Minutes
DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING
VA Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Headquarters
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA
September 12, 2015

SRC Attendees

Christine Appert, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; 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; Nicole Drummond, Falls Church, represents Virginia's Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center; Chris Grandle, Stuarts Draft, represents the Statewide Independent Living Council; Justin Graves, Fredericksburg, represents Business, Industry and Labor; Ray Hopkins, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member; Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, represents Disability Advocacy Group; Jeanette McAllister, Franklin, represents Disability Advocacy Group; Jill Nerby, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Kim Shick, Winchester, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Judy Swystun, Hampton Roads, represents Community Rehabilitation Services Program; Shelesha Taylor, Richmond, represents the federally mandated Client Assistance Program (CAP); Valerie Walker, Newport News, represents Business, Industry and Labor.

Members Absent

Jeanne Armentrout, Roanoke, represents the Virginia Workforce Council; Linda Broady-Meyers, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Isaac Crisp, VR Counselor, Richmond Regional Office, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member.

Members of the Public

Patricia Mitchell, Winchester, Ms. Shick's assistant; Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner, DBVI; Cindy Roberts, Workforce Coordinator, DBVI.

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

Mr. John Bailey called the meeting to order. Members introduced themselves.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Ken Jessup moved to adopt agenda, Mr. Chris Grandle seconded. Mr. John Bailey requested an amendment to move the elections to before the working lunch. Ms. Rebecca Bridges moved to adopt the amendment. Mr. Ken Jessup seconded.

Approval of June 2015 Meeting Minutes

Council members voiced they were unable to open the minutes from June 2015. It seemed the file extension was invalid. Ms. Rebecca Bridges moved to table the motion to approve the meeting minutes until the December 2015 meeting. Ms. Kim Shick seconded. The approval of June 2015 meeting minutes will be added to the December agenda.

Public Comment

None.

Commissioner's Report – Ray Hopkins

Commissioner Hopkins spoke of several additions to his report. He stated that DBVI had asked for additional money for the VR Grant and it has been received. With this increase, the funds are similar to the amount of the 2013 grant. Also, all Executive branch agencies are to make known through their Secretariat of any additional funding they would like the Governor to request from the General Assembly. Discussions between DBVI and the HHR Secretary's Office began a month ago and information has been submitted for review. If accepted, the requests will be included in the Governor's suggested budget which will be released on December 17th. Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) continues to grow at an exponential rate over the past seven years. Nonprofits associated with VIB have been experiencing employment cuts and layoffs while at the same time VIB is experiencing growth. The Commissioner mentioned the legal issues involving other industries for the blind, such as Ability One, and how VIB is not associated in those matters. Since VIB is a part of a state agency, they must follow procurement laws and they receive an audit from the Auditor of Public Accounts.

Deputy Commissioner's Report – Rick L. Mitchell

Deputy Commissioner Mitchell mentioned a couple of highlights from his report. Staffing in the regional offices is moving forward. DBVI has hired Donna Cox as the Norfolk Regional Manager. There is a challenge in hiring the three Education Coordinator positions. DBVI is finding that school systems are more appealing with offering summers off; however, the agency is looking how to add incentives to their positions. Dr. Mitchell mentioned the hire of Cindy Roberts as the Coordinator of Workforce and the excitement of beginning the Workforce Unit. Ms. Roberts has been interviewing for the four Workforce Specialist positions across the state. The hiring process of the Director of Workforce has taken longer than anticipated. The position has been offered twice, but both applicants withdrew. Currently the position is out to recruit and the title has changed to Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce. Dr. Mitchell also mentioned that as of September 11th, DBVI has closed 149 cases successfully with 51 cases eligible to close in September. DBVI has not had 200 successful employment outcomes in many years. Ms. Rebecca Bridges questioned how the metrics are created for the number of closures. Dr. Mitchell explained that every counselor has an annual goal of 11 closures, which with 18 counselors would create the agency goal of 198 successful closures. Mr. Ken Jessup questioned if the geography of the state is involved in the goal setting of each counselor. Dr. Mitchell explained that in the rural areas, where there would be fewer consumers, there are fewer counselors. Ms. Judy Swystun asked for a most recent DBVI Organizational Chart. Dr. Mitchell mentioned it is online at: <http://www.vdbvi.org/documents/DBVIOrgChart.pdf>. Ms. Swystun also asked for an update on the Roanoke Office. Dr. Mitchell informed the council the Roanoke staff is working in a temporary location and still serving clients.

VR Program Update – Susan Payne

Ms. Payne entertained questions from the report. Ms. Swystun asked for more information about the SRC Annual Report. Ms. Payne explained the SRC is required to develop an annual report of the VR Program. The agency can provide information, but it is the council's responsibility to develop the report. The report is completed by mid-December. Ms. Payne also mentioned the multiple public meetings across the state. These meeting dates are posted online and the notice is posted in the Dropbox. In the future, if the SRC would like to reimburse member's attendance at these meetings, that amount will need to be included in the SRC Resource Plan. Also, FIOA was mentioned. Ms. Payne and other DBVI staff will be attending a FIOA Training on November 4th. Multiple members requested information to be sent about the training, as well as, for highlights of the training to be discussed at the December meeting. Ms. Nicole Drummond mentioned she can send information about a FIOA training conference call she is involved in planning.

Legislative Work Group Report – Ken Jessup

Mr. Ken Jessup reported that due to personal reasons, he had to cancel the three conference calls that has been scheduled and subsequently, had no report to present at this time.

Commissioner Hopkins requested Ms. Jessica Collette to give an update on the legislative outreach by DBVI. Ms. Collette explained that invitations are being sent to all elected official's offices for any DBVI event all around the Commonwealth. In August, Bristol had a Back to School Bash and was the first event where these invitations were sent. A representative from Congressman Griffith's Office, Senator Bill Carrico and Delegate Todd Pillion were in attendance. The upcoming *Celebrating Ability in the Workplace* event in Richmond has had invitations sent also. As responses are received, if the official is unable to attend, they are receiving an invitation to visit the campus on a different date. Delegate Peter Farrell and Delegate Jimmie Massie have accepted these invitations and Ms. Collette and Commissioner Hopkins are looking forward to speaking with them. Ms. Kim Shick asked for notification for the council members of the statewide events. Ms. Collette explained that all events are posted on the DBVI Facebook page and asked for all members to join, <https://www.facebook.com/VDBVI>.

Marketing Work Group Report – Kim Shick

Ms. Kim Shick reported the July work group meeting has great participation. She stressed the importance on social media marketing. Ms. Jessica Collette mentioned that DBVI is posting information on the Facebook page, as well as posting photos on Flickr and reviewing the need of a Twitter account. Ms. Shick asked Ms. Collette to join the Marketing Work Group to be able to give updates and insight on what the agency is already doing. Commissioner Hopkins asked for the SRC Chair to submit a formal request to the agency for Ms. Collette's supervisor to review potential involvement. Ms. Shick also mentioned she had worked with Ms. Collette to correct a couple accessibility issues on the DBVI website. Ms. Shick reported the work group will review other states to compare and learn how they are using social media and marketing to clients. She also mentioned the need of a marketing position for the agency. Commissioner Hopkins informed the council Ms. Wallica Gaines, Deputy Commissioner of Administration, is gathering information and developing a Communications Director job description. Ms. Judy Swystun questioned how to increase communications between the council and DBVI. Commissioner Hopkins requested Ms. Shick to begin a conversation with him and other DBVI staff to facilitate enhanced communication. Ms. Shick reminded members the Marketing Work Group meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm.

Employment Work Group Report – Rebecca Bridges

Ms. Bridges announced the next meeting will be on September 21st. The work group has discussed how to establish relationships with businesses and requests all council members to send information about relationships they have with businesses to examine any potential employers. Ms. Bridges mentioned the American Council of the Blind has created a video celebrating ability and it shows the professional life of the blind and interviews from employers (<https://www.youtube.com/embed/5e5payf2QMc>). Ms. Bridges introduced the council members to Ms. Cindy Roberts and asked for her to give more information about herself. Ms. Roberts mentioned her background and the relationships she brings with her from DARS, Hershey, CVS and a number of federal contractors. She announced she has hired a Workforce Coordinator for the Southwest region, who is the single point of contact for Wells Fargo. Ms. Roberts also encouraged the council members to attend the event on October 15th in Richmond.

Update on Shared Directory – Susan Payne

The SRC decided to use Dropbox as their shared directory. This meeting was the first where all documents were shared in a shared folder. There was an issue with the minutes from June, but this will be remedied and it was suggested that if members have issues in the future they let DBVI support staff know.

Council Elections for Chair & Vice Chair – Rebecca Bridges

Mr. John Bailey will be stepping down from the SRC after the September 2015 meeting. The Chairman asked Ms. Rebecca Bridges to review the responsibilities and tasks of the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Ms. Bridges reported that the Chair is responsible for creating the meeting agendas, running the meetings, appointing work groups, and being a “cheerleader” for the other members on the council and keeps them focused. Mr. Ken Jessup nominated Ms. Rebecca Bridges for Chairwoman; Judy Swystun seconded; Ms. Bridges accepted the nomination; Ms. Swystun moved to close nominations; Ms. Kim Shick seconded; Ms. Bridges was unanimously elected. Ms. Judy Swystun nominated Mr. Ken Jessup for Vice Chair; Mr. Justin Graves seconded; Mr. Jessup accepted the nomination; Ms. Shick moved to close the nominations; Ms. Swystun seconded; Mr. Jessup was unanimously elected.

Business Enterprise Program – Xavier Trimiew

Mr. Xavier Trimiew presented information about the Business Enterprise Program. He was asked to send his PowerPoint presentation to council members for their review.

Old Business

None.

New Business

The fall Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation meeting will be held November 1-6, 2015 in Seattle, Washington. Attendance is encouraged for representation of the SRC and support of Commissioner Hopkins as the President-elect for the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). Ms. Judy Swystun moved to have the SRC represented, either Madam Chair or the Vice Chairman, at the fall meeting. Ms. Kim Shick seconded. Madam Chair and the Vice Chair agreed and will notify the SRC of which has availability

to attend.

Ms. Judy Swystun mentioned her review of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Implementation plan and congratulated Ms. Susan Payne on the hard work and effort she exhibited in creating the document.

Multiple members questioned the responsibility of meeting minutes. Ms. Rebecca Bridges asked that all meetings have minutes taken. As long as two or more members are together, those minutes will need to be taken and send to Ms. Collette for posting on Townhall (<http://townhall.virginia.gov/index.cfm>). Members voiced again the need for FIOA training during the December meeting.

Ms. Rebecca Bridges entertained the conversation about the opinions of lodging at the Crowne Plaza Downtown Richmond and the convenience of meeting in the hotel. The council members did not have a strong opinion either way, but after conversing, the council decided it is more cost effective to meet at the DBVI Headquarters.

Date for next meeting – December 12, 2015

Adjournment

Ms. Judy Swystun moved to adjourn. Ms. Kim Shick seconded.