**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 WITH MOTIONS**

# September 20, 2017

**Members Present:  Ms. Nyema Pinkney, Mr. Brian Sigman, Ms. Ellen Telker, Mr. Alan Gunzburg, Mr. Patrick Melfi, Mr. Nate Barnes, Ms. Diane Weaver-Dunne, Ms. Diann Murray, Mr. Gary Gross, Ms. Jeannette Rodriguez-Perez, Ms. Colleen Hayles, Ms. Kathleen Marioni, Mr. Steve Famiglietti, Ms. Kimberly Tindall, and Mr. Michael Bartley.**

**Others Present: Ms. Mary Burgard, Mr. Andrew Norton, Ms. Enaida Mendoza, and Ms. Mychelle Carter.**

**Members Absent: Ms. Beth Reel and Mr. Carl Noll.**

**Call to Order: Ms. Pinkney, Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.**

**Old Business**

**Review and Approval of Minutes from the June 21, 2017 meeting: The Council unanimously adopted the meeting minutes of June 21, 2017.**

**Workgroup Reports**

**Membership: Ms. Pinkney updated the Council members on the current membership status including recent reappointments and two new appointments that are in progress.**

**Finance: No expenditures to report since last SRC meeting.**

**Consumer Satisfaction: Mr. Sigman stated that a preliminary draft of the consumer satisfaction report has been received and it will be made available to the membership once it has been finalized by the Center for Public Policy and Social Research.**

**Technology: Mr. Gunzburg informed the SRC that representatives from LYFT will be at the December meeting for a presentation.**

**Legislative: Deferred to Legislation Update later in the meeting.**

**New Business**

**VR Success Story: Mr. Mark Ward, BESB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, introduced Ms. Erika Cooper. Ms. Cooper talked about the challenges she had to overcome after vision loss. Upon referral to BESB, a work evaluation was arranged through a community rehabilitation provider, which subsequently led to an internship as a Youth Coordinator at the same employer site. After finishing the internship and gaining more work experience, Ms. Cooper started an internship at Neighborhood Housing Services of Waterbury Inc. Her success in the internship resulted in a job offer. Ms. Cooper is now working as a Community Building and Engagement Specialist. Ms. Cooper expressed her appreciation for Mr. Ward’s timely assistance that brought about this successful job match.**

**Election of Officers: Ms. Pinkney presented the Council with the slate of officers for 2018 based on the responses that she had received from the membership: Ms. Pinkney took nominations from the floor for the roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer whose terms will begin October 1, 2017.**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously to combine the slate of the four offices into one single vote.**

**Ms. Pinkney announced the slate of officers: Chair- Alan Gunzburg, Vice Chair- Diane Weaver-Dunne, Secretary- Nate Barnes and Treasurer - Diann Murray.**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously to vote in this slate of officers.**

**SRC Annual Report: Ms. Pinkney, working with Mr. Gunzburg, stated that she will reach out to each member for input to the SRC annual report that is due by December 31, 2017.**

**SRC Training on Role And Function:  Mr. Sigman gave an overview of the role and functions of the State Rehabilitation Council as detailed in the federal regulations.**

**Business Plan Development Guide for Review: Mr. Sigman distributed the proposed business plan development guide and template. This guide draws directly from the Vocational Rehabilitation policy language and is a step-by-step guide which includes a business plan template to help clients to address the requirements for business plan funding requests. The guide originated from a recommendation by the Work Group that reviewed last year’s Consumer Satisfaction Survey and wanted to increase communication levels in the Business Plan/Self Employment area to help clients better understand the policy requirements. After discussion, it was decided that members should send suggestions to Mr. Sigman by no later than October 31st so that he can distribute them. This will allow time for both the Advisory Board and SRC members to review all of the comments prior to their December meetings.**

**Meeting Dates for 2018: Discussion took place on the SRC meeting dates for 2018. The dates agreed upon were March 14, June 13, September 26, and December 19.**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously.**

**VR Budget Discussion- Status and Options: Mr. Sigman reported that the State budget has not been passed yet and the state is operating under Executive Order. On the federal side, the bureau will not know until the end of September if any federal re-allotment funds are awarded to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. While the program has sufficient funds to meet expenses in Federal FY 18, without additional funding through the re-allotment process, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program will be on the brink of needing to implement an Order of Selection in FY 19.**

**Motion made, seconded, and accepted unanimously to form a workgroup of the SRC to work with the Advisory Board to examine criteria for Order of Selection and make recommendations to the bureau regarding implementation.**

**The following members volunteered to serve on the workgroup:  Ms. Pinkney, Ms. Murray, Ms. Weaver-Dunne, and Mr. Bartley.**

**Report from BESB State Director**

**Program Update: Mr. Sigman thanked Ms. Marioni for organizing a productive workshop for all the partners in the workforce development system regarding the development of cost-sharing arrangements for infrastructure costs of the One-Stop centers. BESB is looking to have a part-time physical presence at the comprehensive centers in each of the five workforce regions. Michelle Laramie from BESB and Arlene Lugo from BRS are assisting with assessing the accessibility of the One-Stop centers for individuals with disabilities.**

**Mr. Sigman reported on two Children Services camps that were held this past summer. Discussion also took place on reassessing the provision of summer programs in future years given the cost and the lower enrollment trend. Ms. Marioni offered to assist with distribution of information going forward to help cast a wider circulation of these opportunities.**

**Legislation Update: At the Federal level, Mr. Sigman reported that the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind has submitted public comments in response to the President’s executive order to review federal regulations that could potentially be modified or repealed. The closing date for public comment is September 20.Also brought to the SRC’s attention was the Graham-Cassidy Affordable Care Act Repeal Bill in Congress. At the state level, Mr. Norton updated the SRC on the latest proposals to pass the state budget.**

**Report from Chair: Ms. Pinkney congratulated Gary Gross on his recent graduation from the Partners In Policy program. Also, she thanked Mr. Sigman for keeping the SRC informed and updated on the re-allotment process and its potential impact on the VR budget. Last, Ms. Pinkney thanked the SRC for their commitment and how it has been an honor to serve them since this is her last meeting serving as Chairperson.**

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

**The next Council meeting is scheduled for December 20, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at BESB**