



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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OVR BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (BEP)

Ad hoc Committee Meeting

Minutes for March 13, 2026

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Lynn Heitz (P)

Joan Myers Goodman (P)

Andrew Pennington (P)

Julia Barol (P)

Passle Helminski (NP)

Michelle Mitchell (NP)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: Wes Runnels

PaRC Staff Present: Christopher Todd, Michelle Gerrick

Guest Present: Judy Schoenly

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Lynn Heitz called the meeting to order after quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

MOTION was made by Ms. Joan Myers Goodman for approval of the agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

CHAIR REPORT

Attendance at the Blindness and Visual Services Committee meeting

- Ms. Lynn Heitz provided a report on her attendance at a meeting with the Pennsylvania Elected Committee of Blind Vendors, State Licensing Agency (SLA), and Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) which included information about Meta glasses, bill / coin counters, Business Enterprise Program (BEP) fiscal report, and newly established BEP vendors.

OVR UPDATES

BEP Vendor update

- Members provided a review of discussions held at the recent State Board meeting regarding information about new BEP licensees, discussions with new BEP vendors, and inquired about the number of participants that are prepared to begin training located at the Hiram G Andrews Center (HGAC).
- Mr. Wes Runnels provided updates regarding BEP vendors. New participants of the program are currently at different stages of training requirements, including 2 individuals that are close to beginning the in-person training located at the HGAC. HGAC is currently prepared to receive trainees at their facility.
- Members requested previously discussed BEP policies and legal documents. Additionally, members shared interest in visiting the BEP classroom while visiting the HGAC for student graduation in April.
- Mr. Runnels provided additional details about the 10-week in-person training program which will include working with different aspects of vending machines, working in the café and cafeteria, and the Serve Safe Certification.
- Members inquired about the process for new vendors to locate new sites. New vendors will focus on state and federal locations not private industry, vendors will be provided with a list of offices in their local area, supports will review their goals and the bidding process will be made available to them following graduation from the training program.
- Members inquired about policies regarding seniority for being awarded sites. A bid can be tied to seniority however priority is given to vendors that are bidding on their primary site. Satellite sites are awarded on one-year contract basis with a maximum of 2 satellites per vendor. Each vendor may have 1 primary site and 2 satellites. A merit-based policy is currently under development. Policies are developed in collaboration with the Elected Committee, SLA and then sent to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for review and approval. All vendors are provided with an opportunity to review policies, and a Public Comment period is also required prior to RSA final approval. Vendors are given the opportunity to provide input and recommend changes. Additional information was provided regarding the composition and processes of the Elected Committee.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

- Members agreed to meet again on May 8, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Mr. Andrew Pennington to adjourn. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.