**State of Connecticut**

**Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS)**

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

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

# DRAFT MINUTES

## December 18, 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, Ms. Eileen Rose, and Ms. Dawn Russell.**

**Others Present: Mr. Brian Sigman, Ms. Mary Burgard, Ms. Beth Reel, Ms. Jennifer Jenkins, Ms. Tara McAuliffe (Interpreter), and Ms. Caleigh McKenna (Interpreter).**

**Members Absent: None.**

**Call to Order: Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.**

**Old Business**

**Review and Approval of Minutes: MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Allen, and seconded Mr. Baecker, to adopt the minutes from the September 25, 2019 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Workgroup Reports**

**Membership: Mr. Sigman, on behalf of Mr. Barnes, reviewed the vacancies that exist on the SRC and pending appointments.**

**Finance: Mr. Baecker reported on the Consumer Satisfaction Survey quarterly expenditure since the last meeting.**

**Consumer Satisfaction: Mr. Bartley reviewed and summarized for the SRC the workgroup’s notes from their conference call this past June on ways to improve the survey. Discussion took place on the instrument currently being used to analyze the consumer satisfaction level of BESB Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients. One recommendation was to pursue another survey tool to gauge consumer satisfaction. Different on-line survey platforms were discussed such as Qualtrics, Survey Gizmo, and Survey Monkey. It was decided to table the discussion to the March SRC meeting and to reconvene the workgroup at that time for the purpose of deciding what the content of the survey questions should be. The workgroup would bring those recommendations to the June SRC meeting.**

**New Business**

**VR Success Story: Ms. Jeannette Rodriguez-Perez, BESB Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Counselor, introduced Ms. Janel Parker. Ms. Parker spoke about how she obtained her undergraduate degree and master’s degree with assistance from BESB-VR. This helped her to obtain her current job as a Clinician. Having access to the most current adaptive technology provided by BESB-VR allows her to be more independent and to do her job quickly and efficiently while working in the community. Ms. Parker is now a Licensed Social Worker and thanked Ms. Rodriguez-Perez and BESB-VR for all the help and support.**

**A discussion followed Ms. Parker’s presentation regarding the process for obtaining a professional license and the challenges that Ms. Parker experienced to obtain reasonable accommodations for the licensing exam.**

**Chairman Gunzburg requested that Ms. Burgard compile input from the VR staff on what clients are experiencing when requesting reasonable accommodations for tests in a variety of settings, and to report back at the March meeting.**

**VR Section of Unified State Plan: Mr. Sigman detailed the process required to finalize the draft plan, that will include a public comment period, public hearing and review of the public comments by the Advisory Board and the SRC after the public comment period closes. The final draft must be submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration by March 1, 2020.**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Allen, seconded by Ms. Russell, to permit the draft BESB Vocational Rehabilitation section of the Unified State Plan to proceed to the public comment period. Motion passed unanimously.**

**SRC Annual Report: Mr. Gunzburg reported that he will be finalizing the annual report so that it can be submitted on time to the Governor and Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration.**

**Review of Consumer Satisfaction Survey Summary: Mr. Sigman informed the members that the executive summary for the 2019 consumer satisfaction survey has been received and the full report is forthcoming. The executive summary reported that levels of satisfaction have increased in comparison to the survey results from last year.**

**Report from BESB State Director**

**Program Update: Mr. Sigman reported on the VR Program’s activities during the month of October, which was National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month. BESB-VR was a co-sponsor of the Employment First conference and the 27th Annual Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities. BESB-VR also participated in a resource fair that was held in Hartford and a job fair that was held in Orange. Attendance was strong at all events.**

**Legislation Update: Mr. Sigman noted that the federally funded programs at BESB, particularly VR, has been receiving allotments under the continuing resolution and has adequate carry-forward funds to maintain staffing and service levels.**

**Report from Chair: Mr. Gunzburg urged all SRC members that it is imperative to let constituents know that the VR portion of Unified State Plan is open for public comment and to make sure they are heard any way possible by showing up at the public hearing or by submitting comments through any of the other options that are available.**

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Baecker, seconded by Mr. Allen, to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.**

**The next Council meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at BESB.**