MCB Statutory Advisory Board Minutes

May 6, 2022

Present SAB:

Joe Abely, Chair

Kim Charlson

Dr. Howard Purcell

Amy Ruell

Present MCB:

David D’Arcangelo, Commissioner

John Oliveira, Deputy Commissioner

Nathan Skrocki, Director of Policy and Compliance

Loran Lang, General Counsel

Approximately five members of the public also attended.

March meeting minutes approved by SAB.

The meeting was recorded.

Commissioner Update:

* Status of the 2022 reallotment fund RFR Process – David said that the RFR’s have been awarded and/or have had their kickoff meetings. All are on track to be completed on time. Nathan Skrocki is managing VR Projects - Disabilities of Qualification (kickoff meeting held), Impact of Covid-19(awarded, kickoff scheduled), and VR Consumers Survey analytics(awarded, kickoff scheduled). No comments/questions from SAB Members.
* Current FY spending against the GAA – Several amendments failed. Email regarding update on the budget process was distributed to stakeholders. MCB is in a strong financial position. Budgets still going through the lengthy process. Large amount of reversions will primarily be in Turning 22, mostly due to staffing shortages to accept consumers into some programs. Kim asked about when the Senate budget may come out, late May? David explained they are projecting for 2 or 3 weeks from now but it could change.
* NIB Updates from John Oliveira – Consumers have finished the first course. After a 2-week break, they will begin the second course. Second and third course to be completed by June 30th with a fourth course to begin in August. Another class will be introduced in September. Curriculum focusing on operating as an e-commerce business. NIB and MCB will offer assistance to ensure vendor success.
NIB contracted out some training courses. MCB VR funds are being used to pay for some of these programs.

- Discussion about the Randolph Sheppard program and issues/potential solutions.

Program Updates:

* Dashboard on Registrations, Process, and Outcomes – Nate presented dashboard. It has been updated with 2019 figures. YTD through April, 747 registrations have been processed which is putting us on pace to process 2200 cases for the year which would be above pre-covid numbers due to increase in appointments after lifting of covid restrictions. Registrations are almost being processed in real-time. Automation has improved processing time and data efficacy. Working toward the goal of central registration processes being completed within 10 business days.
* Amy asked about the process of registration and referral to services. Nate explained the process of registration in case management system assignment to a worker to then schedule an intake appointment. Joe asked if there was a backlog. John explained that there is not however, MCB needs to verify if the consumer intends on entering the workforce or if SR would be more appropriate.

Update on staffing changes and levels:

* David shared HR doc:

MCB FTE Cap is 133.5. Current FTE level is 129.8 with several positions in the hiring process which will bring MCB to the FTE Cap with the possibility of exceeding this number.

Status of effort to automate notification of blindness to assessors for tax exemptions:

* David, Loran, and Nate have met with DOR Division of Local Services about MCB accessing their portal that is available to all 351 city and town officials. A letter will be going out to inform consumers of this regulation update.
* Nate – this has given MCB an opportunity to update addresses and other pertinent information and ensure accuracy.
* Nate – There will be an opt-out option for consumers. Important to note, the assessors will only have the ability to access the data of the consumers in their specific town/city. The consumer data share will only be triggered by the consumer tax abatement request. This will help decrease the thousands of inquiries MCB receives regarding requests or questions on tax abatement and streamline the process.

Update on phone system procurement:

Contracted with KMBS to develop requirements. KMBS gathered feedback through discovery sessions and are currently taking feedback into consideration in order to develop these requirements to pass on to EOHHS IT to EOTTS who is the procurer of phone system. Feedback was gathered from consumers, staff, union, and various stakeholders. Optimistic to get this procured and installed by late summer.

Update on PPE available to MCB staff:

KN95 masks continue to be available to MCB staff upon requests. Gowns, gloves, shields, sanitizer etc. are also available upon request. Direct service staff have been approved to receive N95 masks. Fit testing is required for N95 which has been done and will continue to be done on an as needed basis.

SAB questions:

 Dr. Purcell - Consumer surveys?
 David: Met with HSRI and Alexander Pooler (AT).

They will be putting together a survey for consumers who have interacted with MCB VR services. Large print, mail, phone/zoom responses. Questions regarding Assistive Technology (AT) and VR. To be completed by September 30th.

Not a lot of comparative data. If SAB members have input, MCB can pass it on to AT to assist in the development of the surveys.

 Hiring updates?

David: We have made progress; however, it is a very competitive market. In addition, unfortunately, the state hiring process can be a bit lengthy. Possibly 90-120 days from posting date to onboarding.

There were no questions from the public at this meeting.

Next meeting: Friday, June 10 at noon.