**Statutory Advisory Board (SAB)**

**February 4, 2025**

**Minutes**

SAB Attendees: Blair Wong, Brian MacDonald, Kathy Petkauskos, Nancy Rumbolt-Trzcinski

MCB Staff Attendees: John Oliveira, Justine Muir, Nathan Skrocki, Lucy Evangelidis, Loran Lang

Meeting Held via Zoom; Recordings made available to public on MCB YouTube channel

Public invited to participate through Q&A made at end of the meeting.

Minutes

Blair motions to accept the minutes from the January meeting. Minutes accepted.

Commissioner Update: John Oliveira

John attended the Governor’s State of the Commonwealth address.

MCB is level funded for FY26 at approximately $30 million. The budget allows for three additional positions which include a region 1 social worker, region 2 rehabilitation teacher, and region 6 housing specialist.

A new children’s worker is also starting in our New Bedford area office due to retirement.

There is a lot of uncertainty coming from Washington but so far nothing has impacted MCB’s federal funding. We have our staff funded through June 30th and have our money in place for contracts. The final payment for FY25 federal funding can be expected around April or May.

Brian asks if the CFO position is still open. Yes. The budget director is doing a great job to cover everything and make sure the exercises are completed on time.

Kathy asks about RSA regarding the remarks in the news about the dismantling of Department of Education. John says at this point it is just talk and it is being discussed at the New England CSAVR meetings and NCSAB meetings. If it is moved to the Department of Labor or another agency, it will not be an issue for us.

Programs and Services Update: Justine Muir

Boston Tax Help Coalition Partnership – provides free tax services and accommodations for taxpayers with disabilities. These services are available to individuals earning $70,000 or less annually and are offered on Sundays in Brighton. Information on scheduling appointments will soon be available on the MCB website.

Kathy asks if they assist people in other parts of the state. Justine said that specific service is just for Boston and the surrounding communities.

Additionally, several Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs operate in other parts of the state. We encourage consumers to check with their local Community Action Councils for available resources.

CCB and BMC Employment Now **-** Our Employment Services Team is launching an exciting new vocational training collaboration with The Carroll Center and Boston Medical Center (BMC). This partnership will provide consumers with structured volunteer opportunities, helping them develop skills, gain experience, and build confidence for future employment. Next week, we will tour the BMC facilities and review potential roles across various departments that may be of interest to our consumers. Shortly after, the Carroll Center will lead consumer preparation, training, and facilitation of these experiences at BMC.

Blair asks if there are other opportunities to partner with hospitals in the Springfield, Worcester, or New Bedford regions. Justine says we do not have any at the moment but hopefully it can be replicated in the future in other regions. John says it is part of the employment now initiative we have been doing since 2017.

Dashboard Update: Nathan Skrocki

867 open SR children’s cases and 3,366 open SR adult cases.

213 open VR youth cases and 769 open VR adult cases.

14 closed SR children’s cases and 209 closed SR adult cases. (calendar year)

118 successful VR closures and 65 unsuccessful VR closures. (fiscal year)

806 COBs, 120 MCB IDs, and 142 new registrations.

The dashboard is updated on the first business day of each month. It is located on the MCB main page, but Nate also sent it to the Zoom chat.

Questions from the SAB Members

Blair asks if the Work Without Limits links and events are also on the website. Kathy can send that info to MCB to post on our website.

Blair asks if there is a meet and greet opportunity when a new staff member is hired for the region they work in. John says we have not done that, but it is something we can think about doing virtually.

Brian asks what the process is for getting an extension on our virtual board meetings. John is meeting with the Secretary next week and will ask her what the process is.

Questions from the Public

Amy asks if finding candidates for open positions has gotten easier over the past year. She also asks if we anticipate more retirements now that the Social Security Fairness Act has been appealed. John says there are several employees eligible for retirement at the agency, but he does not know if that will impact their decision. In terms of increasing MCB’s visibility, we are working with UMASS to develop an undergraduate course to introduce students to the field we work in. We are also creating short videos about certain positions for different media channels.

Meeting adjourned.