**SCPD Employment first**

**August 11, 2015**

**SMYRNA REST AREA CONFERENCE ROOM, SMYRNA**

**Present:** Dan Madrid, Co-Chair/DHSS-DVI; Ellen Coulston, Parent; Marissa Catalon, DHSS/DDDS; Nick Fina, SCPD; Andrea Guest, DVR; Sandy Reyes, OMB/HRM; Ron Sarg, Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs; Lloyd Schmitz, Advocate; Cindy Sterling, DelARF (ServiceSource); and Kyle Hodges, Staff.

**Absent:** Dan McGannon, Co-Chair/DOL; Deb Bradl, DOL/DVR; Jocelyn Langrehr, DVI; Pat Maichle, DDC; Melissa Martin, Autism Delaware; Dale Matusevich, DOE; Wendy Strauss, GACEC; Laura Strmel, St. John’s Community Services.

**Guests:** Janet Berry – Blind Sight Delaware

Kristy Harmon – Blind Sight Delaware

Chris Coulston – Project Search

**Call to Order/Welcome/introductions/Approval of the JUNE 8, 2014 Minutes**

Dan called the meeting to order at 9:40 am. Everyone introduced themselves. There were no minutes available to approve from the June 9, 2015 meeting.

**Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

None

**Business**

Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Project Update

Dan referred to two Reports in the meeting packet submitted by Nancy Gurney: Delaware Industries for the Blind/Division for the Visually Impaired (June 23, 2015) and Delaware Psychiatric Center Workshops/Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (June 23, 2015). Dan explained that these were the results of on-site visits with Nancy Gurney who is a national Subject Matter Expert (SME) who is on contract with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). Dan stated that one day was spent visiting the sites and the second day was spent meeting with stakeholders discussing and sharing data about the two sheltered workshop programs. Input to the initial draft Reports was provided by Dr. McGuffin (DPC) and Rita Landgraf (DHSS Secretary).

Dan summarized the strategic recommendations for each program listed in the Reports as follows:

*DVI/DIB - Overall the work was competitive in nature, wages were competitive, and people were doing work found in any promotional product production industry in the community. One of the issues is being located on the grounds of the Delaware Psychiatric Center, which is still viewed by the community as a State Hospital and is seen as a segregated location for the employees. The best strategic planning is to work towards a business plan and to relocate to outside the grounds of DPC, potentially using Economic Development Funds and switching it to an independent C corporation. These funds could be used to find a location in the community. Nancy felt the business was viable and the mission could remain intact.* Lloyd asked if it would still be a segregated facility even if moved into the community. Dan explained that one of the issues is location, but it would be more integrated into the community. Dan added that integration is another aspect of it. He explained that our contracts require that 75% of our people working be people with disabilities for the federal contracts. He said that until the laws change, there is not a lot we can do. He stated that the State Use contracts may bring down the existing thresholds next year. Dan stated that they are in the process of planning the location change and have a consultant working with DVI to develop a strategic plan. Kyle asked if this was different from the Vision Quest initiative. Dan commented that it interrelates. Dan said they hope to have something in place within 18 months. Nick asked if there was discussion about getting individuals out of the program and into the integrated employment. Dan said that will come more into play with DTC. Dan added that Nancy said the work was competitive and the work was commensurate with what is going on in the community. Lloyd spoke about the intent of the shop being upward mobile. Dan commented that this evolves over time, but that they want to retain trained and skilled employees. Kyle spoke about the Bank of America program and asked if it was similar to an enclave. Andrea asked how financial losses are covered. Dan explained that initial losses were covered by reserves the business had accumulated. Only in the last year or two were the reserves fully expended and were not able to close the remaining gap, which had to be supplemented with State funds. Dan explained that SCORE is a nonprofit retired executives program that works with people in developing their business plan. Cindy asked if they had considered the Supplier Diversity Council. Dan commented that he has spoken with Michelle Moran several times. Lloyd added that the business cannot be nonprofit to qualify. Dan added that we cannot be part of this because we are part of the State. There was some discussion about AbilityOne. Cindy explained that AbilityOne is a federal counterpart, with set aside contracts. State Use Law includes State Set Aside Contracts and there are some conflicts with these different programs. Kyle asked if the losses have come into discussion with JFC. Dan added that Joint Sunset Committee (JSC) is currently reviewing State Use law and this process started last year and will continue into the next legislative session with the expectation of having a proposed statute, regulations and bylaws prepared in January. He added that they are looking at reducing the threshold from 75% to 50% of employees being those with disabilities to promote integration on contracts involved with production. He noted that services contracts are already more integrated because they are typically already in the community. Lloyd asked if they are looking at increasing the competitive range from 10% to 15%. Dan explained that the way the State contracts work is that they have to demonstrate that they are within 10% of the market and provided an example. He added that this is part of the overall review and currently being discussed. Dan commented that we need to look at states where it is working effectively. Andrea asked about private entities being able to bid on a contract and but being required to have a diversity plan in place; she noted that the feds do this now with contracts over $10,000. Dan commented that it is in the proposed regulations. Andrea commented that the State needs to develop programs that encourage integration and competitive wages. Lloyd suggested having a subcommittee look at this because JSC is still reviewing the State Use Law. Andrea commented that there are many people who are knowledgeable in this area that are part of this and did not think another committee would be of benefit. Dan noted that DVR is being added to the State Use Law Commission proposal.

Ron commented about running the programs on a one-year State budget instead of a one to five-year business plan. Dan commented about Nancy’s feedback that government is not necessarily good at running private types of operations. He noted that the financials in the past year had commented about the State operating at a $3,000-5,000 monthly loss when previously we were triple that amount. He said that we can close the gap, but know that we are still subsidizing the building, in-kind management services through the agency. They are phasing out some contracts and looking at successful partner industries throughout the country. The SCORE consultant is looking at marketing and competition, and how other industries around the country are doing. Dan said that the SCORE contract is currently running one year. Kyle asked about Nancy’s availability. Dan explained that we can still obtain consultation from her. Kyle asked if the SCORE person is able to work with Nancy. Dan will follow-up on this and arrange a meeting. He also said that the project with ODEP that is running through October-November will still continue to work with us. Dan stated that currently 10% of the business is from private entities. Cindy spoke about the federal contract superseding all other requirements and gave an example. She added that it is not just the contract, but all work performed entirely, which is 75%.

Dan spoke about an Annual Report that should be presented to the Governor and the Legislature from this Commission about the work being done, along with strategic recommendations on a State level from the feedback received from the national consultants. Kyle suggested starting to draft the strategic recommendations at the September meeting. Nick asked about the cycle of the Annual Report. Kyle explained that there is no due date, but one could be established. Kyle added that it could be done by the end of the calendar year (December 31, 2015). Dan also suggested establishing a special meeting with Representative Heffernan and other stakeholders to review the Annual Report. Ellen asked if Jennifer White would be training or consulting as she came from a business perspective. Dan added that she will be brought in again. Dan spoke of similar type training from Rick McAllister with providers, etc. and we could have him return. Ellen asked if educators are included because that is where the change needs to start. Dan spoke about trainings conducted by ODEP Subject Matter Experts. He said that a training is scheduled for September 24, at DHCI with Corey Smith on provider network funding. He will send an Outlook Calendar invite and advertisement in the next couple of weeks. He also said that we need to look at whether agencies are incentivizing or creating disincentives. Ellen asked if this will be discussed on the transition conference. Andrea commented that DVR and DOE have been collaborating and learning, particular in Delaware. Ellen spoke about workshops for students showing the importance of training, etc. Other workshops have been very positively received. Andrea commented that DVR needs to work collaboratively with DOE and set up programs that get students out working and everyone needs to know how to make it work. Comment was made that the ambassadors need to know to lead.

Andrea spoke about a recent New Journal article published regarding transitional programs. There will be another article in the Dover Post. She spoke about transitional programs contracted with various providers over the summer. Andrea commented about the tremendous feedback they have received. She spoke about connecting and engaging students to learn about work in real settings. She spoke about the goal of not having young people access into segregated workshops settings, although transitioning 40-50 year olds would be difficult since they have been active in them for many years. Ellen spoke about the importance of getting the message to the classroom level. Lloyd stated that DART provides statewide temporary service for those attending trainings, etc. under ADA. He suggested coordinating this with Bonnie Hitch. Andrea stated that the State could be helpful in providing a learning worksite for students. Kyle asked if this is a recommendation we want to make as a Commission. Andrea commented that we do have internships for people with disabilities. Some students get paid stipends. Sandy suggested that DNREC would be a good agency for summer internships or casual-seasonal positions. Lloyd also suggested DelDOT. There was discussion about places that offer internships in a volunteer role, with the possibility of being offered a paying job after a two-year period. Andrea commented that the temp job processes are more difficult than getting hired directly by the State and spoke of an example of the temp agency requiring a background check when the State does not require it for this position. Sandy commented that they would be violating EEOC laws. Dan added that it came up during Sunset Review and they have to report on this in January. Dan commented that State Use can address this issue by reviewing hiring standards by State Use contracts and find out if there are more prohibitive than what the State really requires. This could be another strategic recommendation. .

*Delaware Psychiatric Center Workshops* – Nancy is recommending that this be phased out completely because she did not see competitive work or wages. Although 20 people are working under it, there are four to five psychiatric staff overseeing it. These people could be strategically phase out in the next 18 months into the community in competitive work. Dan said he will be meeting with the new DSAMH Director Mike Barbieri on how to carry this forward and phasing out. He will also be working with Dr. McGuffin on a strategic plan. Andrea will meet with Dan to discuss implementing referrals for DVR services for DSAMH. Lloyd asked if there were any aspects of the DPC operation that could be merged with the DVI operation. Dan commented that he did not see any work performed on face value that could transfer to DVI. He added that they are working closely with DVR on transitioning those folks. Dan suggested presenting the strategic recommendations to Representative Heffernan.

Dan spoke about another small workgroup that will be meeting for a short period of time. The group includes Dan, Kyle, Secretary Landgraf and representation from Division of Public Health, Division of Libraries, and Center for Disabilities Studies. The work group is called “The Ill Effects of Unemployment.” Persons with disabilities are the largest minority in the country, the largest minority living in poverty today with some of the poorest outcomes and a high rate of unemployment. The only way to address these issues is through employment initiatives. The goal of this work group is to develop strategic recommendations for research that looks at the link between these areas in Delaware. Another research group under Center for Disabilities Studies wants to take on the research work. This work group also wants to look at the marketing issue and how to raise public awareness about these issues. Abby Cooper is the SME and is providing guidance. Dan expects the work group to meet for one more month. Sandy suggested checking whether or not this is fundable under the Tobacco Settlement money because we are talking about health outcomes. Comment was made that Public Health will know if it is fundable. Kyle commented that he understands that no new initiatives are being accepted for this funding, although employment is a big issue under the Governor. CDS is taking the lead into seeing what type of funding is out there. Kyle noted that no other state is looking at this in this way.

Nick spoke about having a workshop at the LIFE Conference on January 20, 2016. Kyle stated that all sessions are finalized, but added that we could do this next year in 2017. Ellen spoke about a Statewide Transition Council meeting on September 24th. This meeting includes all school district transition coordinators, and representation from DDDS and DVR. Kyle asked Ellen and/or Chris to send any recommendations and these can be discussed regarding going into our overall strategic recommendations. He added that it would be beneficial to have a perspective from a parent. There was discussion about getting information disseminated in the schools. Lloyd suggested going through the Parent Information Center.

Kyle asked if Rick McAllister would be providing any specific recommendations. Dan stated that it is more of a presentation and discussion, but that we could discuss this with him, although he was not as deeply involved as Nancy. He plans to have him do one more presentation before the initiative ends.

Committee Reports

*Education and Advocacy*

Nick provided an update to this Committee and reviewed the handout. Lloyd, Kyle, Cindy, Sandy and he met on July 20th. Nick said that he met separately with Jill Fredel regarding their mutual work. Nick spoke about a rotating Welcome page. A decision was made to display a gallery of pictures of successful employees, along with tagline that hyperlinks to the individual’s full success story, which will appear in a separate PDF file.

Nick referred to a handout with a new headline and draft lead-in copy for the Welcome page. He said that Cindy offered to provide some of the initial profiles from ServiceSource. He referenced a handout regarding three first year students having landed summer jobs with Centerplate, a concession stand at the Wilmington Blue Rocks Stadium. Nick asked for feedback on the lead-in story for the Welcome page. Dan suggested revising the last sentence to: *“If you are a person with a disability, be inspired, or an employer looking to hire, we have resources to help you in your employment first initiatives.”* Nick will review this sentence further. Nick will send a group of updates for the Employment First website to Kyle to forward to DTI. Nick spoke about our ability to provide timely content for the News page. He said that Cindy had suggested that a good solution would be to provide links to the news pages of organizations that are like to have timely and relevant news, for example, the Office of Disability Employment Policy; the group agreed to this.

Under Resources, a section will be added on local organizations, for example, Office of Supplier Diversity, Selective Placement and DVR, DDDS. Training courses available will also be updated with information from Tracey Connolly’s organization. Nick will continue to send update instructions to Kyle or Jo for forwarding to DTI. Nick stated that Kyle should maintain a file of signed releases on profiles. Cindy will forward signed releases to Kyle. He requested a copy of a standardized release which he can distribute to Commission members for future referrals. Nick stated that this Committee will meet quarterly. He asked Jo to reserve the Smyrna Rest Area at 8:30 am for the October 13th Employment First Commission meeting.

*Data Standards, Needs & Analysis*

None

*Strategic Recommendations & Reporting*

This was discussed previously.

Other Business

Kyle spoke briefly about federal legislation (S.2001 and H.R. 188) that he had emailed to everyone regarding appeal of Section 14(c) the Fair Labor Standards Act. He commented that we may want to monitor these bills.

**Announcements**

Dan spoke about a gift shop that will be opening soon at the Smyrna Rest Area to support people with disabilities. The shop will be open Fridays-Mondays.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at11:30 am. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 8, 2015 at the Smyrna Rest Area Conference Room at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Singles

SCPD Administrative Assistant

Employment First/minutes 8-11-15