**State of Connecticut**

**Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**

**Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)**

**State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to BESB**

# DRAFT MINUTES

## September 25, 2019

**Members Present: Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Mr. Nate Barnes, Mr. Michael Bartley, Ms. Enaida Mendoza, Mr. Scott Baecker, Ms. Kendra Valente, Ms. Amanda Billiot, Mr. John McNickle, Mr. Gary Allen, and Ms. Dawn Russell.**

**Others Present: Mr. Brian Sigman, Ms. Mary Burgard, Ms. Jennifer Jenkins, Ms. Laura Ferrall (Interpreter), and Ms. Anita Benjamin (Interpreter).**

**Members Absent: Ms. Eileen Rose, and Ms. Linda Mizzi.**

**Call to Order: Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.**

**Old Business**

**Review and Approval of Minutes from the June 12, 2019 minutes: MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Valente, and seconded Mr. Baecker, to adopt the minutes from the June 12, 2019 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Workgroup Reports**

**Membership: Mr. Sigman, on behalf of Mr. Barnes, reported on the vacancies that exist on the SRC: Employer - 2 vacancies with two candidates pending appointment consideration; Recipient of Services - 2 vacancies with two candidates pending appointment consideration; Consumer Organization- 1 vacancy with one candidate pending appointment consideration. Workforce Investment Board- 1 vacancy with a candidate needed. Community Provider- 1 vacancy with a candidate pending appointment consideration. Parent Organization- reappointment of candidate to a second term pending. State Department of Education- 1 vacancy with one candidate pending appointment consideration. BESB State Director- reappointment pending. Native American VR- replacement needed.**

**Finance: Mr. Sigman reported on expenditures since the last meeting that has included FY19 payment towards the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and SRC co-sponsorship payment for Youth Leadership Forum.**

**Consumer Satisfaction: Mr. Sigman reported that the Consumer Satisfaction Survey is underway as of this past July and phone calls to clients should be completed soon. The survey process will be converting to quarterly phone calls to clients for the coming fiscal year that starts in October. The Memorandum of Agreement is being finalized that would detail the shift over to the quarterly model.**

**New Business**

**VR Success Story: Ms. Jenifer Eukers, BESB VR Transition Counselor, introduced Mr. Cody Rivenburg. Mr. Rivenburg is a recent high school graduate who spent the majority of this past summer at the Carroll Center where he participated in their “Real World of Work” program which provides students with summer work experiences and job-related blindness skills for daily living. Mr. Rivenburg gave an enthusiastic presentation, detailing his accomplishments and passion for the field of criminal justice, as well as music and acting. He finished by saying that he would not be where he is today without the ongoing support from BESB VR services.**

**Election of Officers: Mr. Sigman read the proposed slate of officers for FY 2020 based on the responses that were received from the membership at the June meeting: Chair- Alan Gunzburg, Vice Chair- Michael Bartley, Secretary- Nate Barnes and Treasurer- Scott Baecker. Mr. Gunzburg requested additional nominations from the floor for the roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. There were none.**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Allen to vote in the slate of officers as presented. The motion passed unanimously.**

**OrCam Presentation:  Ms. Marilyn Davidson gave a demonstration on OrCam and showed firsthand how this device functions. The device has a small camera that attaches to the side rim of glasses and it can perform scanning of printed text, and also can perform face recognition.**

**State Plan Update: Mr. Sigman reviewed the timelines for the State Plan. Both he and Mr. Gunzburg gave an overview of the responsibilities of the workgroup that needs to be formed to develop proposed goals for the new state plan.**

**Mr. Gunzburg, Ms. Valente, Ms. Russell and Mr. Bartley agreed to serve on the workgroup.**

**SRC Annual Report: Mr. Gunzburg will be reaching out to the workgroups very soon to gather information from them and add it to the SRC Annual Report. Also, any member who wishes to submit information for the annual report, that is due on December 31, 2019, should notify him as well.**

**Meeting Dates for 2020: Discussion took place on the proposed SRC meeting dates for 2020. The dates proposed were March 25, June 24, September 23, and December 16, 2020.**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Baecker and seconded by Ms. Valente to accept these meeting dates for 2020. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Report from BESB State Director**

**Program Update: Mr. Sigman announced that through the federal reallotment process, the bureau has received an additional $1.4 million to put towards vocational rehabilitation services. With the addition of these new funds, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is now able to project adequate funding to serve all eligible individuals through federal fiscal year 2021.**

**October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Plans are in the process of being finalized for events during the week of October 15 in celebration of Blind Americans Equality Day. More detailed announcements are coming very soon covering the whole month of October.**

**One of the agency strategic planning workgroups, co-chaired by Mr. Sigman, Technology and Service Delivery, will be sending out a short survey by the end of December though Survey Gizmo to ask what the preferred method on communication is for consumers to engage with the agency and to then assess whether existing technology is available to align with these preferences.**

**The agency’s name will be changing to the Department of Aging and Disability Services effective October 1st.  The agency will be referred to as Aging and Disability Services. If an acronym is needed, it would be referred to as ADS.**

**Legislation Update: Mr. Sigman reported that Mr. Mark Schultz has been appointed as the new Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Mr. Sigman, on behalf of Mr. Gunzburg, will be sending out to the members a United States Department of Education document that addresses post-secondary opportunities and success for students and youth with disabilities.**

**Report from Chair: Mr. Gunzburg does not anticipate any proposed WIOA re-authorization language before Congress anytime soon based on what CSAVR has been told.**

**He spoke to the SRC about the importance of continuing our support of high school transition students. Also, he wanted to stress how important getting the reallotment dollars was and hopefully it is a sign of increased availability of reallotment dollars in future years as well.**

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Allen, seconded by Ms. Valente, to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.**

**The next Council meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at BESB.**