



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Voice: (717) 975-2004 or (888) 250-5175 TTY: (888) 559-2658 Fax: (888) 524-9282

Email: parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org Website: parehabilitationcouncil.org

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for February 2, 2023

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

Paul Fogle (P)	Susan Tomasic (P)	Jeanette Alexander (P)
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, Cheryl Novak

Staff Present: Michelle Gerrick, Chris Todd

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Mr. Rob Wallington to approve today's agenda with additions and past meeting minutes. Ms. Lynn Heitz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

AGENDA ITEMS

FINAL DRAFT FEBRUARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

- Members reviewed the February 15th Full Council (FC) meeting agenda and requested that staff reach out to the speaker planned to present on Unemployment Compensation (UC) to follow up and ensure they will speak to the corrective actions, timelines, and solutions that will be implemented since their November meeting with UC staff and PaRC members.
- Ms. Heitz informed members of her meeting with Federal Legislators regarding the Website and Software Applications Accessibility Act. This legislation would require that private and public entities' websites be fully accessible.

MOTION was made by Mr. Wallington to approve the Full Council Agenda. Ms. Michele Leahy seconded the motion. All were in favor.

SECOND QUARTER FISCAL REPORT

- The report was screen shared and Mr. Paul Fogle informed members that the report will be read during the upcoming FC meeting.

OVR MEDIATORS AND IMPARTIAL HEARING OFFICERS

- Members reviewed the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) for PA OVR Independent Hearing Officers and Mediators Recruitment, Selection, Contracting, Onboarding, Reimbursement and Assignments. The document provides information regarding the Appeals Policy and states that “The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA in 2015, requires all applicants and eligible individuals be notified of the opportunity for review of determination made by personnel of OVR affecting the provision of services. PA OVR will retain qualified contracted Mediators and Independent Hearing Officers to be retrained in the appeals process and to conduct an impartial hearing upon request. Below is a summary of the key steps in recruitment, selection, contracting, on-boarding, billing reimbursement procedures for these venders.”
- The document also outlines the “Brief Steps and SOP line of progress from Recruitment through Contractor Billing for Services.” Which includes the PaRC’s role in steps 2 and 3 as stated:
 - “Step two: Responses are checked weekly, acknowledged and forward to PaRC VR Specialist and L&I OCC OVR attorney for vetting. All accepted candidates information is sent to PaRC for voting at their next full council mtg.”
 - “Step three: All PaRC and L&I OCC OVR attorney recommended candidates are then contacted to verify their continued interest and provided with COFA instructions on how to register with the Commonwealth as a vender using their EIN number and business name.”
- Additional time for discussion, questions, and a vote from FC will be included during the February FC meeting regarding the OVR mediators and impartial hearing officers’ applicants that have been shared with the Council.

COUNCIL OF STATE ADMINSTRATORS OF VOCTIONAL REHABILITATION (CSAVR) 2023 SPRING CONFERENCE

April 15 – 19 Hyatt Regency Bethesda, Maryland
Registration not yet available

- Ms. Michelle Gerrick (staff) inquired about out of state conference attendance requirements and limits.
- Ms. Lee Ann Stewart recommended that the Council follow the same process as previously followed. A Commonwealth Out of State Travel request could be submitted right after the FC meeting once members determine how many would like to attend. Approval is determined by the Department of Labor and Industry and the Governor’s Office. Limits on travel during Covid mitigation efforts may no longer be in place. The number of attendees may not be limited and could most

likely be determined by FC interest and recommendations.

- Ms. Michele Leahy and Ms. Lynn Heitz informed attendees they would be interested in attending the conference.
- Mr. Fogle requested that FC be polled for interest and the request be submitted as soon as possible.

PaRC COMMITTEE UPDATES

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - Review & Recommendation of:

Ms. Twana Jones and Ms. Joan Myers Goodman for PaRC membership to represent category of Business / Labor / Industry

Revisions to the PaRC Bylaws

Revisions to Handbook / Policies / Procedures

Drafted warning letter to PaRC members for notification of lack of attendance

Revisions made to the PaRC PowerPoint for guiding new member orientation

Presenters during new member orientation

SRC Training modules for all new & existing members

- Mr. Fogle reviewed the work of the Governance Committee with attendees. Members were provided applications, resumes, and letters of reference for two applicants to represent business/labor/industry and will be provided for the upcoming FC meeting for recommendation. The revised Bylaws and Handbook will be provided to FC along with a summary of those revisions for review and recommendation for the upcoming FC meeting.

POLICY COMMITTEE: Review & Recommendation of:

Revised the Citizen Advisory Committees' (CAC) Training Manual

- Ms. Heitz informed attendees of the revisions to the CAC Training Manual. Revisions will be highlighted for FC review and recommendation.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE: Review & Recommendation of:

Revisions made to PowerPoint for guiding PaRC outreach & informative presentations

- Ms. Leahy informed attendees about Social Media Committee's work to update the PowerPoint presentation that could be used to inform the public and organizations about how the PaRC serves the community, the Council's Federal Mandates, collaboration with OVR, member representation and appointment, and other information about the Council that is also included in the PaRC website.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Letter to Governor Shapiro

- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas informed members that the Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for February 10th and members will provide review and recommendation on an introductory letter to the Governor and that document will be forwarded to FC for review prior to the February FC meeting.

TRANSITION COMMITTEE UPDATE

- Ms. Jeanette Alexander informed attendees that the focus of the Transition Committee has remained on data collection, reports, and information regarding OVR services and programs.

HIRAM G. ANDREWS AD HOC COMMITTEE UPDATE HGAC staff to present during May Full Council meeting

- Members were informed that the HGAC will be presenting during the May FC meeting and provided a great presentation during the January HGAC Ad hoc Committee meeting.

OVR UPDATES

- Mr. Fogle informed attendees that there was a special State Board of VR meeting held on January 27th and Mr. Ryan Hyde was approved as the permanent Executive Director of OVR. Informed attendees that he is personally supportive of the appointment of Mr. Hyde, learned about the meeting second hand, and inquired if other members were made aware of the State Board meeting. Concerned about systemic miscommunication and that other organizations were solicited for letters of support, but the Council received no such request.
- Ms. Leahy and Ms. Heitz learned about the meeting from their attendance of meetings/correspondence/roles unrelated to the PaRC.
- Ms. Stewart informed attendees that she is sorry this happened as OVR typically sends a separate message regarding meetings to the Council as a stakeholder and that moving forward as a safeguard PaRC staff and Chair email addresses have been added the list serve. Additional members can be added to those communications upon request.
- Ms. Leahy informed attendees that she recently attended a Neurodiversity Employment event held by Drexel University and a current State Board member. Upon speaking with the Board member about the PaRC, Ms. Leahy is concerned that they are unaware of the Council's role and work they do in collaboration with OVR. Ms. Leahy informed attendees that the event was not accessible because the wheelchair lift did not work and that the networking portion of the event was not accessible as a person using a wheelchair could not navigate the tables as they were arranged. Ms. Leahy was asked to speak during the event pertaining to networking rather than after OVR's informative presentation. Ms. Leahy voiced her disappointment that the PaRC is not being taken seriously by OVR or its Board members and was disheartened that she was not treated as a professional that has worked with OVR for 35 years. Ms. Leahy stated that she does not blame OVR for the event being inaccessible as they were not the hosts.
- Ms. Susan Tomasic inquired if it would be possible the Chair could provide a presentation about the PaRC during a State Board meeting.
- Ms. Stewart informed attendees that State Board members are provided information about the PaRC during their orientation. This event was not organized

by OVR.

- Mr. Fogle voiced his concern with issues highlighted by Ms. Leahy and stated that he is concerned that collaboration and communication between the Council and the Board needs to be improved.
- Ms. Stewart informed attendees that in the past a summit was held between members of the State Board and Council for collaborative efforts. Members may want to consider holding a similar event as the roles of both groups overlap. During trainings with OVR staff provides information about the important work of the PaRC and improved communication and collaboration with the Board would be very beneficial to OVR.
- Ms. Heitz stated that in an effort to get the word out about PaRC it would be beneficial to provide time to share the great work of the Social Media Committee and the informative PowerPoint Presentation during a State Board meeting.

Adjourn

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