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

**December 1, 2022**

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

**Attendees:**

* Statewide Rehabilitation Council Members: Ronaldo Fujii, Inez Canada, Joe Bellil, Cheryl Scott, Christine Tosti, Naomi Goldberg, Doug Mason (Ex Officio), Steve LaMaster, Dawn Clark
* Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff: Kate Biebel, Amanda Baczko

Please Note: This meeting was held remotely.

**Meeting was called to order at 1:02 pm by the Chair. Ms. Baczko read the attendees from the participant list.**

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Chair Canada asked whether there were any corrections to the November 2022 meeting minutes. Ms. Goldberg motioned to approve the November minutes. Mr. Fujii seconded. The November 2022 minutes were approved with no corrections.

**OLD BUSINESS**

* **Administrative Support update-** We have identified a candidate Jennifer Templeton, who is a VR Consumer at MRC. She will be assisting by working roughly five hours a week for 3 days/week. She will be supporting note taking and administrative duties.There will be a formal ask for all executive members to connect with her once her start date begins. Jennifer will also be responsible for supporting an SRC Zoom account, and calendar related registration.
* **Finalize 2023 SRC meeting calendar**- Ms. Biebel reminded everyone that the updated calendar was attached to the invite. Most executive committee members reviewed and approved the existing version. The proposal was to wait until the new SRC Admin was fully here to send out all relevant Zoom calendar invites, upon her start date, which is either 12/8 or 12/13. We will review the document together of existing committee membership on December 15th, to submit via email during the meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

* **MRC VR Operational & Service-Related Updates (Ms. Biebel)** 
  + **Shifts in VR Leadership**
    - In process:
      * Malden – recommended candidate for Area Director
      * Lowell – recommended Area Dir. candidate backed out b/c of salary – MRC will repost position
      * Hyannis – interviews scheduled, some potential candidates (this is the 3rd posting
        + Looking for someone familiar with Cape & Islands
      * Administrative fiscal posting – uber fiscal office work and supporting Business Improvement Partners (BIP)
  + **NextGen** 
    - Officially open for business. The team has put together some solid recruitment materials. State hiring is taking a long time, but we are approximately ¾ staffed
    - We are heavily focused on recruitment, with a focus on groups of people we’ve never served before, developing new pathways. NextGen staff are hitting the streets to locate new interested candidates.
    - There is a new marketing strategy to use social media focused ads targeting locations of priority, with an original goal of recruiting 100 individuals by end of December.
    - The NextGen team will be presenting on updates at the March full-SRC meeting. A suggestion was made to include a testimonial from individuals who had experienced NextGen directly. Additionally, the Needs Assessment Committee would like to invite a NextGen participant to come speak at their meeting, once recruitment is more off the ground.
    - **Question:** Have you looked into young adult programs at DMH? And are you connected directly with vendors?
      * **Answer:** Yes, we’ve been heavily working with many state agencies, with not much results at this point.One of the challenges is that we’ve made a commitment not to pull from existing VR pools**.** Ms. Biebel will review with VR Leadership to see if there are vendors, we aren’t capitalizing on that would be wise to connect with.
* **Consumer Newsletter & Disability Forum (Ms. Baczko)** 
  + **Newsletter:** The next Newsletter is coming out in December and will focus on employment (for disability employment awareness month).
  + **Family Forum-** December 13th, invite going out today! The topic is on Transition Assistance program and disability benefits. If you are not able to attend the forum, you can still register and will receive a copy of the presentation slides, and any resources shared during the live discussion.
* **Agenda for December 15 Quarterly**
  + Chair Canada reviewed the existing template and proposed agenda items for the December 15th SRC Full Meeting Agenda (see attachment).
  + A kudos board will be circulated so individuals can share kudos focused on SRC Liaisons.
  + A note was made to add the Commissioner update, which was unintentionally left off the template.
  + A request to include a recruitment/membership update was made, Chair Canada agreed to provide an update during the Executive Committee Report. Additionally, a document will be distributed to allow folks to re-up their interest in Committees. As a result, Committee Chairs should give a sense of what their goals are for the coming year, so when people are indicating their interest in the Committee, they know what is going to be the priority focus.
  + A question came up regarding what committee would be tasked to talk about consumer appeals, and for the SRC to get a sense of what appeal trends are within the MRC. An example of an appeal regarding getting a service dog was raised, and how appeals can be important for a consumer. Chair Canada referenced that this would be a topic of focus for the Policy committee. She recalled a previous suggestion to have CAP come in to present on trends CAP is seeing in cases. Chair Canada asked if Ms. Goldberg, in her capacity as CAP Director, would be willing to discuss that topic at an upcoming Quarterly meeting. Ms. Goldberg agreed to present in March Quarterly.
    - Sahara Defensor (MRC General Counsel) is putting together a draft template of Fair Hearing and Appeal results, to be disseminated to the Committee and broader SRC. Ms. Baczko also offered to bring in Ombudsman trends as part of the presentation, as often many of the Ombudsman inquiries are settled before going to Administrative Review or Appeal, so we can see broader trends that occur.
    - Commentary raised indicated an interest in hearing more about the Ombudsman Report and Appeals and Fair Hearings. Ms. Tosti offered to share her personal appeal experience.
    - A suggestion came up to provide some foundational information about what the Appeals and Ombudsman roles are. Ms. Baczko referenced that MRC is working with CAP to develop this training internally and can bring that content to the SRC.
  + A suggestion to include December agenda report item from Commissioner regarding the Gubernatorial transition and implications for how MRC continues to operate.
  + **Topics for March SRC Qtrly** 
    - MRC Next Gen Update
    - Appeal process Overview and Trends - Presentation re: types of issues coming up w/ VR from Client Assistance Program (CAP) and MRC Ombuds Program
* **Committee Reports**
  + **Policy Committee – Naomi Goldberg**
    - Two recommendations focusing on:
      * Orientation - completed materials on VR and SRC
        + Has been passed along for feedback
        + Online VR presentation - looking for next steps in process
      * Fact sheets - being developed and will send for review once in a good place to solicit feedback and determine next steps
  + **Needs Assessment Committee- Ronaldo Fujii** 
    - No meeting in November, but meeting Dec 19th 2-3:30pm
    - Discuss changes to CSNAC schedule- to give space to consumer voice
    - Every other month for survey tool discussions and updates
    - Alternate month w/ different consumers and VRC to help understand VR and various roles
  + **MRC Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility Council Representative- Doug Mason**
    - DEIA meet late November
    - Received MRC employee demographic data and starting to review & compare that to Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) data and other Executive Department at the State level
      * Looking at break out for mangers, supervisor, etc.
        + Developing a demographic comparison between levels of MRC personnel
      * 25% at or approaching retirement and how to recruit in light of the demographic goals
      * Goal: all levels of MRC represent demographics of the State population
  + **State Plan Committee – Joe Bellil**
    - Oct 12th last meeting
    - MRC looking for more information on some of the recommendations
      * Has touch base with relevant Committee chairs to clarify outstanding questions from MRC
    - Annual report edits submitted to Colleen Casey
    - Next mtg Feb 8th @ 11am
  + **Business and Employment Opportunities Committee -Steve LaMaster**
    - Mtg next Thursday Dec 8th
    - Recruitment materials submitted to MRC Comms Dept.
      * Doesn't appear that recommendations have been addressed
      * Requested updates twice with no response from Colleen Casey
    - MRC Request to combine Recruitment and orientation but sounds like orientation is complete.
    - Comments re: how to make the Recommendation process more efficient
      * Suggestion to have a State Plan meeting to hammer out differences
      * Not mandatory that we go back and forth with MRC and they can accept or not
        + Noted that it does help with collaboration with MRC that we are working to build
  + **Will discuss State Plan Recommendation process at January Exec Comm meeting**
* **Open Mic**
  + Ms. Bazcko reminder: the MRC Ombudsman retiring Feb 1 and will post position at that time; she will send posting to SRC and ask SRC to forward to people who may be a good fit
  + Ms. Tosti. reported that having service puppy has greatly helped her progress. She’s doing better and able to talk more and participate at SRC meetings.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Fujii. The motion was seconded by Mr. LaMaster. Chair Canada adjourned the meeting at 2:24 pm.