

MINUTES
DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Held Via Zoom Teleconference
December 11, 2020

SRC Members Present

Julie Akers, Radford, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor

Christine Appert, Chair, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Alexa Bowe, Newport News, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor

Tammy Burns, Midlothian, Representative of Virginia's Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

Irene Conlin, Virginia Beach, Representative of an Individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing him or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent him or herself

Annette Hyde, Radiant, Representative of the Workforce Council

Larysa Kautz, Alexandria, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program Provider

Liang Liao, Richmond, DBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Ricardo Lizama, Arlington, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group

Marianne Moore, Richmond, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education

Mark Roane, Vice-Chair, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Laura Sinclair, Richmond, Representative of the federally mandated Client Assistance Program

Members Absent

Ray Hopkins, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member

Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council

DBVI Staff to the SRC Present

Pam Cato, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services

Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant for Services

Public Attending

Shelesha Taylor, Richmond, Past Representative of the federally mandated Client Assistance Program

Call to Order / Welcome and Introductions

Chair Appert called the meeting to order. Ms. Cato welcomed and identified those on the call. Quorum was met.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Roane moved to adopt the proposed agenda; Ms. Burns seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of September 2020 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Kautz moved to accept the September 11 and September 30, 2020, meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Moore seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Ray Hopkins

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Ms. Cato reported in the Commissioner's absence. Commissioner Hopkins was recently appointed to the Virginia State Board for Workforce Development. Governor Northam recently announced new restrictions due to Covid-19. The Commissioner has shared with DBVI staff the modified stay-at-home order and has requested that DBVI have all employees telework who are able to. Access to the DBVI campus is much more restricted as well as the Regional Offices. DBVI is still open and providing services virtually. DBVI has completed its four public meetings which were all held virtually. Comments received will be posted by January with the Agency's (DBVI's) responses. VRCBVI has conducted numerous successful virtual trainings. The feedback received from organizations nationally is that the Agency reacted quickly to the pandemic and is doing so very well. The Agency met with RSA representatives regarding the DBVI PY2019 Quarter 4 RSA dashboard data getting technical assistance and getting feedback from RSA. DBVI has had many successful case closures that resulted with exceptionally good wages. The Agency is watching to see what comes of the federal Continuing Resolution which funds our programs.

Deputy Commissioner's Report – Dr. Richard Mitchell

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Ms. Cato reported in Dr. Mitchell's absence. DBVI is still recruiting for a Regional Manager in the Roanoke Office. Another position that DBVI is in recruit for is the Assistant Vocational Rehabilitation Director. The initial round of interviews has been scheduled. Tish Harris has been leading the CPID projects which is scheduled to end in December; however, Tish will stay on with DBVI as a Pre-ETS and Career Pathways Coordinator.

VR Program Update – Pam Cato

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Next week the IT Credential Fair will be held virtually. The Fair is open statewide. There will be one fair for students and one for adults. Anyone interested in joining the fair can email Maggie Mills @ maggie.mills@dbvi.virginia.gov. DBVI has developed a Letter of Agreement with Sky's the Limit which is an executive coaching team. DBVI is going to have two targeted groups for a virtual Ace Academy – one for younger students

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and one for older high school and college-age students dealing with pandemic-related support such as how to handle virtual learning. In January DBVI will be launching a new Career Connections – career ready workshop – for anybody in their job seeking journey receiving services in the VR program to help increase skills in using the virtual platform, creating elevator speeches, how to dress for success, and other difficult issues. Career Connections will be led by DBVI's Business Relations Team, collaborating with Tish Harris and VRCBVI.

Old and/or New Business

New Member Orientation – Pam Cato

The intent is to hold the New SRC Member Orientation prior to the March 12, 2021, SRC Quarterly Meeting. The Orientation will probably be held virtually. Proposed dates will be sent to check everyone's availability. The Orientation is open to all SRC members, not just the newly appointed. The Orientation will include information on items such as the SRC and federal law, what are the requirements and mandates of the SRC. There will be some presentations.

Please confirm if you want SRC-related emails to be sent to work or home email addresses with Maggie Mills.

DBVI is still waiting for the Governor's office to announce the remaining new SRC members.

CSAVR/NCSAB – Pam Cato

The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) is a national organization comprised of Directors of State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies. These agencies are the state partners in the State-Federal program of rehabilitation services provided under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Some states have one agency that administers VR programs and some states like Virginia have two: a general agency and an agency-specific agency like DBVI. Conferences are held once in the spring and once in the fall. Traditionally the spring conference has been held in Bethesda, MD, which presents the opportunity to meet with elected officials in Washington, DC. The fall conference traditionally moves around the country when not virtual due to the pandemic.

In conjunction with these conferences is the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) conference. The mission of the NCSAB is to promote through advocacy, coordination, and education the delivery of specialized services that enable individuals who are blind and visually impaired to achieve personal and vocational independence. SRC members have attended the NCSAB conferences in the past representing DBVI.

Anyone with an interest in attending a CSAVR and/or NCSAB conference should email Maggie Mills. It is the decision of the SRC Chair as to who will attend each year and represent DBVI.

Update on SRC Annual Report – Christine Appert

The Annual Report is a requirement of all state rehabilitation services agencies. Chair Appert is finishing up the Annual Report which will be distributed soon. It is the Chair's desire that another SRC member will take the lead on producing the Annual Report next year as her term will be expiring.

2021 Quarterly SRC Meeting Dates – Christine Appert

March 12

June 11

September 10

December 3

Each SRC Quarterly Meeting ends with an SRC Representative Roundtable in which each SRC member who represents an organization is encouraged to share any highlights about what their organization is doing lasting a short two minutes or less.

Adjournment

Mr. Roane motioned to end the meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2020.