

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

For the

State of Delaware, Division for the Visually Impaired

MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 2017 9:30am - 1:00pm

Location: Smyrna Rest Area

5500 DuPont Pkwy. Smyrna, DE 19977

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kevin McAllister called the meeting to order at 9:46 am.

II. ROLL CALL

Kevin McAllister (Chair), Blake Roberts (Co-Chair), Dava Newnam (DVI Deputy Director), Sonya Lawrence (Member), Deborah Bradl (DVI), Debbie Harrington (Member), Shirley Bryson (DVI), Jill Morrison (DVI), Suzanne Howell (Member), Erin Weaver (DVI Education), Genelle Fletcher (DVI), Darryl Garner (Teleconference, Member), Wayne Marsh (Teleconference, Public), Grisel Espinosa (DVI), Lloyd Schmitz (Teleconference, Public).

III. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS VRAC MEETING

The minutes were reviewed. A motion was proposed to approve the minutes for February 13 2017, the motion was seconded and the minutes were approved and passed as written.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mr. McAllister asked Ms. Bryson for an update in regard to White Cane Day 2017 in October. Ms. Bryson responded that as of then, there was no updated information available and that she would

Speak to the director and get back to the Council with this information at the next meeting.

B. Annual report- Mr. McAllister stressed the importance getting the annual report information. A draft would be collected by Ms. Deb Bradl, a letter would come from Elisha Jenkins to the governor about employment outcome in DE, number of successful closures, and the participation outcome on carriers. She stated that she would email Mr. McAllister the rest of the information from others sources like VR.

C. VRAC Retreat- Mr. McAllister was concerned about the outcome of the retreat and town hall meeting. He would work with Ms. Deb Bradl on the agenda for the yearly retreat. Dover Downs was tentatively the place but based on the budget \$3,000 wouldn't be sufficient to cover the \$7,000 needed. A meeting took place in February concerning the retreat but no members from VRAC were invited back to discuss the justification for the retreat. It was unclear how the communication broke down resulting in the retreat and the Town Hall Meeting being canceled. Ms. Newnam agreed that it was unfortunate how the events unfolded but under inclusion part 3 of the federal guidelines- federal money can't be used for food for this type of event and at the same time the state is in a deficit. Mr. McAllister wanted this information in writing because it was a month since the decision and no information was ever received. VRAC did not have the opportunity to discuss or appeal the decision in early February and he was told that there was \$3,000 for the retreat with no provisions. Ms. Laurence was concerned about the reason for canceling. The council was volunteering to do work for DVI and they are partners and thus should have the right to discuss the decisions made.

V. **NEW / SPECIAL BUSINESS**

A. *Healthy Vision Month* – There is an event on May 10 from 10:15 AM -12:30 PM at the network Public library; to RSVP you can email healthyvision17@gmail.com . Mr. McAllister suggested that someone from the council should be present. Mr. Schmitz suggested that Ms. Deb Talley coordinate this from DVI because she may have more information. Ms. Lawrence stated that if they work as partners the council will advocate for DVI so that people serving visually impaired consumers have any new information.

Mr. McAllister asked DVI-VR what resources were able to be utilized from ENTAC and how they serve the consumers. MS. Bradl stated that she, Ms. Bryson, Ms. Jenkins, and Ms. Weaver attend the Claymont

Elementary school with ENTAC, Department of Education, General VR, other community rehabilitation providers, Carrier Tec, as well School personnel to talk about some initiatives involving the students on self-advocacy & student leadership. They also involve them on their IEP and help parents understand more of the school side outcome to increase their satisfaction with different agencies. By updating transition guidelines teachers, administrators, etc. can increase communication to better connect. Employment readiness allows the students have the best outcome after school increasing internships to make sure the students have the skills and the credentials and are better preferred for employment or work. Mr. McAllister asked how this is woven into what we do. Ms. Bradl replied the EMTAC is putting this information on a report to show how DVI-VR can help schools make sure students get better work opportunities. Ms. Lawrence asked when that report was coming out and Ms. Bradl replied that they would take the information and

forward it to the VRAC but nothing will be implemented immediately. It is a process to reach out to as many students as possible. Ms. Lawrence asked how do to get the education information from the school in order to get them ready for pre-employment if they are not ready. Ms. Bradl stated that Ms. Jenkins is overseeing the education unit and she, Ms. Bryson, & Erin weaver coordinate with the schools, and the counselors are in contact with the schools to ensure they refer all the students not only IEP but all 504 referrals. Ms. Laurence stated the perception is that the 504 kids haven't been served and if they receiving services they need to be identified. Ms. Laurence was concerned that some of the 504 kids are not receiving some of the equipment needed. Ms. Bradl stated that DVI Referrals are being sent to the counselors. Ms. Weaver added that DVI works together with the school when they are evaluated by education. VR regulates the equipment purchased and the training needed to be able to interact with that piece of equipment. Ms. Fletcher stated that the counselors coordinate with the parents after school or get report back to the school with an outcome and plan with the district.

B. Statewide advisory council on transition- Ms. Bradl stated that this is for professionals in Dover for DE VR & Education units. DOE and DVI are to participate. Ms. Bryson added that the students were invited but they are in classes; DVI is sending the information to the parents. Mr. McAllister suggested to use community members to get the information out as well.

C. Disability Mentoring Day- Mr. McAllister asked how DVI would participate and how the council could help. Ms. Bryson stated that DVI has been involved in this program for the last three years. Last year 3 people attended, University of Delaware oversees the program and provides the mentors needed. More mentors would be

appreciated if the council would like to participate. Ms. Lawrence asked how the professional is matched with the student. Ms. Bryson stated that they match based on interest. Last year they had a student with multiple disabilities interested in bicycling and he participated at North Cycling. Ms. Lawrence suggested having the student's names and interests to help connect them with a visually impaired professional or a student with no disabilities.

*A. Project search-*Ms. Bradl stated this is for intellectually disabled students. She stated that some of them get employed by the trainers. VR helps the students prepare.

B. Start on Success. Ms. Bradl stated this is similar to the Project Search except that this is for kids with any disability. The last time Walgreens participated by training them on management to cashier & stocking. Mr. McAllister asked if DVI reserved a place for the consumers. Ms. Bryson stated that they reserved 2 separate places for their consumers.

C. Pathways to employment readiness/Collaboration and data sharing- Ms. Bryson Stated there are three consumers participating that qualify for the program. They have to medically qualify for DVI and Medicaid. Ms. Bradl explained the typical training from pathways is Carriers planning and carriers counseling financial literacy and placement.

D. DVI VR Services for middle School Students- Ms. Lawrence stated the she and Ms. Bradl had a discussion about the carrier's counselors that VR hired to serve children in middle schools.

E. Pre-Employment readiness- Mr. McAllister asked how DVI was coordinating to help the students. Ms. Shirley stated that the first is the spring break program activities. Together internally with our partners ILS and O&M, and Education would provide some activities starting next Monday. Mr. McAllister asked what the age group was; Ms. Bryson stated 16-18 because this would be their

last opportunities to have a paid job before they graduated from high school. Ms. Bradl added the other aspects that DVI is working to prepare the kids to get ready either for graduation or post-secondary education.

VI. DVI

Administrator Report – Ms. Bryson reported the following data:

- 273 caseload
- 7 successful closures
- 24 Individuals who are ready to work
- 12 employed less than 90 days employed
- 64 currently in a training program
- 95 are transition age 14-21 YO
- 118 transition aged 14-24 YO

Ms. Bryson also reported that there were 33 closures in the 2nd quarter (7 Closures that achieved employment, 7 who we could not locate, 4 who were not in compliance, and 15 who are no longer interested in services.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McAllister adjourned the meeting at 1:00pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Grisel Espinosa & Amber Mangini