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

**November 7, 2024**

**4:00 - 6:00 pm EST**

**Attendees:**

* **Executive Committee Members:** Heather Wood (SRC Chair), Joe Bellil
* **Other SRC Members:** Tay Silveira
* **Massachusetts** **Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff:** Kate Biebel, Emily McCaffrey,William Noone, Amy Karr
* **Others present:** ArmenéMargosian, Doug Mason, Milo Pass (Client Assistance Program [CAP]), Sarah Wiles (CAP)
* **Absent Executive Committee Members:** Naomi Goldberg, Steve LaMaster

Please Note: This meeting was held remotely.

**The meeting was called to order at 4:10 pm by the chair.**

**Introduction:** Ms. Wiles introduced Milo Pass, a new CAP Advocate.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** No minutes were approved at this meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Membership update – Sahara Defensor

Ms. Defensor was unable to attend this meeting. Chair Wood noted that the SRC has received membership applications, and she will be meeting with the applicants. Those applicants who express continued interest will be asked to attend the Quarterly and committee meetings.

1. NASHIA review and reflection – Heather Wood

When we have the final versions of all the materials produced by NASHIA, we will review them. These include orientation and training materials. We will also continue to review the bylaws.

Last month (October) we talked about the news of the budget. In future meetings we will discuss what the SRC can do going forward.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Review 2025 meeting calendar – Heather Wood

Members were sent the draft of the 2025 meeting calendar in advance of the meeting. **(See SRC 2025 DRAFT\_Master Calendar v.11.7.2024.docx.)**

It was decided to cancel the July 3rd Executive Committee meeting and to hold the December Quarterly meeting on December 18th instead of the fourth Thursday of the month, which is December 25th, Christmas.

Ms. Karr will send the revised calendar to the committee chairs and request they send any changes back to her within two weeks, by November 21st.

1. Vice chair discussion

The plan is to keep this item on the agenda until someone is found to fill this position. Currently many members are serving in holdover status, we are waiting for the governor to appoint nominated individuals, and need to recruit additional members, so this is a challenging time to find a vice chair.

1. **Committee Reports**

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

The committee last met on August 8th. The October meeting was canceled. Mr. LaMaster was not present at this meeting.

The next committee meeting is on December 12th at 1:00 pm.

* **State Plan Committee – Joe Bellil**

The committee last met on August 21st. The October 16th meeting was canceled.

* Recommendation process: The SRC approved the FY25 recommendations at the June Quarterly meeting. MassAbility responded to the recommendations. Mr. Bellil and Mr. LaMaster updated the recommendations document, incorporating MassAbility’s response. In the past the SRC did not formally approve the revised document, it was just considered an update.

In the future, do we want to have the SRC and MassAbility working more closely together earlier in the recommendation process? MassAbility wants to make sure that it has the capacity and staff resources to do the work, and that it can fit somewhere in MassAbility’s work.

MassAbility would like to know the committee and SRC point person responsible for the recommendation, and MassAbility would appoint its own point person also. It could help save time, prevent the SRC from working on recommendations that MassAbility would not want to do or could not do. Mr. Bellil likes this idea and will bring it up at the December State Plan Committee meeting.

* Annual reports: Mr. Bellil sent the annual reports from the committee chairs to Colleen Casey. Commissioner Wolf has talked about combining the MassAbility and SRC annual reports. Ms. Biebel will follow up with Ms. Casey next week about what else is needed. Mr. Bellil will discuss this at the December State Plan Committee meeting.

In addition to the two topics above, Mr. Bellil will review the status of the current recommendations at the December State Plan Committee meeting.

The next State Plan Committee meeting is on December 18th at 11:00 am.

* **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Council – Doug Mason**

The council last met in October. The meeting focused on two things:

1. Looking at where the council is currently, and setting up plans for its upcoming third year, following guidelines from the scorecard created earlier in the year.
2. Discussed term limits for existing members, most of whom have been serving since the council’s inception. Limits of one year, 18 months and two years were mentioned. The discussion was tabled and is expected to be finalized at the next meeting.

The next meeting of the DEIA council will be on November 19th.

* **Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee (CSNAC) – Heather Wood**

The committee last met on September 23rd. It has not met since the October Executive Committee meeting so there is no additional update.

At the next meeting the committee will review the Consumer Experience Survey.

The next meeting is on November 18th at 5 PM.

**Questions/comments for committee chairs**

There were no questions or comments for the chairs.

1. MassAbility update

* Budget/funding: The Commonwealth has already asked MassAbility for its FY26 budget. The budget will be tighter, particularly in Career Services. The main drivers of cost are staff salaries and salary increases. The Research Services Administration (RSA) does not cover the increases, so every time salaries increase that money must come out of the base, so it is not available for other uses. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and probably all agencies are being asked to propose budget cuts. There are advantages for MassAbility being a small agency. This is regarding state funding. Most funding for Career Services is federal but there is some state funding, and it is important. In December we will potentially have more of an idea about the budget for FY26.
* Explore Possibilities Summit: MassAbililty held this in Quincy about two weeks ago. The first day was participant focused, and the second day was provider focused. Both days were great, but the provider day was particularly excellent. Everyone was clear about what was not working. There was good communication, and the provider feedback was excellent.
* Office relocations: All Commonwealth agencies are moving out of 600 Washington Street. MassAbility is moving earlier than the other agencies to save money. For about six months the staff will be spread out in local offices. It is planned that in June 2025 MassAbility will be in its new location at 40 Broad Street. The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) will be moving there also. The space has been assessed for accessibility. There were no door openers on the doors for people in wheelchairs. Commissioner Wolf discussed accessibility with others who will be occupying the building. The MassAbility space will be more open. MassAbility has been working on a project with Ahoi, an app that is like Yelp around accessibility. Users can review places for accessibility. MassAbility has been doing a project paying interns to check out spaces and enter the information. There are accessibility reviews of restaurants, bars, department stores, etc. The founder of the Ahoi! app is Jake Haendel.
* Branding/marketing: There will be a big marketing push for the public in November and December. There will be billboards and ads during the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade and the “Golden Bachelor” television show. It will be interesting to see numbers coming through the door. There has already been a bit of an increase. The providers at the Summit already knew the agency is now MassAbility.

1. Open Mic

Chair Wood thanked Mr. Press for attending the meeting.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be on December 5th from 4:00 to 6:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.