

**Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
Full Council Meeting Minutes**

May 11, 2023

Attendance

Members Present

Lisa Livesay, Chair
Adam Robson
Dave Cheesman
Ceci Hartke
David Carey
Diana Meza

Members Absent

Paula Seanez
Melissa Wojtak

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Linda Fischer
Mathew Nevarez

Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

Lisa Livesay, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

Approval of February 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Adam Robson moved to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2023 SRC Full Council meeting. David Carey seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

SRC Chairperson's Report

Lisa Livesay stated the committees had been active and she thanked everyone for their participation in the committees. Lisa Livesay stated the council had received confirmation that Boards and Commissions was reviewing applications and she would continue to provide updates as they were available. Ms. Livesay noted that some council members' terms would be ending soon, and those individuals could apply for reappointment. Lisa Livesay stated that if any council member was not participating on a committee, they were welcome to join a committee, or assist a committee with their activities. Lisa Livesay stated that in reference to some council members' terms ending, Dave Cheesman's membership with the council was ending, and she thanked him for all of his work with the council. Dave Cheesman stated that he had enjoyed his time with the council and had some Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) that he would recommend as potential council members. Linda Fischer noted that Dave Cheesman had always been helpful when assisting clients and she thanked him for his help.

SRC Membership Discussion

Lisa Livesay encouraged council members to remain in contact with individuals they had recommended applying to and continue to invite them to meetings. Lisa Livesay stated there were national resources available for new members that could be incorporated into onboarding materials for new members. She noted that she had reviewed some of the videos, which addressed legality issues, membership, and ways to participate on the SRC. Adam Robson stated that he might have some previous training materials that he could share also. Mr. Robson stated the council could also consider inviting someone from a comparable SRC to discuss their successes in recruiting new members. Lisa Livesay stated the council was also trying to recruit a member to serve as the Workforce Board representative, and an email had gone out to that council.

RSA Administrator's Report

Mathew Nevarez stated there were currently 11 informal reviews, and there were 35 the previous year. Of those, 6 were overturned and 5 were upheld, which was consistent. Mathew Nevarez stated there were 16 mediations and there were 15 for the previous

year. He noted of those, 4 were not resolved in an agreement, 5 were resolved in an agreement, and 7 were still pending for 1 client. Mathew Nevarez stated there were 3 fair hearings, which were still pending for denial of services of Assistive Technology (AT), an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), and self-employment. He added that there were 14 fair hearings the previous year. Mathew Nevarez the Ombudsman's Office held an Appeal's Workshop, and discussed the VR decision making the appeals process, sending out decision letters and included VR and AG panels. Mr. Nevarez stated the Ombudsman's Office had also been successful in sharing tipsheets for clients and their representatives, as well as flow charts for clients to understand where they were in the process. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the Ombudsman's Office held the workshops quarterly or annually. Mathew Nevarez stated the workshops were held bi-annually, and there were talks about strongly encouraging new staff that had not attended a workshop, to attend future trainings. Linda Fischer inquired whether the Administrative Law Judges (ALJ)s ever attended the workshops. Mathew Nevarez stated the ALJs had not attended the trainings, although the presiding judge had been in office for some time. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the Ombudsman's Office had an opportunity to hone into specific offices or regions with an influx of grievances. Mathew Nevarez stated that when the Ombudsman's Office noticed an influx in grievances, they attempted to track whether they came from a specific office or region. He noted that because the numbers were lower, they tended to be more sporadic, although if they noticed trends, they would share the tipsheets with those offices.

Dave Cheesman stated the Transition School to Work (TSW) office had been divided into 4 offices, in which supervisors had been hired for each office. Lisa Livesay inquired whether Mr. Cheesman experienced any issues in retaining VR staff. Dave Cheesman stated that about half of the staff that left had retired. He noted the Rehabilitation Technicians (RT)s did have a higher turnover rate, although the Purchasing Technicians (PT)s tended to remain. Dave Cheesman stated that as the referrals increased, they were able to hire more PTs as well.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Ceci Hartke stated the Executive Committee had discussed onboarding for new members, and potentially drafting a letter of recommendation for more VR funds.

Program Review Committee

Linda Fischer stated the Program Review Committee sent a letter requesting the hearing decisions for the past 3 years from the Ombudsman's Office and had received the information. Ms. Fischer stated the committee was interested in identifying any patterns or the judges were using the right regulations.

Employment and Community Partnerships Committee

Ceci Hartke stated the Employment and Community Partnerships Committee had reviewed some of the committee's previous activities, which was useful. She noted that she was able to share the committee's Employer Handbook with a community member. Ms. Hartke stated the committee was hoping to get more committee members to share ideas and assist with committee activities.

Membership Organization Updates

SILC

David Carey stated SILC continued to provide Emergency Preparedness training across the state and provided monthly webinars. Mr. Carey stated SILC received the Health Equity Grant and was working with the rural communities to bring in partners and individuals with disabilities to discuss different topics such as transportation and access to services. Linda Fischer inquired whether SILC received responses to their inquiries. David Carey stated SILC held listening sessions on topics such as technology, health discrepancies, and vaccines to get an understanding of what went right and wrong. He noted that many individuals in rural areas had been unable to obtain transportation, have access to the vaccine, had a lack of Internet, or lived too far away to obtain services. David Carey stated SILC wanted to create information that could be used in any future emergencies.

CAP

Linda Fischer stated the Client Assistance Program (CAP) had participated in the Ombudsman's Office workshop. Ms. Fischer noted that CAP had some challenging cases and were trying a different approach to solving them. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the cases were unique, or whether staff required additional training. Linda Fischer stated the cases were all different in that clients were requesting services and it was unclear how they would use them.

ADE Updates

Lisa Livesay stated the ADE continued to work on capacity building with VR, which was an ongoing process, and they continued to develop relationships around supporting Transition age youth. Lisa Livesay stated they were also working on increasing referrals for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and making better connections with educators and youth. She noted the ADE was also including Pre-ETS into their learning activities and had a good interaction with educators and parents through a focus group with VR. Lisa Livesay stated VR would be providing an overview regarding the schools that offered Pre-ETS, whether there had been an increase in referrals, and whether there had been any changes to the Pre-ETS process. Ms. Livesay noted that many families and educators had indicated the Pre-ETS referral form was difficult to navigate, and VR would focus on new ways to provide technical assistance or modify the process. Lisa Livesay stated the IDEA Conference was scheduled for August and would be awarding Transition awards to individuals in an education setting, individuals in a community or business that supports Transition age youth, a secure care environment, or any youth with a disability. Ms. Livesay stated the Disability Innovation fund through the Pathways to Partnerships Innovative Model Demonstration Project was an opportunity for state agencies to obtain funding to develop and pilot an innovative Transition model to engage and serve youth with disabilities.

Raising Special Kids

Ceci Hartke stated Raising Special Kids partnered with VR and DDD to assist family support specialists and how they could work together. Ceci Hartke noted the agency continued to provide in-house training and would be offering the Transition Institute in the Summer for parents and youth at Ability 360.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on August 10, 2023 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.

- SRC Refresher Information
- VRC Presentations

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

A call to the public was made with no response forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.