**State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**April 4, 2024**

**1:00 - 3:00 pm EST**

**Attendees:**

* **State Rehabilitation Council Members:** Heather Wood (SRC Chair), Joe Bellil, Naomi Goldberg, Steve LaMaster, Tay Silveira
* **Massachusetts** **Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff:** Amanda Baczko, Sahara Defensor, Emily McCaffrey,William Noone, Amy Karr
* **Members of the public:** Doug Mason, Darryl R. Matthews, Jr., Kimber Tower, Christine Tosti[[1]](#footnote-1)
* **National Association of Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA):** Jill Ferrington

Please Note: This meeting was held remotely.

**The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm by the chair.**

**Introductions:** Chair Wood asked members and attendees to introduce themselves.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Chair Wood called for a motion to approve the January Executive Committee minutes. Ms. Goldberg motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Bellil seconded. Chair Wood asked whether there were any corrections to the minutes. The January Executive Committee minutes were approved with no corrections.

Chair Wood called for a motion to approve the March Executive Committee minutes. Mr. Bellil motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Bellil seconded. Mr. LaMaster seconded. Chair Wood asked whether there were any corrections to the minutes. The February Executive Committee minutes were approved with no corrections.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. NASHIA Update – Jill Ferrington

Ms. Ferrington discussed how NASHIA will be involved in the SRC’s DEI-A goals set previously. **(See MRC-SRC DEI-A & NASHIA Crosswalk.docx.)**

The first column showed the goals established by the DEI-A RFR. The second column showed the specific objectives within each goal. The third column described what NASHIA will do and produce to help the SRC achieve these objectives.

Ms. Ferrington reviewed the SRC’s four FY24 recommendations and the committee responsible for each recommendation:

* SRC will continue to actively partner with the MRC in the interpretation of survey data and strategies for developing different channels for collecting feedback and disseminating of findings and associated actions taken and the SRC will actively partner with the MRC in the interpretation of survey data and strategies regarding dissemination

Customer Satisfaction/Needs Assessment Committee

* The SRC will work with the MRC to develop a mechanism and timeline for engagement of Business and Employment Opportunity Committee members during the implementation of the Disability Employment Tax Credit marketing campaign.

Business and Employment Opportunity Committee

* The SRC will work with the MRC to assess and potentially enhance current strategies and mechanisms to support Job Seekers in pursuing self-employment vocational goals.

Business and Employment Opportunity Committee

* The SRC will collaborate with the MRC to identify, recruit, and engage more MRC Job Seekers and other stakeholders for SRC membership from specific backgrounds, groups, and organizations required by federal regulations, including Un-served/Under-served communities, individuals with disabilities, and businesses.

Executive Committee

1. Committee Reassessment – Heather Wood

Chair Wood wants the SRC to consider how we can most effectively and efficiently utilize the resources of its members and other participants. She shared the slides she put together, which she described as her “thinking out loud.” **(See EC Committee DRAFT slides 4.3.24.pptx.)**

Chair Wood emphasized that suggestions about reorganizing the committees are not personal reflections of anyone. They are attempts to best manage the SRC’s resources, so no one feels burnt out, overwhelmed, or unengaged.

The Policy Committee has not met since August of 2023. In the SRCs of other states, the State Plan functions are often handled by their Executive Committees.

From the responses to the question about areas of interest in the post-meeting survey disseminated after the March Quarterly meeting, the areas with the strongest interest were membership and consumer satisfaction.

Chair Wood presented two proposals:

* Committee-based: The SRC would continue with its committee-based structure. The Executive Committee and the Business, Employment, and Opportunity (BEO) Committee would continue. Potentially there could be an ad hoc Membership Committee that would work with NASHIA. Perhaps Graham Porrell could give reports and updates about the consumer satisfaction needs assessment survey results at Executive Committee meetings. Perhaps the State Plan Committee could be ad hoc, called upon when it needs to work.
* Leadership-based: This would be more of a restructuring of the SRC. There would be a Vice Chair, a Director of BEO, and a director of Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment.

The Federal regulations require no specific committees and our SRC’s current bylaws only require the Executive Committee. Some members have served on boards and councils where committees have outlived their usefulness. Perhaps committees could exist but not meet, and then meet when needed, such as when there are relevant SRC recommendations to work on. At this point, when all membership seats are not filled, perhaps the leadership-based proposal is not the best way to go.

The term “directors” may connote barriers, while the term “committees” may help foster more participation. There is a need to get more members involved in the committees. Many committee Chairs are involved in committees besides the ones they chair because few other members are involved.

There was a discussion about the Policy Committee. The SRC must keep on top of MRC policy. However, MRC needs to ask for feedback, and/or members need to be interested in policy. The Policy Committee has created items that have not been used. The Policy Committee has created SRC orientation materials and now NASHIA is doing that. Chair Wood assured the SRC that NASHIA is not working from scratch. The team is building on what the Policy Committee and others have created.

It was suggested that if committees are to be restructured or condensed, then perhaps the State Plan and Policy Committees could be merged into one committee because there may be some overlap.

A major concern is that because of a lack of a Chair for the Consumer Satisfaction Needs Assessment Committee (CSNAC), the SRC is missing consumer input. The SRC is beginning the process of creating FY25 recommendations. Creating these recommendations is a priority right now. Part of the SRC’s job is to advise MRC, and the recommendations are the SRC’s advice to MRC. Each recommendation will ask MRC to spend time and/or money if MRC chooses to accept it. Therefore, the recommendations should have merit. Mr. Bellil has started reaching out to attempt to obtain recommendations.

Perhaps there should be a short-term plan and a long-term plan. A priority is to get new members appointed to the SRC. Committees can be changed at any time; the SRC’s current bylaws do not stipulate what committees must exist. A plan can be made for the present. Then, once membership has been built up and there is more public involvement, discussion about more long-term changes can reconvene. With a short-term plan, MRC (through Graham Porell) could present consumer satisfaction data to the SRC. Mr. Noone noted that in addition to results from the consumer survey, MRC also has analytical data about outcomes and about how MRC has accomplished the goals set in the State Plan.

Dawn Clark has expressed interest in serving as interim Chair of the CSNAC. Chair Wood will contact Dawn Clark to potentially have a CSNAC meeting in June.

Ms. Tosti stated that she felt uncomfortable and unsettled with the discussion of the need for a CSNAC Chair. She joined the SRC because she has had bad experiences with MRC. She has put her all into working with the SRC. She has shared free knowledge with the Chairs. Chair Wood explained that when she first became SRC Chair, she did not want to appoint a CSNAC Chair right when NASHIA was starting to work with the SRC. Then Ms. Tosti’s term as a voting member ended so Ms. Tosti was no longer eligible to be a committee Chair. Chair Wood stated that she will follow up with Ms. Tosti during Open Mic if time allows, or offline.

The joint input MRC and SRC provide to the State Plan is important. Chair Wood agrees and wants to rely heavily on Mr. Bellil since he is familiar with the process. Chair Wood cannot attend the State Plan Committee meetings because of her school schedule, so she is not familiar with the exact process of putting the State Plan together. The public hearings about the State Plan were recently held and the State Plan is all set. There is a difference between the recommendations and the State Plan, although the recommendations do end up in MRC’s State Plan. It may be possible for the Executive Committee to review the State Plan, although it is a lot of work and would take the Executive Committee a lot of time. Mr. Bellil stated he does have enough committee members and support for the work, but his membership term may end at any time. There are a lot of tasks involved with preparing the State Plan, such as reviewing statistics with Mr. Noone.

Mr. Bellil will send the State Plan/Recommendations timeline document to Chair Wood and will present it at the May Executive Committee meeting.

Another urgent matter is to get those who are interested to begin working with NASHIA in creating membership development materials. Ms. Goldberg agreed to spearhead this effort. Ms. Ferrington will get in touch with Ms. Goldberg. Ms. Ferrington asked for other members who are interested in working on this to let her know. Ms. Tosti expressed her interest in the chat.

In the chat, Ms. Tosti suggested that the SRC have an Education Committee focused on free education. She shared the following link in the chat:

<https://mailchi.mp/tacqe/tacqe-tuesday-2024_04-02?e=73f6f82be8>

Ms. Tosti also expressed disagreement with having an Executive Committee and noted that the former DEI consultants reported that Executive Committees could create power hierarchies.

Chair Wood appreciated all the feedback and will consult her notes for further ideas.

1. Quarterly Meeting Thoughts and Discussion – Jill Ferrington, Heather Wood

The post-meeting survey results indicated that 75% thought the March Quarterly meeting was informative or very informative. Many thought the meeting was engaging.

In the survey question about group agreements, a few choices were very popular. These included the ones about asking clarifying questions, clarifying the decision-making process, and looking for learning opportunities and resisting the need to be an expert at all times.

Ms. Ferrington acknowledged that the icebreaker took too long and that it could have been done better. Chair Wood liked the icebreaker but agreed that it did go too long. She asked the SRC members and other participants at the March Quarterly meeting how they felt about the icebreaker and the meeting, and what they would like to see at the June Quarterly meeting.

A member stated that he views SRC meetings as business meetings. If the SRC had a retreat, icebreakers may be appropriate, but perhaps not at SRC meetings. Chair Wood pointed out that the goal was to try to have more engagement at the SRC meetings.

It was noted that the agenda for the March Quarterly meeting was very packed; the Pre-ETS and MRC Connect presentations had to be done quickly. It may be preferable to have fewer agenda items to allow enough time for presentations and discussions.

Ms. Tosti would like to see newcomers and members of the public attend SRC meetings. If she was a member of the public, she would be confused. Ms. Tosti thanked Mr. Matthews and Ms. Tower for coming to today’s meeting. It is a good idea to make the flow of the meeting more welcoming to new attendees. However, while anyone can come to any meeting, is the Quarterly Meeting the most appropriate setting for members of the public to learn about the SRC? While the SRC wants to welcome everyone, it might be counterproductive to take time out of a business meeting to do lengthy introductions and explanations. Also, individuals who attend one SRC meeting and refuse to attend additional meetings because of confusion may not be that interested in learning about the SRC and the work that it does.

Suggestions to help make meetings welcoming to newcomers while still allowing the SRC to conduct business included:

* Continually posting text in the chat as new people join the meeting. This can include information about what the SRC is and what it does, perhaps the agenda of the particular meeting.
* There could be an ad hoc task force to deal specifically with how to welcome new attendees at meetings.
* There could be a 20-minute welcome session for visitors and new members before the regular meeting.
* Any membership committee should be tasked with developing procedures to welcome and onboard new members.

Specific requests for the June Quarterly meeting:

* There is a need to get some kind of an idea of what consumer needs are without an active CSNAC.
* More qualitative data
* An appropriate number of items on the agenda to allow for sufficient time for presentation and discussion

Chair Wood thanked everyone for their feedback. She will address this for the June Quarterly meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Committee Reports**

* Business and Employment Opportunity (BEO) Committee – Steve LaMaster

The committee last met on February 8h, 2024. The meeting scheduled for April 11th was canceled because the individuals who were to present about the Disability Employment Tax Credit (DETC) and MRC’s self-employment initiative were unavailable.

Tomorrow, Friday, April 5th, Mr. LaMaster will be having an online meeting with Paula Euber and Rachel Reyes about the self-employment initiative. He can send the link to anyone who would like to be present.

The date of the next BEO Committee meeting is June 13th at 1:00 pm. Deloitte Consulting will present at the June BEO committee meeting about self-employment.

* **State Plan Committee – Joe Bellil**

The committee last met on February 21st.

Mr. Bellil thanked Ms. Baczko for placing a request for recommendations in the newsletter put out by her office.

The next State Plan Committee meeting is on June 19th at 11:00 am.

* **DEIA Council – Doug Mason**

The Council last met on March 19th. There have been no updates since last week’s March Quarterly meeting.

The next meeting of the DEIA council will be on April 16th from 12 until 1:30 pm.

* Policy Committee – Naomi Goldberg

The Policy Committee scheduled for early today, April 4th, was canceled. The Policy Committee last met on August 1st.

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for June 6th at 11:00 am.

* **Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee (CSNAC)**

There was no CSNAC meeting in February The committee last met on August 21st. There currently is no Chair for the committee.

There will be no CSNAC meeting in April. At this point, the next CSNAC meeting has not yet been scheduled.

**Questions/Comments for Chairs:**

There were no questions or comments for the Chairs.

1. MRC Update – Amanda Baczko

The Explore Possibility Summit is still scheduled for the third week in August. Once the venue has been confirmed, MRC will send out save the dates. Ms. Baczko will contact those who have expressed interest in being involved with the planning committee.

Rebranding: The House has approved the name change with modification; it is not yet known what that is. Now waiting for Senate approval.

Questions/Comments

* Ms. Tosti received an email from someone she did not know thanking her for speaking up about MRC’s name change. Just because other consumers do not speak up does not mean they do not exist.
1. Open Mic
	* Ms. Tower thanked the SRC for allowing her to attend. Mr. Matthews said that the meeting was enlightening. Ms. Tower and Mr. Matthews may contact some members and attendees.
	* Ms. Baczko mentioned the newsletter that goes out from her office. The family ambassadors are the lead content creators. She urged anyone with any content relevant to the disability community to reach out to her. The next newsletter will go out in June. Usually, the newsletter is finalized a month before it goes out.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

1. Upon request, attendees’ names are used when they contribute to the discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)