

Minutes – February 4, 2016

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

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Thursday, February 4, 2016	12:30 PM – 3:30 PM	Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI) 60 Kimball Avenue South Burlington VT 05403
Meeting called by	Adam Leonard, Chair at 12:30 pm	
Members Present	Spencer Lemons, Michele Hubert, Sam Liss, Diane Dalmasse, Martha Frank, Olivia Smith-Hammond, Alaina Clements, Nancy Breiden, Samantha Brennan, Leslie Walker Mitchell (via phone) and Julia Burakian	
Members Absent	Ben Wimett	
SRC Liaison	James Smith, DVR Budget and Policy Manager	
SRC Coordinator	Rebekah M. Stephens	
Interpreters	n/a	
Speakers/Presenters	Meg Lidster, VR Counselor and Barbara Pawluk, EAP Life Resource Counselor	
Guests	Jessalyn Gustin, Tom VanMeter (driver for SRC member) and Mark Hastings	
1. Today's Agenda		
2 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	No discussion. Sam Liss moved to accept. Michele Hubert 2 nd .	
Conclusions	Today's agenda accepted.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
2. Approval of Minutes – December 3, 2015 SRC Meeting		
3 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	No discussion. Sam Liss moved to approve. Spencer Lemons 2 nd .	
Conclusions	Minutes approved.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Upload approved minutes to www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	2/12/2016
3. Consent Agenda		
5 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Consent agenda includes approved minutes: Policy & Procedures Committee - September 3, 2015 & November 5, 2015, Steering Committee – November 5, 2015 and Advocacy, Outreach & Education Committee – November 5, 2015 and the Coordinator's Report. No discussion. Sam Liss moved to approve. Martha Frank 2 nd .	
Conclusions	Consent agenda approved.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
4. Discussion and Vote – Proposed Changes to SRC Bylaws		
20 minutes	Sam Liss and Michele Hubert	
Discussion	The Policy and Procedures Committee reviewed the SRC Bylaws and are recommending the following proposed changes: "Article VII to include a Section 4 which will read "In event the Chair and Vice-Chair are unavailable for a decision to be made the first available Committee Chair will be approached to make decision." "Article VIII, Section 2 – Language "Special consideration should be given by the Chair to any request made by the Division Director." will be removed and replaced with "DVR Director or DVR Director's Designee may call a special meeting when necessary to transact business that cannot wait for a regularly scheduled meeting." Sam and Michele provided a brief overview of why the changes to the SRC Bylaws language are being proposed. Nancy Breiden asked for some clarification around what kind of decisions are being referenced in Article VII, Section 4? Rebekah Stephens explained	

Minutes – February 4, 2016

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

that decisions usually relate to scheduling details. Nancy suggested some clarification around what type of decisions will be made by the SRC officers. She suggested some wording around what are the officer's duties. Council members agree that additional clarification is needed. Article VIII, Section 2. No additional discussion. Adam Leonard called for vote of approval on Article VIII, Section 2 proposed new language.		
Conclusions	Article VII, Section 4 proposed language will go back to Policy & Procedures Committee for more clarification. Article VIII, Section 2 approved by unanimous vote (11 ayes, 0 nays). Rebekah Stephens will update the SRC Bylaws to reflect the approval of Article VIII, Section 2 language.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Article VIII, Section 2 Language “Special consideration should be given by the Chair to any request made by the Division Director.” will be removed and replaced with “DVR Director or DVR Director’s Designee may call a special meeting when necessary to transact business that cannot wait for a regularly scheduled meeting.”	Rebekah Stephens	2/26/2016
Include discussion of Article VII, Section 4 proposed language on March 3, 2016 P&P Committee agenda - “In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are unavailable for a decision to be made the first available Committee Chair will be approached to make decision.”	Rebekah Stephens	2/19/2016
5. Presentation – VR/OCS (Office of Child Support) Partnership – OCS Work for Kids Pilot		
1 hour	Meg Lidster and Barbara Pawluk	
Discussion	Barbara gave a brief overview of where the OCS Work for Kids Pilot came from. OCS was having difficulty collecting child support and once a parent entered into contempt of court they were jailed. So a solution was suggested to try to help these parents secure employment instead of being jailed. The pilot program works with non-custodial parents who do not have a way to pay child support. The parent is referred from court and connects directly with the EAP Life Resource Counselor. An appointment is scheduled to meet with the EAP Counselor. This program is incumbent on the non-custodial parent making contact with the EAP Counselor and following through with the appointment. It is being found that many of these non-custodial parents have some form of disability and qualify to work with VR. The EAP Counselor may work with the non-custodial parent for a bit before referring them to VR. The EAP Counselor has become a form of advocate for these individuals. The EAP Counselor’s responsibility is to find out what the barriers are that are preventing the individual from working and paying their child support. The EAP Counselor will then make a referral to VR if found appropriate. Meg explained that a majority of these individuals have not sought out program assistance in the past. Education, homelessness and poor work history contribute to the cycle these individuals have found themselves in when they enter the pilot program. The feedback on the pilot program has been positive from the individuals in the program. The pilot program has been around for 2 years. Because time is of the essence with these individuals, the pilot program does not have the 90-day orientation period and they bring in the VABIR Counselor early on in the process. The question was asked if there have been any obstacles from the criminal justice system? There has been a recent major breakthrough with the criminal justice system, in particular, suspension of licenses. The State Attorney is going to do an ad hoc amnesty on a case by case basis with the individuals in this program. If things don’t work out the State Attorney can reinstate the suspension. The question was asked if there have been any barriers with employers hiring these individuals. Some employers have issues with hiring individuals with violent criminal backgrounds or sexual offenders. But we are getting better at educating employers around hiring these individuals. Diane suggested progressive employment for use with this population. Barb and Meg shared they have used some work experiences however the short time frames set by the courts don’t always make progressive employment ideal. The increase in employer paid child support shows that this program is working. The whole stigma around the “deadbeat Dad” is something that	

Minutes – February 4, 2016

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

these non-custodial parents want to get out from under. The individuals in this program want to work and pay their child support obligations. The program is expanding to Rutland, Middlebury and Bennington.		
Conclusions	Wonderful discussion! Thank you Barbara and Meg.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
6. Order of Selection		
10 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	No one has applied for services under OOS since the last full SRC meeting.	
Conclusions	No need to open services at this time.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
7. Discussion – “Serving people outside of OOS if employed and need services to retain employment.” VR would like to have this option available		
10 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	“Vermont DVR has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of the order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.” This is a yes or no question under the State Plan and VT DVR would like to have the option. VT DVR has not yet determined how to operationalize this as of yet but would like to keep the door open. VT DVR would like to explore this option and along with the SRC figure out how to implement it and determine if it is working. This will be an addition to the OOS in the State Plan. This option has its origin in WIOA (Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act). This option is intended as a job save. If this option was not included in this year’s State Plan then VT DVR would have to wait until next year to include it. VT DVR is not given additional resources to serve additional consumers. VT DVR is currently serving category 1 and 2 individuals. This option allows VT DVR to serve these individuals without bringing it to the SRC to prevent loss of job. VT DVR does not want to open the full Category 3. This option allows VT DVR to carve out a subsection of Category 3 and provide short term services to these individuals in an expedited manner. This is a significant change to OOS. The SRC needs to review and approve this change in policy. VT DVR is seeking the SRC approval today because the State Plan is due on April 1, 2016. This is approving a concept and the SRC will have plenty of opportunities to revisit this policy change. Council members discussed what is Category 3 - “Individuals who have been determined by DVR to have non-significant disabilities are those who have one or more areas of functional loss not requiring multiple services over a period of 6 months or more. To meet the Priority 3 Category the applicant must intend to achieve an employment outcome that is consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.” Under this addition to OOS, the individual must have a disability and qualify for VR services. However, the disability does not have to be directly related to them losing their job. It would be for example - if they need transportation until they get their car fixed or short term training because of new equipment. It could be one thing that will help them not lose their job. It is very individual to each situation. The comment was made that this all seems really vague and needs to really be vetted. The term “short term services” needs clarification. Diane Dalmasse agreed but because of the State Plan deadline of April 1, 2016, there is not enough time to completely vet it all out right now. Agreeing to keep the door open at this time will allow for a more detailed discussion in the coming months. Adam Leonard called for a vote.	
Conclusions	The Council voted to approve including this addition to OOS in the upcoming State Plan. Unanimously approved (10 ayes 0 nays – Michele Hubert exited the meeting prior to this vote).	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Minutes – February 4, 2016

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

Include additional language and check yes to “Vermont DVR has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of the order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment” in State Plan under Order of Selection (OOS)	James Smith	4/1/2016
8. Director’s Report		
25 minutes	Diane Dalmasse	
Discussion	A contract with Alliance Enterprises for AWARE was finalized last Friday. DVR has officially moved to Waterbury. The Unified Plan has not yet been posted but hopefully soon. The VT Department of Labor is holding 12 public hearings on WIOA in February 2016. Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) are moving along quite nicely. 14 VR counselors have been moved into PETS and DVR anticipates seeing a decline in successful outcomes for general DVR as a result of this move. “H.642 – a bill has been introduced in the VT House to create a study committee to consider a move of VR to VDOL. The administration has taken a position in opposition to this bill. “The advocates are opposed to the bill. We are very opposed to this bill and a move to VDOL given our shared work within AHS.” VT DVR is in good financial shape at this time. The SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Employment and Training Grant is getting off the ground. The grant is 9 million dollars for 3 years (3 million per year) to get people back to work. 4 new EAP clinicians, a SNAP manager and 9 VABIR employment consultants will be hired. This is moving us in a positive direction. Assistive Technology (AT) services are being expanded to VR consumers. The AT needs of young adults will be considered.	
Conclusions	A lot of positive news. VT DVR will continue to watch H.642. Thank you, Diane.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
9. WIOA Update		
10 minutes	Diane Dalmasse and James Smith	
Discussion	No discussion.	
Conclusions	WIOA update included above under agenda item #8 – Director’s Report.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
10. Other Business		
15 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Sam Liss gave a brief update on Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Advocacy for funding of the National Federation for the Blind is getting some positive feedback.	
Conclusions	Thank you, Sam!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
11. Parking Lot		
10 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	None.	
Conclusions	None.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
12. Round Table		
5 minutes	Council Members	
Discussion	Martha Frank shared how impressed she is with the collaborative efforts of the various agencies to assist Vermonters with disabilities. Olivia Smith-Hammond found the presentation on OCS	

Minutes – February 4, 2016

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

very helpful. Alaina Clements shared that she is also impressed with all the efforts. Mark Hastings enjoyed seeing how he can be involved. Nancy Breiden enjoyed the in person meeting. She liked the proactive nature of the OCS Work for Kids pilot. Samantha Brennan is looking forward to finding more ways to provide more excellent service to VR consumers. Julia Burakian shared that she enjoyed hearing what other counselors are doing. Leslie Walker Mitchell really enjoyed the presentation. Adam Leonard was excited to see everyone here today and hear all of the passion, thoughts and perspectives. James Smith also enjoyed the presentation and how the pilot is giving people hope and the chance for better outcomes. Spencer Lemons also enjoyed the presentation and is eager to hear more about the OOS changes. Sam Liss believes if you give people a chance in a sensitive corrective way positive things will happen. Tom VanMeter thanked everyone for inviting him and he enjoyed the interagency perspective of the meeting. Diane Dalmasse appreciated the hard work that puts the consumer first. She is very proud of Barb and Meg's hard work and passion.		
Conclusions	Another wonderful meeting! Thank you, everyone!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
13. Adjournment		
0 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Olivia Smith-Hammond moved to adjourn. Spencer Lemons 2 nd .	
Conclusions	Meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Draft minutes respectfully submitted for approval	Rebekah Stephens	3/4/2016
Draft minutes emailed to all Committee members	Rebekah Stephens	3/4/2016
Draft uploaded to www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	3/4/2016
Minutes approved	Full SRC	4/7/2016
Approved minutes uploaded to www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	4/15/2016