**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 26, 2018

**Members Present**

**Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Mr. Brian Sigman, Mr. Scott Baecker, Mr. Steve Famiglietti, Mr. Patrick Melfi, Mr. Nate Barnes, Mr. Michael Bartley, Mr. John McNickle, Ms. Enaida Mendoza, Ms. Linda Mizzi, Ms. Beth Reel, Mr. Gary Allen, and Ms. Kimberly Tindall**

**Others Present**

**Ms. Mary Burgard**

**Members Absent**

**Ms. Colleen Hayles and Ms. Kathleen Marioni**

**Call to Order**

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

**Old Business**

**Review and Approval of Minutes from the June 13, 2018 minutes**

**On a motion by Mr. Barnes, seconded by Mr. Bartley, the Council unanimously adopted the meeting minutes of June 13, 2018.**

**Workgroup Reports**

**Membership**

**Mr. Barnes and Mr. Sigman welcomed new Council members Gary Allen, Scott Baecker, John McNickle and Enaida Mendoza. Mr. Sigman reported that Mr. Melfi and Mr. Bartley have been reappointed to a second term. Vacancies still exist in the categories of “recipient of services, employer,” and a “representative of an individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing himself or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent himself or herself.”**

**Finance**

**Mr. Sigman reported on federal fiscal year 2018 expenditures including the shared expense for NFB Newsline, the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, NCSAB membership dues, CSAVR membership dues, and the SRC Chair’s attendance at the spring CSAVR and NCSAB national conferences.**

**Consumer Satisfaction**

**Mr. Sigman confirmed that letters have been sent out to all individuals who will be receiving a telephone call for the 2018 survey. In reference to potential vendors for future surveys, Mr. Bartley obtained confirmation that UConn no longer conducts consumer satisfaction surveys.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Bartley and seconded by Mr. Barnes to have CCSU continue as the provider to conduct the 2019 Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Technology**

**Mr. Gunzburg stated that coming up later on in the meeting will be a presentation from MicroSoft regarding some AI programs that are free and available for iPhones.**

**Legislative**

**A new committee will be assembled moving forward.**

**New Business**

**Vocational Rehabilitation (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 Vocational Rehabilitation. This helped her to obtain her current job as a Case Manager. 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.**

**Election Of Officers**

**Since Mr. Gunzburg was on the slate of officers up for election, he requested that ex-officio SRC member Mr. Sigman perform the steps involved for moving the slate of officers forward. Mr. Sigman presented the slate of officers for 2018 based on the responses that were received from the membership at the June meeting. Mr. Sigman requested additional nominations from the floor for the roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, whose terms will begin October 1, 2018.**

**Mr. Sigman announced the slate of officers: Chair- Alan Gunzburg, Vice Chair- Michael Bartley, Secretary- Nate Barnes and Treasurer- Steve Famiglietti.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Barnes, seconded by Mr. Bartley to close the nominations. The motion passed unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Mr. McNickle, seconded by Ms. Mizzi to vote in the slate of officers as presented. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Seeing AI Presentation**

**Harrison Wray from MicroSoft gave a presentation on Seeing AI, a free App designed for individuals with blindness or low vision. He provided information on the capabilities of the AI app to scan and read text and currency, and to identify colors, objects and people.**

**Order of Selection Workgroup Recommendations**

**Mr. Sigman reported on the Order of Selection workgroup’s recent activities that included a proposal to update the Vocational Rehabilitation policy on Order of Selection.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Bartley, seconded by Mr. McNickle to present the draft policy update document for public comment. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Identifer Language For Program Participants**

**As requested at the June SRC meeting, Mr. Sigman reviewed the document he sent out to each member that contained proposed choices for terminology to describe those who receive services from DORS. Mr. Sigman provided the Google and dictionary definitions of “client”, “consumer”, “customer”, “individual”, “participant”, and “recipient”. Discussion took place from different perspectives on each choice.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Bartley, seconded by Mr. Barnes to recommend “client” as the term to describe those who receive services from DORS. The motion passed on a vote of 9 in favor and 1 opposed.**

**Consumer Satisfaction Vendors**

**As a continuation of the workgroup report from earlier in the meeting, Mr. Gunzburg requested that if any of the SRC members learns of another state entity that conducts consumer based satisfaction surveys, to bring this information forward for the SRC to consider.**

**SRC Annual Report**

**Mr. Gunzburg stated that any member who wishes to submit information for the annual report that is due on December 31, 2018 should notify him or Mr. Sigman as soon as possible.**

**Meeting Dates for 2019**

**Discussion took place on the proposed SRC meeting dates for 2019. The dates proposed were March 13, June 12, September 25, and December 18.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Bartley and seconded by Mr. Baecker to accept these meeting dates for 2019. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Report from BESB State Director**

**Program Update**

**Mr. Sigman announced that VR Counselor John Farrington retired on September 1st. However, Mr. Farrington was brought back as a temporary worker/retiree to help continue with his caseload until his replacement is hired. This federally funded position has been posted and the interview process is being set up. The new hire will be located in Bridgeport, which will result in some shifting of other VR Counselor’s territories to even out caseloads. Children Services had two teachers retire in August, but two new hires were brought in at the beginning of this school year. Adult Services Mobility Instructor Mr. John Waiculonis retired effective August 1st and was brought back on August 17th as a temporary worker/retiree. Ms. Mary Burgard, VR Supervisor, and Mr. Jonathan Richmond, VR Counselor Coordinator, will be presenting at the national fall NCSAB Conference on the Career Index Plus model. Mr. Sigman also announced that the first WIOA Annual Report will be submitted by the end of the week.**

**Mr. Sigman provided an overview of the current status of the Vocational Rehabilitation budget.  BESB recently received $431,000 through the federal re-allotment process.  For FFY 2019, current projections indicate that sufficient funds are available to serve all eligible individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. FFY2020 is projected to have less funding available, but current projections do indicate it will be at a level sufficient to serve all eligible individuals in that year as well.**

**Legislation Update**

**Mr. Sigman reported that HB 5503, “An Act Concerning the Killing or Injuring of Seeing Eye Dogs and Assistance Dogs” passed in the last legislative session. This law increases the liability for a person whose dog has injured a guide dog or assistance dog.**

**Report from Chair**

**Mr. Gunzburg thanked the workgroups for their diligence on the draft policy updates voted on today. Also, at the next SRC meeting there will be a Technology Report from Mr. Steve Famiglietti. Among the topics will be the iPhone app “Be My Eyes.” Mr. Gunzburg reminded everyone about the upcoming 2018 Candidates’ Forum on Disability Issues on October 11th at the Red Lion Hotel in Cromwell.**

**Adjournment**

**A motion was made by Mr. Bartley, seconded Ms. Mizzi to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.**

**The next Council meeting is scheduled for December 19, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at BESB.**