

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

For the

State of Delaware, Division for the Visually Impaired

MEETING MINUTES

October 10, 2016

9:30am - 1:00pm

Teleconference Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Garner, Chair of the VRAC called the meeting to order at 9:40am.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Garner requested a telephone roll call for the purpose of the minutes. The following were on the bridge-line: Darryl Garner (Chair), Suzanne Howell (Member), Walter Harper (Member), Shirley Bryson (Member/DVI), Elisha Jenkins (DVI Director), Dava Newnam (Deputy Director DVI), Deb Bradl (Member/DVI), Sonya Lawrence (Member), Kevin McAllister (Member)

*Amber Mangini (Admin/DVI) was in attendance for public attendance purposes.

III. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS VRAC MEETING

Lack of quorum/ couldn't approve

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. *CONCERNS FROM THE SEPTEMBER MEETING* – In regard to last month's meeting minutes Ms. Jenkins wanted to know what information (if any) has not been provided to the VRAC so that she can ensure the delivery of the requested information? Mr. Garner responded that a few months prior an email was sent to Mr. Madrid and Ms. Bradl requesting information regarding the

transition students and the procedures of the transition program. Ms. Lawrence stated that she had been waiting for a response since May 2016 to an email asking for the number of transition students, their statuses, and employment activities/opportunities offered by DVI-VR. She stated the importance of getting the data needed in a timely manner for it to be effective and productive, and Ms. Jenkins agreed. Ms. Bradl stated that she did respond to the email to the best of her ability back when it was sent. Ms. Lawrence stated that she would put a packet of information together and forward it to Ms. Jenkins, Ms. Bradl, and Ms. Bryson and try to figure out a new way of getting the necessary information from here on out. Bottom line was that the lines of communication need to be tightened.

B. *BROCHURES* – Ms. Howell stated that the brochures have been approved and that she would like to get them out in time for the event, and brailled if possible. Ms. Jenkins stated that she had Ms. Deb Talley in her office and she was willing to help get the brochures out as well. Ms. Jenkins agreed to get 50 large print copies and 20 brailled copies of the brochure for Ms. Howell.

C. *M.O.U*– Ms. Lawrence stated that although the MOU was approved, it should be used as a template to identify the places that need to be further developed or need more information. She suggested going through the MOU to create a “road map” and to ensure that everything is working properly. Ms. Jenkins agreed completely.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. *New Employees at DVI Including Director & Deputy Director*– Elisha Jenkins has taken on the role of Director for DVI. She is a strong leader and looks forward to further strengthening DVI’s relationship with the VRAC. Dava Newnam is the new Deputy Director of DVI, she brings 20 years of experience with the State

of Delaware (16 of which employed with DSAAPD) as well as a strong background in finance; DVI is happy to have her. Mr. McAllister inquired about the other new positions within VR and the status of those. Ms. Bryson explained that DVI, with assistance from Mr. Garner (on the interview panel) recently went through a vigorous interview process with many candidates. Ms. Bryson hoped to get all of the candidate's references checked by the end of the week; as long as all goes well she hopes to have her new employees started within the next couple of weeks. Mr. McAllister inquired about the status of the principle position to which Ms. Jenkins replied that DVI did have a candidate however they are waiting for his credentials to come back. Ms. Lawrence also brought up an email that Mr. Lloyd Schmitz sent out involving title 14, she wanted to know how this new legislation would affect the way DVI evaluates their teachers. She also asked that Ms. Jenkins look into the proposal to amend title 14 with regard to student/teacher ratios.

Mr. McAllister inquired about the 1 hour "break-out" session. His opinion was that if the VRAC chose not to do anything, he would like to give the space to the elections board- with the VRAC members available to answer any questions. He was also very concerned that there was still no key note speaker for the upcoming luncheon that is only one week away. Ms. Jenkins stated that she would contact Dan to see where he was with this topic and get back to the VRAC that day with a response.

B. *Sharon Sutlic Award*– Ms. Lawrence stated that she had 3 nominees thus far, but they needed to figure out if there were any other nominees from DVI so that a person/entity could be awarded this honor. Mr. McAllister added that DVI hadn't given any feedback regarding their recommendations/nominees and Ms. Jenkins assured him that she would look into it right away.

C. *New Members*– Mr. McAllister expressed the importance of finding possible new members to fill the available slots on the

Council. A discussion ensued between the members about the interview process for new members, possible candidates, and the benefits of finding members who could benefit the people we serve.

VI. **WHITE CANE DAY/TECH FAIR**

Ms. Melodye Maye stated that they have approximately 40 vendors secured for the event. She did not have an exact count on the number of people who would be attending, however they expect a great turn out. Ms. Debbie Talley will be assisting with plenty of outreach and marketing for this event- such as flyers, emails, and automated calls will be sent out up until the day of the event.

VII. **DVI**

A. *DVI Director Report*– Ms. Jenkins wanted to begin by formally thanking the VRAC for their patience during the transition of DVI. She shared the strategic plan that was unveiled the prior Tuesday and spoke about how she plans to make services better for all of DVI’s consumers. Ms. Jenkins stated that she is aware of how tight the budget is for FY18 and therefore was very grateful for the positions given. There haven’t been any candidates yet for the two O&M positions. There are also two administrative specialist positions open within the agency as well.

B. *DVI-VR Administrator Report* – Ms. Bryson reported that the VR caseload is currently 213. The number of successful closures for FY16 is 30, meaning that 30 consumers have been employed for longer than 90 days. 13 additional individuals have been employed less than 90 days while 20 individuals are ready to work and actively seeking employment. 63 individuals are currently in training or a higher education program. VR has 67 transition students aged 14-21, she stated that all of the individuals that needed to be transitioned to VR have been put on the proper counselors caseloads. There are 85 transition students

aged 14-24 some are high school students and some are college students. One of VR's business consultants made contact with a brand new restaurant in Georgetown that could possibly have need for several employment positions, so we are actively pursuing that lead. DVI-VR and DVR have been collaborating in working with a utility company. They have been doing sensitivity training with the company with the hopes of providing some positions within the company for our clients. Lastly, one of DVI-VR's students, Adam Daily, who the VR team has watched grow up has now become an intern for the VR program through Wilmington College.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned at 12:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Mangini