
DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
Quarterly Meeting
MINUTES
June 10, 2022, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227

SRC Members in Attendance

Christine Appert, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Alexa Bowe, Newport News, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor
Irene Conlin, Chair, 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
Heidi Lawyer, Henrico, Representative of Parent Training & Information Center (PEATC)
Liang Liao, Richmond, DBVI, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Joliefawn Liddell, Richmond, Representative of the Client Assistance Program
Rick Mitchell, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member
Marianne Moore, Richmond, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education
Mark Roane, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Rachael Rounds, Midlothian, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program
Milford Stern, Roanoke, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

SRC Member in Attendance via Zoom from Suffolk, VA, due to caregiving obligations.

Leelynn Untalan Brady, Suffolk, Representative of Statewide Independent Living Council

SRC Members Not Able to Attend

Julie Akers, Radford, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor
Annette Hyde, Radiant, Representative of the Workforce Council
Prem Jadhvani, Vice Chair, Leesburg, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor
Edna Johnson, Alexandria, Former or Current Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Ricardo Lizama, Arlington, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group
Chanthen Nene, Manassas, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group

DBVI Staff Present

Pam Cato, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services
Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Mitchell – Recorder of Minutes
Cindy Roberts, Director, Business and Corporate Initiatives
Diane McBride, Business Relations Specialist
Karen Kahn, Business Relations Specialist

ASL Interpreters

Ivy Brothers
Katherine Malady

Public

Mr. Michael Sebastian

Mr. Richard Sorey

Call to Order / Welcome and Introductions

Chair Conlin called the meeting to order. A roundtable of introductions took place. Quorum was met.

Adoption of Agenda

Mark Roane moved to adopt the proposed agenda; Christine Appert seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of March 2022 Meeting Minutes

Rachel Rounds moved to adopt the March 11, 2022, SRC Quarterly Meeting minutes as presented. Milford Stern seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Mr. Sorey thanked DBVI for what the agency does and is delighted that the public can now join the SRC Quarterly meetings virtually. Mr. Sorey commented on the appointment of the new DBVI Commissioner.

Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Rick Mitchell

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

In February, the Agency conducted a climate survey of all employees and received excellent feedback. The survey returned a high number of responses indicating 96% of staff feel they understand the mission of the Agency. The major takeaway from the survey addresses communications. In response to that, the Agency now has a Director of Communications and is publishing a monthly newsletter to be distributed to Council members, the Board, the public, the Agency stakeholders and staff. DBVI will continue to welcome feedback.

The Virginia General Assembly passed a two-year state budget June 1 and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Deputy Commissioner's Report – Dr. Rick Mitchell

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

Recruitment for the Deputy Commissioner for Services position has begun and interviews will be conducted later in June. The Agency is recruiting for several vacancies including Education Coordinators, a part-time Rehabilitation Technology Specialist, a Rehabilitation Engineer, a Rehabilitation Teacher, and an Access Technology Instructor. A Coordinator for Engagement is a new position focusing on pre-employment transition, will report to Megan Hall, the Assistant Director for Vocational Rehabilitation and can be located at any one of DBVI's six regional offices.

VR Program Update – Pam Cato

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

Ms. Cato explained the launch of a pilot with VCU-Rehabilitation Research and Training Center to provide a Pre-ETS Peer Mentoring Capacity Building Project which will provide real world transition experience, not just classroom instruction.

There are several summer programs about to begin.

Leap into Linux, June 26 – July 1, 2022, a one-week residential academy that teaches cyber security and citizenship.

Virtual Cyber Warriors offers five different trainings this summer starting June 20. The instructor, high school student Ishan Jadhvani, was recently highlighted in a NOVA newspaper as a leader and mentor in the field. The five offerings include Robotics, Digital Automation, Virtual Reality Metaverse, Cyber Threat Hunting, and Drones.

July 10 - August 12, 2022 is the Live Independent Feeling Empowered (“LIFE”) program which is a five-week residential training program for students between the ages of 14-18 years old, providing basic training in the skills of blindness and advocacy skills.

The JMU Success! Program will begin with a group of applicants from throughout the state coming to JMU for a college immersion program in July.

The Parents Resource weekend will offer parents resources, information and a community of others who parent a blind or low vision individual. Parents Resource Weekend will be held on July 22 - 24 in Harrisonburg, VA at the Hotel Madison.

Business Relations Presentation

The Business Relations Team, Cindy Roberts, Diane McBride, and Karen Kahn, shared the best practices that came about due to the Covid-19 pandemic in regard to virtual meetings and networking. Many of the ways of virtually connecting with career seekers and business partners during the pandemic worked so well, they will continue to be conducted. Many of the career seekers' success stories were shared. DBVI's Business Relations Team has a presence nationally and many of its programs are getting national attention. “Celebrating Ability in the Workplace” in honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month will be held October 5, 2022. This is DBVI's annual awards ceremony where the Agency honors its business partners and career seekers who have displayed excellence in hiring and those that have excelled within the workplace.

Old and New Business

Hearing Officer Request for Proposals Update

At the March 2022 SRC meeting Rachael Rounds, Chanthen Nene and Alexa Bowe volunteered to review Hearing Officer applications. There has been a delay in this review, and volunteers will be notified when the review is scheduled.

SRC Elections in September

Elections for a new SRC Chair and Vice Chair will be held at the September SRC Quarterly Meeting. If you would like to be considered for either position (or would like to nominate another SRC member) let Chair Conlin know via email. The slate will be presented to the members at the September meeting for a vote at that time. If you are not able to attend the meeting in person, you must have a proxy designated in writing (as per the Bylaws), only persons physically in the room at the time will be able to vote.

Next SRC Quarterly Meeting - September 9, 2022

Representative Roundtable

Heidi Lawyer – PEATC – Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

See website for details on events:

<https://mailchi.mp/peatc/peatcs-open-and-here-to-help-5925776>

PEATC, in collaboration with the VDOE, invites families to join in the online training course, Building Strong Parent Advocates July 11 – August 11.

Joliefawn Liddell – dCLV – disAbility Law Center of Virginia

A fundraiser gala will be held June 17. Tickets are available on website. Theme is Midsummer Night's Gala benefiting the disAbility Law Center of Virginia. The disAbility Rights and Resources Summit will be held September 23 virtually, and the title and theme of this year's summit is: "Achieving Liberty and Justice for Individuals with Disabilities through Social Justice and Racial Equity." <https://www.dlcva.org/events/list>

Marianne Moore - VDOE – Virginia Department of Education

<https://imdetermined.org/event/2022-youth-family-summit/>

The Youth and Parent Summit is a three-day event held each June and sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education and the Partnership for People with Disabilities. Youth with disabilities from across the Commonwealth meet to network and discuss issues of importance to youth and young adults with disabilities. June 14-16, 2022

Mark Roane – NFB – National Federation of the Blind

Mr. Roane shared that the NFB is all volunteers. He highlighted the Silver BELLS program which just completed a session in April. The next session will be held June 9 – 12. The program is designed to teach elderly vision impaired the core skills applicable to a variety of ever day tasks.

<https://www.nfbv.org/silverbells>

Milford Stern – DOLI – Virginia Department of Labor and Industry

DOLI administers the programs for Virginia Occupational Safety and Health, Registered Apprenticeship, Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety and Labor and Employment Law. Mr. Stern gave an overview of the types of apprenticeships available. <https://www.virginia.gov/agencies/department-of-labor-and-industry/>

Adjourn

Mr. Roane motioned to end the meeting. All were in favor.