

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council
Smyrna Rest Stop
5500 DuPont Highway
Smyrna, DE 19977
October 14, 2019
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Members present: Darryl Garner, Chair; Suzanne Howell, Vice Chair; Blake Roberts, CAP; Mary Andrews, PIC

Teleconference: William McCafferty, Member; Kevin McAllister, Member; Jacqueline Poquette, Member; Jill Morrison, DVI Constituent Relations; Lloyd Schmitz, Public

Division for the Visually Impaired: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Sandi Miller, Deputy Director; Shirley Bryson, District Administrator; Patricia Burrell, VRAC (Member); Lisa Edmondson, Administrative Specialist I

Approval of August 12, 2019 Minutes: William McCafferty moved that the minutes be approved. Suzanne Howell seconded the motion. Motion carried. August 12, 2019 minutes are approved.

Old Business:

The Chair directed the question to DVI asking what the purpose of the VRAC is. Elisha Jenkins responded and referred the Chair to the by-laws for the council.

William McCafferty asked if the data on VR previously requested was available yet. Sandi Miller responded that she is still working on the data with the IT department, but it is not a priority for IT as they are working to get systems updated for new RSA requirements. Sandi Miller stated that she would continue to try to get the data the council is looking for.

William McCafferty stated that he would like to have a representative from RSA attend a VRAC meeting or call in by teleconference. Sandi Miller suggested that the council prepare questions prior to meeting or speaking with the RSA representative.

The council discussed holding the retreat in 2020 so there is ample time to plan and work out the details. Training for the council at the retreat was also discussed.

New Business:

White Cane Day: Chair asked if VRAC members using Paratransit would be reimbursed for their travel expenses. Shirley Bryson responded by telling the council that we did not provide tickets for this event last year and we will not be providing Paratransit tickets this year.

Director's Report:

Business Enterprise Program: The DeIDOT micro-market opened on September 30, 2019. The micro-market offers a wide variety of selections including beverages, frozen entrees and healthy snacks. A mini-kitchen area and large seating area are also on site.

Independent Living Services: ILS staff exhibited at the Veterans Stand Down event. Health and community services information, as well as information about the Division's services, programs and eye disease was disseminated to over 1000 veterans.

The Division's Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation and Orientation and Mobility Program staff provided sensitivity training to employees of the Independent Resources Incorporated (IRI) Center for Independent Living in Dover. Best practices for interacting with individuals who are visually impaired, courtesy rules of blindness and a lesson in sighted guide were provided.

Education: The Division hosted the Fall Beach House weekend in Rehoboth. The event was geared toward students in 9th through 12th grade. The students learned many valuable skills and experienced a variety of activities. The feedback from the students was all positive and the students reported that they enjoyed the weekend.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys:

The Division for the Visually Impaired satisfaction rate from 365 surveys since January 2019:

Education: 83%

Vocational Rehabilitation: 78%

Independent Living Services: 84%

Orientation and Mobility: 91%

Technology: 95%

Average Percentage Rate: 81%

Other events:

October 8, 2019: DHSS Reorganization Committee, Carvel Building, Wilmington, DE

October 15, 2019: White Cane Day 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Legislative Hall House Chamber Room. Sharon Sutlic Winds of Change award and Deborah Briddell Excellence in Teaching award will be presented at this event.

October 17, 2019: Joint Legislative and Oversight Sunset Committee meeting #4 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The focus on meeting #4 is Education.

District Administrator Report:

Current Caseload: 215

Ready to Work: 37

Transition aged students: 75

Education & Training: 59

The number of individuals who are employed is currently being audited. This information will be provided at the November VRAC meeting.

Youth Service Programs:

Fall Beach House was well attended.

Space Camp had eleven students attend.

18 students are graduating from high school this year.

On September 24, 2019 LaDerick Horne provided a workshop on self-advocacy. DVI received great feedback from parents and others who attended. Mr. Horne will be invited to speak again in the future. Mr. Horne is a motivational speaker for individuals with disabilities.

Darryl Garner asked for the council to be invited to events. Response was that whenever appropriate we will invite council members.

Suzanne Howell stated that she doesn't know any of the TVIs and it would be advantageous for the council to get to meet some of the TVIs and learn their experiences. Council is advised to coordinate with Erin Weaver at DVI to schedule TVIs to attend a meeting or to call in to a meeting.

Public Comments: Tentative schedule for the next VRAC meeting is November 18, 2019.

Action Item: Administrative Specialist will make every effort to secure a location for the meeting on November 18, 2019. Smyrna Rest Stop is not available on that date.

Adjournment: The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m.