

**CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)
TO THE
READING OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (OVR)**

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MEETING MINUTES

NOTE: Meeting Minutes are posted on Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) website.

TYPE:	PA OVR Statewide CAC Officers Meeting (Open To The Public)
LOCATION:	Virtual via Zoom or Call-In
DATE:	February 27, 2025
TIME:	1:00am - 2:30pm
RECORDED BY:	Chris Harbert, Administrator to the State Board of VR

NOTE: Meeting was coordinated, hosted, and recorded by PA OVR.

In attendance: Brian D'Amico, Chris Harbert (OVR), Andrew Pennington, Angel Torres, Ariana Jordan, Kim Baskett (OVR), Bob Mecca, Shari Brightful (OVR), Kathleen Brown (OVR), Amber Chatterjee (OVR), Danielle Dawgiello (OVR), Marjorie Duranko (OVR), Jeff Durmis (OVR), Casandra Falkenhagen (OVR), Hayley Penn (PaTTAN), Jack Hewitt (OVR), Mike Huber (OVR), Ryan Hyde (OVR), Hunter Steinitz (PaTTAN), Joan Myers Goodman, Pat Kane (OVR), Melissa Kinser (OVR), Linda Carmona-Bell (OVR), Ruth Lotz (OVR), Lynn Heitz, Meg, Amy Moore (OVR), Cheryl Novak (OVR), Kelly Ojo (OVR), Darla Openbrier (OVR), Passle Helminski, Susan Richeson (OVR), Kim Robinson (OVR), Chris Roken (OVR), Craig Schield (OVR), Alex Shay (OVR), Krista Sloan (OVR), Stephani Smithbower (OVR), Dawn Sokol (OVR), Gail Steck (OVR), Sue Swartz (OVR), Tom Burgunder, Chris Todd (PaRC Admin), Andy Wagner (OVR), Jim Whitonis (OVR),

CHRIS HARBERT: Good afternoon, this is Chris Harbert with OVR and I'm going to share my screen, and we are going to get started in a couple minutes. Just staying timely. This is the second citizen advisory meeting for the CAC members to come together to discuss -- just to

come together to get a centralized group for centralized support to our CACs at the local level. We do have OVR leadership with us today. I apologize I'm going back-and-forth with people in the lobby. I scheduled right over agency training needs initially, so thank you for your attendance today. I know that Ryan might have some limited time, so Ryan, if you'd like to go ahead and give any opening remarks and I will take roll call.

RYAN HYDE: Thanks, Chris. Good afternoon, everyone. Good to be here with you. I thought that I would give a couple brief updates, and I have to jump to another call. But umm, the Governor recent did his budget address and I hope that everyone saw that OVR is prosed to receive an additional 5 million in state funds and the Governor spent his opening address talking about OVR and the work that the first lady is doing with us. I thought that was really cool and I have been around for a long time and don't remember being mentioned in a governor's address before. We hope that we are going to keep that money because it is going to help us overcome some of these Federal Funding limitations that we are experiencing. I ask that you continue your advocacy with local legislators on the state budget and that turns to the federal budget and we are still in continuing resolution, as you are probably aware. I know that leadership and Congress is working on approval of a federal Fiscal Year 25 budget. The House passed something earlier this week and I believe they are going to send it over to the Senate and they will negotiate some of that stuff. So, we are sure not what our full year federal budget is going to be. We continue to plan to be flat funded, which has been communicated to us in the past. Hopefully, that is the extent of any loss that we experience and again, any advocacy that you are doing with federal lawmakers is greatly appreciated. I know that our counsel is sending

letters to the federal legislators and doing advocacy on the hill in D.C. as well. So, you know, some good things here in the state going on and we still have some question marks at the federal level, but I think that it is really important that you are all made aware of those things and you can do some local advocacy because I do think that makes a difference. So, more to come, as we know, we are going to be communicating out and the continuing resolution expires on the 14th. I know they are trying to pass a federal budget by that time. So, more to come. That's it for me. Again, appreciate your time and I will turn it back over to Chris.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Ryan. For those attendees that just joined, thank you. I appreciate your flexibility from this initially rescheduled and this is the second officer Chair meeting. I appreciate your time. I'm going to go into roll call by office. One moment. I will do roll call alphabetically by office and we will start with -- one moment. We will start with the CAC, the local CAC attendee, or attendees and then, from there, if there are any OVR district admins, please let me know if you are here. First, Allen town. Is there still a vacant chair in Allentown?

BROOKE CHO: This is the District Administrator in Allentown, and yes, our seat remains active at this time.

: Altoona combined.

CRAIG SCHIELD: Hello. This is Craig Schield speaking through a sign language interpreter and our Chair is also vacant.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Craig. Is Andy here today? I know Andy -- I appreciate Andy and just tracking him from the office.

STEPHANIE: He is not able to attend and I'm here. This is Stephanie with the ADA.

CHRIS HARBERT: Excellent. Thank you.

BOB MECCA: This is Bob Mecca from lift and I'm the CAC Chair for the Dubois office.

CHRIS ROKEN: This is Chris, the DA.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Chris. Erie DVBS.

CASANDRA FALKENHAGEN: This is Sandra, the DA.

CHRIS HARBERT: Is Linda Morris still the Chair in Erie?

CASANDRA FALKENHAGEN: Yes, she hasn't been to the last few meetings. We are working on nominations again.

CHRIS HARBERT: Okay, thank you. And Erie BVRs.

JACK HEWITT: Hi Jack Hewitt. The administrator.

CHRIS HARBERT: And Harrisburg combined. I know that Kathy may have told me that she is not available today. I have to double check that if Kathy is not on. Any District Administrator staff from Harrisburg combined?

RUTH LOTZ: This is Ruth, the DA for BVRs.

And this is the CAC contact person.

AMY MOORE: This is Amy, the District Administrator.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you for the good turnout. I appreciate it. And Johnstown?

MARJIE DURANKO: This is the District Administrator for Johnstown, and our CAC Chair is vacant.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Margie. New Castle BVRs.

GAIL STECK: This is the District Administrator for New Castle, and our Chair is vacant.

CHRIS HARBERT : Thank you. All right. Norristown BVRs.

KATHLEEN BROWN: This is Kathleen Brown, the District Administrator for Norristown.

MICHELLE LEAHY: And the Co-Chair of Norristown.

MARY BERRY-SHIELDS: And Barry Shields secretary for Norristown and we are proud to say that we just elected a secretary this week. I will get you that information.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. Glad to work with you again, Michelle. Philadelphia combined? I see -- or I have Sue San as the Chair, and she may have RSVP'ed, but I apologize I don't have that list up. Any DA staff from Philadelphia combined?

ALEX SHAY: Alex Shay, Philly BVRs.

CHRIS HARBERT: Moving on ward, Pittsburgh BVRs? Vacant. I'm tracking. And district DA staff, OVR DA staff, if there is any present? Pittsburgh BBVS?

DANIELLE DAWGIELLO: Danielle, District Administrator.

CHRIS HARBERT: Hi, Danielle. Thank you. And Thomas, he is the Chair of BBVS?

TOM BURGUNDER: Yeah.

CHRIS HARBERT: I attended a meeting, a Pittsburgh CAC meeting and I think that Pete facilitated it, though. Thank you. Reading BVRs.

KIM BASKETT: This is Kim and I'm the District Administrator for the Reading office and I believe our Chair and Co-Chair are on here.

TOM BURGUNDER: This is Tom, can you hear me now?

CHRIS HARBERT: Yes, I can.

TOM BURGUNDER: I'm the Co-Chair in Pittsburgh.

CHRIS HARBERT: Excellent. I appreciate it.

: So, Chris, I think that Brian is on the call also and he is our Chair for Reading.

: Yes, I see Angel.

: I'm no longer an officer at the Reading DO, but I wanted to make sure that I participated in this one for sure. I think that Brian is on the call or listed here. Helen, umm, she is actually the Vice-Chair currently and Mackenzie is the secretary. But I'm here.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. And Brian, I think that I saw your hand was raised. If you are able to unmute. I will do my best if I can unmute you. All right, moving on. Washington BVRs?

DARLA OPENBRIER: This is Darla, I'm the District Administrator and our Chair is also on.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. Hi, Darla.

DARLA OPENBRIER: Hi. Megan, do you want to say hi?

MEGAN VAN FOSSAN: Hi, I'm Megan.

CHRIS HARBERT: And Wilkes-Barre combined?

MIKE HUBER: We currently do not have a CAC Chair. But this is Michael, the DA of BVRs.

: And the administrator for BVRs is also here.

: Thank you. Almost done. Williamsport BVRs?

SUE SWARTZ: Good afternoon. Susan Schwartz, District Administrator, our Chair is currently vacant.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Sue. And our last DO, York BVRs. I saw Eric and he was starting in 2025, did Eric start yet?

SUSAN RICHESON: Yes, this is Susan Richardson and Eric did start and conducted the last meeting. Was I supposed to invite him to this?

CHRIS HARBERT: I included his email on the invite.

SUSAN RICHESON: Yeah, I was making sure that I didn't have to do something.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you for checking. I have been communicating with the chairs and the officers and I don't know if I got a RSVP back from Eric, but we are good to go. I think that we will be okay either way today. I got a notification that someone raised their hand. Brian? I think that you are unmuted, Brian, if you would like to speak.

: He might be having difficulties with his computer.

CHRIS HARBERT: Yeah. Well, that concludes at least the roll call for the chairs and the District Administrator leadership. Are there any other OVR leaders? We might be fortunate to have some directors on the call today or managers. Any other OVR staff that would like to say hello or introduce themselves to the CAC Chairs?

DAWN SOKOL: Dawn Sokol.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you for coming today.

DAWN: Sure.

CHRIS HARBERT: All right. Well, I think we had a pretty good turnout. Again, thank you so much for your flexibility and understanding. With everything going on at the agency, a few upcoming meetings, and some meetings that we just got done with, it is a busy time. The start of the year seemed to be busy last year, and this year followed suit especially. I didn't -- I didn't give anyone -- or anyone specific time or presentation slots because across all of the

Citizen Advisory Committees everything is so busy and all of the presentations very similar. That's good. It is good for consistency. It may indicate there is consistency in other areas, as well. We can always get better at things that we do well. This gives everyone a good chance to come together with the leadership at your CAC with OVR leadership and managers to come together for discussion and share ideas and information and give me ideas to pass up. I can go on and on. The first item for discussion today is youth engagement at the local level. There is a lot of invested stakeholders and managers on the call. I have had a lot of presentations and seen a couple different projects for youth engagement for CACs. I have attended Norristown's meeting this week and similar presentation on youth engagement. I think that I saw a couple pat ton staff log in today as well. I would like to open this up and where we left off and we were discussing youth participants or youth members in your local CACs. The idea of a whole standing Youth Citizen Advisory Committee. I'm going to pause to open the floor up if anyone wants to discuss.

JACK HEWITT: Chris, this is Jack. Hi. Can you hear me all right? Okay, cool. Yeah, in October, we had PATTAN come to our pack and present on this topic and have a discussion and I haven't seen it yet, but I thought they were gearing up for a second round of surveys that were supposed to be going out. They did the first round in July. And then, they were going to be offering up some training to the CAC on uh, on this topic because I guess they are focusing on providing mentorship to the youth from a CAC member and then, talking about changing the timing of CACs to accommodate the youth because of their academic schedule. That sparked a discussion on our CAC in regards to that since most of ours -- well because all of ours are

professional and they are during the day. So, that is the stuff that we talked about in our October meeting. And I think that we are kind of on hold to see where the second survey goes.

HALEY PENN: Hey, Jack, and everyone. This is one of the youth engagement specialists from PATTAN and I want to give an update on the whole project, and I feel it can answer questions before they start coming in and what Jack said is right on. We are gearing up to send out our second round of surveys, which we have ready to send and we told to put the whole project on hold right now. We have the whole packet ready for anyone that is interested in participating and three separate trainings for the young people who join and three separate trainings for the existing CAC members. For the youth, it involves a mock sort of CAC meeting, so they can understand the language and the agenda and how it is all set up. And then, a training on how to engage with adults and the first would be an overview of what the Citizen Advisory Committee is and then, for adults tools and techniques for how to engage with young people in this setting. And mind and behavior and mindset and how the CAC is going to integrate youth voice. All that to be said, it is on hold. We are in the process of developing everything, but we were instructed to hold off until further notice. But we do have the second survey, and it is going to be coming out eventually. And you also brought up the barrier of the timing of the CAC and I would love to hear what you guys discussed when you decided that you would meet that accommodate maybe a student schedule. And I'm here for more questions because I know that was a lot of information at once.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thanks for your availability and thanks for being great to work with as you were developing all of that. With everything said, that is going to be kind of hard to hold back

from this group. They might be asking for some of that stuff. Definitely appreciate all the work that you put into it. That sounds like a lot of great things. I think some of the conversation on -- just regarding scheduling that if -- if a member were to still be in high school, the typical class schedule of a high schooler of a public school, is ballpark 8:00 a.m. to 3 or 4:00 p.m. They were are discussing that consideration. With that college aged individuals if they are enrolled anywhere or even just working and considerations for that as well. I believe I have some council members on and I think -- Andrew, if you are on, I think that Andrew Pennington had a couple good points on it in one of the most recent meetings. Did PATTAN's surveys give CACs a good opportunity to kind of look at how to grow or were you able to identify any thing that you can do? Maybe now we can identify some things that we need to do while PATTAN is told to off. Any thoughts on there?

HALEY PENN: I know that one of the questions was about barriers and the timing of the meetings was one that -- a response that came up the most. And also, youth friendly language and the agenda and the way that the structure of the meeting goes. Umm, but I believe that the timing was the biggest one and sort of where we landed is that just that would be up to the CAC, each individual CAC would have sort of a different time that would work for their group. But that would be decided I guess after the students were already picked because their schedules would be different. I can see, let me pull up the surveys.

TOM BURGUNDER: While you are doing that, this is Tom from Pittsburgh.

: Hi, Tom.

TOM BURGUNDER : We haven't done much in terms of youth activities, but it sounds as

though you have developed a pretty good starting point for a template that involves students. Would you mind distributing that template to all of the CAC offices and people on the call or have Chris do it? Even though you are on hold, at the very least it will serve as a good discussion start off point for our individual CAC groups when we next meet.

HALEY PENN: Yeah, definitely. I can share the template of the overview of the project. I'm not able to share any of the trainings yet. But if that -- is that what you mean? Would that be helpful?

TOM BURGUNDER : If you would distribute what you can. I mean the training would be good, but I understand that you may want to finalize that before you distribute it.

HALEY PENN : Yeah, definitely I can send the overview. We have fliers for the youth, and we worked with the family engagement team at PATTAN also because there is so many vacancies in the Chair and Co-Chair positions, and we talk about family engagement and how that voice is so prominent in this discussion all the time. My thought is that a family member would be a great person to fill some of these vacancies and I can share that flier too if that is helpful. Basically, it is the overview of the Citizens Advisory Committee as a whole.

: Thank you.

: Sorry, could you say that again?

: I was just saying great job. It sounds like you did some excellent work.

HALEY PENN : Thank you! I'm still very excited about the project. It has been just like pushed off, but we have a lot of materials ready, we are just kind of holding on to them until we are instructed to share more. I would also love feedback from the CAC teams themselves on

what you all think would be beneficial to include in the trainings and whatnot. Because while I'm getting an understanding on how they are been operating better, you have all been involved much longer than I have, and this is next steps and once we get to share them with you, I will be asking for feedback on those as well. To answer the initial question and some of the barriers are just transportation to the meetings that are in-person and mostly, availability and timing.

: Can I ask something?

: Absolutely.

: For our CAC, we have to look at our bylaws and I think that you were on the call when we discussed that.

: Yes.

: And the bylaws and how we accept people to our CAC, and we have a system if someone misses so many meetings, and we have to see if a youth is below 18 in case, they need to sign a waiver.

: I'm unsure how those would be adjusted. I'm not sure how that works. But it is good to bring up in case other CACs have that same issue.

: Thank you. Thank you.

HALEY PENN: So, that is the update that have on the standing on the Y CAC right now.

CHRIS HARBERT: Well, thank you very much. Yeah, you guys are great to work with and you are very efficient. You're prompt -- efficient and prompt and spot on with your stuff, with your documents. Appreciate you supporting and continuing to support myself and the CACs. Thank you.

HALEY PENN: Of course. And I'm always here for anyone has questions. I'm going to mute

myself now.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. If there is any discussions or ideas, please feel free to chime in. Recently I was working, and I had a meeting with some of our managers in the transition division. They were working on a flier for a Youth Citizen Advisory Committee. Other conversations I have been having, recruiting on social media, advertising on social media and we're in a very lucky position that the PA rehab council -- Jack go ahead whenever you come off mute. Might be to take you off mute.

JACK HEWITT: I was just going to say when our staff was attending IEP, this is a thought to throw out and when we are attending IEP meetings, we can identify a student and they can put it in the IEP as a goal and maybe we can carve out some time during the school day, maybe during a tutorial or study hall or looking at their calendar when it is an in-service day when they don't have school. Then they are getting two benefits and doing adult type activities, and it is counting towards their IEP goal. So, we can possibly make it an education component for them as well. Just some things I'm thinking while we are talking.

CHRIS HARBERT: Jack, I actually I had a similar thought. Kind of the same thought for college campuses. Umm, just a thought. I hadn't spoken -- well, I will be careful. Yeah, I'm doing my best to have conversations looking at schools and I went to Cal U in Washington County, and I linked up with my internship and got involved with a large community in southwestern Pennsylvania and TRIPIL, they came to my university just for some volunteer hours for a class on physical accessibility. But I believe they recruited and recruited volunteers for community events and impacts on my college campus.

JACK HEWITT: Wouldn't that be an adult, Chris? If they are in college, I'm thinking that the youth engagement is to get people under the age of 18?

CHRIS HARBERT: I was going off of ages just in my head. I didn't have anything specific with that.

: Oh, all right.

: I can --

: Sure, go ahead.

KRISTA(?): Just that even with my work in PYLN, because I'm working with the Pennsylvania youth leadership network a lot and we are trying to identify what categorizes someone as a youth or young person. So, in this document that the yes has said 14 to 22, the transition age and in PYLN, it is 18 to 30 and it is really how you identify yourself. In this setting the transition age makes the most sense, 14 to 22, which would still mean college to Chris' point of recruiting on a college campus.

KIM ROBINSON: Just to chime in and this is Kim Robinson, the transition section administrator, the legal definition in WYOA with youth with a disability is 14 to 24 and it includes the college students and the students that are in prevention services.

: Thanks, Kim.

: Sure.

BRIAN D'AMICO: Chris, this is Brian. Are you able to hear me now?

: Yes, I can. Thank you.

BRIAN D'AMICO : Okay, sorry about that. I was having trouble with the mic, and I tried to

introduce myself earlier. And I finally got that figured out. Appreciate it.

CHRIS HARBERT: Absolutely. I knew you were here, Brian.

BRIAN D'AMICO : I did have a question with the youth engagement for Haley, what I'm trying to figure out and understand better is this for the youth to attend our current CACs or create their own CAC?

CHRIS HARBERT: So, Chris, OVR, this -- and Haley you can absolutely answer. That was something that I was having conversations with to determine alignment or direction. Some offices might have a different answer than others, though. And each operating as they need appropriately is important. We do want consistency, though. Luckily, I'm in a room full of decision-makers. Haley, did you have any background on that?

HALEY PENN : In short, yes to both questions. We want the young people to be involved in the conversation in the existing CAC and we were hoping for two students maybe in each CAC -- at least one, but two or more would be great in each CAC involved in the conversation. And outside of the quarterly CAC calls they would meet themselves and just the young people all across the state meeting to talk about what they have learned in their area or what questions come up in their area and have a separate Citizens Advisory Committee and it is just students meeting and that is supported or facilitated by the youth engagement specialist and they would be supported by the mentor in their area's CAC outside of the youth CAC, if that makes sense. So, they would be part of two things essentially.

BRIAN D'AMICO : Again, this is Brian. I can just speak for our CAC in the Reading area, and I think that it is going to be probably for a lot of the CACs across the state, you know, it's

difficult already for our CAC to get members and customers in the adult area. I think you are going to find that it is a challenge -- it is going to be a very big challenge to have a youth CAC separate.

: Mm-hmm.

: To have youth join our CAC and that is always -- and I think that is going to be across the state that is going always going to be available. That is available now. Any individual can join our CAC. I think that the challenges are getting those individuals.

: Definitely.

BRIAN D'AMICO : Then when you are talking about youth, you know, there is a discussion on the age and 18 and older, you are an adult, and you are allowed to join our CAC. There is a 17 and younger and who authorizes that? Who allows them to do that? Do the parents have to be involved? Who gives them authorization to come on our CAC? I don't have a problem with them being a CAC member, but quite friendly, outside of our CAC, it is a challenge enough to get members to our CAC. I don't think that you are ever going to get enough youth to create their own CAC. There is a lot of logistics that go into it. Everyone is always welcome to our CAC and just from looking at past minutes and seeing what other CACs across the state are doing, I think that it is a challenge in all the CACs across the state to get members in their committee. Obviously, when you take the roll call, you see, you know, some have CACs going. I think that the last minute, the last meeting that we had here there were 12 out of 17 CACs that were active. And even those 12, it is a challenge for them. Again, youth are always welcome, and we are looking for their input. We want to have their input. We want them to join our CAC. It is

just that's difficult to do. As a member of the CAC and I'm the Chair of our Reading CAC and, you know, how do we get a youth involved? We are not going to go into a school and try to talk to those people. That's going to have to come through the district offices. We don't know who is going to be involved with our services. So, we are open to having youth, that's for sure. We want to have their input obviously. They are going to be the future, and they need the services just as much if not more than anyone else. And so, we are open to that. I just think that it is going to be a challenge to get that done.

TOM BURGUNDER: This is Tom. Building off of what Brian just said, and I think that you articulated a lot of points really well. Perhaps, Haley, as you get back into developing documentation to make youth CAC feasible, you might develop a consent form for parents or guardians to sign for anybody who wants to participate if they are under 18 years of age. And also, maybe it would be nice to have youth activities tied into local CAC groups. But as Brian said, that is going to be a challenge. We have trouble keeping all of our members as it is, adults. Maybe there could be a statewide youth CAC meeting and have -- and have some Co-Chairs or Chairs of CAC groups and/or a district administrators or assistant administrators facilitate those meetings. The same person wouldn't have to do it all the time, it could rotate. That way you might be able to collect a lot more people at a time. The time issues seem to be prohibitive for any youth member that wants to participate throughout the state.

HALEY PENN: Thank you, I appreciate everything that you have said. I have taken notes to take back as we continue to develop. The attendance issue of all of the existing CACs is something that we talked about a lot, as well. And we kind of keep going back to the same

answer and we could just go off on our own and try to develop a Youth Citizens Advisory Committee and call it something else and have the same purpose, but we don't want to reinvent the wheel. We want to work with the existing CACs and support you all and also support the young people that express interest and eventually get involved. I do like the idea of having a statewide youth CAC meeting and having a Chair and a Co-Chair helping to facilitate. I feel like that would make more sense in a way that you are knowledgeable about what is going on in your CAC and the consent forms, as well. So, all of this is good feedback and I'm going to take it back as we continue to develop them. Yeah, thank you.

DANIELLE DAWGIELLO: This is Danielle from Pittsburgh. I wanted to ask if -- with the idea of the youth advisory committee and is it getting to the youth engagement specialist and that team with PATTAN and the customers with the OVR and is that something that the OVR counselors can do something with their guidance to ensure that students are aware of that? Also, we have the summer programs like summer academy or envision, can we also kind of collaborate there? I was just wondering how the students are getting that information and if there is a way that we can do that through the counselors as well or through the programming that we already have?

HALEY PENN: Yeah. Hi Danielle, thanks for sharing those ideas. Currently, we were just attending the CAC meetings and sending out these surveys to get engaged on which CACs are active and who is interested in supporting the project. We haven't yet distributed the fliers to any students. But I know social media has come up. We work a lot on the PA public square, which is a PATTAN secondary transition, and we talked about posting a flier on there and

working with the counselors and I love the idea of distributing the fliers in the summer as well. We are working on that list with how to distribute the fliers and get the word out currently. If anyone has more ideas, we are all ears.

CHRIS HARBERT: Yeah, thank you, Haley. Thank you, Danielle. I took notes of all of that. Great ideas. I really like that you are seeing opportunities for engagement and recruitment. Regarding, you know, the considerations of your staff's abilities, I will definitely pass forward your idea to our chain of command. Kim, I saw you raise your hand. I will do my best to unmute you. You might have beat me to it, though.

KIM ROBINSON: I got it, Chris. Thank you. I just wanted to put out the suggestion there too for Haley to consider if you haven't done this already, Haley, to reach out to the transition councils across the state. Because they are a really great resource. That is where you are going to find the transition coordinators and Special Ed teachers and some family members as well depending on the make-up of the transition council and agency personnel that can connect you to youth. I just wanted to throw that suggestion in there.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Kim.

: And Sue Richardson, you raised your hand twice. Sorry.

SUE RICHESON: : Sorry, didn't mean to do that. I wanted to say a couple weeks ago, I was asked to present at a parent forum and well, none of the parents showed up and it is run through the ARC here in Lancaster and we were having a conversation about how difficult it is to get people to participate and things like that. We are going to partner with the ARC in our area has a self-advocacy group and comprised of both adults and students and we are going to

connect with them to see if we can possibly get some students and/or adults that are interested in joining our CAC. It would be a dual purpose for them, help with them learning advocacy skills and also getting individuals on that can provide us with feedback. Our biggest difficulty in York is to get customers and we have very few customers that sit on it. We really want their feedback and participation, so that is what we are going to try here.

CHRIS HARBERT : I'm thinking if that can be replicated, it sounds like a great idea.

BRIAN D'AMICO: This is Brian from Reading again.

: Hey, Brian.

BRIAN D'AMICO : I wanted to piggyback and add on to Tom's comments a minute ago and he mentioned time and that is one of our biggest problems in Reading and the time schedule. It is hard to get adults because people work during the day, and we are trying to stagger some of our time in the meetings from day tonight and that is a big problem. I think that Tom had a good recommendation there about doing -- a statewide CAC for the youth. And instead of like and someone spoke earlier about reinventing the wheel. I think that we could even -- we are already doing this CAC Chair meeting here and we are looking for subjects. We could even have a short session here and invite the youth to come to this CAC meeting and have a short session for the youth to start to learn about what a CAC does and give their input right at this meeting. Hopefully, that will turn into something bigger. But it is difficult, I think, for all the CACs in getting customers involved.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. And Linda, she sent a comment in the chat. I will read it out loud. To seek guidance and participation from families, there are networks that can be tapped

such as Families to the Max. Excellent. Thank you. Lots of great discussion. Haley, thank you, again. Lots to come and I continue having conversations with Ryan, Kim, all the leadership on some of these discussions. If someone raised their hand, please unmute, you can go right ahead.

: That was me and I was trying to say thumbs up and thank you for letting me do a share out and having youth engagement as a bullet on the schedule.

CHRIS HARBERT: Hey, thank you. Much appreciated. Any other discussion for now on youth? One thing that I was going to say earlier, Citizen Advisory Committees are in a good position as the PA rehab council does and is willing to share as much you would like on social media on your behalf. I know that each DO has their own page with updates and things like that on the parks website. Even if there is interest in speaking with some PARC members on potential ideas for youth engagement, that is typically always there with the rehab council. So, more to come. If there are any thoughts in the meantime, please speak up, send me an email, call, whatever you would like.

BOB MECCA: Hey, Chris. This is Bob Mecca. I wanted to say with OVR having the P2P grant and opportunities for cells and OVR to work more closely together with youth, it will be a great opportunity to get youth membership into the pack as well.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Bob. I wrote that down. And yes, I appreciate seeing these avenues that we are able to engage and recruit potential members. Thank you. Any final remarks or discussions on youth engagement, youth recruitment?

JEFF DURMIS: Hi Chris. This is Jeff. I just wanted to kind of throw this out there as a potential thought process especially having kids here becoming more and more engaged in their

own way of interacting whether it be, you know, through social media or different forums kind of thing. It sounds to me and this is something that has been lingering in the back of my own mind for a little while, are we operating off of the assumption that the youth are not already engaged through their own medium? Maybe it is a Reddit forum that is out there or something along those lines where we might not be aware of or have considered doing any type of deep dive or things along those lines. Because you know, again, using my kids as my example, they are more willing to send a text than they are to make a phone call. That sort of thing. I just wanted to throw that out there as maybe a spark to elicit some more conversation as an idea of how we might be able to engage the youth to a more established CAC for each area. Or do we need to not necessarily reinvent the wheel, but maybe it is a different set of tires.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Jeff. Yeah, when I think of the need for the youth member and I'm assuming they are not engaged in type.

HALEY PENN: I really appreciate the conversation as I have popped on as far as youth data and where they may or may not be participating in youth advocacy and from some preliminary data collection that we have done with youth engagement in the existing CAC structure, there is very little. Part of that, as we have discussed, is tied to, right, how well members of the community know when CAC meetings are occurring and how they are occurring. Sometimes changing to scheduling might be necessary in order to accommodate other groups and all of that kind of stuff. You are absolutely right that youth in these days don't particular like making phone calls. But they will text and send written things and hop on Zoom meetings or other virtual opportunities when available and when requested. We are also part of the Pennsylvania

youth leadership network or PYLN, which is a big part of connecting youth across the state who are interested in doing advocacy. Some of the challenges honestly that have observed is the way that our youth is comfortable doing things tends to differ from the way that us adults are comfortable doing things and trying to find a happy medium is kind of the name of the game that I have noticed. With that to say, we really appreciate all of the feedback and the recommendations, and we are going to take all of this back as we continue developing resources and whatnot to make this happen.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. I appreciate all your effort as well. Document those in the call. Any other closing thoughts for youth engagement? I have some notes to take forward. Any offices or you know, Chairs or offices that we may not have heard from? Any concerns that might not have been expressed? Any specific challenges you may need help with or some insight on? If not --

SUE RICHESON: This is Susan Richardson again from the York district office, from our last CAC meeting we did have some questions that I did propose up my chain of command, but I have not heard anything yet. One of the things is they are interested whether or not they could have their own Facebook page? So, they wanted to create a Facebook page that would like share things about the CAC meetings and also things that maybe going on in the disability community in the four county area that we serve. So, that was one question they had. Another question was, could they complete a flier about the CAC listing the dates and times of the meeting? And could we include that with say the closure letters that go out from the district office just notifying people that hey, there is this committee and if you are interested, not

putting anything with OVR's name. I mean, the letter and the flier would be in there with the closure letter, but the contact would be the Chair. So, once again, we are trying to figure out ways that we could reach out to people and get that information. And then, they also were thinking about creating a survey to get some feedback on people's thoughts on OVR services and again, we were wondering if that's something that could be done. And not a separate mail out from OVR but included in purchase orders or something like that. And the feedback would not come back to the district office or OVR in any way, it could go to the CAC. Those are a couple questions they had, and I said that I would ask to see if any of those are a possibility for things they could do.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, Sue. There is a lot of good stuff there. Sorry, someone notified me, and I might have just missed it. Umm, I don't know if I will answer anything directly right now, without of course, talking to Ryan.

BRIAN D'AMICO: Chris, can I jump in here for a second?

CHRIS HARBERT: Absolutely.

BRIAN D'AMICO: This is Brian from Reading. I think that a key with all of our CACs across the state and just to answer some of your questions and I think that it was Susan. OVR and the PARC have a training manual and handbook on their website and what that training manual and handbook is there to guide the district officers on how to create a CAC and how the district offices to run the CAC themselves. We went through and did our bylaws, and we used that manual and handbook, and it was very, very helpful. In there, it tells you that some of the best practices and this is coming from OVR and the PRC and some of the best practices are

conducting surveys, creating a Facebook page, creating a set of bylaws. And I would encourage all of our CACs across the state to look at that handbook and use that as a guide to help create these CACs and further them along in the guidance. So, it does say in there that you know, you can create a Facebook page. One of the things I just mentioned is -- and I think that it is key for all of our CACs across the state, is to get a comprehensive set of bylaws to follow. And we just did that at the Reading CAC. It is up on the PAR website on our page. You are all welcome to look at our bylaws. We just redid them. I'm pretty proud of them. We had a lot of input from our members at our Reading district office and that is a good place to start, look at that handbook that OVR has and start and set a set of bylaws for yourself and that should help. We were in the same boat. We are going -- we haven't started yet, but we have been talking it for a while, and we are going to tackle that and that is creating our own Facebook page. Hopefully, some of that information helps.

CHRIS HARBERT: Yes, thank you. If anyone is not aware of the PA rehabilitation council, the PARC, just reach out to me. They are very supportive, and CAC Chairs do receive invites to their full council meetings, as well. Well, I appreciate everyone's discussion with youth engagement, youth recruitment in mind. Umm, I don't mean to stay on the same tune, but I would kind of like to expand and open it up for potentially -- for potential discussions that of maybe obstacles and things that district offices are doing great. Anything, you know, you'd like to improve on, sustain and continue doing well. That is going to be this following part of the meeting and discussions. The conversation could flip right to adult recruitment and engagement, or it could, you know, turn into any conversation and maybe about the importance

of having their own Facebook page for their area and region. To get started; does anyone need to talk about adult engagement or recruitment?

SHARI BRIGHTFUL: This is Shari. I jumped in late, but in the Philadelphia office, we are a CAC with our BBVS and BVRS and our meetings are pretty consistent and there is a good representation as far as individuals that tend the CAC. We were a CAC that was meeting in-person and with the pandemic, we started to have to meet remote. A lot of the individuals on our CAC are also a part of other agencies and committees and a lot of times it feels like we are talking to the same individuals. So, at one point we worked, I think really hard to try to find other individuals who could join the committee. Not that we don't like seeing the same individuals, but you know, seeing if we can get a more broader representation. We also talked about changing the hours. I think that was discussed on a tail end when I came on the call and a lot of the individuals that we are trying to generate interest from are either in school or working or taking care of families and a lot of times, we were holding them during our workday or OVR's workday that are on the CAC. One of the things that has helped is talking with our CAC about different opportunities we had going on in the office and asking them to join us and if we were doing things like a fair or a job fair entry and hosting a table and having our CAC members being a part with assisting us getting the word out or just being there helps with supporting us and maybe engaging others that may have been OVR customers that now may want to join the CAC. We come across a lot of youth and adults while they are in services and it is a great opportunity to kind of talk about maybe what the CAC is, as they have secured employment, that if we have been sharing information or they are aware of it along the way,

maybe they would be more interested in being on the CAC when time permits. I missed the -- a lot of the conversation with the youth, but the youth that we engage before we even heard about this potential opportunity was an individual from the summer internship program. I'm not sure how many people the state summer internship program -- I'm not sure how many people are aware of it. But we support a lot of individuals going to college and with the internships and helping them to find their voice and engaging with themselves and hearing their voice because they are the ones that are engaging in these services and talking with someone who went through a summer internship program, they learned more about OVR, our services, and the ins and outs of how to get from Point A to Point B. Youth like the hear from other youth. If I'm somebody that is participating in something really cool and student council and I don't know if they still call it that, but if I'm in student council and him hearing student council is this really great opportunity and with youth, it spreads like wildfire and hopefully, more people want to join student council and they hear about this opportunity and it sounds great, and something that I want to be a part of, and you share the information, and hopefully, they are interested. And the barrier was timing and figuring out timing wise and when to engage our CAC and be a part of the things they are doing and that it also met their timing needs. If they are in a job fair or working, they are not going to get off to be a part of a job fair, but just to engage our CAC as well.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you, so much, Shari. A lot of good things shared. Yes, an intern would be an excellent individual. Just as you said, who better? Again, I appreciate that and seeing and communicating that avenue. From our light conversation, yeah, we definitely want

the Philadelphia Citizen Advisory Committee to serve the Philly DO and to be the most beneficial, you know. Does anyone have follow-up or discussion for some of Shari's thoughts and remarks? Thank you.

Another topic that I'm aware of being discussed, as it was mentioned, bylaws. And I saw there was -- Brian may have shared them in the chat. That was a conversation I was --

BRIAN D'AMICO: I was going to say, Chris, I shared the links to the handbook. But I am about to put up a link to our Reading page and the bylaws. I will add that link now.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. One thing I was speaking -- so it was probably -- it was definitely before this recent Department of Education federal level discussions, I was initially speaking with some managers on initially discussing aligning bylaws. I plan to have a discussion this meeting on concrete moving forward with plans of bylaws. Bylaws being just an example as I understand CACs have their own from each district office to another. I was going to bring up, is there any oversight needs or oversight maybe manuals or bylaws and is there any need that Chairs would like to communicate, that something -- something is needed to officially run their CAC better? Or a resource that could be -- they need in order to meet the needs to operate efficiently for their DO? Just throwing some ideas out there. Again, this meeting, it gives way for direct central -- direct support from central office. That way I can directly communicate to my leadership team and address and discuss.

BRIAN D'AMICO: Chris, this is Brian from Reading.

CHRIS HARBERT: Hey, Brian.

BRIAN D'AMICO: Again, the reason we got this meeting together, you know, one of our

members was -- and he is on the call -- I think that he is on the meeting still is Angel Torres and he spearheaded getting this statewide CAC Chair meeting together and we appreciate that being done. You just brought up a couple good points. That is one of the reasons that he wanted to do this. I don't want to speak for him. But we all wanted to do this, is to get feedback from other CACs across the state to see what the challenges are. And one of our biggest challenges and Chris, you and I have already had discussion on this, and one of our biggest challenges is getting a secretary and getting our minutes taken. That is a key for us going forward and trying to understand what has been done in the past. And finally, you know, we are tackling that issue. So, I think across the state, that is one of the big things is having a secretary to take the minutes and the other thing is I know the district administrators in all the offices are already very busy, but getting their cooperation on creating a CAC and maintaining a CAC is something that we, as CAC members and customers, really need their help to do. And in communication with yourself up at the state level. Those are a couple of the things that we have a challenge at our end was we didn't have a secretary for years. And quite frankly, it is because no one wants to take the minutes. You know, I'm admittedly terrible at taking minutes. That is not my forte. But we are getting that done and that was a big challenge in the past couple years is getting a secretary and getting our minutes taken, getting them accurate, and getting them post-ed on the PAR website. We are finally getting that done. I think that is a big step for us. And I think that would probably be a big challenge across the state. Again, I'm not speaking for everyone. But those two things, along with the bylaws, as I mentioned before, under that handbook, it says that we should create our own bylaws and we

could have a comprehensive set of bylaws that are for across the state, but it may not be the best for every district. But that is a place to start, getting a set of bylaws and getting those members all together, and I think someone mentioned earlier about recruitment of not just youth, we have a problem recruiting adults and we are looking for any other suggestions from other CACs on how we can recruit more adults. One of the issues in recruiting adults is if we want to move our meetings at nighttime, we don't have -- because of a lot of adults are working during the day, we don't have the facilities to do that. You know, all the places are closed. Your career link is closed. Abilities in motion are closed at 5 o'clock. Even the district office is closed at 5 o'clock. To move a meeting after 5 o'clock, it is difficult for us to do. That's why we are trying to accommodate our current members but also get other members. So, that that's just a couple things for thought that is happening at our district office.

PASSLE HELMINSKI: This is Passle. Thank God Jack is our secretary too and he always takes notes for us. We are looking to recruit people. We have a good relationship and keep expanding as we go on. Jack, do you want to add anything?

JACK HEWITT: Thanks. No, I keep an agenda and I'm able to add notes as we talk. It is simple and we just follow Robert's Rules, and the minutes take themselves at some point. I have to give her kudos too.

PASSLE HELMINSKI : Do you conduct your meetings at all using Zoom or Teams?

JACK HEWITT: All of our meeting are through Microsoft Teams, and they have been doing it since the pandemic. Yeah, it is all through Microsoft Teams.

Theoretically, you can conduct your meetings in the evening and have someone serve as a host to

set it up. They wouldn't have to be an actual office.

PASSLE HELMINSKI: Correct. And we just did a -- Andrew Pennington, who is on here with us, he is one of our members, he was kind enough and we did a poll for all of our members, an online poll and all of our current members, the best time for them to meet is during the day. And that was one of the suggestions we did, is we were trying to have later meetings, and we can do it virtually, sure. But we are trying to also connect and do it in a facility, so people can come in and we can have a face-to-face, and we can network face-to-face and partnership with like a career link or even a school. And that's where we found it was difficult. But, yes, we can do it virtually. It is just that all of our members currently during the poll and I think that we have 8 or 9 members, they are all wanting to do it during the day. I agree with you, it can be done at nighttime, sure.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. Yeah, I was aware of Reading's, and you know, we have had the conversation. Glad leveraging resources to take care of the areas that we need support on. We are coming to the end of our time. Time went very quick today. Are there any other Chairs I might not have heard from or heard a little bit less from that would like to communicate anything, whether it is a strength, a success, an area of improvement that they would like to either share with myself, any managers, agency leaders, other Chairs for conversation?

ANGEL TORRES : Chris, this is Angel.

: Hey, Angel.

ANGEL TORRES : I have a question for Pacil, and you mentioned earlier about a waiver for under 18 possible CAC members or youth engagement and that youth engagement conversation,

is there such a thing in writing --

: Can you hear me now?

: Yes. Did you hear my question?

PASSLE HELMINSKI: I was speaking about developing a waiver for anyone under 18 sign off.

: Oh, developing. So, there isn't one currently?

PASSLE HELMINSKI : No, because we have not had anyone under 18 apply to our CAC. We have not had any youth under 18 apply yet.

: So, there is no restriction with a person under the age of 18 joining?

PASSLE HELMINSKI : No, we just have to have a waiver because I think that it is required by law or whatever or OVR's requirements and we have to have a waiver, and I want to make sure that we are with that.

: Got ya.

: And Jack can jump in at any time too.

: Thank you.

JACK HEWITT: I don't know if we can use a waiver that OVR already has on.

We have our media waiver and if this is an avenue that we go down, it is always something that we can follow up with the executive team and legal if there is a requirement for waiver in regards to this. I think that is something that we'll have to cross whenever we get to the point of determining the need because we are going to have to get central office and the executive team and legal involved to get the right document.

: And the other case is that the parent is joining for the under age child.

: We have had that in the past.

: Right. Okay. Thank you.

: Thank you.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. I like that -- I love the communication amongst Chairs.

Speaking with board member Mike this week and he was not able to come in as a guest Chair or anything, but I know he thinks highly of the advisory committees. I hear him all the time and speaking and that CACs are a very important driving force for OVR. They have a great history of successes and accomplishments. Mike is aware of the situation of some DOs, you know, DO needs for CACs and vacant Chair positions and Mike did want to send his best before our meeting closes today. Any other closing thoughts? Discussions? For myself or leadership on local activities and needs?

BRIAN D'AMICO: This is Brian from Reading. For an agenda topic for maybe the next CAC meeting I would like to discuss on how the current CACs can communicate with current customers of -- in the district offices. How can we contact them? How can we communicate with them? How can we get their feedback? How can we let them know about the CACs? Get them to join the CACs? So, maybe a topic for the next agenda on a discussion on that. And if I could just say, you know, in our Reading district office, and this might be another agenda item, we are doing very good I think with referrals. One of the challenges we have and again, maybe other CACs across the state can talk to this, one of the challenges that we have are staffing. You know, our referrals are up, but -- and I think that is maybe a challenge across the board, is getting workers and then keeping the workers. So, it might be another agenda item topic for

the next meeting.

CHRIS HARBERT: Thank you. Absolutely. Communicating with current customers and then, referrals.

: Referrals and staffing, correct.

: Thank you.

: Thank you, Chris.

CHRIS HARBERT: Absolutely. Yeah, thank you, Brian. I appreciate staying in tune in between and your engagement and assistance here today in the meeting. Any other closing remarks? If not, I'm going to plan for six months from now in August. Whoever is still left on, just to let you know I'm expecting my third child in mid-July. I find out this weekend if it will be a boy or a girl. Mid-July, I should be off for three weeks, but that should not affect the August meeting. Thank you. I will be out for about three weeks probably. But yeah, leadership is tracking. It won't affect the meeting date for August. If there is something in the meantime that we did not discuss, please feel free to give me a call or email.

: Chris, you look too young to be on your third child.

: I turned 35 in December, so thank you. I have a gray hair, well salt and pepper. I appreciate it.

: Congrats.

: Yeah, I have two daughters, so a boy would be cool. But I can imagine three sisters would be great too or three girls. So --

: Another girl and you would be the only man in the house and that might be tough.

CHRIS HARBERT: I know.

[Laughter]

Oh, man. This is hilarious. I think that I would be more nervous if it is a boy, though. Because I have piles of pink stuff everywhere. I have it all. Thank you for humoring me and thank you so much for your time and your notes. These are very much appreciated. I look forward to passing to leadership improvements and I have a lot of improvements, sustains, and needs as well. So, thank you.

: Chris, do you have an exact date for us in August yet?

: I don't. But if there are any date that you would prefer or any that wouldn't work, please let me know.

: We have a BVRC meeting in August too.

: Yes, we do. I'm pretty flexible per your flexibility.

: I have to say thanks to you because Angel wanted to spearhead this, and you took the reins and got this together. And also, when we are offline here, you have been very helpful to the Reading office on getting some stuff done with the minutes and stuff like that and your feedback has been very prompt and thorough. So, I speak for the Reading office and the Reading CAC, we greatly appreciate your help and cooperation.

CHRIS HARBERT: Brian, thanks. It means a lot. This was your idea, and it was a great idea, and the other Chairs definitely appreciate it. I understand you saying I'm prompt, but I'm my own worst critic and this quarter, I was delayed with a lot and all the federal conversations and board meeting in two weeks. Thank you for following up with that thing that we are working on

for transcription. Glad you are able to leverage the resource, and it worked out.

: Have a great day folks.

: And congratulations on your new baby, Chris. Bye now.

: Thank you. Bye