

**MINUTES**  
**DBVI REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired**  
**Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind & Vision Impaired**  
**401 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA**  
**December 13, 2019**

**SRC Attendees**

Julie Akers, Ashland, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor; Christine Appert, Chair, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Irene Conlin, Virginia Beach, Representative of an Individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing him or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent him or herself; Wanda Council, Newport News, VA, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education; Justin Graves, Fairfax, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor; Ray Hopkins, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member; Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group; Larysa Kautz, Alexandria, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program Provider (via phone); Raymond Kenney, Richmond, Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council; Jenny McKenzie, Roanoke, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor; Shelesha Taylor, Richmond, Representative of the federally mandated Client Assistance Program (CAP); Megan O'Toole Hall, Montpelier, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Ex-Officio Member; Mark Roane, Vice-Chair, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

**Members Absent**

Tammy Burns, Midlothian, Representative of Virginia's Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center; Gina Koke, Richmond, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group; Jill Nerby, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

**DBVI Staff to the SRC**

Jessica Collette, Staff Assistant, DBVI; Pam Hinterlong, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services, DBVI; Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant for Services, DBVI

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Appert called the meeting to order.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chairwoman Appert asked members to introduce themselves and welcomed everyone.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Council moved to adopt agenda; Ms. O'Toole Hall seconded and motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of September 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Conlin moved to accept the September 2019 meeting minutes as presented; Vice-Chair Roane seconded and motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment**

No comment.

**Commissioner's Report** – *Commissioner Ray Hopkins*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

The Commissioner shared that the renovation of the DBVI Headquarters building has been underway.

DBVI has submitted proposals for funding of various programs and services and is awaiting announcement from the Governor for his proposed budget for next year. The Governor's budget will be made public December 17. It will need to be passed by the General Assembly. Included in DBVI's budget proposal is funding for the VR program sufficient enough to allow DBVI to end its waitlist. The current Continuing Resolution expires December 20. If it is not approved the VR program is in a position to operate under funds already allocated for its federal grant programs. If there is a government shutdown DBVI will continue to operate.

A new Assistant Secretary for OHHR has been assigned to DBVI. Ms. Katherine Finley comes from the federal government and is the new liaison.

DBVI is currently in recruitment of a Director of Low Vision Services.

**Deputy Commissioner's Report** – *Dr. Richard Mitchell*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Ms. Hinterlong reported in Dr. Mitchell's absence and advised one error in the report provided which is that DBVI is not fully staffed as indicated as it is in recruitment of the Director of Low Vision Services. The two Regional Manager vacancies have been filled by Julie Chappell in Staunton and Nancy Quisenberry in Norfolk.

**VR Program Update** – *Pam Hinterlong*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Dr. Mitchell, Cindy Roberts – Director, Business and Corporate Initiatives, and Tish Harris - Coordinator, CPID, attended the Hire Education Conference. DBVI staff conducted two presentations. The first one was entitled, "Successful Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion." The second presentation included a panel of Interagency Partners, which highlighted CPID activities in four workforce areas.

On December 10 the *IT CREDENTIAL FAIR* in northern Virginia was held sponsored by Intellectual Point. High school students attended the fair in the morning. The Keynote was presented by two high school students with IT credentials that have already started a business. Adult career seekers attended in the afternoon. Keynote speaker was Prem Jadhvani who consults with Homeland Security on cyber security. Credential trainers were on hand to answer questions about pathways, credentials needed, and training opportunities. Prem has expressed an interest in being a sponsor and being involved next year as well.

There was a discussion regarding what will happen when the CPID grant funding ends. Career Pathways has been and will continue to be a major focus of DBVI. The Robotics Academy is changing to Leap into Linux offering a fully accessible curriculum that will allow students to learn the Linux operating system, coding, developing website and to take home and use laptops.

**Old/ New Business** – *Pam Hinterlong***Review of Combined State Plan**

Ms. Hinterlong reviewed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Virginia chose to submit a Combined State Plan. The first four-year cycle was submitted in 2016. The law requires updates to the plan as

needed but at a minimum every two years. Ms. Hinterlong requested SRC recommendations to support its goals and asked for recommendations for the VR program for the next four years.

SRC members have the opportunity to view and give recommendations for Sections A through Q of the Combined State Plan. The first draft of the revised Combined State Plan is due January 13. The SRC and public can provide comment. The SRC will be presented with a final draft in March.

PMG will conduct roundtables where the public can give comments throughout different parts of the state.

***\*\*\*Action: Ms. Hinterlong to share dates and locations to SRC.\*\*\****

Ms. Hinterlong reviewed the current State Plan Goals and the current SRC recommendations.

Proposed goals for the 2020-2024 State Plan Cycle are listed below.

1. Expanding and enhancing workforce development activities to develop and maintain effective working relationships with Virginia business and industry at the local, regional, and state level to develop partnerships that facilitate industry recognized credential attainment, skill development, and entry into career pathways for eligible individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind leading to competitive integrated employment.
2. Increasing and improving competitive integrated employment outcomes, with wages above the state average, for all blind, vision impaired, or deafblind individuals receiving services from DBVI.
3. Achieving agency annual performance goals and establishing base lines for the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.
4. Providing rehabilitation technology to blind, vision impaired, or deafblind individuals, including youth and students, to facilitate their success in training and competitive integrated employment settings.
5. Expanding transition services for youth and students seeking employment and/or post-secondary education and training; including pre-employment transition services for secondary school students.
6. Expand the utilization of Supported Employment services for adults and youth to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

#### Discussion Regarding Proposed DBVI State Plan Goals and SRC Recommendations for 2020-2024

1. Ms. Conlin recommended reviewing customer satisfaction feedback with emphasis on response rate, develop strategies to increase participation.
2. Mr. Graves recommended bringing attention to IT as a pathway. SRC recommends DBVI VR continue emphasis on career pathways and credential training in high demand industry sectors.
3. Ms. Hall O'Toole and Mr. Jessup recommended focusing on diversity and inclusion. The members agreed to let DBVI respond to this item rather than add as an SRC recommendation.
4. Ms. Conlin recommended focus on individuals younger than 14 years of age to provide basic skills so they are prepared for programs offered at later ages.
5. Ms. Council recommended for Goal 5 adding "post-secondary **education and** training." Include coordination with DOE and DBVI Education Coordinators. Chairwoman Appert recommended focus on pre-employment transition services, collaborating with DOE, continue collaborative efforts, expanding the provision of Pre-ETS to include interagency cooperation.

6. Ms. Hinterlong recommended a goal specific to supporting employment for those with the most significant disabilities.

The SRC agreed to have seven recommendations for the 2020-2024 cycle. Several require additional wording as noted.

1. The SRC recommends DBVI report to the SRC quarterly on the progress toward accomplishing the 2020-2014 State Plan goals.
2. The SRC recognizes that self-advocacy skills are critical to the achievement of personal and vocational goals for transition-age youth and individuals of all ages. Therefore, the SRC recommends that DBVI continue to promote the importance of self-advocacy and incorporate these skills into its rehabilitation programs.  
*\*\*\*Action: Mr. Graves and Ms. Council to wordsmith this goal.\*\*\**
3. The SRC recommends the following related to consumer satisfaction data:
  - a. Consumer Satisfaction survey data is collected annually or on a rolling basis.
  - b. DBVI establish a quarterly reporting cycle whereby consumer satisfaction data and analysis is provided to the SRC at each scheduled meeting (a minimum of four times each year).
  - c. Develop strategies to increase consumer participation in consumer satisfaction surveys.
4. The SRC recommends that DBVI continue to provide new SRC New Member Orientation, and the provision of a dedicated staff person to capture notes and key action items from all SRC meetings.  
*\*\*\*Action: Chairwoman Appert and Ms. McKenzie to wordsmith.\*\*\**
5. The SRC recommends the following as it pertains to providing opportunities for public comment:
  - a. DBVI continue to conduct regional public meetings with regional or state meetings of consumer organizations during the State Plan cycle and share the public comments and agency responses from those meetings with the SRC at each scheduled SRC meeting.
  - b. DBVI continue to provide notification of all public meetings to include regional meetings, state meetings of consumer organizations, and the quarterly SRC meetings to the DBVI website and the designated channel for Virginia on Newline. In addition, the SRC recommends that DBVI provide notification of the quarterly SRC meetings to students enrolled in VRCBVI.
6. The SRC recommends that DBVI make workforce activities such as job development, job placement, and job coaching training to counselors a very high priority for the future, and include mentoring as one of the training strategies. The SRC recommends that DBVI report on these efforts at each scheduled SRC meeting (a minimum of four times each year).  
*\*\*\*Action: Ms. Conlin to wordsmith.\*\*\**
7. DBVI develop and distributes various marketing materials for individuals in the community, including business and potentially eligible recipients of services. The SRC recommends that DBVI share these materials with the SRC, and ensure that all materials are available in alternate format, to include large print, Braille, and electronic media. The SRC recommends that DBVI conduct targeted outreach to underserved populations.  
*\*\*\*Action: Ms. Hinterlong and Ms. O'Toole Hall to wordsmith.\*\*\**

The SRC group photo was taken.

#### Meeting Location – Jenny McKenzie

Ms. McKenzie recommended the SRC meet in alternate locations in the state.

*\*\*\*Action: Chairwoman Appert will table this for March meeting.\*\*\**

Annual Report – *Chairwoman Appert*

*\*\*\*Action: Chairwoman Appert will deliver draft of the Annual Report to Ms. Hinterlong beginning of next week\*\*\*.*

*\*\*\*Action: Chairwoman Appert will request a volunteer to work on the Annual Report in her place at the next SRC meeting.\*\*\**

Parliamentarian Request – *Chairwoman Appert*

Chairwoman Appert requested a volunteer for a member to act as parliamentarian at future meetings. Ms. McKenzie volunteered and all were in favor.

Member/Agency Spotlight – *Chairwoman Appert*

Going forward, members will be asked to share brief news of their organization at each meeting.

Reappointments

SRC member reappointments will most probably be announced after the first of the year. Those waiting on reappointment are considered members until further notice.

Working Lunch: CSAVR/NCSAB Conference Report – *Megan O'Toole Hall*

Ms. O'Toole Hall highly encouraged members to attend future CSAVR/NCSAB Conferences that provide an overview of why VR does what it does and how one can take a more active role in supporting VR. It is a great opportunity for networking. Members were advised to let Chairwoman Appert know if they would like to attend the spring meeting in April in Bethesda, MD.

Date of next meeting – March 13, 2020

Adjournment

Mr. Jessup moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Conlin seconded; motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned.