

## **CAC MEETING MINUTES for MAY 7, 2021**

**The meeting was held telephonically and using Skype beginning at approximately 10:00 a.m. on May 7, 2021.**

### **In Attendance:**

Tom Burgunder, Rich Fisher, Lynn Fox, Emily Gindlesberger, Chris Hunsinger, Carla Hayes, Terri Lucas, Bob Nagy, Barb Peterson, Larry Shock, Sarah Vogel, Mike Zaken.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made to approve the Minutes by Terri Lucas and seconded by Carla Hayes. The motion carried.

### **Staff Updates:**

The Pittsburgh BBVS office submitted Requests to Fill for 3 VRC positions, a Social Worker position, 2 O&M Specialists, a Vision Rehab Therapist, and at least one clerical (CT2). BBVS got approval for one VRT, one O&M Specialist and a VRC. CO is working on posting the jobs. It could take a year to get folks hired and working independently.

Tom asked Sarah to explain which positions they would like filled and where the staffing levels are now. They are down one VR Supervisor which cannot be filled because the office VR Supervisor, Harold, is on a temporary assignment in Central Office.

They are still down two Social Workers, two VRCs, one CT2, two O&Ms, and one VRT. Sarah stated they are operating at approximately fifty percent of employee capacity, and the Bureau Director is working on determining additional needs. They feel that even if the above-mentioned positions could be filled, it might still not be enough staff to take care of the workload adequately.

### **Hiring Freeze Update:**

The office currently has two Social Workers, one Social Worker Supervisor, two VRTs, two O&Ms, two VRCs, no VR Supervisor, one ADA, one DA, one Clerk Typist 2, one Clerk Typist 3 and one Fiscal Assistant. Hiring freeze has not been lifted, abut offices are asking for positions to be filled at request. Each position requested is evaluated individually.

## **Instructional Staff Returning to the Field:**

The office received guidance in April 2021 concerning critical cases with criteria for inclusion. That included college students, some VR activities, and individuals who live alone with more immediate safety issues. Sarah believes that there could be 30 such cases.

Several customers have been receiving in person VRT and O&M services.

They did as much as could be done virtually, but there were services where personal contact was justified.

## **Telework Update - Return to Office / Field - All Staff:**

The office has been working on its plan for full return to work. At the time of our meeting (May 7, 2021), hybrid and full return were still being addressed. There were still questions about how all of the regulations and rules - including what the Office of Administration decides - as well as the fact that certain rules will change by order of the governor at the end of May- which could affect the decisions for the office.

Larry and Sarah are evaluating how to do this by going into the office starting the week of May 10, 2021.

Those above the office will be making the final decisions.

Mike Zaken asked if people had been going into the office. Sarah pointed out they have been taking care of critical functions with a few people going in and taking care of mail, etc., but never having a group of employees in the office.

Carla Hayes said that her remote work in training has been working out well. The remote work has changed the travel expenses for the contract work. She also asked if the savings realized by telework interviewing would be passed on to other areas. Carla mentioned that she has been using the Zoom platform. Sarah said there would probably be new vendor codes for virtual learning.

The agency has not been spending as much money with less travel and other limits put on work and activity during the Covid period.

## **Pre-ETS Programming – Specific BBVS Programming:**

New Program – STRIVE-ON runs through May 27, 2021. Those who do the Spring session will be able to do a Fall session. It is geared for students ending

their high school year. Sarah says it has been well attended. Sarah didn't know if there will be an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program.

### **Summer Programs:**

There is no Summer Academy this year.

### **Western PA School for Blind Children:**

Collaboration and Coordination of Programming between OVR and special education: Three meeting **“cews” whatever that is something about IEP and work plans. My recording stopped and my notes were not clear about the work between WPSBC and BBVS, but I think that the additional coordinated work was positive. [CH notation]**

**The remainder of this information is from my typed notes. [CH notation]**

### **Pre-ETS:**

Information about BSE and OVR MOU:

There are three webinars which have been developed to explain how the MOU between OVR and BSE are to be handled. Larry and Sarah are to find the link to the MOU for us.

**Here are some links that I got at PACES-BVI meeting: [I meaning Chris H ?]**

Here is a Link to OVR information on the PaTTAN Website. You can link to the webinars and handouts from here: <https://www.pattan.net/Graduation-Post-Secondary-Outcomes/Educational-Initiatives/Additional-Resources/Office-of-Vocational-Rehabilitation>

Below are two BSE/OVR MOU for Professionals links:

<https://www.pattan.net/Publications/BSEOVR-MOU-for-Professionals>

<https://www.pattan.net/CMSPages/GetAmazonFile.aspx?path=~\pattan\media\materials\publications\files\ovr-bse-mou-overvw-professionals-2-21-wbl.pdf&hash=0732d3bfd74054b888b14148af4d39ca1ae37bc72980f4f5636f207948ffcb5e&ext=.pdf>

**Training Update (Accessibility, Diversity, etc.):**

**I had nothing in my notes about this topic. [CH notation]**

**Business Services Update – Spero Pipakis:**

InspiroTec has a goal of hiring 1000 employees as a contractor for unemployment, ACA and medical marijuana. InspiroTec isn't compatible with JAWS, but can use ZoomText. Spero has a customer who wants to work for a company hiring for the Federal Government. Spero also has a customer who wants to work for IRS but has not found out about whether they are hiring.

InspiroTec looks out for its visually impaired employees and is willing to work to keep them in the loop because there are issues with the software. Spero also contacted First National Bank about their work on a call center - NIB for Sisco Certification Internships.

Blind Institute of Technology is doing some training on Salesforce for people who want to work for companies that use it.

No information regarding job fairs.

**Order of Selection – Status of Wait List:**

On May 3 there were 19 customers in Wave 6 released to the office from the list. Some had been on the wait list for only a month. BBVS Pgh has only two VRCs: Gale Bretti and Koji Matsuda.

What is done about those who are no longer interested in Job Placement?  
The terms being use differed when Shannon talked about what to do, how to code it, and the way the office described it. **Suspending or pausing to take into account Covid concerns sounded possible in my notes.[CH]**

### **Collaboration between Dept. of Education and BBVS Update:**

There has been encouragement for BBVS counselors of students in high school to actually be a part of the IEP discussion. We didn't have any numbers of how often that happens and whether the school districts and the counselors from BBVS are working together.

### **Competitive employment for people with MH issues – Aspire Program Update:**

Pennsylvania didn't apply for any of these funds for BBVS to be using for people with mental health issues as well as visual impairments.

### **New Business:**

There was no new business discussed.

### **Next CAC Meeting Date:**

August 6, 2021 beginning 10:00 a.m. – will be held virtually

### **Adjournment:**

Proposed by Rich Fischer and seconded by Mike Zaken.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Hunsinger