**Statutory Advisory Board (SAB)**

**May 14, 2024**

**Minutes**

SAB Attendees: Blair Wong, Brian MacDonald, and Kathy Petkauskos

MCB Staff Attendees: John Oliveira, 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.

Commissioner Update: John Oliveira

The summer internship program is moving forward. Soft Skills training is happening this week. All participants are asked to attend.

The job fair planning continues for the event in October.

Attended the National Council of State Agencies Serving the Blind conference in Washington D.C. Discussed different programs and training opportunities. Rehab Service Administration (RSA) presented some of the feedback they are receiving. A portion of the conference was dedicated to the Randolph-Sheppard Vending program, which was severely impacted by the pandemic and teleworking.

Bay State Council for the Blind conference is on Saturday. John is presenting an agency update.

Meeting with the National Industries for the Blind later this month. We are working on a self-employment project with them.

RSA will begin looking for reallotment project ideas.

Fiscal update. We are in a good place. Still finding little pots of FY23 money we are moving into place to help pay for services. We are now looking at the FY24 grant. Our budget was level funded by the Governor. We have been working with HR to fill positions.

Brian asks for an update on the new SAB members. John says he will email them this afternoon for an update. The paperwork has been completed so we are just waiting for the process to finish up.

Dashboard Update: Nathan Skrocki

Dashboard project update. Currently communicating the methodology of how to obtain numbers out of our case management system. Nate is creating a document to guide them. The next step will be aesthetics and accessibility. We are on track to finish by September 30th if not before.

725 registrations this calendar year.

Not a lot of changes for SR cases. 64 additional adults and 7 less children in open SR cases. 8 additional DBES cases.

Slight increases in open VR cases. 14 additional VR cases and 6 additional pre-ETS.

SR closed cases for the calendar year: 941 adults and 52 children

VR closed cases for the fiscal year: 138 successful closures, 81 unsuccessful closures

Close to 1,700 people have been referred to Support Services this calendar year. 3,123 COBs, close to 500 IDs, 66 EDP applications, and 33 disabled placards.

Brian pointed out the seasonality of the increases in COBs, etc. Nate says the increases occur around the new year and mostly during tax abatement season.

Minutes

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

Questions from the SAB or Public

Blair asks if there is a preferred strategy in determining the timeline for distribution and completion of services to a client on the VR side. Nate says there isn’t a timeline as everyone is very different. Everyone is looking for some sort of employment as their goal. Some people need more training, others need more assistance in preparing themselves for work personally, etc... Some successful closures take a year, and others might take a decade or so. It is on a case-by-case basis.

Nona Haroyan serves on the Mass Hire Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council, and they are in the process of putting together an accessibility committee based on the Bond Bill. She is wondering if they can have a representative from the MCB assistive technology department for this committee. John says he can ask that department but that we are not accessibility specialists in terms of design. He will speak to the head of the department and get back to her.

Meeting adjourned.