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**DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
**Quarterly Meeting**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

**September 9, 2022, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
**395 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227**

**SRC Members in Attendance**

**Christine Appert**, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
**Alexa Bowe**, Arlington, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor  
**Irene Conlin**, Chair, 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  
**Leelynn Untalan Brady**, Suffolk, Representative of Statewide Independent Living Council  
**Annette Hyde**, Radiant, Representative of the Workforce Council  
**Liang Liao**, Richmond, DBVI, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Ex-Officio Member  
**Joliefawn Liddell**, Richmond, Representative of the Client Assistance Program  
**Ricardo Lizama**, Arlington, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group  
**Rick Mitchell**, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member  
**Marianne Moore**, Richmond, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education  
**Chanthen Nene**, Manassas, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group  
**Mark Roane**, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
**Milford Stern**, Roanoke, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

**SRC Member in Attendance via Zoom**

**Heidi Lawyer**, Henrico, Representative of Parent Training & Information Center (PEATC) (attended virtually due to medical condition)  
**Rachael Rounds**, Midlothian, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program (attended virtually due to medical condition)  
**Edna Johnson**, Alexandria, Former or Current Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (attended virtually due to work conflict)

**SRC Members Not Able to Attend**

**Julie Akers**, Radford, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor  
**Prem Jadhvani**, Vice Chair, Leesburg, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

**DBVI Staff Present**

**Pam Cato**, Deputy Commissioner of Services  
**Megan Hall**, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services  
**Maggie Mills**, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Mitchell – Recorder of Minutes  
**Wanda Swaringen**, Executive Assistant, Services Division

**ASL Interpreters**

**Heather Kubitski**  
**Katherine Malady**

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## **Public**

**Lori Epik**, Vocational Evaluator, DARS, DRS Charlottesville Office - Virtual  
**Meghan Cox**, DARS, Policy Analyst, Policy & Legislative Affairs

## **Call to Order / Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Conlin called the meeting to order. A roundtable of introductions took place. Quorum was met. The Council was introduced to DBVI's new Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services and SRC Liaison, Megan Hall.

Chair Conlin reviewed those members with terms expiring September 30, 2022:

Prem Jadhvani (eligible to reapply)

Mark Roane (eligible to reapply)

Christine Appert (completing second term, not eligible to reapply)

Julie Akers (completing second term, not eligible to reapply)

Irene Conlin (completing second term, not eligible to reapply)

## **Adoption of Agenda**

Mr. Roane moved to adopt the proposed agenda; Mr. Stern seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Adoption of June 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Bowe moved to adopt the June 10, 2022, SRC Quarterly Meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Nene seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Rick Mitchell**

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

The Agency is in the process of closing out last year's budget, working with the new budget and preparing decision packages for next year's budget. DBVI did receive preliminary notification that the Federal grant will be increasing October 1. In July the Agency received significant State funding.

Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) has received a significant amount of contracts recently.

VIB was awarded a \$940,000 contract from the aircraft carrier USS TRUMAN, for a new product called Deck-in-the Box. This single purchase doubles sales of that product this year and helps a small business based in Virginia Beach and will increase jobs at VIB. A large number of quotes have been submitted for furniture to various DOD offices totaling more than \$4.5M.

## **Deputy Commissioner's Report – Pam Cato**

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

The Agency is experiencing a record number of vacancies. Ms. Cato reviewed some of the positions open and their recruitment status. The Program Director of Rehabilitation Technology Services, Peggy Fields, has announced her retirement as of January 1, 2023.

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Ms. Cato reviewed the seat vacancies coming up October 1 on the SRC. If anyone needs assistance completing the application, let Ms. Mills know. The application can be found at this link: <https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/va-government/boards-and-commissions/>

### **VR Program Update – Pam Cato**

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

The Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment was completed last spring. Now the Agency is in the process of submitting some updated data to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

Ms. Cato gave an overview of the summer programs which included the Live Independent Feeling Empowered (LIFE) program, the Senior Retreat, Leap into Linux, Cyber Warriors, and the JMU Success Program.

Ms. Hall and Ms. Cato will meet with Melody Roane, Director of the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) about the possibility of having a program for parents to have an understanding of what students are learning at the Agency's programs so these skills can be encouraged and reinforced at home.

Dr. Edna Johnson offered to provide guidance or assistance with some type of workshop to further the understanding of providing reasonable accommodations and empowering young people moving towards their life career. Ms. Hall will discuss this further with Dr. Johnson.

### **Old and New Business Annual Report Update**

Mr. Stern is the lead on producing the Annual Report and will soon be receiving information from the Agency to include in it. Ms. Bowe will receive the Success Stories shortly to review that will ultimately be included in the Annual Report. The goal is to have the Annual Report completed prior to the December 9 Quarterly SRC Meeting.

### **CSAVR Fall Conference Oct 29-Nov 2 San Antonio, TX NCSAB Fall Conference Nov 2-Nov 4 San Antonio, TX**

Ms. Mills will send links to the websites for both of these conferences to the SRC Members. Please let Ms. Mills know if you are interested in attending by Friday, September 23.

### **Hearing Officer Renewals**

Daniel Hand's contract will expire on September 30, 2022. Carl Schmidt's and Sarah Freeman's contracts are up for renewal September 30, 2022. Mr. Nene motioned to renew Mr. Hand's contract, to renew Mr. Schmidt's contract and not to renew Ms. Freeman's contract. Mr. Stern seconded all three of the motions. All were in favor and the motions were carried.

### **SRC Elections**

Ms. Appert nominated Alexa Bowe to serve as 2022-2023 SRC Chair. Ms. Conlin seconded the nomination. All were in favor. No other nominations were presented. Ms. Moore nominated Chanthan Nene for 2022-2023 SRC Vice Chair. Mr. Stern seconded the nomination. All were in favor.

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### **Representative Roundtable**

Several of the SRC members provided highlights on the organizations they represent.

**Heidi Lawyer** – PEATC – Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

**Joliefawn Liddell** – dCLV – disAbility Law Center of Virginia

**Marianne Moore** - VDOE – Virginia Department of Education

**Mark Roane** – NFB – National Federation of the Blind

**Milford Stern** – DOLI – Virginia Department of Labor and Industry

### **Adjourn**

Ms. Bowe motioned to end the meeting. Ms. Appert seconded the motion. All were in favor.

### **Next SRC Quarterly Meeting**

December 9, 2022