**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

**March 25, 2020**

**Members Present: Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Mr. Nate Barnes, Mr. Michael Bartley, Ms. Enaida Mendoza, Ms. Brandy Altergott, Mr. John Carnemolla, Ms. Lucretia Jones, Mr. John McNickle, Ms. Deborah Reed, Ms. Dawn Russell, Mr. Brian Sigman, Ms. Kendra Valente, and Mr. Gary Allen.**

**Others Present: Ms. Mary Burgard, and Ms. Lori St. Amand**

**Members Absent: Mr. Scott Baecker, Ms. Amanda Billiot, Mr. Jay Brown, Ms. Beth Reel, Ms. Eileen Rose**

**Call to Order: Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.**

**Public Comment: None.**

**Old Business**

**Review and Approval of Minutes from the December 18, 2019: MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. McNickle, and seconded by Ms. Valente to adopt the minutes from the December 18, 2019 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Workgroup Reports**

**Membership: Mr. Barnes welcomed new members Brandy Altergott, John Carnemolla, Lucretia Jones, and Deborah Reed to the State Rehabilitation Council and thanked them in advance for serving on the SRC. Mr. Sigman announced the re-appointment of Ms. Beth Reel and the expiring terms this year of Chairman Gunzburg and Mr. Barnes.**

**Finance: Mr. Sigman, on behalf of Mr. Baecker, reported on the three expenditures since the federal fiscal year started last October: Consumer Satisfaction Survey, NFB Newsline, and NCSAB Membership Dues.**

**Consumer Satisfaction: Mr. Sigman reported that the** **Center for Public Policy and Social Research at CCSU is conducting the satisfaction surveys on a quarterly basis.**

**Technology: Nothing to report at this time.**

**New Business**

**VR Success Story: Mr. Jonathan Richmond, BESB Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor Coordinator, introduced Ms. Melissa Thompson. Ms. Thompson spoke about how she obtained her undergraduate degree with a GPA of 4.0, and then continued to obtain a master’s degree with assistance and support from BESB Vocational Rehabilitation. She also received adaptive technology and mobility instruction that helped her along the way. With guidance from Ms. Mychelle Carter, BESB VR Counselor, she was assisted by a local community rehabilitation provider with updating her resume and to strengthen her interviewing skills. Ms. Thompson is now working at an independent living center as an Advocate. Ms. Thompson thanked BESB for the services that she received.**

**Comprehensive Needs Assessment: Mr. Sigman reviewed what this assessment is for the SRC and explained how this differentiates from the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. This assessment is performed every three years and needs to be completed by December 31. In the past, the Center for Public Policy and Social Research at CCSU has conducted the Comprehensive Needs Assessment for BESB.**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Barnes, seconded by Ms. Jones, to permit the Center for Public Policy and Social Research at CCSU to conduct this Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Unified State Plan Update: Mr. Sigman reported that the BESB-VR section of the Unified State Plan has been submitted to Rehabilitation Services Administration on time. He then explained the next steps in the process now that they have received it.**

**Public VR 100 Year Anniversary: Mr. Sigman informed the members that June will mark the 100-year anniversary of the public vocational rehabilitation program. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, events were being planned to celebrate this milestone. However, under the current circumstances, the celebration will be through electronic communications. Rehabilitation Services Administration has a website page dedicated to highlighting the history and accomplishments of the program.**

**SRC Leadership Transition Plan: Chairman Gunzburg announced that his term expires on April 10 and Mr. Barnes’ term ends June 30. Consistent with the bylaws for the SRC, Vice-Chair Bartley will take over the duties of the Chair, serving out the remainder of the term. Mr. Bartley will run the June and September meetings of the Council. At the June meeting, a call for a Slate of Officers will be conducted and voted on at the September SRC meeting.**

**Report from BESB State Director: Mr. Sigman gave an overview on how services are being provided during the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Many staff are now telecommuting. The building is closed to the public. Field staff are providing services via telephone and email communications. Most of the vending facilities operated through the Business Enterprise Program have stopped operations for the time being. Discussion took place on the impact this pandemic is having on the Vending Facility Managers who run the food service operations in state buildings and state parks which are being closed off to the public and have minimal staff presence.**

**Mr. Sigman informed the Council members that the State Legislature is presently closed and no meetings of the legislative committees are currently scheduled. He also mentioned that the President has signed into law an economic stimulus package in response to the national pandemic crisis.**

**Report from Chair: Mr. Gunzburg told everyone how much he enjoyed his time as Chairman of the SRC and is very grateful to have served. He appreciated all SRC members for being available today and participating during these difficult times.**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. McNickle, seconded by Mr. Bartley, to thank the Chair for his time and dedicated SRC service. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Bartley, to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.**

**The next Council meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.**