

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
State Rehabilitation Council
Meeting Minutes
9 March 2013**

10:00 a.m.-Welcome and Call to Order – Michael Davis

Introductions & Designations

Members Present: Michael G. Davis, Chesapeake, VA-(Chair/former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); John Bailey, Fairfax, VA-(Vice Chair/Business, Labor, and Industries), Melanie Brunson, Vienna, VA-(Past Chair/Disability Advocacy Groups); Valerie Walker, New Port News, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries); Marguerite Bardone, King George, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries); Celia Yette, Petersburg, VA-(Client Assistance Program); Claudie Grant, Jr., Prince George, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Nicole Jeffords, Norfolk, VA-(Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, ex-officio); 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); Debbie Pfeiffer, Yorktown, VA-(Virginia Department of Education; Rebecca Bridges-Arlington, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries), James Taylor-Richmond, VA-(Disability Advocacy Groups); Angie Matney, Fredericksburg, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services); Richard Holley, Hallwood, VA-(Disability Advocacy Groups); and Rick Gonzalez, Springfield, VA-(Virginia Workforce Council).

Guests Present: Faye Adams, Virginia Beach, VA.

DBVI Staff Present: Susan Davis Payne-(Vocational Rehabilitation Director); and Marcus L. Byrd, II-(Administrative Support Staff).

Adoption of 9 March 2013 Agenda-Action Item

Michael Davis entertained a motion to approve the March 9, 2013 agenda. Melanie Brunson moved for approval and was seconded by Nicole Jeffords. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Adoption of 15 December 2012 Meeting Minutes-Action Item

Michael Davis entertained a motion to approve the December 15, 2012 draft meeting minutes. Nicole Jeffords moved that the meeting minutes be accepted as distributed and was seconded by Marguerite Bardone. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Comments from the Public

None to report.

Commissioner's Report-Susan Davis Payne

Susan Payne expounded on the Commissioner's report by explaining that DBVI does not currently anticipate closing Order of Selection categories as a result of sequestration during 2013. DBVI continues to operate under Order of Selection with all categories open with the understanding that if the agency is unable to serve all eligible individuals due to inadequate funds categories may be closed.

Deputy Commissioner's Report-Susan Davis Payne

Dr. Rick L. Mitchell has been appointed Deputy Commissioner for Services at DBVI. He is scheduled to assume his new responsibilities on March 11, 2013. Council member Rebecca Bridges served on the initial panel which recommended three candidates for a second round of interviews.

Susan Payne explained that statistics located in the Deputy Commissioner's report reflect the 1st quarter numbers only.

VR Program Update- Susan Davis Payne

Susan Payne elaborated on a conversation with council member Jim Taylor in which he expressed concerns about the Vocational Rehabilitation Compliance and Consumer Satisfaction Survey Analyst position. The position has been vacant for two of the past three years and efforts to fill have been strenuous due to the inability to find a pool of candidates with appropriate qualifications. One of the primary concerns with the vacancy is that the responsibility of conducting ongoing consumer satisfaction surveys has not taken place, thus resulting in DBVI being out of compliance. Mr. Taylor suggested that DBVI could possibly fill the position by hiring a part-time employee to conduct this particular responsibility in the short and potentially long term. Ms. Payne expressed to the council that she intends to speak with Commissioner Hopkins and Deputy Mitchell about the possibility of the aforementioned on 13 March. The most recent announcement closed on the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) website on 8 March. Ms. Payne intends to correspond with human resources to inquire about the pool of candidates. In the event DBVI finds qualified candidates to interview for the position, a member of the SRC may be selected to serve on the interview panel. Furthermore the panel would include members who represent the demographics of the group of candidates selected for interviews.

The council inquired about the possibility of potentially hiring three individuals as opposed to one with specific levels of expertise to conduct position responsibilities. Specifically, graduate students attending Virginia Tech, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia State University as candidates to fill the position. Ms. Payne also explained that the possibility of outsourcing the comprehensive needs assessment surveys responsibility is not off the table and could be a potential avenue for DBVI to explore.

Michael Davis entertained a motion for DBVI to consider multiple options for completing the tasks associated with the VR Compliance and Consumer Satisfaction Survey Analyst position including full-time and multiple part-time positions, outsourcing/contracting, graduate students, internships, and or any other options presented with the goal of DBVI reestablishing its compliance. In addition, the council would like for the position to be filled as soon as possible followed by an outcome report from the agency NLT the next SRC meeting currently scheduled for 8 June. Marguerite Bardone moved that the motion be accepted and was seconded by Melanie Brunson. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Michael Davis noted that if DBVI decides to focus on college students, that he would be willing to contact his former professors at the University of Richmond for recommendations at either the undergraduate or graduate student level.

State Plan Development-Susan Payne

Michael Davis explained to the council that the State Plan Development was a critical discussion topic at the SRC retreat on 8 March. The following council members were present: Michael Davis, Melanie Brunson, Nicole Jeffords, Jim Taylor, Ken Jessup and Debbie Pfeiffer. The following recommendations were developed by council members whom participated: 1. DBVI develop a frequently asked questions section in terms of service on its website, 2. Orientation for newly hired VR staff to include how to provide services, 3. Improve job placement, development, and coaching for staff to include a mentoring component, 4. To enhance training to VR staff in terms of job placement and the approach used to provide services, 5. DBVI ensure that consumers are

provided consistent information from office to office, 6. DBVI is working in partnerships with consumer groups to include using them as mentors for individuals receiving services, 7. DBVI collaborate with other disability services agencies, 8. DBVI have transition caseloads in every office to help support all counselors, 9. DBVI educate staff on the Assistive Technology Bill which allows technology to follow students after graduation and transition to work, 10. Expand marketing and outreach efforts with the use of social media to individuals in minority groups, 11. Expand marketing to the public, 12. Expand training to consumers, 13. Develop best practices for provision of services, and finally possibly outsourcing the satisfaction needs assessment surveys.

Melanie Brunson explained that most of the recommendations derived from the comprehensive needs assessment survey results and public comment in which consumers relayed their concerns about the ability of counselors to provide services in the areas of job placement and development.

Susan Payne elaborated on the focus of the satisfaction surveys which polled consumers whose cases had been closed successfully, closed unsuccessfully, DBVI staff, DBVI State Rehabilitation Council, Students for Independent Living, Consumer Advocacy Groups, Community Rehabilitation Providers, and Employers whom hired DBVI consumers. Specifically the survey asked the following: what needs had or had not been met and barriers to successful employment. Under barriers of employment the council provided the following recommendations: DBVI explore avenues of communicating the availability of resources both internal and external in a creative manner so that the public is confident that DBVI is capable of removing employment barriers. In addition, in the un-served and underserved section of recommendations, that DBVI establish opportunities to be present at functions pertaining to and conducted by Native Americans in Virginia.

The following council members volunteered their services to assist with the development of the state plan and to organize the council's recommendations before voting on them: Michael Davis, Jim Taylor, John Bailey, Melanie Brunson, and if needed Marguerite Bardone. The group plans to meet in the next few weeks to focus on the above mentioned responsibilities.

The following members have volunteered to assist with analyzing the results, recommendations, and contents of the CSAN in preparation for development of the 2012 State Plan: Michael Davis, James Taylor, and Melanie Brunson.

Workgroups Report:

The council agreed that the current workgroup committee structure is not working, specifically due to a lack of action. Susan Payne noted a possible approach to circumvent this issue was to afford committees time to meet and conduct business on the day of the SRC quarterly meeting. In addition, another approach offered was for the council to conduct quarterly meetings on a weekday as opposed to Saturday which may interfere with personal appointments. The council decided that an additional agenda item would be added:

Committee Meetings commence at 9:00 a.m. beginning at the next Quarterly SRC meeting on 8 June 2013-
Action Item: Melanie Brunson moved for approval and was seconded by Nicole Jeffords. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Melanie Brunson entertained a motion to recommend that DBVI provide the SRC with success stories, pictures and releases of information from VR counselors, consumers, employers, and other stakeholders

regarding the positive impact of VR services on their lives in a timely manner for inclusion in the annual report- Action Item: Michael Davis moved for approval and was seconded by Marguerite Bardone. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

The following workgroups are current as of March 2012:

| <u>Annual Report</u> | <u>State Plan</u> | <u>Transition Committee</u> | <u>Legislative</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Marguerite Bardone | Marguerite Bardone | Michael Davis | Melanie Brunson |
| Doug Powell | Michael Davis | Rick Holley | Ken Jessup |
| Rick Holley | Jim Taylor | Debbie Pfeiffer | John Bailey |
| Debbie Pfeiffer | Melanie Brunson | | |
| | John Bailey | | |

CSNA Consumer/Satisfaction Surveys

Doug Powell
Valarie Walker
Melanie Brunson

Marketing & Public Relations

Michael Davis
Marguerite Bardone
Melanie Brunson

Nicole Jeffords agreed to send a template to Marcus L. Byrd to disseminate to the council in efforts to assist with the development of the work plan for committees to use. Melanie Brunson has agreed to do the same serving as chair of the legislative committee.

Working Lunch:

Scheduling of SRC meetings and Retreat Planning:

The council collectively agreed to meet on the following dates during 2013:
June 8, 2013 SRC meeting
September 14, 2013 SRC meeting
October 19, 2013 SRC annual retreat
December 14, 2013 SRC meeting

Susan explained to the council that if they were interested in being reappointed to the board, to submit resumes to her as soon as possible. Additionally no action would be necessary for council members not interested in being reappointed.

Old Business and New Business

The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind conferences spring session will take place in Bethesda, Maryland on April 20th-21st (NCSRC), April 22nd-24th (CSAVR) & April 24th-26th (NCSAB). Michael Davis will not be able to attend either conferences and inquired if any council member(s) would be interested attending on the SRC's behalf. Ken Jessup made a motion for Melanie Brunson to represent the council for the duration of each conference; Michael Davis moved for approval and was seconded by Marguerite Bardone. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Ken Jessup expressed his concerns about DBVI's newly renovated website and potential challenges the public may face in trying to find the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council's information. The SRC's information is currently located under the Vocational Rehabilitation Services section as opposed to within DBVI's Boards & Council tab. Specifically, his concern is that the general public may have some issues locating the SRC's

information due to its current location. Melanie Brunson made a motion for DBVI's State Rehabilitation Council be listed under the VR Services and Boards & Councils tab on the internet site; Michael Davis moved for approval and was seconded by Ken Jessup. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. Marcus L. Byrd submitted the IAR request to DBVI's webmasters on 13 March.

Date for Next Meeting/Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m., the next State Rehabilitation Council Meeting will convene on 8 June 2013, 401Azalea Avenue, Richmond VA 23227 @ 10:00 a.m.