



# MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION STATEWIDE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

**Chairperson**  
Dawn Clark

**Vice Chairperson**

**Secretary**

**Members at Large**

## **Executive Committee**

600 Washington Street

August 1, 2019

1:00 PM-3:00 PM

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Call to Order/Introductions**

- Attendees: Dawn Clark (SRC), Inez Canada (SRC), Alex Scarlis (MOD), Naomi Goldberg (SRC), Christopher Dreher (SRC), Erik Nordahl (MRC), Bill Noone (MRC)
- Remote participation: Joe Bellil (SRC), Kristopher Callahan

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- Naomi motioned to except minutes
- Joe seconded
- All in favor

### **Old Business**

### **Office of Consumer and Family Engagement**

Erik provided an update on his progress with the Office of Engagement and Family Support. Erik informed the committee that the name of the program/ office has not been decided on as of now. Erik explained that there is a 6 Member team that is working on “how” the office will look. Erik and the team will continue to research by speaking with persons who are currently receiving MRC services. People can speak about their experience with services, and what services fit or did not fit his/her needs. Positive response from field so far. Team is drafting a list of proposed functions for the office that will be submitted to the Commissioner. Erik noted that MRC collected the ideas from the MRC Consumer Conference/Training. We discussed the importance of language – particularly the term consumer? Client? Individual? Participant? Community? Historically the name “Consumer” covered provider and parent affiliation.

### **Questions/Comments**

- Will there be a duplication of efforts with this office and the SRC?

Erik responded that he is attending SRC meetings to get a better understanding of what SRC does to compliment the body and not duplicate efforts. SRC speaks to VR, but not other MRC divisions. How would this strength the SRC? Geography of coverage is expanded by regional advisory boards/councils, which could become a “feeder mechanism” for SRC membership. Ex., Reps from different regions

- **How will complaints be handled?**

Also discussed was the issue of complaints received by the Ombudsman's office and how this function would intersect with the new Office of Engagement. Erik reported that while no decisions have been made, complaints will continue to be reported to the Ombudsman who reports to Erik. Ombudsman attempts to resolve complaints before they become formal. Erik is working with the Ombudsman to create a system to better track complaints handled by his Office.

- **Will the new Engagement Office replace the former Consumer Involvement Program?**

Dawn mentioned that by laws should be kept in mind when contemplating this question. Erik noted that the roles of the ICC program are being explored to determine what could be incorporated into new Engagement Office. He expressed that MRC welcomes ideas.

- **Is there anyone on the SRC that is on the Office of Engagement team?**

Not at the moment, but Erik is working on it. Erik wants to involve SRC in the process of shaping the office. For ex., SRC would get proposed list of functions for review. Will be key to orient people around the "what" of the new Office so people can provide meaningful feedback.

- **Discussed whether/how Engagement Office could help recruit members to SRC and Committees**

- Could committees be renamed? Must refer to by laws.
- Looking for someone who is willing/able to participate
- Provide a list of the functions of each committees
- SRC could become involved with the team and remain informed
- Explain what SRC committees do for the consumer and explain what they are responsible to do before joining a committee.
- Should SRC recruit current consumers or consumers whom have gone through the VR program? (most members favored the latter for membership)

- **Ideas on how to engage membership to the committees**

- Have an individual on council from area offices, rep from advisory board on the SRC committee.
- Strategies on how to engage others
- Maybe difficult because of school/employment
- Know what the involvement/time of the SRC

## **State Plan Committee Report**

Joe reported that State Plan Committee will meet August 29, agenda includes:

- Review MRC responses to the FY2020 Recommendations. Joe contacted Erik N. and Joan P. to remind them that MRC responses were due 7/29/19.
- How will the State Plan committee help MRC with the goals of given MRC's responds to the goal?
- FY19 Annual report timeline
- SRC role in state VR goals. What is the SRC level of involvement? What is the process?

Joe read the responses from MRC as well as the progress that the committees have made with the support of the SRC to the FY2018 State Plan Recommendations. These recommendations and responses/ comments will be submitted for the annual report that goes to RSA (Sept. 30 deadline).

Bill Noone described the three reports that must be completed and provided a time line for completing them.

- SRC Annual report –includes the recommendations and responses; goes to RSA: deadline Sept 30
- MRC Annual Report goes to Executive Office of Health Human Services
- WIOA State Plan- every 4yrs, includes goals that are reviewed by the SRC; joint effort with Dept. Ed, Workforce Development, and other WIOA partners; also gets help from Dept. of Labor; each Party (MRC, One Stops, MCB, etc.) contribute a section; final product due April 2020; draft to Governor by Oct 2019; MRC draft Sept 2019.

Bill and Graham are going to work on a spreadsheet/map of the process that includes due dates for each report/plan and expected completion dates/steps for completion. This will show what needs to be done, when, and by whom.

Additional meeting set to discuss WIOA State Plan: Sept 10, 2019 from 1-3pm was the agreed upon date and time. Location: 600 Washington. The time of the Aug 29, 2019 meeting was changed to 11:30am -1:30pm. Theresa C. would send notices and updates.

### **Policy Committee Report**

The Policy Committee divided the policies regarding VR services into groups and determined the order of reviewing and how to give feedback. The first to be discussed will be the three financial policies. Next meeting is Sept 5, 2019. Policy Committee will also discuss tackling the FY2020 recommendations at that meeting.

The committee is seeking answers to the following questions moving forward:

- What is the process for providing feedback on the policies?
- What is the status of SRC receiving Fair Hearing Decisions? Can the Policy Committee be provided reports on fair hearings outcomes?
- Can MRC clarify when it is asking Naomi in her CAP role to review policies vs. Naomi in her role as Policy Committee Chair? Under the federal regs CAP does this review work and the SRC Policy Committee also does this work. Right now the person holding these positions is the same. Therefore, the committee is asking that when Naomi is sent policies, MRC be clear about whether they want her to review them as CAP, Policy Committee Chair, or both.

### **Business & Employment Opportunity Committee Report**

The Committee reviewed and agreed with the mission statement that was last updated in 2019. The committee discussed ideas on ways of meeting the goals of FY2019 and FY2020 recommendations. The main topic that came up w/ this Committee was the lack of membership and how this impacted the Committee's ability to properly function. It was agreed that attention must be given to ways/methods to recruit new SRC members and committee members. One question that we agreed must be answered is "what role will the B&E reps have/how will they utilized?"

Challenges to recruiting new members:

- The newcomer feels out of place
- Making the time commitment is difficult for most people; middle of the day is difficult for some people b/c busy with their own employment
- Too many emails regarding meeting invitations/reminder and updates can be overwhelming for some people
- SRC needs to provide background of each committee – what are functions and expectations.
- Provide trainings on what the committees do

Next meeting is August 8, 2019 1-3pm.

### **Comprehensive Needs Assessment/Consumers Satisfaction Committee Report**

Alex will represent this committee per Rich C. Bill, Graham and Lola gave update on progress and timelines/steps for two surveys conducted by MRC: Consumer Needs Survey and Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

Spreadsheet w/ FY19 survey results discussed and general ideas were discussed regarding survey results. Question was asked re: how to reach Status 30 (VR case closed before services provide or an IPE was developed) to get surveys to them.

Question was raised as to whether there was a way to survey successful self-employment case closures; does MRC use any method to follow up with these consumers?

Suggestion was made that survey team add a question for consumers to determine what they like to be called (consumers, clients, participants, etc.) per Office of Engagement discussion earlier.

Bill N. gave an update on current steps to outreach to Asian community in Lowell. The next focus groups will likely be held in Braintree and/or Cape Cod.

Suggestion was made that in order to help the outreach efforts to Asian population, the SRC should look to fill one of the vacant seats with an Asian.

### **Exec Committee Report re: Membership of the State Rehabilitation Council**

Discussed what membership slots are currently filled and what slots are currently open:

- Disability Representative 1 slot, Dawn will contact Lisa Chiango to inquire if she will continue to hold the seat
- Disability Representative 6, Heather Wood, per her conversation with Dawn is no longer interested in holding a seat on the SRC, Dawn will ask for written resignation
- Disability Representative 8; Christopher Dreher, appointed May 20, 2019 and will hold the seat until May 2022 (term needs to be confirmed – have no documentation of this from EHS – have emailed Robert Jones)
- Higher Education Representative 1: The seat is vacant at this time, looking into a DESE representative
- Higher Education Representative 2: Lusa Lo will be more active in September
- Parent Training/Info Center Representative: a potential candidate in the works , possibly representative from MCB RC
- Will Speak with Joan to recommend someone to fill the slot of Community Rehab Services Provider Rep with the resignation of Steve Aalto
- SILC Rep, Bonnie Jones, would like to continue to serve but has transportation issues
- Joan P. may be a good person to ask for a recommendation to fill the vacant WIB (Workforce Investment Board) rep seat

### **Next Steps to fill the vacant seats on the SRC**

- Draft and provide materials for recruitment – Erik N. took ownership
- Create orientations packet/materials – Inez C. took ownership
- Provide a one page document about the SRC as a brief introduction for new members – Inez C.
- Revise Mission Statement so that the role of the SRC is clear – Exec committee
- Clarifying meeting commitments for members – Exec Committee

- Suggest to the new members that they read orientation materials before attending their first SRC meeting
- the SRC should consider a requirement that a member should be on at least one committee
- Should quarterly meetings be structured differently?
  - Meetings are from 1 to 3 PM, but do they need to be longer?
  - Should business be conducted at the quarterly meeting or should it be handled in committees?
- Comment was made that members should not be hearing things for the first time at Council meetings: there must be some requirement that they prepare by reading the materials that will be discussed at meetings beforehand
- Address the attendance problem: look into the Open meeting law requirements regarding remote participation versus being physically present – Erik N.

### **State Plan Recommendations Report - Bill N.**

As discussed, Bill and Graham will develop a spreadsheet that will indicate responses for each recommendation. The roadmap or work plan will be developed so that everyone knows what must be done and when. Going forward, Bill proposed that the Recommendation process go electronic and be automated, similar to the consumer surveys, with the understanding that any suggested change to the recommendation process be approved by SRC. Bill's team will be present a final draft of the work plan for approval at the Exec. Committee meeting on September 5, 2019. It was also suggested that our SRC could ask SRCs in other states to see how collect recommendations. The recommendations and MRC responses will be in the SRC reports.

Naomi motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Inez seconded

All in favor