



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for December 11, 2023

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

Paul Fogle (P)	Susan Tomasic (P)	Michelle Mitchell (P)
William Del Toro Vargas (P)	Michele Leahy (NP)	Lynn Heitz (P)
Julia Grant Barol (P)	Andrew Pennington (NP)	

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Present: James Whitonis, Cheryl Novak

Staff Present: Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

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

REVIEW DRAFT OF 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

- Ms. Michelle Mitchell presented on the development of the Annual Report which has been shortened in number of pages by consolidating information, creating infographics, and presenting the information in a more engaging format for the reader.
- Members reported that they proofed and reviewed the Annual Report and agreed that no changes or additions were needed.

MOTION was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to approve the 2022-2023 Annual Report. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DRAFT PLANS FOR BENDER CONSULTING

- Staff provided a reminder about the commitment to Bender Consulting Services as part of the Small Diverse Business requirements in the contract.
- Members recommended that Bender Consulting Services be invited to the next Legislative Committee meeting to discuss collaborative efforts between different entities for the review and development of legislation or advocacy for Schedule A like program for the PA Civil Service employment system.

EVERY DAY LIVES CONFERENCE JANUARY 9-11, 2024

- Mr. William Del Toro Vargas and Ms. Julia Barol will be attending the Every Day Lives Conference. Mr. Del Toro Vargas volunteered to bring the Council's materials to the conference.

SPEAKERS FOR FEBRUARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING

- Ms. Michelle Mitchell suggested having a speaker from the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation at the February Full Council meeting to hold discussion on the roles of the Council and Board, how to better collaborate, discuss potential projects, and potentially holding a summit between the Council and Board.
- Mr. Del Toro Vargas suggested inviting Ms. Juliet Marsala back to a future Full Council meeting to discuss the need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on employment with the Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL).

CSAVR CONFERENCE REPORT – Ms. Julia Barol

- Ms. Barol reported that Mr. David Doukas presented on various topics at the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Conference held in October including staff retention, consumer engagement and eligibility, rapid engagement efforts, career pathways and service providers, values of VR and promoting those values to employers, Connecticut has developed a curriculum for schools to begin at age 10, some states have seen a big improvement in response rates for Customer Satisfaction Surveys after providing links to surveys within each email from counselors, Oklahoma developed a primer for legislation which includes a 1 pager that is laminated and handed out to legislators, and reviewed benefits of the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON).
- Members inquired about data presented by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) at the Conference and requested that OVR provide a link for members to log into on the RSA Dashboard.
- Ms. Cheryl Novak explained that a link to information for the RSA Dashboard data is provided on the Executive Directors report. Ms. Novak said she will have to inquire with OVR leadership on providing a direct link and login to members to view the RSA Dashboard.

PaRC COMMITTEE UPDATES

CAREERLINK – Mr. Andrew Pennington, Chair

- Ms. Julia Barol explained that the Pa Development Disabilities Council Grant is in the early stages and to revisit the topic in one year. During the previous meeting Workforce Development reported larger retirement rates, needs to provide employment for re-entry population, immigrants/asylum seekers, and reported that transportation and childcare are some of the biggest barriers for those who remain unemployed to returning to the workforce.

GOVERNANCE – Ms. Susan Tomasic, Chair

- Governance Committee meets on January 4th and will review new applications for membership and the appointment of a member to the committee screening Impartial Hearing Officer / Mediator applicants.

LEGISLATIVE – Mr. William Del Toro Vargas, Chair

- Mr. Del Toro Vargas reported that the November meetings with Legislators was very productive and continues to lead to further follow up from Legislators.

TRANSITION – Ms. Julia Barol, Chair

- Transition Committee held discussion on attending the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Conference and a recent policy change allowing for students enrolled in Special Education to stay in school an extra year which is until their 22nd birthday.

SOCIAL MEDIA – Ms. Michele Leahy, Chair

- The committee has reviewed and recommending moving forward with a Member's only page on the PaRC website. Mr. Fogle requested that members hold a presentation during the next Executive Committee meeting.

AD HOC COMMITTEE HGAC – William Del Toro Vargas, Chair

- HGAC Ad hoc Committee is scheduled to meeting January 24th.

MOTION was made by Mr. William Del Toro Vargas to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Susan Tomasic. All were in favor.