



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 January 20, 2024

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 (NP)
Julia Grant Barol (P)	Andrew Pennington (P)	

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Present: Chris Harbert

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. Michelle Mitchell seconded the motion. All were in favor.

AGENDA ITEMS

CHAIR REPORT – Mr. Paul Fogle

FINALIZE AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Follow up on format of OVR's Director's report

- Members reviewed the February 14, 2024, Full Council (FC) meeting draft agenda.
- Mr. Chris Harbert reported that there is a scheduling conflict that OVR will work through to ensure that a District Administrator or manager presents during the FC meeting from the Philadelphia District Offices.
- Members agreed that it would be helpful to ensure that the Executive Director report become more interactive. Reformatting the report during the meeting would include a longer question and answer period and follow up from questions posed during previous meetings. Members explained that a lot of the information shared is included within the Executive Director written Quarterly report and/or during other Board and Commission meetings. Members shared they would like to open up more dialogue during the report so that questions and comments can be provided as discussion rather than waiting until the end of the report. Members agreed that content that would be most helpful to be reported on includes any changes or updates to the broad range of services OVR provides, less focus on

Summer Programs and other information that could be included in written form, more focus on potential pitfalls and what is working in terms of OVR services, policy changes or redrafts, work groups, updates on grants, and current happenings.

- Mr. Del Toro Vargas explained that members appreciate the educational component that OVR provides to the Council and community during FC meetings. The main responsibility of the Council is to provide oversight of the VR program and a focus on data, numbers, and how the Council may support changes to policies and services would be most helpful during the FC meeting report. Is especially excited to hear from the Philadelphia District Offices and would like to learn about their data, numbers, challenges, and successes. Explained that he would not be as interested in receiving a presentation on what OVR services are being provided or other information that could be submitted in writing such as CAC meetings.
- Mr. Fogle also mentioned that it would also be helpful to include an update from Mr. James Whitonis regarding the State Plan to include more detail/data, benchmarks, and other specifics that are outlined within the State Plan.
- Mr. Pennington also stressed the importance for OVR to provide follow up during FC meetings on the questions that had been asked during prior meetings and required more time or further research to be fully answered.

MOTION was made by Mr. William Del Toro Vargas to approve the agenda for the February 14, 2024, Full Council (FC) meeting. Ms. Susan Tomasic seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MAY FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Update on poll to change date from May 15 to May 8

Discussion of potential speakers

- Mr. Fogle explained that the FC meeting had to be moved up one week due to a scheduling conflict with the Employment First Oversight Commission (EFOC) meeting. Quorum is especially important for the May meeting because of the PaRC Election of Officers. It was determined that a vote is not necessary to make this change and quorum has been determined for the May 8, 2024, meeting.
- Members agreed that Local District Office reports are much appreciated and would be more helpful if they were more data driven rather than anecdotal.
- Members are interested in reports for the May FC meeting from the Southwest, Northeast, or Central region District Offices of the State.
- Mr. Del Toro Vargas suggested a document or presentation be created to educate the public during an upcoming meeting on the PaRC and Board responsibilities and how they correlate with OVR.
- Mr. Fogle reported that Ms. Passle Helminski and Ms. Sylenthia Dent have been appointed to the Council and will be part of quorum for the February meeting.

PaRC COMMITTEE UPDATES

CAREERLINK – Mr. Andrew Pennington, Chair

- Mr. Pennington reported the next Committee meeting is February 20th and they will be going over various Workforce initiatives, compliance of ADA accessibility for CareerInks, and accessibility of grants provided for those seeking OVR services.
- Members agreed it will be very important to hold discussion during the next FC meeting regarding a member being appointed to the Council from the Workforce Development Board. This category of representation has not been filled for several years.

GOVERNANCE – Ms. Susan Tomasic, Chair

Recommendation of Ms. Christie Cyktor to represent the category of Former/Current OVR Customer

Recommendation of Ms. Julianna Rodrigues to represent the category of Community Rehabilitation Provider

- Ms. Tomasic reported that Ms. Christie Cyktor and Julianna Rodrigues have been recommended by the Committee for appointment to the PaRC to represent the category of Former/Current OVR Customer and Community Rehabilitation Provider. Bylaws and policies will be reviewed. Welcomed members to provide comments and suggestions to the Governance Committee for review.

MOTION was made by Mr. Del Toro Vargas to recommend Ms. Christie Cyktor to represent the category of Former/Current OVR Customer and Ms. Julianna Rodrigues to represent the category of Community Rehabilitation Provider. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. All were in favor.

LEGISLATIVE – Mr. William Del Toro Vargas, Chair

Recommendation of the highlighted updates on the State and Federal Position Papers

Update on meeting with Bender Consulting to develop educational and collaborative projects

- Mr. Del Tor Vargas reported that the Committee held discussion regarding two goals with Bender Consulting for educational outreach for Schedule A in state jobs and sheltered workshops. There were some concerns shared by OVR in regard to the goal for sheltered workshops. The Committee will need to schedule some time to hold discussion with OVR to meet in the middle and talk through those concerns regarding the goal for education outreach on sheltered workshops. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2024.

MOTION was made by Ms. Michelle Mitchell to approve the updates on the State and Federal Position Papers. Mr. Andrew Pennington seconded the motion. All were in favor.

POLICY – Ms. Lynn Heitz, Chair

Recommendation of consulting with Ms. Amanda Baczko (Director, Office of Learning and Community Engagement at Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission) on her work with Massachusetts SRC & Designated State Unit on

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

- Mr. Fogle explained that the Policy Committee Chair held discussion about inviting the person from Massachusetts' Council that worked on their Customer Satisfaction Surveys to the next Committee or Full Council meeting. This conversation could begin at the Committee level and could collaborate the effort with the Transition Committee as both have held discussion on the surveys. The next meeting is February 27, 2024.

TRANSITION – Ms. Julia Barol, Chair

- The next meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2024.

SOCIAL MEDIA – Ms. Michele Leahy, Chair

Recommendation of Member's only page on the PaRC website

- Members reviewed the Member's Only draft webpage layout and design. Mr. Fogle explained that this page would help members more easily or readily view meeting, Committee, or Council documents without having to search their own emails for the documents.
- Ms. Michelle Gerrick (staff) explained that many opinions have been shared by members for several years on the amount of emails received and believes that this will be a great tool for members to access documents and streamline that process for members. Using other tools such as Dropbox was also discussed but there were concerns with accessibility. This webpage should be a good option for members interested in using it.
- Ms. Tomasic explained that the webpage is not a Sunshine Act problem as the documents are meant for the internal governance of the Council. The SILC and other organizations use very similarly formatted webpages/tools for their own meeting materials.
- Members in attendance today and members of the Social Media Committee will be invited to use the webpage for the upcoming February 14th FC meeting to test it before it is provided to all members to avoid any confusion. A demonstration will be provided to all members during the FC meeting and added to the agenda.
- Staff was asked to begin providing the required setup and username / passwords to the members mentioned today to assist with testing the member only webpage.

MOTION was made by Ms. Julia Barol to approve of the Member's Only webpage. Mr. Del Toro Vargas seconded the motion. All were in favor.

AD HOC COMMITTEE HGAC – William Del Toro Vargas, Chair

- Mr. Del Toro Vargas reported that the Committee met recently and discussed streamlined funding with PDE and School District, outreach, and other topics. Would like to hold discussion regarding the HGAC Ad hoc Committee becoming a Standing Committee.

AD HOC COMMITTEE OVR HEARING OFFICERS & MEDIATORS – Mr. Andrew Pennington, Chair
Recommendation of Ms. Lynn Heitz to represent the PaRC during the screening process and trainings

- Mr. Pennington reported that OVR agreed to allow a PaRC representative serve on the screening and training portion of the hiring process of IHO/Mediators. Ms. Lynn Heitz volunteered to serve as the PaRC representative and inquired if a vote of approval was needed.
- Mr. Fogle and Ms. Tomasic agreed that a vote of approval was not necessary. Members should be kept updated on what members are serving or have volunteered to serve on each of the OVR workgroups.
- The next meeting is scheduled for February 28th.
- Mr. Harbert explained that Ms. Deborah Schwartz and Mr. Robert Schramm will be in attendance for the next Committee meeting and were updated about the Committee’s questions regarding OVR IHO/Mediators.

OVR UPDATES

- Mr. Harbert reported that the Board sent the State letter to Governor Shapiro and carbon copied Senator Casey. Mr. Del Toro Vargas volunteered to be a part of the State Board Legislative Subcommittee. In respect to conflict of interest, this will be in an advisory role with the State Board.
- Mr. Del Toro Vargas shared his concerns that the State Board Legislative Subcommittee should be in correlation with the public needs and not with any specific agenda that may be in place.
- Mr. Harbert explained that the Board’s Subcommittee is not designed to perform Council Legislative Committee duties such as meeting with Legislators. Tentatively the Subcommittee is interested in research and analysis, is recommendation based rather than outreach, and is an advisory role to the State Board to provide recommendations to the State Board.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Mr. Del Toro Vargas to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mitchell. The meeting was adjourned.