

# FINAL Minutes – June 1, 2017

## Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)		
Thursday, June 1, 2017	12:30 PM – 3:30 PM	Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired (VABVI) 60 Kimball Avenue South Burlington, VT 05403
Meeting called by	Adam Leonard, Chair at 12:30 pm	
Members Present	Max Barrows, Sherrie Brunelle, Rose Lucenti, Leslie Walker Mitchell, Martha Frank, Christopher Kane, Jessalyn Gustin, Sam Liss, Michelle Paya, Brian Smith, Diane Dalmasse and Julia Burakian	
Members Absent	Olivia Smith-Hammond	
SRC Liaison	James Smith, DVR Budget and Policy Manager	
SRC Coordinator	Rebekah M. Stephens	
Interpreters	n/a	
Speakers/Presenters	Sabrina Hicks (High School Student), Mackenzie Munro (College Student), Hamdi Muya (High School Student), Gabrielle Nutt-Mayhugh (College Student), Molly Thompson (High School Student), Tara Howe (VR Transition Program Director), Amanda Kohle (VR Transition Counselor), Brit Hallock (VABIR Youth Employment Specialist), Jayson Capobianco (School Case Manager, Spaulding High School) and Pam Gowland (VR Transition Counselor)	
Guests	Nick Caputo, Lee Reilly (Max Barrow's Assistant) and Rocko Gieselman (VABIR)	
<b>1. Today's Agenda</b>		
1 minute	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Sam Liss would like to add a good news advocacy update. Sherrie Brunelle moved to accept with addition. Max Barrows 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	
Conclusions	Today's agenda accepted with addition of advocacy update under "Other Business".	
<b>Action Items</b>		<b>Person Responsible</b>
None		n/a
<b>Deadline</b>		n/a
<b>2. Approval of Minutes – April 6, 2017 SRC Meeting</b>		
1 minute	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	No discussion. Martha Frank moved to approve. Leslie Walker Mitchell 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	
Conclusions	Minutes approved.	
<b>Action Items</b>		<b>Person Responsible</b>
Upload approved minutes to <a href="http://www.VTSRC.org">www.VTSRC.org</a>		Rebekah Stephens
<b>Deadline</b>		6/9/2017
<b>3. Consent Agenda</b>		
1 minute	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Consent agenda includes approved minutes: Policy & Procedures Committee - January 5, 2017 & March 2, 2017 (cancelled), Steering Committee – March 8, 2017 and the Coordinator's Report. No discussion. Leslie Walker Mitchell moved to accept. Rose Lucenti 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	
Conclusions	Consent agenda accepted.	
<b>Action Items</b>		<b>Person Responsible</b>
None		n/a
<b>Deadline</b>		n/a
<b>4. Committee Chair Update</b>		
7 minutes	Sam Liss, Julia Burakian and Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Sam Liss provided a brief update for the P&P Committee. Our last meeting was very productive. Several chapters that contained WIOA updates were approved. James Smith will now schedule a public meeting. The Appeals Process chapter was finalized. There were two suggested changes to the bylaws. The first change involves adding language that will allow a parent or immediate family member of a person	

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with a disability to sit as SRC Chair or Vice-Chair. The second which involved adding some language around advocacy has been deferred for now. Approval of the suggested bylaws language will be brought before the full SRC later in the year. Julia Burakian provided a brief update on the Performance Review Committee. Martha Frank provided a summary overview of the Youth Survey conducted by Vermont Family Network. James Smith presented the rough draft 2017 Needs Assessment Pre-ETS section information. The Committee provided feedback to him. Not surprisingly youth with disabilities have a lower participation in employment then youth without disabilities. Adam Leonard provided a brief update for the Steering Committee. The 2017 Retreat was discussed. The normally scheduled PR and SRC October meetings will be replaced with the Annual Retreat. There will be only one meeting in October. The hope is to not overburden the SRC members with two meetings in the same month. The AOE dissolution was also discussed and that discussion was added to today's SRC meeting agenda. The SRC promotional video was discussed. Due to time constraints on the part of the school, filming has been postponed until September 2017.		
Conclusions	Thank you, Sam, Julia and Adam!	
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
None	n/a	n/a
<b>5. Pre-ETS Student Panel</b>		
65 minutes	Sabrina Hicks, Mackenzie Munro, Hamdi Muya, Gabrielle Nutt-Mayhugh, Molly Thompson and Tara Howe	
Discussion	Tara Howe was the panel moderator. Panel participants were given an opportunity to answer each of the questions. SRC members were invited to ask questions after all panel participants had responded to each question. Question 1. Talk about your experience getting connected to VR services. Molly Thompson (MT) - Her IEP team first told her about VR. But it was her school counselor that actually connected her with VR. Then the VR counselor came to her school and spoke with her. Mackenzie Munro (MM) - She first connected with VR in her sophomore year of high school. Her caseworker came up to her and told her about VR. And then she met with a VR counselor the same exact day. She then went home with the information. Her parents encouraged her to participate with VR. She is now a junior in college. Hamdi Muya (HM) - He is a high school senior. His counselor connected him with VR in his junior year. Gabrielle Nutt-Mayhugh (GNM)- She was connected in her senior year of high school. Sabrina Hicks (SH) - She was connected last year through her case manager. SRC Questions - none. Question 2. How does your experience with VR match up with what you thought the experience would be? MT - She didn't have any expectations. It is going well so far. If she had any expectations she believes VR is meeting them. MM - She had no expectations. She feels that VR has done more than she would have expected. HM - He has only worked with VR for one year. He has had two work experiences and both went well. GNM - She had no expectations. The experience has been positive. SH - She had no expectations. The experience has been good. SRC Questions - Michelle Paya asked what County do the participants live in? MT - Windsor. MM - Washington. HM - Washington. GNM - Washington. SH - Washington. Leslie Walker Mitchell asked MM, how did she feel about not having time to think about meeting with a VR counselor? MM - It made no difference, she would have still met with the counselor. Sam Liss asked If any of the panel had ever been in a situation with VR where they felt uncomfortable or intimidated? MM - There was a lot of information thrown at her all at once, however, she didn't feel intimidated or uncomfortable. She was 18 at the time and her Mom was not with her. Leslie asked what would have made a difference. MM- If the VR counselor had offered more of a simple overview of the total process, instead of all the paperwork. MM suggested VR offer students information that can be reviewed before the meeting or something to take home to review again after the meeting. Martha Frank asked how accessible were the printed materials Received from VR? MM - She was given copies of everything and she was able to take it home to show her Mom. Question 3. How would you describe the role of a VR counselor? MT - Assess her needs and have a	

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conversation with her about what kinds of things she could get help for going into adulthood. Connect her to technology and other available resources. Her VR counselor connected her with Assistive Technology. VR has provided a hub for other resources. MM – She feels she had the opportunity to shape the experience for what she needed. A lot of what the VR counselor did was just making sure she knew what her available supports were, like Assistive Technology. The VR counselor helped her feel more confident around her disability. Her VR counselor checks in with her a lot. HM – He uses a computer in class and that helps him a lot with taking notes. GNM – Laurie Brown, her VR counselor, provided her with a lot of support. She helped her with Assistive Technology, finding a job and getting financial help for college. SH – The VR counselor helped her find and apply for jobs. Her counselor makes it easier. SRC Questions – none. Question 4. What have you found most helpful in working with VR, and what has been challenging? SH – Her VR counselor, Amanda Kohle, helped her apply for a summer job. The challenge was filling out the paperwork for the summer job, but Amanda helped her do it. GNM – VR provided her with text book money, prepare a cover letter and resume and advised her on how to dress for an interview. There have been no challenges. Everything has been straight-forward. HM – VR helped him get ready for the interviews for his two jobs and prepared him for real life experiences. MM – It is nice to know someone understands you. And the financial help from VR has been helpful. The constant support she receives from her VR counselor is great. She emails her VR counselor, often just to ask questions about college. There have been no challenges. MT – She “freaks out” about her future and college a lot. She thinks about the big picture and how she is going manage to be independent in 2 years. VR has helped her by teaching her to break things down into smaller pieces and that has helped a lot. The challenge is that not all resources available are on board with what we are trying to do. She was recently given a free trial of a smart pen and no one knew how to use it. When we are not on the same page it is challenging. SRC Questions – none. Question 5. How is/had your VR counselor helping/helped you prepare for life after high school? MT – She has just started with VR this year (sophomore year high school) and hasn’t done much yet. But with all the technology and all the connections VR has with other partners it will be easier when it is time to plan for after high school. MM – She started working with VR in her senior year of high school. VR helped her know what she had access to or how to access services through VR or other agencies like Assistive Technology. VR made sure she had the information she needed to move forward. She believes she is more successful because of VR. HM – He has only worked with VR for one year. VR found him jobs that are comfortable for him. GNM – She decided to take a “gap” year between high school graduation and starting college. Her VR counselor supported her decision to take a “gap” year and helped make the transition into employment easier. SH – Her VR counselor is helping her prepare to go to work right after high school. VR has been helping her line up work. SRC Questions – none. Question 6. What are your plans for after high school? MT – She is going to college and hopes to do public speaking and advocacy. MM – She is working towards a Bachelors of Science in Psychology at UVM. HM – He plans to attend college but not sure what he is going to study. GNM – She has one year left at CCV and is planning on studying either accounting or law at UVM or Johnson. After graduation, if she chooses law she plans on working for an attorney for 5 years. SH – She plans on working with the Career Center in Barre to study automotive skills. She would like to get a job in the automotive field for a few years and then move to Maine to study Criminal Justice. With the ultimate goal of becoming a game warden. SRC Questions – Adam Leonard asked MM, you mentioned peers that could have benefited from VR services. Do you know what prevented them from working with VR? MM – Possible financial barriers and lack of self-motivation. A lot of her peers are not comfortable with who they are and won’t seek the support. GNM – Her Mom had to hire a lawyer to get her sister the supports she needed from the school. And kids aren’t always willing to take help. MM – There are a lot of people at my university who are part of the assistance support program offered by the college. But they only access it for finals or tests. She uses it on a daily basis for help like online notes. Julia Burakian asked, if you were in charge and could implement

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<p>something for the school or VR what would it be? MT – She would make sure that high school students get more opportunities to prepare for the real world like college experiences or life skills. More opportunities to prepare for the future. It would also be more helpful to start earlier in high school and not wait until senior year. MM – It would have been great to have a panel of college students come to her high school and answer questions about what college looks like for students with disabilities. GNM – She was really pushed to go to college by her high school teachers. It would have been helpful to have someone be able to say if you aren't ready for college here are some options like work, internships or just a year off to travel. Options were not offered. SRC Questions – Sam Liss asked, do you feel that there was a clear line between what VR does and what a mental health counselor does? Do you feel the VR counselor concentrates on job supports as opposed to helping you get through life's emotional challenges? MM – Yes, definite clear line. Her VR counselor helped her deal with stress but it was around getting a job or going to school. She has different people for helping with the emotions of life stuff. SH – VR helps her line up jobs and makes sure she is ready to go. Max Barrows mentioned Think College as an excellent resource. Julia Burakian asked, was the IEP process at school helpful for preparing for life after high school? SH – It has been helpful. She shared that if she didn't have it, she wouldn't be where she is now. The IEP process has helped her understand things better and lets her ask questions. GNM – It was helpful. She received extra help because her community is small and the team had family friends on it. Also, she always stayed engaged in the process and made sure she got copies of all the paperwork. When she turned 18, she signed papers so that her Mom wouldn't be at the meetings. It was a really good experience for her. MM – She compensates for her disability well, so there were things on her IEP that she felt she didn't need. She was very vocal about it and let people know what she needed. It was a good experience. MT – She goes to all of her IEP meetings. Her IEP is the reason she is able to function at school. She needs physical therapy and help taking notes and she wouldn't have gotten the help without her IEP. She is an active part of planning her IEP along with her Mom.</p>		
Conclusions	Thank you for sharing today! It was wonderful information! Great panel!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
<b>6. Pre-ETS Staff Panel</b>		
60 minutes	Pamela Gowland, Amanda Kohle, Brit Hallock and Jayson Capobianco	
Discussion	Adam Leonard acted as moderator for this panel. Question 1. Why do you do what you do? Brit Hallock (BH) – As a youth, she was on a 504 plan in school. She didn't know about VR services and she didn't have a lot of confidence. She wants to be part of making a difference. Amanda Kohle (AK) - She enjoys helping students focus on their goals and providing them support by letting them know what resources are available to them. Pam Gowland (PG) – She has always been drawn to this particular population of individuals. She connects with the work and loves finding the spark in students. She is part of the process. Jayson Capobianco (JC) – He is a full-time employment representative. His school is large enough to provide for a full-time position. He enjoys working in the school and doing this type of work. SRC Questions – none.	
Question 2. How does coordination of services between the VR transition counselor, the VABIR youth employment specialist and the school case manager work? PG – She works with 4 large schools. 2 of the schools have a full-time school based employment consultant. For schools that don't, it is more of a collaborative effort. What works for each school is different. Everyone gets the same message from VR, but implementation and interpretation is unique to each school. AK – She works in 13 schools through out Washington County. She goes in with the attitude of “what can VR add to what is already being provided?” It is definitely the case that each school implements and interprets the message differently. JC – The level of collaboration between each of the partners is wonderful. Communications between VR, VABIR and community mental health is on-going and consistent. Each of the partners support each other in serving the students. BH -		

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<p>She agrees with what everyone has already said. She works with all of the Chittenden County schools. There is a lot of collaboration. They reach out when they need help to fill the holes for students' needs. JC – There has discussions on how to handle students over the summer. VR and VABIR have stepped up to fill the gap when school staff is unavailable. SRC Questions – How does the lack of consistency among the schools affect the students and how you do your job? AK – She tries to get ahead of it and provide verbal and written communications to students and families. The timing of when a referral is received by VR affects how much VR can work with a student. A lot of her day may be spent just tracking down students. BH – Special education teachers will sometimes shelter a student and not reach out to VR until the end of a school year. To be fair, there are a lot of students and it can be overwhelming also. Martha Frank asked, how are you connecting with students? BH – It is different for every student. Martha Frank clarified, if special education teachers are not connecting with VR until 2 weeks before the end of the school year, how are you getting the information to families? BH – She is not sure. AK – She provides an informational letter to all school staff. She tried a mass mailing a couple of years ago but it turned into a nightmare. So, she now gives a letter and packet of information to the special education staff. The role of the special educators is very important. She counts on special educators for referrals. JC – The team of partners discuss who should reach out to each student. The staff with the best relationship with the student will usually reach out. However, if a referral is not received it is harder to reach out because we don't know they need services. PG – The IEP meetings are also a good place to get information to the families. Diane Dalmasse shared, it is a little concerning that the families of students receiving SSI are so dependent on that income. Many of these families don't support a student working or attending post-secondary education for fear of losing the SSI income. James Smith added, 50% of youth get knocked off SSI at age 18. Question 3. What is working well in the process? PG – Having a youth employment specialist available in the school is fabulous. The working partnership is nice. VR and VABIR don't have to be in the school at the same time in order to serve the students. AK – Being able to provide more services and provide them quickly has been great. JC – No one is territorial. The focus is on meeting the needs of the students. There is a shared mission and vision. BH – Working directly in the schools has been great. The collaboration has been wonderful. Having everyone agree on the focus to serve the students has helped provide the best experience for the student. SRC Questions – Martha Frank asked, do you feel that the transition plan has been helpful in working with students? BH – Generally, yes. However, sometimes the student changes their mind about where they want to go and the schools are reluctant to move off the plan. Transition plans are generally not fluid. PG – She has seen improvement on how schools are writing transition plans. The special educators are certainly trying to make each plan student specific. Question 4. What has been challenging in the process? If you had a magic wand what would you change? BH – She would have referrals for VR services done earlier than the senior year of high school. Making earlier referrals consistent across all schools. AK – Continued education of VR's partners and the schools around what is an appropriate referral. What is a good referral. It needs to be made clear that just because a student falls into the correct age bracket doesn't mean that VR can provide the necessary supports for that student. JC – More hands on deck would be great. His school will have 170 special education students next year. PG – Better follow-up from potential referrals would be helpful. So many students and not enough staff. SRC Questions - Sherrie Brunelle shared that the information is not getting down to the parents and she is not sure how this can be done. Sam Liss asked, how helpful do you feel it would be if entitlement programs eliminated the benefits cliff? AK – Not sure it would make a difference right away. Families need to be educated around how they would be effected.</p>		
Conclusions	Thank you! Your participation on the panel is appreciated! Wonderful information.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a

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7. Director's Report		
20 minutes	Diane Dalmasse	
Discussion	Diane handed out Linking Learning to Careers info sheet. This is very exciting to create a laboratory on what helps students and what they need to be successful in postsecondary opportunities. This could be a huge system change. Getting a career not a job. Pilot has started with 3 students in each of the districts. The full enrollment is 800 participants. AWARE is ramping up. Alliance is in town for the next 3 days doing training with VR staff. The Brattleboro and Newport offices will be conducting the pilot test. The Go Live date is September 2017. AWARE will provide VR with much better data. The Benefits Counseling Program has been restructured. VR looked at how other states are doing benefit counseling and found that most of it is telephonic or via Skype. So, VT VR has set up a hotline. Most people calling in have just one question and don't need a whole case opened. So, the benefit counselors are now staying in their offices and doing more phone work. This has helped by eliminating travel time. The process has been tightened up so there is less wasted time and more individuals can be provided a quality product. VR has also restructured their counseling for the deaf program. The deaf population in Vermont is shrinking. It was hard to justify 4 full-time counselors for the VT deaf population. VR now has 2 counselors serving the deaf population in Vermont. The expectation is that most work will be done via Skype. VR is going to see how it goes and reassess as needed. VR has finished all of its bids. VR is still working with RSA around VR's Employee Assistance Program. RSA still has some questions. Once AWARE is done, VR would like to take a more comprehensive look at the common performance measures. This will be a large system change with a more intentional focus on getting people careers not just jobs. It is all exciting, but it also a lot of work. VR continues to struggle with a very tight budget. VR will be constricting next year. VR is considering doing an initiative like "Change the Story" around people with disabilities in the workplace. However, there is no budget for it at this time.	
Conclusions	Thank you, Diane!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
8. Order of Selection		
10 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	James reviewed the regulations and it is pretty clear that the SRC holds an advisory role. VR is not bound to any SRC decision, except in the case of the State Plan's goals and priorities. The SRC must agree with VR when setting the State Plan's goals and priorities. VR currently has 6 Category 4 individuals that have applied for services. Diane Dalmasse shared that VR is under-spent on case services, at this time. VR is not underspent by a significant amount but should have enough money to provide services for 6 more people. However, VR is understaffed for general counselors. Sherrie Brunelle voiced that she has some concerns about providing services for individuals that are not the most significantly disabled. The question was asked, "What are the disabilities for these 6 individuals?" James does not have that information today, but it is data that could be provided to the SRC at future meetings. VR is recommending the OOS be opened for these 6 individuals. No further discussion. Vote was taken by a show of hands. 8 ayes and 1 opposed.	
Conclusions	SRC recommends opening services for these 6 Category 4 individuals.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Include data on what type of disability Category 4 individuals are reporting to SRC when making recommendations to open services	James Smith	on-going
9. Other Business		
15 minutes	Sam Liss	
Discussion	Sarah Launderville unable to attend today's meeting. "Discussion: Dissolution of AOE Committee and Legislative Highlights" that was to be addressed by Sarah will be included on October 5, 2017	

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10 <sup>th</sup> Annual SRC Retreat agenda. Sam shared that Medicaid for Working Persons with Disabilities (MWPDP) enhanced work incentives have become public policy. The Agency of Human Services (AHS) was waiting on guidance from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). Technical approval was given for 3 of the 4 changes. AHS has begun using the new eligibility rules as of today. Full implementation is set to begin in December 2017. These new rules satisfy many inequities and will improve opportunities for self-sufficiency.			
Sherrie Brunelle handed out some new Client Assistance Program (CAP) materials – Frequently Asked Questions sheet, a brochure and a Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) sheet. Michelle Paya shared that she is very impressed with the Washington County transition staff. The collaboration between the partners is wonderful. Nick Caputo agreed. They are top notch.			
Conclusions	Include AOE dissolution discussion on October 5, 2017 Annual Retreat agenda.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Include “Discussion: Dissolution of AOE Committee and Legislative Highlights” on October 5, 2017 10 <sup>th</sup> Annual SRC Retreat agenda. Sarah Launderville to present		Rebekah Stephens	9/22/2017
10. Adjournment			
0 minutes	Adam Leonard		
Discussion	Max Barrows moved to adjourn. Sam Liss 2 <sup>nd</sup> .		
Conclusions	Adjourned at 3:35 pm		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Draft minutes respectfully submitted for approval		Rebekah Stephens	6/30/2017
Draft minutes uploaded to <a href="http://www.VTSRC.org">www.VTSRC.org</a>		Rebekah Stephens	6/30/2017
Draft minutes emailed to all Committee members		Rebekah Stephens	6/30/2017
Minutes approved		Full SRC	12/7/2017
Approved minutes uploaded to website <a href="http://www.VTSRC.org">www.VTSRC.org</a>		Debra Kobus	12/17/2017