



# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Voice: (717) 975-2004 or (888) 250-5175 TTY: (717) 737-0158 Fax: (888) 524-9282

Email: [parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org](mailto:parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org) Website: [parehabilitationcouncil.org](http://parehabilitationcouncil.org)

## Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2025

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

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

Michelle Mitchell (P)  
Joan Goodman (P)  
Julianna Rodrigues (P)

Julia Barol (P)  
Lynn Heitz (P)  
Susan Tomasic (P)

Christie Cyktor (P)  
Twana Jones (NP)

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Present:** Jim Whitonis

**Staff Present:** Michelle Gerrick

Ms. Michelle Mitchell called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

### ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Ms. Joan Myers Goodman requested the addition of a discussion item concerning her interest in the PaRC obtaining a voting member seat on the Rabbit Transit's Advisory Committee - People with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PWDAC).

- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Joan Myers Goodman to approve today's agenda, the proposed addition to the agenda, and past meeting minutes. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### CHAIR REPORT

- Ms. Michelle Mitchell informed the committee that OVR staff would be unavailable to present at the August Full Council meeting on either the SWTCIE Grant InVEST Project or, as an alternative, the Customer Satisfaction Survey questions. She suggested inviting Mr. Aaron Danks to present on the Governor's vision for employing people with disabilities in Pennsylvania. If Mr. Danks is not available, members requested that PaRC staff explore the following presenters:
  - State Board members to discuss their roles, with the aim of aligning efforts with PaRC's goal of fostering improved collaboration.

- Mr. David Mann, with Mathematica, to provide updates on research initiatives related to employment in PA.
- Office of Special Education to present on their efforts of enhancing Braille literacy and related supports in schools.
- Members reviewed the year-end budget for FY 24-25, which was shared prior to the meeting and displayed during the session.
  - Concerns were raised about federal funding uncertainty in the coming years and the idea of the PaRC reserving funds.
  - Clarification was made that unspent PaRC funds at the end of the fiscal year are absorbed by the state.
  - PaRC funding levels remain unchanged for FY 2025–2026
  - Members will continue to hold two virtual and two hybrid meetings in calendar year 2026, while remaining mindful of potential future funding disruptions and prepared to make adjustments as necessary.

## ANNUAL REPORT

- Regarding the PaRC Annual Report for 2024-2025, Ms. Julianna Rodrigues, Member at Large, will serve as the lead.
  - The committee agreed to developing the theme around the word “celebrating” ensuring positivity, effectiveness, and authenticity.

## COMMITTEE UPDATES

### Action/Social Media – Joan Goodman, Chair

- PaRC video project
  - Ms. Goodman reported that the committee is proposing the development of a documentary highlighting the mission, activities, and impact of PaRC and OVR.
  - Recommendations include a modular format (10–12 segments), allowing viewers to either watch continuously (60 minutes) or view individual topics (each about 4-5 minutes) and utilizing one location, such as PaRC Office, for filming all content to reduce complexity and cost.
  - Proposed segment topics include:
    - **Introduction & Mission:** overview of PaRC and OVR - potentially incorporating council meetings
    - **Success Stories:** including former OVR clients now employed or working as counselors, individuals in supported employment, and entrepreneurs supported by OVR (e.g., BEP, Small Business Programs)
    - **Highlighting Hiram G. Andrews Center**
    - **PaRC Committee Spotlights**
    - **Private Industry Perspective:** Employer participation and impact of OVR services on business
    - **Broad Message:** Demonstrating the spectrum of OVR support, whether entering the workforce, reentering after disability, or starting a business
  - Mr. Cassarly, Digital Marketing Specialist, provided a preliminary cost estimate of \$1,750, however, members expressed concerns that a full, accessible documentary, including features such as closed captioning, audio descriptions, and American Sign Language interpreting would be significantly higher.
  - Ms. Goodman and PaRC staff will follow up with Mr. Cassarly to clarify scope of proposal, accessibility features, and revised cost breakdown.

- Committee was in support of the documentary - emphasis placed on the potential impact and visibility this could bring to PaRC and OVR, the need for careful budgeting, and accessibility compliance.

**ADDITION TO THE AGENDA:** Ms. Joan Goodman’s proposal for the PaRC to have a designated voting member seat on the Rabbit Transit’s Advisory Committee, which serves 11 counties in Central PA

- Ms. Goodman informed the committee that she currently serves on the board as an individual and proposes that the PaRC hold an official voting seat on the committee to ensure a voice for all individuals with disabilities and employment-related transportation needs.
- While Ms. Michelle Mitchell expressed her support for involvement in transportation issues - recognizing its direct impact on employment - she raised concerns over consistency at the local level given that PaRC membership is statewide and rotates as member’s terms expire.
- The committee further discussed and recommended pursuing a seat on a statewide transportation board to allow representation of individuals with disabilities across all counties.
- Ms. Goodman will explore possibilities for a seat on a statewide transportation board and report her findings at a future meeting.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Governance – Susan Tomasic, Chair

- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Julia Barol to recommend Ms. Ashley Norkus’ application for membership to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Christie Cyktor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Ms. Tomasic shared that since she has been unsuccessful with reaching a member by phone, email and text following the member’s email expressing concern about their ability to attend PaRC meetings because of their job, a formal letter will be sent to the member stating that if they do not respond by August 24, 2025, their email will be accepted as a formal resignation from the Council.

### Legislative – Christie Cyktor, Chair

- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to approve the draft OVR funding letter and forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Lynn Heitz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Joan Myers Goodman to support State House Bill 485 and forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **ORIGINAL MOTION:** A motion was made by Ms. Julia Barol to approve the draft letter to Governor Shapiro regarding accessible transportation and SEPTA audits. Ms. Joan Myers Goodman seconded the motion.
- **PROPOSED AMENDMENT:** Ms. Lynn Heitz suggested changing the word “recommend” to “strongly request” in the opening sentence.

- **AMENDED MOTION:** A motion was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to accept the proposed amendment to the letter. Ms. Joan Myers Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **FINAL MOTION:** A motion was made by Julia Barol to approve the amended draft letter to Governor Shapiro and forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Joan Myers Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to renew the MYPLS Communications Connection subscription for **\$1,375** and forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Joan Myers Goodman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Julia Barol to support the draft letter regarding withdrawal of proposed rulemaking for phase out of 14(c) subminimum wages and forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Susan Tomasic seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Policy – Lynn Heitz, Chair

- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Christie Cyktor to approve Description (a) for the VR Services Portion of the 2024-2028 PA WIOA Combined State Plan 2 Year Modification and forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Joan Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to approve Description (c) for the VR Services Portion of the 2024-2028 PA WIOA Combined State Plan 2 Year Modification and forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Joan Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Christie Cyktor to approve the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) targeted goals and forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Julianna Rodrigues seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Ms. Heitz informed the committee that Bender Consulting denied their request to develop the Statement of Work for the Customer Satisfaction Surveys, stating that their team does not assist with assessments that relate to the effectiveness of state agencies.
  - Ms. Heitz reminded the committee that the original project was previously approved by Full Council with an allocation of \$4,000 specifically for Bender’s services.
  - The committee discussed reframing the language of the previous motion to remove reference to a specific vendor, thereby allowing for more flexibility in selecting a provider.
  - Ms. Susan Tomasic stated that the committee does not need to rescind the original motion as the action is considered closed due to Bender's declination, however, a new motion is required to expand the search for other Small Diverse Businesses to complete the project
  - **MOTION** was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to expand the search of state certified Small Diverse Businesses to provide the Statement of Work for the Customer Satisfaction Survey Project and

*forward it to Full Council for a final decision in August. Ms. Christie Cyktor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Transition – Julia Barol, Chair**

- Ms. Barol informed the committee that PaRC members will attend the Bridging Knowledge to Know-How conference next week at State College and will also manage a resource table at the event.

**Ad Hoc Committee: OVR Business Enterprise Program (BEP) – Lynn Heitz, Joan Myers Goodman, Co-Chairs**

- Volunteers for the committee include Lynn Heitz, Joan Myers, Andrew Pennington, Julia Barol, and Passle Helminski
- Although the date has not yet been established, the first meeting will be held in September.

**Ad Hoc Committee: PaRC and OVR State Board roles – Lynn Heitz, Michelle Mitchell, Co-Chairs**

- There have not been any responses received yet from State Board members invited to attend previous meetings.

**Ad Hoc Committee – OVR Impartial Hearing Officers & Mediators – Julia Barol, Chair**

- Awaiting written agreements from Office of Chief Counsel regarding PaRC's role in the process

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

- **Ms. Susan Tomasic** stated that she is available to assist Committee Chairs with Robert's Rules and parliamentary procedures for those who need support.
- **Ms. Joan Myers Goodman** stated that one million dollars for Centers for Independent Living (CILS) was not included in the state budget – emphasizing the importance of members contacting their state legislators to advocate for the funds to be re-instated. **Ms. Susan Tomasic** stated that CIL funding has not increased since early 2010, despite rising needs and responsibilities, re-iterating the importance of advocacy.

**ADJOURN**

- **MOTION** was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Joan Myers Goodman seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.