



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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Legislative & Public Awareness Committee Draft Minutes for February 10, 2023

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Jeanette Alexander (P)

Julia Grant Barol (P)

Lynn Heitz (P)

Michele Leahy (NP)

William Del Toro Vargas (P)

Paul Fogle (P)

Michelle Mitchell (P)

Jessica Keogh (P)

PaRC Staff Present: Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

OVR Staff Present: James Whitonis

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: None

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES:

MOTION was made by Ms. Jeanette Alexander to approve today's agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Julia Grant Barol seconded the motion. All were in favor.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Letter to New Governor

- Members stated that they reviewed the letter of introduction to the Governor and had no edits or additions.

MOTION was made by Ms. Lynn Heitz to recommend the letter of introduction to the new Governor. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Letter Supporting House Bill 547

- Members stated that they reviewed the letter of support for HB 547 and had no edits or additions.

MOTION was made by Ms. Lynn Heitz to approve the letter of introduction to the new Governor. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Print and Mail 2 copies of the 2021-2022 PaRC Annual Report to all State Legislators

- Mr. Chris Todd (staff) stated that they are awaiting an estimate of cost from the printer, but it is estimated to be approximately \$4000 for the printing of 500 copies of the Annual Report plus the cost of postage. Members discussed concerns about this printing project being cost prohibitive and that printing reports would not be an effective use of Council funds as they are often not read or kept by Legislators.
- Members suggested providing a both an electronic and printed letter highlighting different areas of the Report to share with Legislators and including a link to the Annual Report in the letter. Members requested an estimate of cost to print and mail the letter.
- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas requested asking the Executive Committee to highlight different areas of the Annual Report that should be highlighted in the letter to legislators as they had reviewed and proofread the report as a committee.
- Mr. Paul Fogle explained that this item was requested for discussion for today because in the past Annual Reports were hand delivered to Legislative Offices when meetings were held in-person and could be a way to provide the reports to all Legislators. Inquired if Labor and Industry may have an updated list of email contacts for PA Legislators and their staff.
- Mr. Del Toro Vargas explained that when reports were hand delivered, they were often directly provided to an office front desk staff and wound up in a bin rather than being provided directly to a Legislator or Chief of Staff. An email or letter may be able to be directly provided to the Legislator or Chief of Staff. Requested that staff reach out to OVR staff to inquire about an updated list of email contacts for PA Legislators and their staff.
- Members provided additional suggestions for the letter to include OVR Success Stories and other information regarding OVR policies and how it relates to the work of the Council. Members requested a draft of the letter to review during the next committee meeting.

MOTION was made by Ms. Michelle Mitchell to email a letter highlighting different areas of the Report to share with all State Legislators and including a link to the Annual Report within the letter. Ms. Lynn Heitz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Pennsylvania Legislative Services (MYPLS)

- Members reviewed the estimate of cost for the contact services of MYPLS and requested that staff schedule a demo with the business to review the service during a committee meeting. Members discussed how the contact service would be analyzed and understand that the service is used by many other organizations and is kept up to date.

National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) 2023 Disability Summit, March 15 – 16, 2023

- Members reviewed the NRA conference information and agreed to let staff know if they would be interested in attending. The website does not include detailed information about what is being presented during the conference. Staff will reach out to the NRA directly to inquire about conference details and email the committee if more information about the conference is being provided.

State Legislative Meetings

- Members discussed whether to hold meetings with state Legislators virtually or in-person. Members agreed that there are advantages to both formats. Members reported that scheduling and confirming time with Legislators or staff that have direct involvement in legislation has been more successful virtually. In-person meetings have typically been with staff that works at the Legislator’s office front desk. Members agreed that in-person meetings can be more beneficial if there is confirmation the meeting is with the Legislators themselves. Since holding virtual meetings there has been more continued correspondence and follow up with Legislative staff. The number of meetings can be very limited to in-person meetings because of logistics.
- Members reported that meetings with Legislators in August 2022 included a lot of good discussion regarding transportation, employment of people with disabilities, inclusion, accessibility, and full funding for OVR.
- Members agreed to hold meetings with State Legislators via Zoom on March 30 and 31, 2023 and to potentially discuss in-person meetings for August during future committee meetings.
- Members asked staff to poll freshman Legislators, staff from the Governor’s Office, Majority and Minority leaders, Caucus Chairs, the Appropriations Committees Chairs, and Labor and Industry Committees Chairs for virtual meetings with PaRC members in March. Talking points will be determined by members during the next committee meeting.
- Mr. Del Toro Vargas requested staff invite members of the PaRC Executive Committee to share talking points for the meetings with Legislators and invite them to attend on March 30th and 31st.

- Members requested that staff send out a Doodle poll to have members share availability for times on March 30 and 31, 2023.

Committee Meeting Dates for 2023

- Members agreed to schedule the next PaRC Legislative Committee meeting for March 10, 2023, from 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Heitz to adjourn. Ms. Alexander seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.