

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
State Rehabilitation Council
Draft- Meeting Minutes
14 September 2013**

10:00 a.m.-Welcome and Call to Order – Michael G. Davis

Introductions & Designations

Members Present: Raymond Hopkins- Richmond, VA-(Director of the designated State Unit **DBVI**, ex-officio, non-voting member), Michael G. Davis-Chesapeake, VA-(Chair/former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services), John Bailey-Fairfax, VA-(Vice Chair/Business, Labor, and Industries), Melanie Brunson-Vienna, VA-(Past Chair/Disability Advocacy Groups), Nicole Jeffords-Norfolk, VA-(Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, ex-officio), James Taylor-Richmond, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services), Valerie Walker-New Port News, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries) and Ken Jessup-Virginia Beach, VA-(Statewide Independent Living Council/SILC).

Members Absent: Celia Yette-Petersburg, VA-(Client Assistance Program), Claudie Grant, Jr.-Prince George, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services), Angela Matney-Fredericksburg, VA-(former recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services), Marguerite Bardone-King George, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries), Debbie Pfeiffer-Yorktown, VA-(Virginia Department of Education), Rebecca Bridges-Arlington, VA-(Business, Labor, and Industries), Rick Gonzalez-Springfield, VA-(Virginia Workforce Council), and Richard Holley-Hallwood, VA-(Disability Advocacy Groups)

Guests Present: None.

DBVI Staff Present: Dr. Rick L. Mitchell- (Deputy Commissioner of Services), Susan Davis Payne-(Vocational Rehabilitation Director), and Marcus L. Byrd, II-(Administrative Staff).

Adoption of 14 September 2013 Agenda-Action Item

Michael Davis entertained a motion to approve the 14 September 2013 agenda. John Bailey moved for approval and was seconded by Ken Jessup. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Adoption of 8 June 2013 Meeting Minutes-Action Item

Michael Davis entertained a motion to approve the 8 June 2013 draft meeting minutes. John Taylor moved that minutes be accepted and was seconded by Valarie Walker. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Comments from the Public

None.

Review and Adoption of Bylaws-Action Item- Michael G. Davis

Michael thanked all members who assisted with production of the proposed draft bylaws.

Topic of discussion

(Term of Appointments): The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) stipulates that an individual appointed to State Rehabilitation Council is eligible to serve (2) three year terms for a total of six years. In addition, if a seat was vacated immediately or at any point during the three year term, an individual is eligible to serve the remainder of the vacated term and be appointed for two additional full terms, potentially serving a total of nine years. An individual with intentions to continue serving is eligible after the expiration of his or her initial term in the absence of official reappointment. Lastly, an individual is ineligible to continue serving in his or her former seat after they have completed two full terms.

Commissioner Hopkins elaborated on the fact that federal law mandates certain exceptions to the rule. In particular, an individual serving as representative of the Client Assistant Program (CAP) and Department of Education (DOE) are eligible to serve beyond two full terms if appointed by the Governor. Federal Law also stipulates that the Director of the designated state unit is officially a member of the State Rehabilitation Council, and his or her term will not expire after the six year period if reappointed by the Governor.

Melanie Brunson suggested a change to the draft version of the proposed bylaws. Article IV: Appointment, Termination, and Leadership- Section 2 (b); currently reads that no member of the SRC with the exception of the CAP representative may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms and must be appointed to a second term by the Governor. Mrs. Brunson suggested that the verbiage be altered to read that no member of the SRC except as provided by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and or by Federal Regulations may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms and must be appointed to a second term by the Governor. Michael Davis asked the council if they had any objections with changing the language pertaining to Article IV: Appointment, Termination and Leadership- Section 2 (b) - none to report.

(Election and Terms): Michael Davis elaborated on Article IV: Appointment, Termination and Leadership- Section 3: Resignations and Terminations, subsection B which currently reads that termination at the completion of a member's term shall be automatic and not require a formal written resignation. Commissioner Hopkins added that if a council member decides to vacate his or her seat prior to the end of their term, a letter of resignation addressed to the Governor would be required. In addition, a council member with the intent to be reappointed after his or her initial term must submit appropriate documentation to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office in order to serve an additional term, in other words reappointment is not automatic.

The council discussed the possibility of redefining the number of appointed members necessary to establish a quorum in order to conduct SRC business. Commissioner Hopkins explained that the council may have difficulties voting on topics of concern when eligible voting members are absent from the meetings. Article V: Procedures- Section 2(a) of the proposed bylaws reads that the presence of at least 50% of the current appointed members shall constitute a quorum. The council agreed to alter the language in the aforementioned section to read, the presence of at least 50 percent plus one of current appointed members shall constitute a quorum.

The council discussed the possibility of altering the verbiage within Article V: Procedures- Section 2 (c) of the proposed bylaws which stipulates that when a voting member is unable to attend a meeting, he or she may submit a proxy to another voting member; which must be documented in writing (including emails) and given to a voting member and the Chair no later than 5 calendar days in advance of the meeting. The proxy will be identified at the beginning of the meeting and included in the minutes. The council agreed to change the number of days allotted from 5 calendar days to 1.

Melanie Brunson inquired about term expirations of the Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and/or Vice Chair are eligible to serve a second one-year term if nominated and elected by the council.

Jim Taylor elaborated on an alteration of past practices located in Article IV: Appointment, Termination, and Leadership- Section 5: Appointment, Terms, and Duties of the Committee Chairs, Section (b) of the proposed bylaws which reads the executive committee will be comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair and Past Chairs, must all be actively serving on the SRC. The Executive Committee shall meet at the request of the Chair and meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to all SRC members and the public.

Susan Payne inquired about the possibility of altering the verbiage located in Article IV: Appointment, Termination, and Leadership- section (6): New Member Orientation, section (a) of the proposed bylaws which currently reads newly appointed members to the SRC will make every effort to attend the SRC new member orientation provided by DBVI.

Action Taken: Michael Davis entertained a motion to approve the proposed draft version of DBVI State Rehabilitation Council bylaws. Melanie Brunson moved for acceptance as corrected and was seconded by Ken Jessup. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

An action item has been added for the December 2013 DBVI State Rehabilitation Council meeting to discuss an alteration to the bylaws, Article VI: section (c), stipulates bylaws may be amended upon a two-thirds vote of the SRC members in attendance, provided a quorum is present.

Workgroup Discussions- Michael G. Davis

The bylaws currently stipulate that DBVI's State Rehabilitation Council shall have standing committees as follows: Executive, State Plan, and Annual Report. The council decided to address the need for other workgroups during the next meeting in December 2013; however the early consensus of the council is to create other workgroups aside from the aforementioned standing committees on an as needed basis.

The council decided to make an addition to the bylaws by stipulating that non appointed DBVI State Rehabilitation Council members are eligible for appointment by the chair of the SRC to serve on committees and workgroups.

Working Lunch:

Vice Chair Election- Action Item- Michael G. Davis

Michael Davis entertained a motion to nominate a current SRC member to be elected Vice Chair of the council effective 1 October 2013. Ken Jessup nominated Rebecca Bridges and was moved by Melanie Brunson that elections be closed and Mrs. Bridges be elected, seconded by Ken Jessup. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Updates on the Status of the State Plan- Susan Davis Payne:

Susan Payne announced that DBVI received communication from the Rehabilitation Services Administration that Virginia's DBVI State Plan has been accepted and published. The only aspect of the State Plan RSA questioned pertained to the manner in which DBVI intended to conduct the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey in the next three year period. Susan received confirmation from Terri Martin, who is the agencies liaison to conduct the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey over a full three year period as oppose to every three years with, 1st year focusing on - literature and demographic research, 2nd year- surveys, and 3rd year- data analysis & report development.

Appointments/Reappointments to the SRC- Susan Davis Payne

Susan Payne alluded to the fact that DBVI's State Rehabilitation Council continues to have vacancies that have yet to be filled. Currently the following seats are vacant: Representative of a Parent Training and Information Center; Community Rehabilitation Services Provider, Department of Education (DOE), and an individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing himself or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent himself or herself.

Valerie Walker and John Bailey, both representatives of Business, Industry, and Labor have indicated to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office and submitted appropriate documentation to be reappointed to an additional full term. Both members' initial term will expire on 30 September 2013.

Seats that will become available as of 30 September 2013 due to the expiration of initial terms with no desire to be reappointed are as follows: James Taylor, and Michael G. Davis, all former or current Recipients of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Seats that will become available as of 30 September 2013 due to the expiration of two full terms are as follows: Angie Matney- former or current recipient of VR services; Marguerite Bardone- representative of business, industry, and labor.

Seats that have been vacated due to resignations effective immediately are as follows: Debbie Pfeiffer- Department of Education (DOE), Claudie Grant, Jr. - former or current recipient of VR services, and Celia Yette- Client Assistance Program (CAP) representative.

Commissioner Hopkins encouraged the council to recruit individuals whom may be interested in being appointed to serve. Melanie Brunson added that it may be in the best interest of the council to become more involved when forwarding interested candidates to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office. Jim Taylor explained that during his time serving as Deputy Commissioner with DVBI, that the representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program (CRP) had traditionally been represented by someone from either the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired or Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) due to the fact they are public CRP's.

Public Meetings- Susan Davis Payne:

Susan Payne elaborated on the upcoming Public Meetings and inquired about whom from the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council planned to attend. Susan will oversee all 3 meetings which begin on 8 October 2013 and will conclude on 25 October 2013. Additionally, Susan is in the process of trying to identify sites in Arlington, Bristol and Norfolk, Virginia in order to expand appropriate representation throughout the state. Council members are encouraged to attend the meetings if possible to hear comments from the public and answer any questions they may have. Melanie Brunson explained that the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council should have at least one representative at each meeting. Please reference all 3 meeting times and dates below:

Richmond Public Meeting

401 Azalea Avenue- VRCBVI Dorm Lounge
Virginia Rehabilitation Center for
the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI)
Richmond, Virginia 23227
October 8, 2013
6:00 p.m. -7:00 p.m.

Roanoke Public Meeting

Lions Club
501 Elm Avenue, SW
Roanoke, Virginia 24017
October 16, 2013
7:00 p.m. - 8p.m.

Fredericksburg, VA

Fredericksburg Hospitality House
2801 Plank Road
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401
October 25, 2013
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Nicole Jeffords shared with the council that a technology expo will take place on 28 September 2013 in Norfolk, VA in a designated auditorium. Sponsorship for the event include: Bayside Regional Library, and the Lions Club.

Commissioner Hopkins explained the possibility of conducting a public meeting via-Video Teleconference (VTC) and/or conference call to allow individuals in remote areas to participate.

Review/Updates to Agency Report- Susan Davis Payne

Commissioner Hopkins informed the council that the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) have facilitated various seminars over the past few months. Additionally, VRCBVI has decided to mobilize the above mentioned seminars by conducting them at regional offices throughout the state. Michael Fish, who is a computer Trainer and Instructor with VRCBVI will travel to Roanoke this month to conduct IOS technology training. Commissioner Hopkins added, that he has challenged VRCBVI to become more of community center for individuals who are blind or vision impaired and to take more of an assertive effort in terms of collaborating with the regional offices statewide.

On 18 October 2013, VRCBVI will conduct friends and family day at the center on DBVI's main campus. The pursuit of this event is to not only invite former and current family members of consumers, but also the blind community as a whole to participate.

Commissioner Hopkins explained to council that RSA is planning to make a site visit to the Department of the Aging and Rehabilitative Services and DBVI in Federal Fiscal Year 2016 for monitoring purposes of federally funded programs. The visits are conducted on a 6 year cycle, and the last monitoring effort by RSA took place in 2010. Commissioner Hopkins touched base on the fact that DBVI has begun the process of preparing for RSA's arrival.

Susan Payne elaborated in the agency report that during the first three quarters of 2013, DBVI's VR program assisted 101 individuals in accomplishing their vocational goals in integrated and competitive settings. Additionally, Susan shared with the council that even though the fourth quarter has yet to be completed; consumers that have accomplished their vocation goals in integrated and competitive settings has increased to 161. Lastly, the average hourly wage at application was \$14.35 and at closure it increased to \$17.89.

Nicole Jeffords alluded to the fact that the Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) has spearheaded an effort to fill current contract specialist positions by providing contract management specialist (CMS) training to eligible blind and vision impaired individuals.

Dr. Rick Mitchell announced to the council that first round interview sessions has taken place for the vacant VR counselor position in the Bristol Regional Office; second round interviews will take place the week of 23 September 2013.

Development of the Annual Report- Susan Davis Payne

The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired State Rehabilitation Council is responsible for developing the Annual Report and submitting it to the Secretary of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the Governor. The report is required to be submitted NLT 31 December yearly. Susan Payne serves as liaison to the SRC and will provide pertinent information for report development to the council by mid October 2013.

The following council members agreed to serve on the 2013 Annual Report committee: John Bailey, Melanie Brunson, and Rebecca Bridges.

NCSRC/CSAVR/NCSAB

The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind conferences fall session will all convene in Denver, Colorado on November 11th -18th, 2013. John Bailey serving as the newly appointed Chair elect will participate on the council's behalf.

Old Business- Michael G. Davis

Melanie Brunson provided suggestions that needed to be made to the June 2013 meeting minutes. The first being that the word Education should be added to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which is referenced in the second paragraph of the Commissioner's Report. Also within the Commissioner's report, the discussion pertaining to the Randolph Sheppard Program which states "a strategic plan to improve the program which may take 18 to 24 years" should be altered to read 18 to 24 months. Lastly, Melanie Brunson suggested that the Chair is the only council member that may entertain a motion. Melanie Brunson withdrew her initial motion to approve the June 2013 meeting minutes and replaced it with a motion to reconsider, and Valerie Walker seconded. Michael Davis entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes as corrected. The motion was moved by John Bailey, seconded by Valerie Walker, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

On June 24-25, 2013 in Crystal City, VA, Susan Payne representing the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired and John Bailey representing the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired SRC attended the National State Rehabilitation Council Forum. The forum was a weekend long seminar on how to empower SRCs to better serve their communities. John Bailey suggested that it would be advantageous to expose newly appointed council members to the NSRC forum. Additionally, John encouraged council members to submit to him any questions or concerns they may have pertaining to the report.

Commissioner Hopkins inquired if John Bailey was connected with the SRC Learning Community for the region and encourage him to do so. Susan Payne has announced that she will assist John with getting established with the mailing group. Melanie Brunson explained to the council that the State Rehabilitation Council online course is another great tool to gain information about the make-up and responsibilities of the council.

Susan Payne made a suggestion to the council to postpone the upcoming SRC Retreat until the spring 2014. The alteration would be advantageous in that it would allow more preparation and development time for the upcoming submittal of the State Plan in June 2014. Michael Davis entertained a motion to reschedule the Annual Retreat in October to March 2014. John Bailey moved, Ken Jessup seconded, and was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Due to Jim Taylor rotating off the SRC effective 30 September 2013, he inquired if anyone would be willing to accept the responsibilities of attending the DARS SRC quarterly meetings on the council's behalf. Ken Jessup explained that he may be willing to represent the council; however this has yet to be confirmed. The next DARS SRC meeting will convene on 18 November 2013 at central headquarters.

New Business- Michael G. Davis

Ken Jessup suggested that when individuals rotate off the SRC, that it would be a good idea to present them with a certificate or some token of appreciation for their service. Commissioner Hopkins suggested that the council implement the above mentioned suggestions into the resource plan in order to determine an established amount of resources needed to dedicate for appreciation memorabilia.

Michael Davis entertained a motion for John Bailey and Susan Payne develop a plan to address providing an appreciation gift to outgoing members of the SRC. The motion was moved by Melanie Brunson, seconded by Ken Jessup, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Nicole Jeffords mentioned that on 28 September 2013, a technology expo will be conducted from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at the main Virginia Beach Public Library.

Melanie Brunson elaborated on the state of the Federal Legislation regarding reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. Senator Tom Harkin has authorized a Bill in the Senate to reauthorize the Rehabilitation Act. The House passed their Bill in March 2013. The Senate Bill would move RSA out of the Department of Education and into the Department of Labor. Additionally, the Independent Living Program would separate from RSA and create a new agency within the Department of Health and Human Services in order to administer its statewide programs. The House and Senate Bill both emphasize transition by regulating that agencies set-aside 10% of VR funds to provide services. Melanie added that the process is currently ongoing and by December's meeting the SRC should know if Congress will act. Commissioner explained to the council that the reauthorization may not take place due to other pressing issues such as regulation realignment and lack of funds.

Melanie Brunson also announced that Janet LaBreck has been nominated by President Obama to serve as the next Rehabilitation Services Administration Commissioner.

Date for Next Meeting/Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m., the next State Rehabilitation Council Meeting will convene on 14 December 2013, 397Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227 @ 10:00 a.m. - 12:40 p.m.