

Minutes – February 2, 2017

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)		
Thursday, February 2, 2017	12:30 PM – 3:30 PM	Waterbury State Office Complex – Oak Room HC 2 South 280 State Drive Waterbury VT 05671
Meeting called by	Adam Leonard, Chair at 12:38 PM	
Members Present	Jessalyn Gustin, Ashley Pulaski, Rose Lucenti, Max Barrows, Sam Liss, Christopher Kane, Olivia Smith-Hammond, Martha Frank, Samantha Brennan, Julia Burakian and Leslie Walker Mitchell (via phone)	
Members Absent	Diane Dalmasse, Michelle Paya, Brian Smith and Sherrie Brunelle	
SRC Liaison	James Smith, DVR Budget and Policy Manager	
SRC Coordinator	Rebekah M. Stephens	
Interpreters	n/a	
Speakers/Presenters	Hugh Bradshaw (VR Employment Services Manager) and Tara Howe (VR Transition Program Director)	
Guests	Lee Reilly	
1. Today's Agenda		
2 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Martha Frank moved to accept. Olivia Smith-Hammond 2 nd . No discussion.	
Conclusions	Today's agenda accepted.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
2. Approval of Minutes – December 1, 2016 SRC Meeting		
3 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Sam Liss moved to approve. Samantha Brennan 2 nd . No discussion.	
Conclusions	Minutes approved.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Upload approved minutes to www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	2/10/2017
3. Consent Agenda		
1 minute	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Consent agenda includes approved minutes – Policy & Procedures Committee November 3, 2016 and Steering Committee November 3, 2016 and Coordinator's Report. Leslie Walker Mitchell moved to accept. Samantha Brennan 2 nd .	
Conclusions	Consent agenda accepted.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
4. SRC Vice-Chair Election		
9 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Sam Liss nominated for SRC Vice-Chair. No other nominees. Adam called for election by consensus.	
Conclusions	Sam Liss elected SRC Vice-Chair by consensus. Congratulations, Sam!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
5. Committee Chair Updates		
15 minutes	Adam Leonard and Sam Liss	
Discussion	No update on AOE Committee, as the January 5, 2017 meeting was canceled. Sam gave a brief update on the January 5, 2017 P&P meeting. A total of 6 chapters have been brought up to date in	

Minutes – February 2, 2017

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

order to conform to WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) changes. P&P also agreed to use the term “consumer” in the VR Policy and Procedures Manual for consistency. Performance Review met this morning and dove into some of the 2017 priorities set by the Committee during the 2016 Retreat. PR had a great discussion on the upcoming June youth panel and came up with some ideas around how it will look. Alice Porter, VR Senior Analyst, joined PR today and provided some great information on the new RSA technical assistance directives on the Common Performance Measures. PR also discussed transitioning students in corrections. The October PR meeting will focus on this topic.		
Conclusions	Thank you, Sam and Adam!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
6. Discussion – “How did the 2nd Annual Interagency Collaborative Event Go?”		
20 minutes	Martha Frank and Tara Howe	
Discussion	Tara passed out a summary of the “Conference and Core Team Collaboration”. The focus was coming together and determining how to best serve the youth in Vermont. There are core teams all around the State and this was an opportunity for everyone to come together. 191 people attended. Each of the individual teams came together and planned some next steps. The questions were, “What can we do to provide support in schools and through the transition out of school?” And “what do we want the core team to be?” Participants expressed that the event was very helpful. It was a positive day. The hope is to make this an annual event. Martha shared that years ago, there were core teams, however they disappeared over time. The purpose of the core teams is to assist people in getting information about how to support youth. The core teams are made up of representatives from Department of Mental Health (DMH), Agency of Education (AOE), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Developmental Disability Services (DDS) and local community resources serving youth. Core teams began 5 or 10 years ago, with funding from a grant. When the funding ended the core teams either became something else or faded away. Individuals expressed a desire to bring back the core teams because it is generally felt that the teams provide an effective means of providing support to families of youth with disabilities. The core teams meet approximately 4 times a year. Youth in corrections are not represented on the core teams. So far, schools have been supportive of the core teams.	
Conclusions	The event was very successful. Great energy! Thank you, Tara and Martha!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
7. Director’s Report		
15 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	The reduction in the VR budget is still a big issue. Funding for Supported Employment was moved to other commitments. In the past, VR has been able to distribute funding to its partner agencies through grants. However, the Agency of Administration has determined that all funding to partner agencies will now have to be through contracts. Now VR must follow contract procurement procedures and all partner agencies will need to bid the contracts. Changing all grants to bids is a huge process and is taking considerable VR administrative resources. All contracts need to be in place by July 1, 2017. AWARE is on track. Live demos are currently taking place in each regional office. User testing will take place during March and April. In June, VR will make the decision which region will host the full test of AWARE. Final clean up of any issues from the full test period will occur in August. The Go Live date is September 2017. VR offices will close for a 2-week period to allow for the transfer of data from the current system to AWARE. There will probably be limited emergency consumer services available during this period. VR received a \$9 million grant for Linking Learning to Careers. This is a huge piece of work for VR, but great news! VR is also	

Minutes – February 2, 2017

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

in the process of redirecting their organizational focus from “just getting a person a job to getting a person a career”. The State has agreed to be a model employer for folks with disabilities. The State will now allow the use of Progressive Employment in some of the placements. This will help with a few of the traditional employment barriers to state workers. In March, VR will be shifting staff into the Linking Learning to Careers’ program to preserve staff from positions lost to the budget reductions.		
Conclusions	This is a pivotal year for VR. A lot is going on. Great information. Thank you, James!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
8. Update – FY 2018 Budget		
30 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	VR lost about \$4.4 million in re-allotment funds. The Agency of Human Services (AHS) backfilled all but \$300,000, with the understanding that VR would present a balanced budget in 2018. VR approached the loss of funding by focusing on maintaining the core program i.e. VR counselors, Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services) and case services. VR has had to figure out how to maintain a certain level of functioning while minimizing impact on long-term community providers. To achieve this goal VR has implemented a hiring freeze, is moving 6 FTE (full-time equivalent) staff positions to the Linking Learning to Careers’ program to avoid layoffs (11 individuals), reducing 1 central office administrative position, reducing progressive employment set asides, reducing VR counselor consumer spending accounts, not filling any vacant positions and reducing Business Account Manager (BAM) positions. VR will definitely be serving less consumers because of the reduction in general counseling staff. VR may need to do a caseload review to close cases where consumers may not be actively engaged in the VR process. VR will be eliminating staff training and temporary employees.	
Conclusions	VR is having to make some very hard choices. Thank you, James.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
9. Order of Selection		
15 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	There are 11 individuals in Category 4 since October 2016. James is not making a recommendation. He is asking the SRC for their input. Sam Liss asked if VR has the resources available to provide services for these 11 individuals? James replied that he is hesitant to make a recommendation because VR will be removing 6 FTE counselors from general services in March. And this does not include the 3 or 4 vacant counselor positions that will not be filled. On average a case is open 15 months. There may not be enough counselors to provide services after March 2017. James shared that if VR was really in dire straits and couldn’t provide services and had to go to a tight OOS, VR would notify the SRC immediately. Please note – There were 9 individuals in Category 4 in October 2016. VR identified 2 of the 9 as having cases that were closed and did not require services. Four additional Category 4 individuals requested services since December 2016 for a total of 11 individuals today. The question was asked if the SRC vote is binding to VR?	
Conclusions	Vote taken to open services for 11 Category 4 individuals. 8 yeas and 1 nay. The SRC votes to open services for these 11 individuals. Services will be opened. James will research to see if an SRC vote to open or not open services is binding to VR.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Research if an SRC vote to open or not open services is binding to VR	James Smith	4/6/2017

Minutes – February 2, 2017

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

Include “Answer to Question – Is an SRC Vote to Open or Not Open Services Binding to VR?” under OOS agenda item on April 6, 2017 full SRC meeting agenda	Rebekah Stephens	3/24/2017
10. Update – Disability Summit		
30 minutes	Sam Liss, Jessalyn Gustin & Hugh Bradshaw	
Discussion	Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights (VCDR) made a suggestion to combine summits with the SRC and the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion. The combined summit would focus on developmental disabilities, mental health and employment barriers. The SRC summit planning committee decided it was too narrow a focus and declined the invitation to combine summits. The planning committee would like sufficient time to plan an effective summit. They are looking at holding the summit in the Fall of 2017. The vision is to do the summit in the framework of a Governor’s Summit. Invitations would go out to the Governor, state agencies and non-profit partners. The event could have a key-note speaker and a luncheon. There may be a fee for the lunch. The summit would include legislative and administrative issues. Jessalyn shared that more individuals are needed on the planning committee. There is a hope to get representatives from other partner organizations on the planning committee. Jessalyn will be sending a letter to Ed Paquin of VCDR, so he can pass it on to the other organizations asking for representative to participate in the summit planning. Hugh shared that every other year, VR hosts a Governor’s Summit. An event like this needs at least 9 months of planning. Hugh asked what is the intent of the SRC summit? Jessalyn explained that the idea is very general at this point – “Unifying issues across advocacy organizations and educating participants.” The broad focus would be to identify issues and who is going to take the lead on each. Determine how not to cross advocate and provide a louder voice with a shared vision. How to advocate in the most efficient way. There is a seed of an idea, it is being planted and it has yet to sprout.	
Conclusions	Thank you – Sam, Jessalyn and Hugh!	
Action Items		Person Responsible
None		n/a
11. Other Business		
10 minutes	Council members	
Discussion	The AOE (Advocacy, Outreach & Education) Committee needs a chair. Anyone interested should contact Rebekah Stephens. James Smith mentioned maybe it is time the Steering Committee look at the AOE Committee and clarify its mission statement and purpose. SRC members agreed. Sam Liss informed the SRC that ABLE Act accounts are rolling out in Vermont.	
Conclusions	Include discussion on AOE Committee’s mission statement and purpose on March 8, 2017 Committee meeting agenda.	
Action Items		Person Responsible
Include “Discussion – AOE Committee’s Mission Statement and Purpose” on March 8, 2017 Steering Committee meeting agenda		Rebekah Stephens
		2/23/2017
12. Parking Lot		
10 minutes	Council members	
Discussion	None.	
Conclusions	None.	
Action Items		Person Responsible
None		n/a
13. Round Table		
10 minutes	Council members	
Discussion	Martha Frank shared that she is blown away by the year VR has had and is so amazed	

Minutes – February 2, 2017

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

by VR's commitment to consumers and staff. Olivia Smith-Hammond liked the change up in the Director's report. The charts were good. Great job James! Chris Kane shared that it has been helpful to hear what the different issues are in the disability community. Sam Liss commended James for his efforts and his presentations today. James explained a difficult situation and explained it very well. Hugh Bradshaw appreciates that the SRC understands what VR has been going through and VR's efforts to continue to serve its consumers while losing this funding. Thank you for appreciating how difficult it has been for VR. Max Barrows appreciates coming to the meetings and learning. Rose Lucenti shared that she has a deeper understanding of what VR is dealing with, appreciates how VR has been going through it and will use VR's experiences to explain similar issues to her staff at DOL. Ashley Pulaski appreciated the visual nature of James's charts for the Director's report. She enjoys the collaboration. Jessalyn Gustin enjoys the meetings. James Smith thanked everyone. Adam Leonard is hoping that the SRC can get more employers around this table. It is important to have their input. Leslie Walker Mitchell shared that not being at a meeting in person is not as much fun. After hearing James talk about the budget situation and VR's commitment to try and continue to serve everyone, she is proud to be part of all the efforts. Julia Burakian thanked James and Alice Porter. Samantha Brennan appreciated Alice's information. And she loved James's charts.		
Conclusions	Another great meeting.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
14. Adjournment		
0 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Samantha Brennan moved to adjourn. Leslie Walker Mitchell 2 nd .	
Conclusions	Adjourned at 3:30 PM.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Draft minutes respectfully submitted for approval	Rebekah Stephens	3/3/2017
Draft minutes uploaded to www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	3/3/2017
Draft minutes emailed to all Committee members	Rebekah Stephens	3/3/2017
Minutes approved	Full SRC	4/6/2017
Approved minutes uploaded to website www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	4/14/2017