



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for July 20, 2022

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

Paul Fogle (P)	Susan Tomasic (P)	Jeanette Alexander (NP)
William Del Toro Vargas (P)	Rob Wallington (P)	Michele Leahy (P)
Lynn Heitz (P)	Julia Grant Barol (P)	

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Present: Lee Ann Stewart, James Whitonis

Staff Present: Michelle Gerrick, Chris Todd

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to approve past minutes and today's agenda. Mr. William Del Toro Vargas seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

FINALIZE FULL COUNCIL MEETING DRAFT AGENDA

SPEAKER – ELLEN STROM (CHIEF ACCESSIBILITY OFFICER)

- Mr. Paul Fogle reviewed the Full Council Agenda and inquired if members had questions or objections.
- Ms. Michele Leahy suggested hearing from OVR Public Relations to collaborate, promote OVR programs, and increase PaRC outreach. She expressed concerns about the lack of a press release when changes in OVR leadership occurred, the inability to obtain OVR Success Stories, and the need to improve communication and collaboration to assist fulfilling the PaRC mission. Ms. Leahy asked if someone from Labor and Industry Public Relations would be available to speak during the Full Council meeting.

- Ms. Lynn Heitz stated that all District Offices hold staff meetings quarterly and inquired if the PaRC could provide a presentation about the Council to increase outreach.
- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart stated there is not currently a Public Relations staff and that Ms. Connie Moonen is currently handling OVR communications. Ms. Stewart said that sharing information about the PaRC would be valuable to all OVR staff and suggested that members be present during the newly established monthly OVR in-service trainings to inform & educate on Council functions and collaboration with OVR. This would include a one-hour session with question-and-answer period.
- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas suggested Council outreach and presentations to also involve the Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC).
- Members discussed having Council work time to discuss details of the presentation, updating PaRC PowerPoints, inquiring about member volunteers to prepare and present the information, and determining dates.
- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas inquired if we have email addresses for all District Administrators, Assistant District Administrators, CAC Chairs, and other District Office staff.
- Mr. Jim Whitonis stated that he has reached out to all CACs and District Offices to continue updating information and that a PaRC presentation would be well received.
- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart stated that the newsletter could be shared with OVR staff and that they have a distribution plan in place to share the newsletter with additional staff mentioned.
- Ms. Michele Leahy requested a list of email addresses for VR counselors, District Administrators, and Assistant District Administrators to share Council information.
- Mr. Paul Fogle suggested discussing a list of OVR contacts for outreach during the upcoming FC meeting.
- Hearing no further discussion or objection, Mr. Paul Fogle recommended moving the Full Council meeting agenda forward for full membership review and approval.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION OF NEW APPLICANT TO REPRESENT CATEGORY OF PEAL CENTER TO INCLUDE REVIEW OF APPLICATION, RESUME, LETTERS OF REFERENCE

- Members reviewed application for membership and related documents submitted by Ms. Lorie Brew for representation of Parent Training and Information Center.
- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas inquired about the new PaRC representative on the Employment First Oversight Commission and which member is on the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP).
- Mr. Paul Fogle stated that Ms. Michele Leahy was selected for recommendation for the Employment First Commission and suggested inquiring with Ms. Jeanette Alexander about SEAP.

MOTION was made by Mr. Rob Wallington to approve the recommendation of Ms. Lorie Brew for the category of the PEAL Center and to forward the application and related documents to the Governor's Office for appointment.

Ms. Susan Tomasic seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION FROM LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE - NEW SUPPORTED LEGISLATION

- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas stated that the Legislative Committee has recommended the new legislation that was provided in pre-meeting material to be added to the Council's Position Paper and asked for additional discussion.
- Hearing no further discussion or objection, Mr. Paul Fogle recommended moving the new legislation forward for Full Council review and approval.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION FROM GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - UPDATE OF 2022-2023 BUDGET AND GOALS

- Ms. Susan Tomasic reviewed Committee Budget and Goals updates.
- Hearing no further discussion or objection, Mr. Paul Fogle recommended moving the Governance Committee's 2022-2023 Goals & Budget forward for Full Council review and approval.

DISCUSSION OF OVR HEARING OFFICER & MEDIATOR TO INCLUDE REVIEW OF RESUME

- Mr. Paul Fogle stated that he received clarification from OVR that there was not a need for a vote for the Hearing Officer applicant under review.
- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas stated the applicant has a very extensive and qualified background and inquired about the details of the position. Members agreed that more information would be needed on the position.
- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart stated that she will reach out to appropriate staff to provide more information and further explain when a complaint reaches a point where it cannot be resolved by OVR, it is forwarded to an Impartial Hearing Officer. The position is on an as needed basis and there is typically only one or two currently on staff.
- Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Paul Fogle recommended adding this discussion to the Full Council meeting agenda prior to Council work time. OVR staff will be available to answer additional questions at that time.

DISCUSSION - REMINDING SPEAKERS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY AS IT RELATES TO POWERPOINTS AND OTHER TOOLS USED DURING PRESENTATIONS

- Mr. Paul Fogle referred to draft letter in pre-meeting material and provided background on the need to provide speakers a reminder on the importance of accessibility during a presentation.
- Hearing no further discussion or objection, Mr. Paul Fogle recommended moving the letter forward for discussion during the Full Council meeting.

REVIEW OF PaRC 4TH QUARTER FISCAL REPORT

- Members reviewed fiscal report provided in pre-meeting material.
- Hearing no further discussion or objection, Mr. Paul Fogle recommended moving the fourth quarter fiscal report forward for Full Council review and approval.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Ms. Susan Tomasic stated that the Governance Committee needed more members to join. The committee provided revisions for the Bylaws and Handbook and is tracking member attendance for Full Council and Committee meetings.
- Ms. Lynn Heitz reported the Policy Committee had an extensive discussion about the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Statement of Work (SOW) which has been reviewed by OVR legal team. Members provided recommendations for goals to include blindness and visual impairment. Other recommendations included changing language from hearing impaired to deaf, deaf blind, and hard of hearing. OVR agreed to work on that language and will have a draft for the next Full Council meeting for review. Ms. Lynn Heitz volunteered to work on the Financial Needs Test workgroup and Ms. Julia Barol volunteered to join the Supported Employment workgroup.
- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas requested that staff send an updated Committee Roster to all members.
- Ms. Michele Leahy reported the Social Media Committee is working to redesign the PaRC newsletter and expand the Council's data base of contacts by sending out a letter to request additional contacts. Ms. Leahy has asked members to share the letters within their networks.

OVR UPDATES

- In regard to timeline of CSNA, Mr. Jim Whitonis stated that they learned from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) that it is not tied to any cycle, therefore, as current contract ends in December 2022, new cycle can follow however, the vendor needs to be in place around September.
- Mr. Paul Fogle stated that he is interested in creating an Ad Hoc Committee to work more closely with the Hiram G Andrews (HGAC) and improve the Council's relationship with their staff and students. Mr. William Del Toro Vargas volunteered to Chair the Ad hoc Committee.
- Hearing no further discussion or objection, Mr. Paul Fogle has recommended moving these two items forward for Full Council review and discussion and / or approval.

MOTION made by Ms. Lynn Heitz and seconded by Ms. Susan Tomasic to adjourn today's meeting. All were in favor.