**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**

## June 13, 2018

**Members Present:  Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Mr. Brian Sigman, Ms. Ellen Telker, Mr. Patrick Melfi, Mr. Nate Barnes, Ms. Diane Weaver Dunne, Ms. Diann Murray, Ms. Colleen Hayles, Mr. Michael Bartley, Ms. Kathleen Marioni, Ms. Linda Mizzi, Ms. Nyema Pinkney, Ms. Beth Reel, and Ms. Kimberly Tindall.**

**Others Present: Ms. Lisa Flaherty-Vaughn and Ms. Enaida Mendoza.**

**Members Absent: Ms. Jeannette Rodriguez-Perez and Mr. Steve Famiglietti.**

**Call to Order: Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.**

**Old Business**

**Review and Approval of Minutes from the March 14, 2018 minutes: The Council unanimously adopted the meeting minutes of March 14, 2018.**

**Workgroup Reports**

**Membership: Mr. Nate Barnes and Mr. Brian Sigman updated the SRC on membership status of current vacancies and upcoming vacancies. Mr. Melfi and Mr. Bartley have indicated their desire to seek a second term of appointment to the SRC. Ms. Pinkney, Ms. Murray, Ms. Telker and Ms. Weaver Dunne will be completing their second term of appointment on June 30, 2018 and will be transitioning off of the SRC. Chairman Gunzburg thanked them for their many years of dedicated service on the SRC. Ms. Mizzi was welcomed as a new member of the SRC, representing the category of Client Assistance Program.**

**Finance: Mr. Sigman reported on the recent expenditures for the CSAVR membership dues and for the SRC Chair to attend the CSAVR and NCSAB national conferences in April.**

**Consumer Satisfaction: Mr. Sigman reaffirmed that the survey has been posted on BESB’s section of the DORS website.**

**Technology: Mr. Gunzburg deferred to an Aira demonstration further along in the meeting.**

**Legislative: Nothing new to report on at this time.**

**New Business**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously to amend the agenda to add an Aira demonstration and a VR Success Story under New Business.**

**Vocational Rehabilitation Policy Updates For Action: Mr. Sigman complimented the SRC for the time and effort that was put into reviewing the current VR policies and making recommendations for changes that subsequently went through a public comment period and a public hearing. Mr. Sigman noted that there were no public comments received in regards to the proposed policy changes. Mr. Gunzburg also thanked everyone for their input on conference calls and attending the special meeting on this topic.**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously to approve the changes to the VR polices as they were written and presented to the public.**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously that if the Advisory Board approves and passes these proposed policy changes, to make the new policies effective July 1, 2018.**

**Slate of Officers for September:  Mr. Gunzburg sought a slate of officers to be elected at the SRC September meeting. Nominations were made that included: Chair, Alan Gunzburg; Vice-Chair, Michael Bartley; Secretary, Nate Barnes; and Treasurer, Steve Famiglietti. Nominations will be taken from the floor at the September meeting and then an election of officers will occur at that meeting.**

**Consumer Satisfaction Survey: Mr. Sigman stated that the Center for Public Policy and Social Research at CCSU has submitted a proposal to conduct the Consumer Satisfaction Survey for 2018. There has been a price increase from the prior year. Discussion took place on whether to seek out other options or to accept the CCSU proposal. It was concluded that CCSU would be utilized for the Consumer Satisfaction Survey this year, but that a workgroup should be formed to consider other entities that may be able to complete the survey for less cost in future years.**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously to have the Center for Public Policy and Social Research at CCSU conduct the Consumer Satisfaction Survey for 2018 and to have the Consumer Satisfaction Workgroup gather more information from UConn, and maybe a third entity, to give the SRC some choices for next year’s survey.**

**Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Funding: Mr. Sigman explained that the YLF is going into a fee-for-service-model and is re-branding the program into a pre-employment transition focus. The funding this year will be on a per-student-basis. Three BESB students are attending this year at approximately $2,500 per student.**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted to support this year’s Youth Leadership Forum utilizing the fee-for-service model. Ms. Reel abstained from the vote due to her role on the YLF board.**

**Technology: Mr. Gunzburg introduced Marty Watts, Director of Sales, from Aira who gave a background on Aira and what services they offer. Also, Ms. Pinkney gave a live demonstration on how the product works. A question and answer period followed.**

**VR Success Story: Ms. Enaida Mendoza, BESB VR Assistant Counselor introduced Ms. Mary McCabe who is a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) for the Norwalk Public School System. Ms. McCabe started off her story by saying that she could not have succeeded in her job without the help and support that she has received from BESB-VR. She discussed the importance of adaptive technology and training from VR and the provision of low vision aids which allows her to do her job and succeed at it.**

**Report from BESB State Director**

**Program Update:  Mr. Sigman stated that since the Department of Aging is now a part of DORS as the State Unit on Aging, a strategic planning meeting was organized to review what the new mission statement, organizational structure and priorities for DORS will be going forward. Additional meetings are planned to address these topics. Another item Mr. Sigman brought forward was a question raised by the consulting vendor that is designing a new case management system for DORS. They are asking about the word that should be used to describe the individuals that are served by DORS. The SRC deliberated on the terms “client, consumer, customer, participant, individual, recipient.” After a robust discussion, the SRC members requested that Mr. Sigman forward to them the definitions for each of these terms and that further deliberation will occur at the September meeting.**

**Budget Update: Mr. Sigman provided a budget update for the VR Program. For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019, that starts October 1, 2018, there are adequate funds to serve all eligible individuals. However, FFY 2020 is very close to the point where an order of selection may become necessary. Mr. Sigman recommended that the SRC initiate the process of updating the policies pertaining to order of selection in preparation for implementation. It is hoped that an order of selection will not be necessary in FFY 2020, but planning must be initiated far enough in advance to be in a position to implement the required steps if the budget projections for FFY 2020 continue to move toward insufficient funding to serve all eligible individuals in that fiscal year. Mr. Sigman stated that he is hopeful the new policies passed by the SRC will have a positive effect on reducing the total expenditures in purchased services.**

**Legislation Update:  Mr. Sigman summarized the Senate HELP Committee letter that every State Director received that is requesting clarification of public vocational rehabilitation’s stance on referrals to Ability One contractors.**

**Report from Chair:  Mr. Gunzburg noted that his trip to the CSAVR and NCSAB national conferences was very interesting, but the one thing he learned in particular is that implementing an order of selection is a significant undertaking and that there is a lot of work to do regarding this. He requests the SRC to keep that in mind going forward and that blocks of time will need to be cleared from their individual schedules to work on this. Lastly, Mr. Gunzburg once again thanked the members who are attending their last SRC meeting for their service.**

**Adjournment: Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously to adjourn at 12:02 p.m.**

**The next Council meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at BESB.**