



CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

November 1, 2017

12:00 – 2:00

Allentown OVR

IN ATTENDANCE:

Michelle Mitchell
Susan Firman
Jane Styer
Susan Storm
Brooke Cho
Dolly Singley
Amy Beck – on the phone
Kathleen Britton – on the phone

ABSENT:

A motion to accept the September 28, 2017 minutes with corrections was made by Jane Styer and seconded by Susan Firman.

AGENCY REPORT:

OVR Report – Susan Storm

A lot has happened since the July meeting in regards to staffing. At that time, we had four counselor vacancies and now the expectation is to reach up to 10 vacancies by the end of November. There have been several counselors who have transferred or retired. The cases that are being served on overtime currently are: Easton, Northampton county, Drug and Alcohol, Whitehall, Allentown, Rehab facilities, Transition caseload for Southern Lehigh, and Bethlehem. We have added working overtime on Saturdays for administrative activity. VR Supervisor Tracie Maille will return from leave next Monday.

We have been interviewing for the vacant VRC positions. As a result of the interviews, two names for the VRC Intern position have been submitted. One is from Penn State and is slated to begin in January. The other candidate has not given a definite date, but probably will begin in January as well. They will be covering the Easton and Allentown caseloads.

Brooke spoke about the training that is required for the interns. The training is broken up in two sections. The policy and procedures training takes about 6 – 8 weeks, which encompasses all of our statewide policies and procedures. Shadowing is also incorporated with that training. The

interns require a certain number of hours of direct and indirect service time. They can have a limited number of cases during their probationary period. Once they have graduated and are promoted from probation, we can build up the rest of their caseloads.

For the Counselor Trainees who don't have a Master's Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation, they may have Master's Degree in a related field, basically Social Work. So, they would be working on a yearlong training program. The training would be the same as the training for ERC's, VRC's They would have to incorporate regular training that would focus more on the foundations of rehabilitation and the different aspects of disabilities and how that relates to employment.

We completed our ERC (Early Reach Coordinator) interviews today and we feel confident we have at least one candidate to nominate. If that person doesn't accept, we have a back-up. We hope to get this person started before January if possible.

Jane asked the question regarding how customers are notified when their counselor has either transferred or left the office? There was discussion around the subject of reassignments and overtime and making more use of the internet or creating online procedures. The new online application process was discussed providing information about how customers now have the ability to apply for services online. It has been well received by students and older customers as well. A Clerk Typist 2 is available to assist customers over the phone who are experiencing difficulties in completing the online applications.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Counsel (PARC) They reached out to the CAC chairs and the CAC overall to get input about how things are going and if there are any issues. The last time we had official contact was in the March timeframe. Michelle continues to receive updates from PARC. She asked if the CAC members would be interested in having this information forwarded to them via email to see what is happening across the state? The 2016 report has been released. The report would be part of the PARC email that Michelle is going to forward to the CAC members. The next PARC/CAC conference call is to be announced. They are looking forward having another Summit in Harrisburg.

Sue Firman provided information about the Department of Transportation Webinar scheduled for next Tuesday, November 7, 2017 from 3 – 4. She will forward the email to Michelle who in turn will forward it to the CAC membership. There will be a link in the email that will allow you to click on if you would like to participate in the webinar.

NDEAM: Susan Storm spoke about the job fair held in October at the Career Link on Union Blvd., in Allentown. The fair was held in the PPL room with a separate section in the auditorium designed to accommodate the students, especially those who were not actually seeking a job at the present time. There were 129 individuals who attended and at least 6 confirmed hires from the fair. There have been at least 12 interviews. There were 24 employers who participated. The employers had good things to say about the preparedness of the job-seekers. The business service team had 4 prep sessions for the people who were going to apply for positions. The other two NDEAM events were transition night events. They were done by the transition team. One was held last week at the Stroudsburg High School to cover the Monroe area. They are OVR 101 events for parents, students and educators, where they discuss what is OVR, and how to get connected with OVR. We will be doing it again for the Lehigh county at the LVCIL on November 14.

Michelle talked about the work involved and how the CAC may be able to assist in future job fairs. There are many educational institutions who are having these kinds of fairs and maybe it would be feasible to work together with them, by bringing in other partners, etc.

New Membership:

Dolly – mentioned a new member possibility in her boss, Barbara Ryan Hausman, who is the Director of Academic & Accessibility Support at Moravian College. She has a lot of connections in the community and would be a good resource. She used to be the disability assistant director at Lehigh and prior to that was a director at DeSales. She would like to join. She feels that she should contact Dolly has questions about the process to have her come on board. She feels that she should contact the career development office at her college, which she thinks would be a good way to get the word out. Michelle is going to email a membership packet to Dolly for Barbara Ryan Hausman.

The Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC), consists of Lafayette, Lehigh, Moravian, DeSales, Cedar Crest and Muhlenberg. Within the LVAIC consortium, all the disability specialists get together every couple of months to participate in webinars to discuss disability services, what are the hot topics, and basically what is going on in the post-secondary arena. The career individuals do the same thing. The next webinar is scheduled for November 7th. The webinars are held about 3 or 4 times a year and each one focuses on a different subject. Dolly could invite a guest to attend one as Lehigh is hosting them this year.

Susan- would like to explore how we reach out to the students in regards to services and how to connect with OVR. Dolly would be interested in having an OVR 101 session to assist the students. She would like to invite the disability specialists and anyone else who would be interested in attending.

WIOA and other OVR Allentown Initiatives: One thing that's new is the VRC Trainee position. It is going to go up on the Civil Service website. It's a position that is going to require the applicant take a test. When Susan receives further information, she will forward it to the CAC. Degrees in Social Work or School Psychology are degrees that would fit well for this position. The salary starts at just under \$42,000 a year.

Like to do more targeted outreach to people we don't seem to be reaching at this time. One sector may be the Hispanic community. Kathleen suggested contacting the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in order to reach their community. Maybe having the opportunity to speak at one of their meetings will be awareness to OVR.

Michelle -Partnership for Disability Friendly Community: The meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month. The last meeting for this year will be held on November 16. There may be an opportunity to post some information in the newsletter. Tabled for now.

Kathleen – membership needs to be increased to get to 9 – 13 members. Susan suggested involving the Business Services staff to make them acquainted with our needs. They may be able to mention them to some of their contacts to consider the CAC membership. The CAC is going to present at the OVR staff meeting on November 15. Kathleen suggested having questions submitted ahead of time via email to Michelle.

Creating a slate of officers for election: The officers have a two-year commitment. The voting will take place in January.

NEW BUSINESS:

Michelle is going to send out the CAC bulletin list with the things that we're supposed to be looking at and focusing on. As chair, she wants to try to help move the CAC in a direction of rolling up our sleeves and becoming more active versus sitting and listening to reports. She thinks that is how we are going to build our membership and bring on high caliber membership that are interested in employment and accessing statewide what's going on and being a part of that whole discussion and process. We really need to have a component of the meeting that feels like we are doing some of those things. She has invited Rick Walters to the January meeting. The CAP person will come to our meeting in the March/April timeframe.

NEXT MEETING: January 3, 2018
Location to be determined (Restaurant)

Agenda & Minutes Due 12/18/2017

ADJOURNMENT