

Department of Human Services  
Office of Rehabilitation Services  
Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council

RI Department of Labor and Training  
Center General Complex 73 (Main Conference Room)  
1511 Pontiac Avenue  
Cranston, RI 02920

**Minutes - Tuesday, March 13, 2007**  
4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Present from State Rehabilitation Council: Rocco Bruno, Raymond Carroll, by Rick Costa, Susan Donovan, Dr. Judith L. Drew, Joseph Ferreira, Jeanne M. Giroux, Margaret Hoye, Gary J. Levine, Lucille Massemينو, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Herb Weiss (note to self - need to double check this at providence office)

Present from Agency: Stephen Brunero, Ronald Racine

**1. Call to Order and Introductions** - The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

1. Additions or deletions to the Agenda – There were none.
2. Approval of Minutes

**Motion**

H. Weiss made a motion seconded by G. Levine and unanimously approved with one abstention from C. Sansonetti, to accept the minutes from the February 13, 2007 meeting.

**2. Old Business** – J. Ferreira

**Annual Report**

A statutory requirement for the SRC is to do an Annual Report, which is then sent to the Governor, Acting Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Service Administration, and also distributed to the rehabilitation community. The report is ready sooner than it was last year. Copies of it were distributed to the attending membership. It is also available on the ORS website at:  
<http://www.ors.state.ri.us/copied/2005.pdf>.

Suggestions were made to send the Annual Report to the Rhode Island Legislators and the Press. Additionally, the suggestion was made to send the Report every year to the Press for better promotion and understanding of the VR Program. *This should be followed up at the next meeting.*

**SRC Letter to the Providence Journal Editor**

J. Drew suggested that some of the data from the Annual Report should also be included in the letter. Specifically, data from pages five (5) and six (6) where it states what services have been provided for consumers in the past year.

G. Levine felt it was also important that anyone reading the letter should understand what the numbers and accomplishments meant.

J. Ferreira suggested that instead of putting the numbers perhaps key bulleted words and phrases might be enough.

H. Wiess asked why there were no quotes in the letter from the Chair.

A brief background for this letter was given to the membership that had recently come onto the Council. As a citizen advisory group, the Council wishes to weigh in, presenting more positive information about what ORS does as an organization.

H. Wiess informed that if this proposed letter was not aligned with the original editorial, so it could be pulled by those in the media and general public who wished to research it, it would be lost as well as having little or no chance of it making it past the Editor's desk.

#### Motion

J. Drew made a motion seconded by S. Donovan and unanimously approved, with one abstention from C. Sansonetti, to review the draft letter and make comments to the Chair for updating.

### **SRC Helping with Stress at ORS**

S. Donovan spoke about The Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) and the Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC), which is running workshops on stress relief. It is a program that they offer for staff at RIPIN and it is going very well. We were treated to a twenty (20) minute demonstration session. The Agency is offering this to Staff that are working out in the field. The workshop runs for six (6) weeks and meets once per week. We would like to offer this to ORS Counselors. The PIRC is eager to do this but they are still running this Program in a pilot format. However, they want to offer a mini course once a week, for thirty (30) or forty five (45) minute sessions. There would be no cost to ORS for this mini course.

J. Drew made a suggestion to develop a post-survey to see what the results of this stress relief program are on the ORS Counselors. The budget shortfalls and sub-sequential staffing shortages are happening all over the country. If we could demonstrate how positive this pilot program is on lowering stress, it could benefit the National VR Program.

J. Drew announced that an appreciation luncheon for ORS staff is being planned.

### **3. New Business**

#### **ORS Administrator's Report – R. Carroll**

**Budget** –The situation is significant with a gap of three hundred and fifty (350) million dollars. All Departments are doing rollbacks to come in line with what is needed to meet the shortfall.

**Personnel** – ORS has many vacancies in the Program however prior to the mid January note on fiscal restraint we had done recruitment of five (5) positions, which have been remanded by the Governor's office. They have since been revised by our Department and sent back to the Governor's office for approval.

**State Plan** – Our Federal Partner, the Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) will be conducting its onsite comprehensive monitoring visit in June. They want to include Stakeholders in that process.

The Public Hearing for the State Plan:

Date: May 22, 2007

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 P.M.

Location: Warwick Public Library

600 Sandy Lane

Warwick, RI 02889

A suggestion was made that a sign in sheet be used to see where people attending the hearing come from and who they represent, i.e., consumer, agency, etc. Additionally, consideration should be given to having more than one hearing and in different locations. This would be similar to what the Governor's Commission on Disabilities does with their annual forums. *This should be followed up at the next meeting.*

This Monday, ORS is having a conference to develop the agenda for the Fiscal Review in April, and then the Program side in June. This onsite monitoring will be taking place every three (3) years.

Charlotte Becher – The Supervisor of The Point, asked me to remind you that they are establishing an advisory committee and wish to broaden representation from consumers and providers working with people with disabilities. She invites anyone who would like to participate on one of two advisory commissions for the elderly to contact her.

May 8<sup>th</sup> SRC Annual Breakfast Meeting – Will be at the Crown Plaza in Warwick. The discussion at the executive meeting stressed that it would be a regular meeting but concentrate on the subcommittee work. ORS will invite some staff to come in and make presentations to you. We want to make the meetings as informative and enjoyable as they can be.

The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) - The CSAVR-sponsored NET (National Employment Team), which provides qualified workers and support services to business customers through a national network of the eighty (80) public VR agencies. The NET website is an intra-net design. The website is set up for the VR agencies to communicate with each other regarding national work opportunities. The beneficial result of this connectivity is for business to view the VR agencies as a national organization representing a large pool of workers. Additionally, our staff will become more sophisticated in linking our customers with employers.

Business Expo – ORS will not be at Providence May Business Expo this year due to the amount of manpower it takes us to keep the ORS team visible there. Our results from doing this Expo have not been as beneficial as we had hoped therefore; we may attend the Central Rhode Island Expo.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

Nomination and Leadership Development – L. Massemino

The committee would like to suggest that the Council actively recruit new members of minorities. If anyone knows someone interested in sitting on the Council please submit resumes to N. Baker. Postscript since meeting; several new resumes have come in for review.

Employment – S. Donovan

The committee met two (2) weeks ago and reviewed the current marketing plan. We are working on a letter to be sent for educational & P.R. purposes to all of the RI Chamber of Commerce groups. One of the goals is to assist ORS in utilizing the Chambers as a means of broadcasting a better image of their customer population, who are seeking employment.

Transportation – J. Drew

The committee is meeting this week to review and revise the draft survey. We are recruiting an assistant to help us with that survey, and considering Survey Monkey. The long-term plan for the remainder of the year is to have a finished working survey by May, data collection done by June, analyze the data over the summer, and be developing a report with recommendation from our members by the fall.

State Plan Policy & Quality Assurance – J. Ferreira

The committee met two (2) weeks ago to review minor Policy changes. We will be meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup> to do our first review of the drafted State Plan.

**4. Public Comment** – None.

**5. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy L. Baker*

Nancy Baker, Staff  
State Rehabilitation Council