



MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION

STATEWIDE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Chairperson
Dawn Clark

Vice Chairperson

Secretary

Members at Large
Steve Aalto

Statewide Rehabilitation Council

Morse Institute Library

14 East Central Street Natick, MA 01760

December 4, 2018

1:00pm-4:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order/Introductions

The following Gubernatorial Appointee Members were in attendance of the meeting: Ms. Rosanna Woodmansee, Mr. Stephen Aalto, Joe Bellil, Mr. Richard Colantonio, Ms. Dawn E. Clark, Chairperson, Ms. Katy O'Neil Watkins, Ms. Naomi Goldberg, and Felisha Battles-Birdsong

The following Ex Officio Members were in attendance of the meeting: Kevin Goodwin and Doug Mason
MRC Staff Present: - Toni Wolf, Commissioner; Kate Biebel, Deputy Commissioner; Cassandra Pierre-Louis, Training Coordinator; Adetokunbo Owolewa, Office Support Specialist; Molly Karp, Associate Counsel.

From the Mass Office on Disability: Mr. Alec Scarlis, CAP

- List of those present participating remotely.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair Dawn Clark, moved to approve the meeting minutes from the September 2018 meeting.

Richard Colantonio, moved to second the motion.

All voted in favor of approving the minutes from September 2018. None were opposed.

Old Business

- Topic
 - o Outcome
 - o Action Item, if applicable

New Business

- Open Meeting Law Presentation given by Molly Karp, MRC Assoc. Counsel
 - o Moly Karp, Assoc. Counsel at MRC, gave a PowerPoint presentation, with an overview of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law. SRC is a public body, and as such, subject to the provisions of the law. A quorum is established, when a majority of the public body is present.

Deliberations are oral or written communications between the members of the public body. They are subject to disclosure under the open meeting law. Agendas and meeting minutes are also subject to public disclosure, under the open meeting law.

Other:

- Topic: Order of Selection
 - o Commissioner Wolf gave a PowerPoint presentation on Order of Selection (OOS). MRC VR will enter an Order of Selection on January 8, 2019. The SRC had a vote in September, to recommend that MRC enter an Order of Selection. That vote was approved. Since then we've held listening session across the Commonwealth with the Independent Living Centers. We will also hold public hearings, before the end of the year. We will also have information with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) for students, parents, and schools across the Commonwealth.
 - o There will be three priority categories.
 1. An individual is considered to have **most significant disability** if there are substantial barriers in four or more of the seven areas described above.
 2. An individual is considered to have a **significant disability** if there is substantial barriers in two or three of the seven areas described above.
 3. An individual is considered to have a **disability** if there are substantial barriers in up to one of the seven areas described above

Questions asked:

Q. What needs to be done to formalize this?

A. We need to open up our State Plan and send our plans to RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration).

Q. What happens to applicants in priority 2 and 3?

A. Those priority categories will be closed to applicants.

We will not be sending a letter of denial to applicants. We will perform a "warm hand off", and direct people to other local resources. We will have updates on open priority categories on our Website, , Facebook, and Twitter accounts. We will hold bi-weekly info sessions at the area offices.

Q. Are these other resources going to be under the MRC umbrella?

A. These will be resource that exist at sister agencies, and community organizations.

- Supported Employment:

Commissioner Wolf gave a PowerPoint presentation on Comprehensive Employment Services.

Supported Employment is a separate unit within VR, which helps clients with services to keep their jobs. There are about 90 providers, with input from DMH, who provide services for Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) clients. Commissioner Wolf then talked about the Vermont Model of Supported Employment. The Vermont Model emphasizes the following:

- Transition Youth Services
- Short-term Employment/Job Exploration
- Informed engagement, and supports
- Partnership Plus and utilization of Supported Employment Services
- What does engagement look like?
- We will go out to consumers, and engage them in the community. This way, they do not have to come to us.
- Utilize benefits specialists to help consumers with navigating their situation.
- Mobile counselor in the community.
- Flexible use of state dollars
- Pathways to competitive employment.

The supported employment services will be individualized. A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, will lead an Individual Resource Team, (IRT) utilizing peer supports, leveraging family supports (if available), and Assistive Technology with an end goal of successful competitive employment. The development of transferable skills, critical thinking, and short-term employment experience are all steps as well.

Does DMH do employment work with consumers?

Yes, but MRC will be taking the lead on these services.

MRC 2019 Initiatives

- In 2019, there will be a pilot Eligibility Unit in the West District of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division. This new unit will determine eligibility for new applicants for six months and then the program will be evaluated.
- In 7/1/19, MRC will receive \$4.5 million in funding from DMH for these services. DMH will be monitoring for employment retention, median dollars earned per client, transferrable skills gained, and employer service effectiveness. MRC will put out a Request for Response (RFR) for ACCS. There will also be an RFR put out for Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES). At this time there are about 1,200 clients receiving services from DMH, who are interested in employment services from MRC.
- Competitive Integrated Employment Services RFR: MRC will be soliciting proposals to provide Competitive Integrated Employment Services with more flexibility in service delivery. Outcomes will be in alignment with WIOA common measures. This RFR will include the ACCS employment partnership.
- Pre-Employment Transition Services:

Pre-employment transition services start at age 14 for students with disabilities in high school and are available until they graduate or turn 22.

MRC is now serving high school/post-secondary students who do not necessarily need to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation services but could benefit from exposure to employment and career development supports.

Students with disabilities who may benefit from Vocational Rehabilitation services may still work directly with your MRC liaison (for students two years from graduation who need more individualized support).

What are the goals of pre-employment transition services?

Services emphasize awareness, exploration, and preparation.

Students can receive one or more of the five pre-employment transition services.

The goal is to provide students with the skills needed to be successful with employment or further education after high school.

Students with disabilities can connect directly through a community provider.

- State Plan Committee Chair Joe Bellil, said the committee will meet on January 31st. The Committee will start the discussion around the 2020 State Plan and recommendations for it. In February, the deliberations for the 2020 State Plan will begin in earnest. These recommendations must be complete by the end of May 2019.
- Chair Dawn Clark, motioned to discuss a proposed council retreat in January 2019. The question was put to the council, about a full day vs. half-day program. A majority opted for a full-day program, via show of hands.

A full day retreat should:

- Look at the nuts and bolts of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Set 2019 goals and priorities for the various SRC subcommittees
- Contingency planning
- Members should have the time to get to know one another
- Basic info e.g. bylaws, annual reports, etc.
- Determine where the SRC can help MRC. e.g. with community outreach.
- Determine the particular strengths of each member
- Meet on a Thursday with a Friday date for a snow date.

At the end of the meeting during open meeting time, there was a discussion about some of the challenges and expectations facing MRC as we move forward.

- The importance of transparency, throughout the Order of Selection (OOS) process
- Making sure that accurate information is put out to the public
- Standardization of intake across the commonwealth
- The MA career centers can pick up some, but not all, of MRC's slack.
- Working with partner agencies to ensure they step up when needed.
- Innovative thinking, around the utilization of our limited resources

Adjournment

- Next meeting date: TBD

DRAFT