

**Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
State Rehabilitation Full Council**

**Meeting Minutes October 6, 2009
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

Department of Labor and Training ~ 1151 Pontiac Avenue ~ Cranston, RI 02920

Present: Janice Belasco, Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Stephen Brunero, Rocco Bruno, Cindy Cote, Linda Deschenes, Domenic DiOrio, Jeanne Giroux, Margaret Hoye, Anne LeClerc, Sandy Lupovitz, Lucille Massemينو, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, David Sienko, Jane Slade

Present from the VR Agency: Laurie DiOrio, Kathleen Grygiel, Lynn Paola, Ronald Racine

- 1. Call to Order** - D. Sienko, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Introductions of membership and guests followed. Full quorum is met.
- 2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda** - There were none.
- 3. Approval of Minutes** - The minutes were approved.

Motion

J. Belasco made a motion seconded by D. DiOrio and unanimously approved to accept the minutes from the June 9, 2009 meeting.

4. Chair's Report - D. Sienko

The Executive Committee has approved the annual SRC calendar.

[Rehabilitation Services Administration](#) (RSA) is producing a new guide on utilizing the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. They have requested information on goals and accomplishments of the SRC.

SRC has been approved to engage with the [National Coalition of Rehabilitation Councils](#) (NCSRC). It is a free service with a great deal of information on the website.

[The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation](#) (CSCAVR) conference is in November. Pre-conference session information is posted on the website. There is a schedule of conference calls for different committees also posted on the website. Members are invited and welcome to dial-in monitor the National stage. The three (3) targeted areas identified as their focus; capacity building for State rehabilitation, organizational development building, and partnership alliance.

[The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island](#) recognized Sandy Lupovitz for his advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities employment.

5. The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) Administrator's Report - S. Brunero gave a summary of events at ORS since the last meeting on June 9, 2009.

Local 94 approved the Governor's proposal. ORS had lost about 1/3 of its staff due to retirements during the last initiative but was able to fill most of the vacancies. If the Governor's proposal was denied a potential layoff could have resulted in significant bumps or loss of positions at ORS.

President Obama signed the [Fiscal 2010 Appropriations Bill](#).

A series of web conferences are offered on the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) reauthorization, participation is encouraged.

The [RI State Plan](#) was approved. VR State Program Plans throughout the country have also been approved.

SRC Leadership is moving forward on the 2008 Annual Review and Report. The report is provided to update the Federal Government on the activities and any new policies of the SRC.

The 107 Monitoring Report is provided after a complete analysis is done through a Federal audit and was last provided in 2006. The audit lasts approximately one (1) week, usually performed during the summer and requires full participation with the Federal Government.

[American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) (ARRA) - RI received one point seventy three (1.73) million in stimulus funds. ORS has established the following programs through the use of these funds:

- 1) **Case Management System** - coming to fruition since 2006. It is a versatile, secure, web-Based, interactive system. Ron Racine head-up the RFP team.
- 2) **SWEET** - A work experience program geared to placing youth in real jobs through partnership with agencies within the community. The six (6) week program was piloted this summer, offered to ninety nine (99) youths, and was a real success. A stipend depending on the agency budget was predicated on daily attendance. The issue of transportation is being addressed for the future. The Program will be a fee for service program when ARRA funds become no longer available. A. LeClere inquired how the transportation issue is being addressed. She offered that Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) has Federal funds available through competitive bidding. *Project Action* would offer travel training to an agency that is able to provide a standard travel-training curriculum. Solicitation is made through a general grant application.
- 3) **LEEP** - Learn to Earn, a prevocational program targeting low-literacy and low-work experience individuals through RIWORKS referrals and supported by Goodwill Industries. Geographic areas are being prioritized through proposals that are provided. The four (4) week Program provides ways of building self-esteem and interview skills. There were fifty six (56) RIWORKS referrals, twenty (20) completed the Program, and nine (9) individuals maintained jobs.
- 4) **Job Developers** - Over the last five (5) years the number of clients has increased by at least forty seven percent (47%) with fewer Counselors available. ORS utilized Craig's List and résumés on file as a successful alternative while hiring three (3) individuals. Looking more efficiently at restructuring fee's by paying an hourly rate opposed to fee for service.

Rhode Island's State Fiscal Year ended sixty (60) million in the red. ORS was not held harmless; however, all state agencies are required to make significant cutbacks including but not limited to travel restrictions and operational restrictions through CNOM (Cost Not Otherwise Matched) through Global Medicaid Waiver to eliminate or cut State spending. ORS is eighty percent (80%) Federally funded and DDS is one hundred percent (100%) Federally funded and were able to hire seven (7) VR Counselors prior to the hiring freeze.

The Employer Honor Roll will be on October 28, 2009 and held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick. Governor Carcieri is invited and Frank Coletta, News Anchor for NBC 10 is the Master of Ceremonies. SRC Members are invited to attend and bring a guest to this free event. ORS is working on alternate ways to provide awards, which are a restricted expense through the Office of Accounts and Control.

There is discussion of centralization through consolidation of The Office of Health & Human Services and The Department of Human Services. There are increasingly more clients and higher operations cost. The Federal carry-over is depleting therefore a need to look at the Service Delivery System to prevent the threat of running out of funds on a State and Federal level. ORS contracted a professor at URI to act as a mediator to address consumer concerns.

RSA Monitoring - Standards and Indicators - L. Deschenes

Rhode Island is one (1) of four (4) states that have met all Standards and Indicators consecutively for the last five (5) years with seven hundred and fifty six (756) successful closures this year.

6. Presentation of Slate of Officers and New Members for Nomination - D. DiOrio & L. Massemينو

The Nomination and Leadership committee recommends the following Slate of Officers for the ballot at the November 10, 2009 meeting.

Kate McCarthy-Barnett - Chair
Judith L. Drew - Vice-Chair
Catherine Sansonetti - Secretary

Several candidates were interviewed for consideration and we ask the Council to move to recommend the appointments of these new members by the Governor.

Cory Allard – Attorney (representing individuals with disabilities who have difficulty rep. themselves)
Don Perrioni - ORS Consumer, (representing individuals with a disability)
Dottie Ferlong - ORS Consumer, (representing individuals with a disability)
Jeff Machado - President, Goodwill Industries (representing community service provider)

The Nomination and Leadership committee recommends the reappointment by the Governor of:

Rocco Bruno - (representing business, industry & labor)
Anne LeClere - (representing individuals with physical, cognitive sensory, and mental disabilities)
Dr. Mona Dorinsivlle-Phanor - (representing community rehab program service provider)
Vincent Rossi - (representing individuals with disabilities who have difficulty rep. themselves)
Herb Weiss - (representing business, labor, industry)

Linda Deschenes (representing the Office of Rehabilitation Services) is replaced by Thomas Clemmons.
David Sienko (representing the Department of Education) is replaced by Jane Slade of the Northern RI Collaborative.
The candidate to replace Lorna Ricci, (representing the State Workforce Investment Board), is still pending.

Collectively the Leadership Development Committee are grateful and acknowledge David Sienko for his leadership that has encouraged professionalism, strengthened the group and allowed subcommittee group leaders to present all successes, also for strengthening the Councils' relationship and partnership with the Office of Rehabilitation Services.

Any other members wishing to nominate someone may do so at the meeting in November.

Motion

A. LeClere made a motion seconded by L. Massemينو and approved, with one (1) abstention from K. McCarthy-Barnett, to accept the Slate of Officers recommended by the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee for consideration at the November 10, 2009 meeting.

Kate McCarthy-Barnett - Chair
Judith L. Drew - Vice-Chair
Catherine Sansonetti - Secretary

Motion

J. Giroux made a motion seconded by M. Hoyer and unanimously approved to accept the new candidates for consideration of the Governor for appointment to the Council.

Cory Allard
Don Perioni

Dottier Ferlong
Jeff Machado

Motion

M. Hoyer made a motion seconded by K. McCarthy-Barnett and approved, with one (1) abstention from A. LeClere, to request of the Governor the reappointment of the following members who have agreed to serve a second (2nd) three (3) year term.

Rocco Bruno
Anne LeClere
Dr. Mona Dorinsivlle-Phanor
Vincent Rossi
Herb Weiss

The Council concurred with the selection of Jane Slade and Thomas Clemmons and will request of the Governor's approval of their appointment to the Council.

7. Subcommittee Progress Reports - D. Sienko

Using Council meeting time allows the committees to get together. The committee structure includes non-members and experts who offer constructiveness to the committee without being members of the Council.

State Plan, Policy & Quality Assurance Committee - C. Sansonetti

Last year the committee worked on Customer Satisfaction Surveys targeting status "26" and "28" closures. Status "26" is successful closure; status "28" is incomplete/unsuccessful closure. About three quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the surveys went out. Three hundred and thirty nine (339) surveys were sent out to status 26, sixty one (61) surveys were returned. This is eighteen percent (18%). One hundred and twenty four (124) surveys were sent out to status 28, eighteen (18) surveys were returned. This equals fourteen point five percent (14.5%). These results were better than expected and better than the amount that went out last year.

L. Deschenes researched the survey design and found Rhode Island is on track in our design and on board with the whole concept in comparison to what other states are doing. They will be meeting at the end of the calendar year 2009 to look at the rest and be able to report back to the Council at a later date. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) can be done a year at a time or over three (3) years. It is required every three (3) years. The subcommittee needs to decide how they would like to write the plan. A time-line similar to the State Plan should be established for reviewing the Comprehensive Needs Assessment with the SRC.

Transportation - A. LeClere

We will be requesting interns to do consumer run transportation service to identify all the barriers.

In November there will be a transportation consortium inviting approximately thirty (30) human resources agencies in the State Department. Agencies that work directly with transportation and client issues and are at risk for financial and client stake are being targeted. There will be more resource assessment coordinated with other agencies to look at the overlaps and gaps.

RIPTA and The Office of Health & Human Services are conducting a four hundred thousand dollar (400,000) study of State resources, looking at where the money is coming from and whose receiving services. They are hoping to develop a better program by looking at the needs and mapping the overlap and deficiencies. A group effort to develop advocacies for people with disabilities who face transportation issues should be coordinated through the combined efforts of the SRC and ORS.

Nominations and Leadership Development Committee - D. DiOrio & L. Massemينو

The committee acknowledges half their job is complete with nominations brought forward for the November meeting and will now concentrate on leadership. A list of speakers is already lined up with a special focus on the hospitality industry. They will be presented to the group and potentially recruited to become members.

Employment - S. Lupovitz

The primary item is getting Council representatives together to coordinate the work of various structures within the State to create more job development for people with disabilities.

Employers are getting bumped around by different agencies with regard to hiring and maintaining employees with disabilities. The committee is discussing ways to educate more employers.

Recommendations have been made to create more of a Business Advisory Council (BAC) to meet once a year. The committee discussed the importance of interacting with facilitators and inviting representatives from agencies to participate in the Council to eliminate duplicating efforts. D. Sienko said representatives have been receptive and proactive to participation in the past.

8. Public Comment – There was none.

Motion

D. DiOrio made a motion seconded by S. Lupovitz and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.

9. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynn M. Paola

Lynn Paola, Administrative Assistant
Office of Rehabilitation Services

The next full-Council meeting is Tuesday, November 10, 2009.