



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

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Executive Committee Call Written Review October 26, 2021 1:00 PM

Committee Members (P = Present) (NP = Not Present)

Cindy Duch (NP) Passle Helminski (P) Juliet Marsala (P)
William Del Toro Vargas (P) Rob Wallington (P) John Seely (NP)
Michele Leahy (P)

Other Members: Paul Fogle (P)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR): Cheryl Novak (P), Lee Ann Stewart (P)

Staff Present: Michelle Gerrick (P), Chris Todd (P)

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Ms. Passle Helminski stated she would like to have added to the agenda the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Conference held from November 1 through 5, 2021 for \$195.00 and the Council Member application and related documents for Ms. Jessica Keogh.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

Mr. Rob Wallington made a motion to approve today's agenda with additions and the approval of the previous meeting minutes. Mr. William Del Toro Vargas seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

DISCUSSION TO FINALIZE THE AGENDA FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING 11/16/21. FC SPEAKER: ACL's Administration on Disabilities will serve as the speaker for the November meeting.

- Ms. Michelle Gerrick (staff) reported that the Administration for Community Living (ACL) will be in touch regarding the speaker for Full Council but did not provide a name yet.

FC REPORTS: In addition to the standing OVR reports, Kim Robinson will provide report on 14C Certificate and if OVR has a plan or has been providing technical assistance on transitioning Sheltered Workshops to competitive employment

Kim has asked for input to make sure that she covers all questions/concerns

- Ms. Michele Leahy and Ms. Juliet Marsala stated that Legislative Committee would like data and information regarding Benefits Counseling and WIPA presented at the next Full Council meeting.
- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart reported that she will ensure that information be provided to members. Ms. Patty Vasco retired in June and was the head of that project. Mr. Ralph Roach has also been in contact with PaRC and OVR staff to identify an individual that will provide information regarding Benefits Counseling.
- Ms. Juliet Marsala inquired if Policy/Customer Satisfaction Committee has had recent discussion/report on the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (DEI) of OVR Services.
- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas reported they have not and could add that to the agenda for upcoming committee meetings.
- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart reported that Ms. Patty McCarter is currently the head of the OVR's DEI Initiatives and that a study was completed and shared with PaRC in the past that was completed through Penn State University, and OVR could share information regarding DEI focus groups. Customer Satisfaction Surveys also have two questions regarding DEI and their rating is 90% positive and that customers stated they have been treated with dignity, respect, and great sensitivity. Those questions are also part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) that is going to be included in an upcoming mid-project report from Temple University that will be shared with the PaRC.

Review timeframes on agenda

11:30 - Council work time or Committee Reports or something else?

- Ms. Juliet Marsala suggested using Council work time for potential discussion of DEI reporting, mid- project reporting regarding the DEI and CSNA, benefits counseling reporting, and/or updated information from the State and Federal Position Papers.

Review of Consent Agenda

- Ms. Juliet Marsala asked if the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Conference was already on the Consent Agenda.
- Ms. Passle Helminski reported that was only part of the Executive Committee discussion as was the Jessica Keogh documents that will also need to be included in the Consent Agenda.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

- Ms. Michele Leahy inquired about the member story page text.
- Ms. Juliet Marsala inquired about member information text.
- Mr. Chris Todd (staff) reported that information will be replaced and is just a placeholder until members submit their information to staff.
- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart reported that she has asked Mr. Matt Raney from OVR to have VR Highlights document available in time to be included in the Annual Report. The highlights made available this year were delayed from the previous fiscal year due to legality issues and data verification.
- Ms. Michele Leahy asked if there will be Success Stories of an OVR recipient included and offered to connect staff with Community Integrated Services (CIS), Achieva, and Mr. John Seely to provide that Success Stories.
- Ms. Juliet Marsala also suggested JEVS hireAbility and other OVR providers and will send emails to request and provide that information for the Annual Report before the end of November.

DISCUSS 2022 Full Council (FC) MEETING FORMAT SURVEY AND DETERMINE RECOMMENDATION BASED ON RESULTS

- Ms. Michelle Gerrick (staff) reported the member polling results for format survey as 5 for in person, 6 virtual, 7 unsure including a change of vote from Ms. Juliet Marsala to in person.
- Mr. Paul Fogle informed members he will not be available to attend in person meetings due to safety concerns, has witnessed friends that are fully vaccinated and lose their life from COVID, brought up concerns about having an exposure while using public transportation to get to Full Council (FC) meetings, inquired about concerns regarding testing for COVID for all attendees of the Full Council public meetings.

- Ms. Passle Helminski informed members she will not be available to attend in person meetings due to concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic affecting those who are fully vaccinated.
- Mr. Rob Wallington will not be attending in person meetings due to concerns of safety regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Ms. Michelle Gerrick informed members that contracts for the Hilton are typically due to be signed to reserve accommodations in December for the following calendar year of meetings. Hybrid meetings will cost approximately \$4,000.00 in addition to the cost of the in-person meetings which is \$4,000.00 to \$6,000.00. Offered to create another poll if members thought it may help with the decision process.
- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart reported that OVR is not required to attend in person meetings, continue to have the option to tele-work, and some OVR staff may attend and some may not attend the Full Council meetings.
- Ms. Passle Helminski reported Legislative Visits currently will not be allowed to take place inside of the Capitol because of the pandemic. There will need to be enough members willing to attend in person to financially justify and ensure that providing a hybrid format would be productive.
- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas suggested finishing the fiscal year with virtual format Full Council meetings due to the survey results and concerns discussed today by members.
- Ms. Juliet Marsala agreed that meetings could remain virtual for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and revisit providing in person and hybrid format for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This would provide an opportunity to prepare and plan for concerns, legalities, costs about in person and hybrid attendance and allow more time for concerns regarding the pandemic to improve.
- Ms. Michelle Gerrick (staff) asked for clarification that this would mean that meetings remain virtual for February and May of 2022. August and October 2022 meetings would require reassessment. Inquired if the Bylaws committee would also aid with this assessment.
- Ms. Juliet Marsala suggested that the Bylaws committee has a substantial task already and that it would be appropriate to create an additional Ad hoc committee for issues concerning FC meeting format.
- Mr. Paul Fogle suggested creating an Ad hoc Governance committee and designating a backup plan for hotels if the Hilton is not able to reserve accommodations.

Ms. Juliet Marsala made a motion to finish Fiscal Year 2021-2022 with two virtual Full Council meetings, consider in person and hybrid meetings for Fiscal Year 2022-2023, create an Ad hoc committee to evaluate best practices, readiness, and preparedness to have a plan to put forward

regarding meeting format by the February 2022 FC meeting. Ms. Michele Leahy seconded the motion. All were in favor.

RECRUITMENT: DISCUSS/APPROVE ANDREW PENNINGTON'S RESUME FOR CONSIDERATION OF CAP REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COUNCIL

Ms. Juliet Marsala made a motion to approve Andrew Pennington's resume for consideration of Client Assistance Program Representative on the Council. Ms. Michele Leahy seconded the motion. All were in favor.

FISCAL REPORT FOR 1ST QUARTER (JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2021)

- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas reported the PaRC July expenses were \$476.66 and August expenses were \$1396.93. September expenses have not been reported yet by Fiscal Department.
- Ms. Michelle Gerrick (staff) reported that September expenses are anticipated to be around \$350.00.

Mr. William Del Toro Vargas made a motion to accept the 1st Quarter Fiscal Report. Mr. Rob Wallington seconded the motion. All were in favor.

OVR UPDATES

- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart reported that last week the State Plan Public Meetings were completed, and the State Plan Public Comment period will end on 11/1/2021 and there were no comments received that would change the current draft. She will provide the draft by the FC meeting on 11/16/2021. Will work with Council in the spring of 2022 to look at goals for the next three-year period for the CSNA. OVR is moving their office to the Labor and Industry building early next year.

ANY COMMITTEE UPDATES

- There were no committee updates.

Addition to the Agenda to discuss application submitted for Ms. Jessica Keogh to join the Council.

- Ms. Michelle Gerrick (staff) informed members that the application stated the applicant may be eligible to fill Categories of Representation for IDEA, Disability Advocacy Groups, Former/Current OVR Customer, Young Adult and may not be eligible for Young Adult based on work experience provided in her resume. The IDEA representative's term expires in July 2022.
- Ms. Passle inquired if the IDEA representative was a permanent member.

- Ms. Juliet Marsala stated that the Category is permanent but not the current member as they are allowed two three-year terms and the only Category exempt from that requirement is CAP as stated in the Bylaws. Suggested the Bylaws Committee provide clarification to explicitly state term requirements and seek further clarification from the Governor's Office.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.