**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

 September 13, 2023

**Members Present: Mr. Phillip Magalnick, Mr. Scott Baecker,** Ms. Brandy Altergott, Mr. William DeMaio, **Ms. Jennifer Jenkins, Ms. Lucretia Jones, Ms. Enaida Mendoza, Ms. Deborah Reed, Ms. Beth Reel, Ms. Kendra Valente, Mr. John McNickle, Mr. Dennis Regan, Ms. Heide Sulewski**

 Others Present: Director Carol Jenkins, Ms. Jennifer Proto, Ms. Mary Burgard, Ms. Lisa Drew, Ms. Rayah Martin, Ms. Honorata Kazmierczak, Ms. Carmen Hughes, Ms. Charlotte Copenhaver, Ms. Haley Jackson

 Members Absent: **Mr. Jay Brown,** Ms. Nicole Rico-Serrano, Mr. Frank Buonomo, **Mr. John Carnemolla,** Mr. Frank Losquadro, **Ms. Nicole Rico-Serrano**

**Welcome and Introductions:**

**Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. by Chair Phillip Magalnick.**

**The roll call was conducted by Secretary Lucretia Jones.**

**Public Comment:**

**None**

**Old Business**

**a) Review and Approval of Minutes from the June 21, 2023, meeting**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Scott Baecker to approve the minutes.**

**SECONDED by Ms. Jones**

**MOTION PASSED**

**Workgroup Reports**

**a) Membership**

**Ms. Jones welcomes Heide Sulewski from the Department of Labor and Lisa Drew, the Administrative Assistant from the BESB, Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind. The Council in Workforce Board and Vice-Chair positions are still open, and Chair Magalnick emphasized the significance of participation and attendance. The Council deliberated on member recruitment, meeting attendance, and the next course of action. Ms. Jones offered to contact members who have missed three or more meetings to ascertain if they intend to continue.**

MOTION: Deb Reed made a motion that the Council contact absent members as discussed.

SECONDED by Bill DeMaio

MOTION PASSED

**b) Finance**

 At the meeting, Mr. Baecker sought to address any concerns regarding the budget report that had been distributed prior. The report encompassed costs associated with the ongoing Lab Expansion Project.

During the discussion, a participant raised a query about the availability of certain technological equipment. BESB Director Carol Jenkins explained that said equipment is solely accessible for loan by Vocational Rehabilitation clients; nevertheless, adult services clients may arrange for a demonstration by contacting a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

 c) Consumer Satisfaction/ Needs Assessment surveys.

Director Jenkins reported that CCSU Connecticut Central State University is collecting the data for the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Data is also being collected for the Needs Assessment Survey. The surveys are being sent electronically via SurveyMonkey.

Chair Magalnick thanked the workgroup for their efforts.

**New Business**

1. **The NCSAB and CSAVR Conferences are taking place in Savannah, GA. CSAVR will be held from October 28 to November 1, while NCSAB's Fall Conference will be from November 1 to 3. The Council discussed attending the conferences and what valuable information they could gather from presenters and attendees of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Mary Burgard and Director Jenkins will be present at the event. Ms. Burgard mentioned that some sessions are recorded and made available online. The Council also discussed the benefits of collaboration with other states and the importance of sharing their newfound knowledge with the rest of the Council.**

**b) VR Success Story**

**Charlotte Copenhaver introduced UCONN University of Connecticut student Haley**

**Jackson spoke about her experience with VR pre-employment services.**

**She has been a BESB client for about eight years. During that time, she has learned about assistive technology and learned to advocate for herself. She had a summer work experience at a stem cell biology lab. She gained a lot of hands-on experience and has been invited back for next summer. She is also working as a mentor at UCONN. She wants to study biology and go into stem cell research.** Her experience working in the lab over the summer helped her decide that is the area she would like to go.

At UCONN, BESB has helped her with magnification and a large monitor, and with accessibility for taking tests.

She was asked about using assistive technology for lab work, and she answered that she was able to receive bifocal lenses and magnification.

Ms. Copenhaver asked about her employer and coworkers at the lab handling her visual impairment. Ms. Jackson said they were helpful and encouraging in finding ways to help do her work.

Chair Magalnick thanked her for sharing her story and wished her continued success.

ELECTION of Officers:

Chair Magalnick asked for any nominations for the slate of officers.

Mr. DeMaio nominated Phil Magalnick for Chair

Mr. Baecker nominated Bill DeMaio for vice-chair.

Lucretia Jones, current Secretary.

Scott Baecker, current Treasurer.

MOTION: Bill DeMaio motioned for the vote to be taken, with all nominations on one ballot.

SECONDED by John McNickle

VOTE: The slate of officers nominated to the State Rehabilitation Council was approved.

Meeting Dates for 2023-2024:

December 20, 2023

March 20, 2024

June 19, 2024

September 18, 2024

**Report from BESB Representative**

**a)** **Program Update: Director Jenkins reported** on **new staff and interviews that were held for Processing Technician, Interviews happening currently for VR Transition Counselor, and Reposting for Rehab Teacher for Adult Services.**

**There is also a vote for the new ADS logo. The choices have gone out by email, and Director Jenkins requests voters reply only to her with their top choice.**

**Blindness Equality Day, Friday, October 13th, at BESB from 10:00-12:00. Legislative Liaison Jennifer Proto is working on a proclamation. There will be special guests and panel discussions. The Director of Communications for ADS will help get the information out, and individuals are welcome to share.**

**Council discussed what would be needed to create a program outreach position and who the Council might want to invite to the event.**

**Director Jenkins asked the Council if they would like to request an allocated budget for the SRC.**

**MOTION: Bill DeMaio Motioned that the SRC request $10,000-$20,000.**

**SECONDED by John McNickle**

**MOTION PASSED**

**Director Jenkins requested a workgroup be formed to work on the results of the survey as soon as we get the results in December.**

**b) Legislation Update:**

**Jennifer Proto reported on planning for the 2024 session. The Governor’s office and OPM have included two new questions in the legislative submission process:**

**1) How do proposals connect to agencies’ ten-year visions?**

**2) How will agencies measure whether the proposal meets its goals?**

**Ms. Proto stated that legislative workgroups related to aging and disabilities have been formed, and there may be proposals forthcoming prior to the next session.**

**She also updated the Council regarding state email addresses, which cannot be provided unless one is a state employee.**

**Report from Chair:**

 Chair Magalnick will meet with Council officers to make a plan for the next year and plan workgroups.

Points to the Good and Welfare

Mr. DeMaio announced a meeting between the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association and the ADA Coalition of Connecticut at the Newington Parks and Recreation Community Center, happening on October 26, 2023.

Chair Magalnick offered an update on Honorata Kazmierczak’s position with the city of Stamford as an ADA coordinator and the assistance she has received from BESB.

**Adjournment**

**MOTION: Bill DeMaio made a motion to adjourn.**

**SECONDED by Scott Baecker.**

 Chair Magalnick adjourned the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

**Next Meeting: December 20, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.**