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

**November 3, 2022**

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

**Attendees:**

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

Please Note: This meeting was held remotely.

**Meeting was called to order at 1:00pm 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 October 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Bellil motioned to approve the September minutes. Mr. Mason seconded. The October 2022 minutes were approved with no corrections.

**OLD BUSINESS**

* **Review Draft SRC Member Policies- Ronaldo Fujii & Inez Canada**
  + The policy is ready to disseminate to the full SRC. Feedback will be solicited during the December 15th quarterly meeting. We are looking for feedback on whether the group would like to vote on the policy or implement it under consensus. A question came up regarding whether the policy would apply with Ex-Officio or members of the public. MRC Counsel did indicate that anyone who attends the meetings would be subject to these policies.
  + The SRC website needs to be updated to include the new mission statement and practices surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. When these updates are made, membership language will also be added. Other pertinent language from the policy will be added to the SRC Website.
* **Administrative Support Update- Amanda Baczko** 
  + The administrative assistant position was posted on the MRC Temp Agency website. We have received 9 interested candidates. The job description was written by the full SRC. Next steps include a review of candidate applications by Chair Canada, Ms. Baczko and Ms. Biebel on November 4th. From there, candidates deemed qualified will be interviewed by Chair Canada and an identified interview team.
  + Mr. Fujii referenced that at the NCSRC Conference, many other states were implementing administrative staff and referenced it being an extremely helpful position.

**NEW BUSINESS**

* **Co-Chair for Committees:** Ms. Tosti, SRC member, brought up the consideration of having Co-Chairs for all committees. Feedback was requested from the group, as follows:
  + Committees are struggling to have interested membership, which would make co-chairs difficult
  + It’s not a bad idea to have Co-Chairs if there are enough people engaged in the Committee.
  + A question came up regarding whether there is any current barrier in having Co-Chairs, as it would make most sense to allow each Committee to determine the need as it arises, rather than make a sweeping decision. Chair Canada indicated the only elected positions are the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Currently, the only one filled is Chair. Committee Chairs are at the discretion of the SRC Chair and are typically appointed by the SRC Chair. Chair Canada determined that if the Committee Chair wants to have a Co-Chair and someone is nominated, she would support that pending any compelling reason that would go against the mission and work of the SRC.
  + We want to ensure that Committee members listed on each committee would have an opportunity to discuss Co-Chair nomination.
  + Having a Co-Chair makes for a good practice and prepares us well for succession planning.
  + A suggestion was made to host co-sponsors of the team, rather than formally nominate a co-chair if preferential.
  + Chair Canada will re-review the nomination process for appointed SRC positions.
  + A question came up regarding whether a Chair can be a public member if their appointment has not yet gone through. Chair Canada clarified that for elected offices such as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, members would need to be fully appointed. Mr. Bellil provided clarity in the chat that in the bylaws it states that Committee Chairs also need to be voting members.
* **Committee Reports**
  + **Policy Committee – Naomi Goldberg**
    - Ms. Goldberg had forwarded out links from different places to solicit group feedback. The Committee has now developed a fact sheet and identification of a training from the National Disability Rights Network on VR, which has been shared with Committee members for feedback. Materials were shared with a membership list provided by Ms. Biebel. Ms. Biebel will share an updated membership list to all Committee Chairs to ensure everyone has the most up to date list. Next meeting takes place December 1st.
  + **Needs Assessment Committee- Ronaldo Fujii** 
    - There was no meeting since the last report. However, Mr. Fujii has participated in the National Coalition for Statewide Rehabilitation Commissions (NCSRC) Conference on behalf of the full SRC and his Committee. Mr. Fujii sent a brief report to Chair Canada including ideas for committees (training & awards) and training/orientation materials.
  + **MRC Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility Council Representative- Doug Mason**
    - We had a meeting on October 18th that covered the future path forward as it relates to the DEI-A manager’s relationship with the Council and the Employee Resource Groups and how the communication would be fostered. Mr. Mason brought up the priority of improving outreach for underserved communities in regard to staffing demographics and identifying where we fall short. Ms. Biebel added that the new DEI Manager Robert is very engaged, and that the Council Chairs will be meeting with MRC leadership to review DEI data and workforce data to understand where we are at, how we compare across the State, and how we compare with other Health and Human Service Agencies.
    - Chair Canada referenced the MA diversity dashboard, where you can find information about diversity across state agencies: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/state-employee-diversity-dashboard>. The data is a good start but is very high level.
  + **State Plan Committee – Joe Bellil**
    - The last meeting took place on October 12th, with an action item to engage with Ms. Casey about the Annual Report. Chairs were asked to reduce their committee reports, which have since been submitted. A suggestion came up regarding developing a committee workplan to track activities and progress. The next meeting will take place February 8th at 11am.
    - Ms. Biebel referenced the process for Recommendations, in which SRC submits a response to MRC, and then MRC sends their feedback. Then a final agreed document should be submitted. Ms. Biebel was looking for a final version to include a clear wrap-up of submitted recommendations, and whether agreement was reached. Otherwise, the target becomes unclear. Ms. Biebel and Ms. Baczko will review the latest version to determine if they need further clarity to ensure MRC is on target with steps to take to address recommendations.
  + **Business and Employment Opportunities Committee -Steve LaMaster**
    - The last meeting took place on October 20th with guest speaker Laysha Ostrow from Live and Learn (<https://livelearninc.net/team>) who works as a researcher interested in helping people with disabilities pursue self-employment. One of the grants through NIDILRR (National Institute on Disability and Independent Living Rehabilitation Research) was reviewed through slides. The study created a platform covering self-paced modules, a resource library, and a Community of Practice. The study is wrapping up in December, and Ms. Ostrow will return in February to present on results. Mr. LaMaster is looking for an update from MRC Communications on drafted recruitment materials. Ms. Ostrow was also interested in hosting a pilot program on self-employment, which will be further discussed in the near future.
    - Additionally, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) State Mental Health Planning Council Employment Sub Committee has been involved in a DMH/MRC collaboration on the Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed. Next steps surrounding this work may include ACCS related focus groups, which was redirected to advising on the current MRC Service Experience Surveys. The group will advise on the Business, Vendor and Staff surveys.
    - A question came up regarding how MRC staff are appointed to SRC Committees, and whether MRC staff can attend of their own volition. Ms. Biebel clarified the normal process for MRC staff participation in work adjacent is to outreach the VR Supervisor and keep Ms. Biebel and Ms. Baczko in the loop.
    - Ms. Baczko reminded everyone that the Office of Individual and Family Engagement puts together a quarterly newsletter that goes out to current and former service recipients and could be an avenue to recruit consumers to the council once recruitment and orientation materials are finalized.
* **SRC Conference- Ronaldo Fujii and Amanda Baczko** 
  + The event had very strong participation, we represented Massachusetts well and were very vocal regarding ongoing SRC activities within our state.
  + Not all VR agencies have strong ties to the SRC regarding their State Plan and generating recommendations to MRC.
  + Our work on diversity equity and inclusion were well received.
  + Lots of conversation took place surrounding training and orientation materials. Mr. Fujii and Ms. Baczko will pull together some recommended materials from their attendance.
  + The NCSRC has asked for MA to participate in their Board if it’s of interest.
  + Two committees were of interest- membership and recruitment, and membership awards.
  + A lot of discussion surrounded the policy committee and including work regarding work on legislative policies outside of the SRC, on a national level.
  + We should consider revision of bylaws.
  + Upcoming activities may include participation in the RSA monitoring, which last happened in 2017 for Massachusetts.
  + A recommendation came up regarding having a strategic planning meeting annually to review activities for the next year, the role of SRC, and build comradery.
  + Seeing the work of other councils, we should be proud of our work together and how much progress we’ve made over the last few years.
* **MRC Updates:**
  + **VR Operational & Service-Related Updates (Kate)** 
    1. **Hybrid Model:** 
       - VR Counselors continue to report 1 day per week “in office.”
    2. **Shifts in VR Leadership**
       - Six VR Area Director postings (Malden, Taunton, Springfield, Worcester, Lowell, Hyannis), Worcester Springfield and Taunton have been filled:
         1. Worcester – John “Jack” Houlker – was previously our West District Business Improvement partner
         2. Springfield – Wendy Andino-Williams – worked at MRC as a Bi-lingual counselor in Greenfield years ago, comes from the private sector, was a college professor, many great ties to the Springfield community
         3. Taunton – Andrea McAuliffe – works as a Unit Supervisor in Taunton and a longtime agency employee
       - In process:
         1. Malden – final interviews this week
         2. Lowell – recommended candidate, hoping for a Nov. start but has not been announced yet
         3. Hyannis – low candidate pool, working on a 3rd posting and recruitment within the cape and Islands
    3. **Next Gen:**
       - We are open and recruiting, and of last week six young adults have been recruited and are participating. Beautiful marketing materials have been developed. NextGen staff are getting incredibly robust training. The first MRC Peer Mentor is starting in two weeks, this is a new position at MRC.
       - We are posting a Family Partner position, which is a new role for the Agency. We are working hard on ensuring our staff is racially diverse and mirror the population we are serving.
    4. **Budget Update: (Amanda)** 
       - **First Priority:** The SRC Administrative position was discussed above.
       - **Second Priority:** Amanda is working with MRC folks to get access to a Zoom account for SRC.
    5. **Consumer Newsletter & Disability Forum (Amanda)** 
       - **Newsletter:** The next Newsletter is coming out end of November 2022 and will focus on employment (for disability employment awareness month).
    - **Q&A:** 
      * **Question:** Can MRC share NextGen marketing materials via email?
        + **Answer:** Yes!
* **Open Mic**
  + A consumer need was raised, Ms. Baczko will connect with Ombudsman.
  + Mr. Bellil and Ms. Scott participated in the MRC Anti-Bias training and really appreciated it and the content covered.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Bellil. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fujii. Chair Canada adjourned the meeting at 2:41 pm.