
VIRGINIA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND AND VISION IMPAIRED (SRC)

Quarterly Meeting

Final Minutes

May 09, 2025

Held at

**The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227 and via Zoom**

SRC Members in Attendance

David Andrews, Hampton, Representative of a Current/Former Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
Susan Bowmaster, Annadale, Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (virtual due to personal matters)
Rebecca Ceja, Richmond, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education
Lasonya Jackson, Crozet, Representative of a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Amaan Karin, Richmond, Business/Labor/Industry Representative
Beth Klein, Stafford, Representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP).
Heidi Lawyer, Henrico, Representative of Parent Training & Information Center (PEATC)
John Leopold, Richmond, Business/Labor/Industry Representative
Gerald Meredith, South Chesterfield, Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group
Chanthen Nene, Manassas, Representative of an Applicant or Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
Mark Roane, Richmond, Applicant or Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
Rachael Rounds, Midlothian, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program
Beth Sellers, Harrisonburg, Parent/Guardian of a Person with a Disability

SRC Members Not Able to Attend

Christine Appert, Charlottesville, Current/Former Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
Rick Mitchell, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member
Gary Talley, Petersburg, Statewide Independent Living Council Representative (SILC)

DBVI Staff Present

Rebecca Askew, Senior Policy Analyst
Rachel Dancy, Executive Assistant, Commissioner's Office
Megan Hall, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services
Tish Harris, Student Team and Career Pathway Coordinator
Becky Keller, Pre-Employment Transition Specialist, Student Team
Kathy Malone, Bristol, Acting Deputy Commissioner of Services
Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Mitchell
William Sutton, Pre-ETS Specialist Dedicated to Outreach
Ashley West, Executive Assistant to Deputy Commissioners – Recorder of Minutes
Felica Williams, Pre-Employment Transition Specialist

Guest

Cara Kaufman, Policy Analyst/Assistant Regulatory Coordinator (DARS)

ASL Interpreters

Carrie Humphrey

Elizabeth Leitch

Public
Mr. Rothwell
Vinetta Freeman
Amy Jones

Call to Order / Welcome and Introductions

Chair Nene called the meeting to order. Ms. Ashley West conducted roll call. Quorum was met.

Adoption Agenda

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

Adoption of February 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Meredith moved to adopt the February 21, 2025, SRC Quarterly Meeting minutes as amended, Mr. Leopold seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Commissioner's Report – Megan Hall

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

The VR grant award resolution was pushed up until September 30, 2025, with the full complement of funding including a cost-of-living adjustment for 2024 and 2025.

As a result of government initiatives, DBVI has had to make a change to the financial participation policy, DBVI has sent out 35 letters of communication to those who were affected by lay offs where grants may have been reduced. This policy will be in effect until September 30th, 2025, and will forgo any financial participation for those that qualify for this policy. A Town Hall has been set up for those that have been affected by this policy. This Town Hall information has been sent out via social media and the .gov delivery system. Correspondence about business practices and how to apply this new change will go out next week. These Town Hall sessions will be useful to further explain to those that are affected as this process can be confusing.

Deputy Commissioner's Report – Acting Deputy Commissioner for Services Kathy Malone

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

A part-time American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter position is open and will be housed in the Staunton Regional Office. Five new part-time regional program assistant positions have been established to assist Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors with clerical tasks and data entry, so VR counselors can be more engaged with clients.

The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) has partnered with the Virginia National Federation for the Blind (NFB), Project RISE (Resilience, Independence, Self-Advocacy, Employment) for a Chaos Challenge event that will take place on June 7, 2025. During this event, students and their families will learn to use cutting-edge assistive technology to stay connected during an emergency, mastering Braille communication in a high-pressure situation, and perfecting their home management skills to keep things running smoothly, even when chaos hits, and will learn orientation and mobility techniques

that'll keep them moving confidently when everyone else is frozen in place. The keynote speaker will be Frank Marsh, who is tradecraft specialist with the U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity and was previously an FBI Academy instructor and a member of the bureau's Behavioral Science Unit.

DBVI staff attended the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) National conference in Bethesda, Maryland. During this conference, staff were able to network and get ideas for programs and services that can benefit the agency and the individuals we serve.

The DBVI Services Division had an in-person staff meeting consisting of program directors and regional office managers. This 2-day training, led by Deputy Commissioner for Services, Kathy Malone, consisted of speakers from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), on topics such as understanding personality, relationship building and communication for managers; Human Resources on the changes to performance plans and a new performance evaluation system; and the DBVI Finance and Risk Management Director who gave a presentation on budget planning. Deputy Commissioner for Enterprises, Matt Koch, presented opportunities for the individuals we serve within the Enterprise Division.

VR Program Update– *Megan Hall*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Megan Hall is happy to announce that Ms. Kath Malone is now the full-time Deputy Commissioner for Services, having been in this role as acting Deputy Commissioner for Services.

The CVS Health Career Skills Lab, supported by Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, CVS Health and Aetna Better Health of Virginia is making progress. The furniture was installed on Monday, May 5, 2025. The CVS Health team was on campus on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, to put up branding in the Career Skill Lab to include pictures and wall signage. On Wednesday, May 14, 2025, the IT equipment is scheduled to be installed. The ribbon cutting for the Career Skills Lab is scheduled for June 4, 2025. This career skills lab will be able to accommodate up to six learners at a time and is the first skills lab in the country dedicated to being accessible for customer service training. Interviews have been conducted for a wage supervisor position for the lab. This wage supervisor will be nationally certified in Customer Service, and will to through the customer service curriculum, with creator Mike Corso and be able to navigate software and pinpoint areas where they can help the trainee navigate the 6-week course. Depending on the skill level, this customer service course will take six to eight weeks. During this time, trainees will be working with a Business Relations Specialist.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Presentation

Tish Harris, Becky Keller, Felicia Williams and William Sutton gave a presentation on VR programs and events.

Old and New Business

Hearing Officers Update – *Cara Kaufman (DARS)*

Ms. Kaufman gave an update for an invitation to bid (IFB) that was posted in January 2025. On February 14, 2025, the hearing officer committee met and was met with one hearing officer proposal from Redina King. If approved, Ms. King would become a hearing officer for the next fiscal year with four renewals. Ms. Lawyer moved to approve Ms. King becoming a hearing officer for the next fiscal year with four renewals, Mr. Andrews seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

SRC Bylaws

The proposed SRC by law changes were read by Chair Nene and Secretary Ashley West. Ms. West outlined the language that was used in the current SRC bylaws and how the new language will be reflected in the proposed bylaws. Since the current SRC bylaws are based on DARS SRC bylaws, language and date changes that needed to be made to reflect DBVI SRC. Ms. Sellers moved to approve the new SRC bylaws with the proposed changes to be adopted, Ms. Rounds seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Ms. Sellers moved to end the meeting. Mr. Andrews seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Next SRC Quarterly Meeting is August 15, 2025.