

Minutes for CAC meeting held on at Pittsburgh BBVS on August 2, 2019

The meeting was held at the BBVS Office at 531 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh PA.

In attendance via phone were Sue Lichtenfels, Carla Hayes, Lynn Fox, Emily Gindlesberger, Lynnette Suarez, Bob Nagy. Attending in the office were Chris Hunsinger, Tom Burgunder, Joe Wassermann, Shannon Austin, and Rich Fischer.

Sue motioned and Carla seconded to approve the May 3, 2019 minutes.

Staff updates for BBVS as of May 2019:

A social worker position was posted in mid-2018. Interviews were held in Autumn 2018.

They also had requested a VRT position that will serve both the Erie office and the Pittsburgh office. This person should be dually certified so that they can do both VRT work for Pittsburgh and O&M work for Erie. Interviews were held in November 2018 for this position. However, neither the social worker nor the split VRT positions were filled. The person doing the split job between Erie and Pittsburgh will live somewhere halfway between the two offices working close to where they live. Joe Strechay was instrumental in putting together this hybrid job split between two offices and two job descriptions.

There are 3 positions that they aren't allowed to fill. They are one social worker, one VRT and one O&M position. They didn't want to move a Vocational Rehab counselor to placement because placement people don't have production goals so the counselor position work would still be there to be done and spread over the rest of the VRCs. Since they chose a dedicated Business Service Representative, that person never had goals to meet in the past so no other people need to pick up that slack.

They could have had one of the VRCs do some business service rep work but that usually doesn't work out as designed. This Business Service Rep will be working for the whole office. Our Business Services Rep was hired in mid-November 2018. He is AT savvy and works with employers and customers being certified to do some of the training needed to get people up and running at jobs with whatever assistive technology they need.

Joe Wassermann asked about an Anthony Murphy asking if he had made applications for any of the jobs. Shannon didn't recognize that name.

Joe had sent Lynn Fox some PARC reports to get her take on it.

Apparently, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had met all goals. The question was "Is the agency meeting its requirements?". The answer appears to be that Pennsylvania meets all state performance goals for 9 out of 10 years. OSEP sets goals for special education delivery, and special ed. www.pattan.net www.education.pa.gov for the state performance plan; also, effective transition practices.

Joe had sent Lynn an email about Indicator 13 as well, which is effective transition practices. The email about Indicator 13 gave some guidance on how LEA's Local Education Agencies should be handling this indicator and what the reporting cycles should be. The LEA is the person in each school district tasked with the responsibility for special education so that the name of the position might be different in some districts, but the job has overall responsibility for special

education in the district. It has something to do with both professional development and effective secondary transition. There were district assignments, and cycles for reporting. Carla had some questions about these emails as well.

Joe then went to Shannon for office goals for the year. She told us that the Pittsburgh office of BBVS had a good year.

Met or exceeded goals in all situations. Rehab goal for VRCs was 82 the office had 86 for the year. Independent Living goal was 135 and they got 137 for the year. For O&M, the goal was 72 and they had 87. Rehab therapy 72 was the goal and they closed 112. We should be able to do more in Westmoreland County with the new hybrid position with the Erie office. The office met 104% of its overall goals.

At the end of July and the beginning of August, the office has been working on a plan to attack the backlog of referrals for service. There needs to be a better strategy for dealing with referrals for people who need to get into the system. The office is trying to reduce the difference between when referral comes in and person actually gets service.

They have a Tiered or ranking system for acting on the referrals. They are treating this backlog as a learning experience for the new staff. There is a new best practices document that staff is following for the referrals for both VRTs and O&M instructors.

Unfortunately, some referrals could be as old as a year. VRTs may well be able to consult with other staff to move along some of the work if customers don't need one on one home visits. VRT's each have between 80 and 100 active cases, now. The office only has two VRTs. We didn't get a number for active cases for social workers, VRT's or O&M's. Rich Asked if there is much contract work to cut down on the backlogs. They can usually only get people for the summer because school district people may not be working, and contract workers may want to limit their work area significantly. Also, annuitants weren't interested so much in being rehired for short term periods.

Chris Hunsinger asked about unresolved referrals. Shannon told us that she will have such a statistic for us at our next meeting. Chris also asked about active cases not closures at the end of the year. Apparently, the year ends in June.

The highest priority cases are the ones that will allow someone to maintain or advance employment. Further down the priority would be summer employment, people facing possible institutionalization without intervention of BBVS people, health and safety issues in the home. Everyone else is below that level.

OVR and BBVS leadership issue. David DeNotaris is no longer with OVR. There was no explanation as to why he left. These jobs are appointed jobs, and since this is a very political year, that may enter into any explanation if anyone wanted to give one. Historically, OVR directors don't last more than a few years. They almost always change when the administration changes, but also during multi-term administrations as well. Ryan Hyde is now acting Director of OVR and Stan Swaintek is now acting BBVS director. Rich Fischer thinks these acting heads are at least people who understand how the organizations run. Shannon didn't necessarily think that she would be having someone from Central Office available for the Employment Seminar being held in conjunction with the PCB Conference. Tom was hoping to clarify whether we would

be able to have a speaker from Harrisburg for our conference. Shannon believes that there would be no new information about any possible changes in goals or direction by October.

They are continuing working to implement WIOA with Competitive Integrated employment, Customized employment Discovery for finding a position, assistive technology, supported employment which recently had some policy changes, and working with partners for identifying jobs whether it is for full time work or for the Academies or summer internships.

Rich mentioned a new initiative that CVS and others are working on to hire more disabled workers. CVS is actively looking for as many as 225 people for positions in stores, call centers, and some work from home positions, and as Pharmacy techs, or positions that get some training at HDAC in Johnstown.

Shannon says that OVR will always be here, but they may be doing there job possibly in a different way. Shannon has yet to set the agenda for the employment seminar.

BBVS and the PETS continuum. This is the Pre-employment transition services for students between 14 and 21 years of age. Doing work in the agency with employment shadowing, self-advocacy, independent living skills, work readiness training, and workplace learning experiences. Shannon wanted to identify the services being provided already and making both parents and students aware of the available services. BBVS already has a children's program, so it is important to send the message out and create linkages between school districts and the Intermediate Units. The BBVS offices cover large enough areas that it is difficult to designate liaisons between facilities or school districts and the agency. In this office, there is a single point contact for school districts at the office. The continuum depends on employment partnerships as well for job shadowing, OJT, and work opportunities.

There is a document describing the continuum. Between 8 and 14 children start with group services disability mentorship day looking at post-secondary programs, college and career bound, resource fairs, self-exploration, self-advocacy, job shadowing, career planning. The continuum is causing people to understand things better about how a child can move through the system. It gives people a roadmap to possible outcomes. This helps school districts, parents, and even agency staff. The juvenile justice system is also part of PETS.

Remember to call the main number at BBVS to do the pre-app and the staff will help fill it out. The common Measures that WIOA has imposed will make statistics similar in all areas of VR services.

Joe also asked about having people talking about the summer programs for students that the state of Pennsylvania and Overbrook School provide during our PCB conference call at the end of August.

He asked that BBVS or the PATTAN people get in touch with TVIs who could then get in touch with the parents of their students to let them know about the call. Joe got in touch with Karen Walsh-Emma who thought that Shelly Faust-Jones might also be a good contact. We talked about other services for young people like Blind Industries of Maryland and the Blind Enterprise Program. They both might be part of a conversation about young people's employment for the future. There might need to be some post-secondary training for people going into self-employment or BEP before jumping into the program. Shannon thought of it as a stair step idea.

Allison Wullbrandt is the head of the BEP program for future reference. The Pittsburgh office only has a couple of people in that program at the time of the CAC meeting.

Lynn Fox asked us to let her know as soon as we could about the end of August call so that we could get the work out through the PATTAN network.

We also talked about the time for White Cane day. We were thinking that it would be either Oct. 12 or Oct. 15. Depending on what BVRS is able to organize.

No old business. Will we need to be talking about voting for officers in November? We all thought that it would be every 2 years.

Shannon wanted to summarize what she is thinking about for the future for the STEM event. She thinks that she would like to expand it to a STEAM event to include arts, which would add an additional group of students that we had not been reaching with the STEM event in March. There are new procurement rules so they are looking at additional vendors for the event and it will probably be in March or April at CMU.

This allows schools to think of a broader group of students since it isn't just science. Shannon pointed out that there were TVIs from WPSBC at the last event but they didn't bring students. They couldn't think of their students in a science or engineering environment, but if we also include the arts, they may be able to see some of their students in those fields. This works back to Pennsylvania being an Employment First state. Shannon told us that these students with non-STEM abilities still deserve exposure to many different possibilities for their adult lives. It may give them, their parents, their teachers, and their counselors ideas about more things that they can achieve as adults. Tom asked if the new event would be for just college bound people but also for other students. Shannon believes that all children should be allowed to have this exposure.

The NDEAM event will not be at PNC. Shannon was thinking about the first week in October. Chatham Eden Hall program is still being looked at. Shannon and Kim Robinson from the OVR side had started looking at that program, but job assignments for Kim changed. The summer program at CCAC, Launch Academy, through CCAC and OVR that lasts a week may be a fit for some. A couple of students from BBVS were part of that this summer. They do field trips job readiness, interviewing skills with employer exposure, and post-secondary exposure at both Chatham and Robert Morris. The students were also exposed to medical technical work like taking blood pressure, etc.

Chris motioned that we adjourn and Rich Fischer seconded. Next meeting will be on Nov. 2. Respectfully submitted by Chris Hunsinger.