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

**October 3, 2024**

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

**Attendees:**

* **State Rehabilitation Council Members:** Heather Wood (SRC Chair), Joe Bellil, Steve LaMaster, Tay Silveira
* **Massachusetts** **Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff:** Amanda Baczko, Emily McCaffrey,William Noone, Amy Karr
* **Others present:** Armené Margosian, Doug Mason
* **Absent Executive Committee Members:** Naomi Goldberg

Please Note: This meeting was held remotely.

**The meeting was called to order at 1:09 pm by the chair.**

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

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

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. SRC budget discussion – Heather Wood

Follow-up discussion about MassAbility not receiving requested reallotment funds. Members are concerned about the lack of resources for the SRC. This may impact recommendations. It is hoped that if MassAbility does find additional funds some will go to the SRC. Chair Wood did not realize that SRC was not factored into the basic MassAbility funding. The priority is that funds are available for people who need services, and also for staff to be paid so they can provide services to consumers. The Commissioner did make sure that Ms. Karr’s position remained.

Chair Wood suggested looking at what other states’ SRCs are doing for funding. She encouraged anyone to reach out to her if they have any ideas.

1. Bylaws review – Heather Wood

Chair Wood thinks that the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) did a great job with the changes to the bylaws. The bylaws now reflect our SRC’s actual practices and the Federal regulations. NASHIA’s last day was September 30th.

1. Meeting time discussion – Heather Wood

Chair Wood had mentioned at the September Executive Committee meeting the need to possibly adjust the time of this meeting going forward. Today is RoshHashanah, so Chair Wood was able to attend. For the future, she is asking if this meeting can still be held on the first Thursday of each month, but from 4 to 6 pm instead of 1 to 3 pm. The consensus was to change the Executive Committee meetings to 4 to 6 pm, still on the first Thursday of each month. Ms. Karr will send out updated invites for the rest of the 2024 scheduled Executive Committee meetings.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Annual Report discussion – Heather Wood, Joe Bellil**

Mr. Bellil has all the reports except the Chair’s letter and the report from the Consumer Satisfaction Needs Assessment Committee (CSNAC).

The Commissioner discussed combining the SRC Annual Report with the MassAbility Annual Report. Mr. Bellil thinks that is fine. The Annual Report gets sent to the Governor and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Once the SRC Annual Report is done, usually MassAbility sends it to the Governor and RSA.

Once Mr. Bellil has all the reports, he will send everything to Colleen Casey and the Communications team with a note asking if it can be included in MassAbility’s Annual Report.

1. **Vice chair discussion**

Mr. Bellil thinks he may have had a vice chair when he was SRC Chair. There has not been a vice chair in quite some time. Chair Wood noted that the SRC is a difficult position – some current members are serving in holdover status, nominees are not yet appointed, and some seats are still open. Being Chair is challenging even in better circumstances. Work and home life present additional challenges. Chair Wood is mentioning the vice-chair position in case any appointed member is interested.

1. **Committee Reports**
2. **DEIA Council – Doug Mason**

The Council last met on September 30th. At that meeting, the council talked about where MassAbility is in terms of the diversity goals it had prioritized for this year.

MassAbility staff is representative of the demographics of the Commonwealth except for veteran representation. That is not new. Historically veterans have been underrepresented in MassAbility. However, there is an ongoing effort to reach out to and try to identify veterans who might be interested in working for MassAbility.

The council should be proud of the work it has done this year.

* **State Plan Committee – Joe Bellil**

The committee last met on August 21st.

Mr. Bellil stated he would send Chair Wood an email reminder early next week about the remaining reports (Chair letter and Consumer Satisfaction Needs Assessment Committee [CSNAC] report). He will send all the reports to Colleen Casey, ask her to combine the SRC’s Annual Report with MassAbility’s, and also ask for any next steps needed.

After MassAbility’s response to the SRC’s recommendations, Mr. Bellil and Mr. LaMaster edited the text of their recommendations.

Mr. Bellil will cancel the scheduled October 16th State Plan Committee meeting because he has a conflict. Ms. Karr will send out the meeting cancellations.

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

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

The committee last met on August 8th. It has not met since the September Quarterly meeting.

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

* Membership ad hoc Committee – Naomi Goldberg

Ms. Goldberg was not present at this meeting.

The committee last met on August 27th. It has not met since the September Quarterly meeting.

Currently, there is no Membership ad hoc Committee scheduled.

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

The committee last met on August 21st. It has not met since the September Quarterly meeting.

The next meeting is November 18th at 5:00 pm.

**Questions/Comments for Chairs:**

There were no questions or comments for the Chairs.

1. MassAbility update/Q & A – Emily McCaffrey, Amanda Baczko

* Budget: The lack of reallotment dollars has already been discussed at this meeting.
* Rebranding: The name is now officially MassAbility. We are slowly going over documents, changing language, and making sure MassAbililty is on everything.

There were no questions about/for MassAbility.

1. Open Mic

It was suggested that there be a presentation, perhaps from the Client Assistance Program (CAP), about the top issues presented by consumers. Ms. McCaffrey loves this idea and could be a part of this. As Ombuds, she works closely with CAP and maintains a tracking system about what issues are presented and what is being done about them. Ms. Baczko agrees that a presentation with CAP, Ms. McCaffrey, and Graham Porell about trends may be a great idea, and Ms. Baczko will get in touch with these individuals about a presentation.

Ms. Margosian, who had attended the August Executive Committee meeting, introduced herself as a MassAbility consumer. She has been receiving services since August 2023. She started school in September but has had difficulty receiving reimbursement for approved expenses, although she began trying to receive reimbursement in May. This is a burden when living well below the poverty line. She also worries about consumers with poor communication skills and more deficits and wonders how they can get what they need. She feels this needs to be addressed.

Ms. McCaffrey knows Ms. Margosian and acknowledges the challenges Ms. Margosian has experienced in receiving reimbursement. There was a change in Ms. Margosian’s counselor and MassAbility was also changing systems which added complications. Ms. McCaffrey noted that she has seen that mileage reimbursement is being pushed through. Ms. McCaffrey said that it sounds like communication is a piece of the problem. She and Ms. Margosian have had conversations. Ms. McCaffrey will reach out to Ms. Margosian to see if they can meet.

Chair Wood invited Ms. Margosian to attend the next CSNAC meeting on November 18th, where the latest results of the Consumer Experience Survey results will be discussed. Ms. Karr offered to send Ms. Margosian links to the CSNAC meeting and other SRC meetings, and shared her email with Ms. Margosian in the chat. Ms. Margosian said she would like to stay in touch.

The next Executive Committee meeting is on November 7th at the new time of 4:00 pm - 6 pm. The existing meeting invites will be updated with the new time.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 pm.