VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
for the
State of Delaware, Division for the Visually Impaired

MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2016
9:30am - 1:00pm

Appoquinimink State Service Center
122 Silver Lake Road, Middletown, DE

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Darryl Garner, Chair to the VRAC called the meeting to order at 9:50am.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Garner requested a role call for the purpose of the minutes. The following were in attendance: Darryl Garner (Chair), Suzanne Howell (Member), Austin Dunn (Public/Student), Blake Roberts (Member), Jessica Vale (Public/Student), Shirley Bryson (Member DVI-VR), Genelle Fletcher (Member DVI-VR), Amber Mangini (DVI-VR), Debbie Harrington (Member), Amy Layfield (DVI-VR), Carma Carpenter (Member), Kevin McAllister (Vice Chair), and Sonya Lawrence (Member).

III. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS VRAC MEETING

At this time the minutes could not be voted on due to lack of quorum.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. *MOU Status*– Mr. Garner was happy to report that the MOU was approved.

B. August Student Luncheon– DVI had a luncheon to recognize the graduates and those who completed summer internships within the program on August 19th. Mr. Garner formally congratulated the students (on behalf of the VRAC) on their success thus far and presented them each with a gift from the council.

C. *VRAC Budget*– Mr. Garner requested and received a VRAC budget report from Dan Madrid (DVI Director). He stated that he would send a copy of the report to all of the members for review.

Mr. Garner stated that a special meeting was held in July to discuss communication concerns in regard to DVI. Mr. Garner wanted to emphasize the importance of communication between DVI and the VRAC. He stated that whenever information was requested from DVI it would take too long to receive or the information would come too late for the VRAC to act upon it. This was creating problems and they were looking for a viable solution.

D. *Consumer Survey Responses*– Mr. Garner stated that he requested the consumer survey information and hasn't received it as of yet. Ms. Bryson responded that she sends a report containing the results of these surveys to the VRAC every quarter and she sent the most recent quarter's report the Wednesday prior to this meeting. Ms. Bryson also explained that she was out on sick leave during the second quarter so the reports for that time were done by volunteers within DVI. She put the second quarter results together and send them with the third quarter.

Ms. Lawrence stated that in May 2016 the VRAC requested a list of information from DVI that still hasn't been provided. She said that the lack of response and communication makes it incredibly hard for the VRAC to do their job when they aren't being provided the things that they need within an appropriate time frame.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. *Student Input*– The students were asked to provide feedback about the services they received and they both agreed (students are ages 19 and 22). Mr. Garner and Ms. Lawrence asked Mr. Dunn a series of questions regarding his experience with DVI-VR and the services he was provided. Mr. Dunn stated that for the most part the counselor kept up with him and his needs however it took a month to get the equipment that he needed. He also stated that the assistance from VR and his grandfather were the primary reason he got his financial aid to go to college. When asked why he started school late he responded that he didn't get the financial aid in time. Ms. Bryson clarified that Mr. Dunn didn't send his paperwork in on time and therefore the school suggested that he start in January. The council asked him what VR could do to better prepare future students. He stated that preparing for college should begin in the junior year of high school rather than senior year. Ms. Vale was asked about her summer

internship and her VR experience. She stated that her summer internship was great and she is working with her VR counselor to obtain a job through the Christy Bingham Cerebral Palsy Foundation. The VRAC gave the students their contact information and invited them to future meetings.

B. *White Cane Day* – White Cane Day is scheduled for Monday October 17th, 2016 at the modern maturity center in Dover, DE. It will consist of a Community & Technology Fair in the morning followed by an afternoon luncheon. You must RSVP to the event, the information is on the flyer as well as an automated call that will be sent out prior. Mr. McAllister stated that he would be sending out applications for submissions for the Sharon Sutlic Award this week. Submissions would be due back by Friday September 30, 2016.

VI. DVI

A. *DVI-VR Administrator Report* – Ms. Bryson reported that DVI-VR has hired 3 full time teachers and 2 contractors so they now have 10 teachers to utilize. They also anticipate hiring 7 more teachers in the near future and are working with DOE as well to hire a principal. Mr. McAllister's concern was that if the new administration decides to no longer fund contractors, does DVI have a plan of action? Ms. Bryson wasn't sure but offered to bring the concern back to Dan. Ms. Bryson also stated that there would a tech position available as well as 2 administrative assistant positions for DVI's Milford/downstate office. In regard to fiscal year 2015, VR had 21 successful closures (employed more than 90 days), 19 more are working and will be closing at the end of their 90th day of employment, and 15 individuals are ready to work and looking for employment currently. On September 19th, DVI-VR held a lunch and learn for DIB where 10 DIB employees came to hear about the process and services offered. Lastly, Ms. Bryson hopes to hire a few new transition counselors within the next month.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Mangini