**SRC-DBVI[[1]](#footnote-1) Minutes**

**Date & Time:** May 1st 2024 (10am – 12pm)

**Location:** Virtual Meeting

**Attendance Key: P = Present, E = Absent (Excused), A = Absent (Unexcused), TEL = Telephone**

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| **Council Members:** | | | | | |
| **P** | Andrew Maclean, *Chair* | **E** | Sherry Belka |  |  |
| **P** | Cheryl Peabody, *Vice* | **P** | David Emberley |  |  |
| **P** | Allen Kropp, *Treasurer* | **E** | Roger Fuller |  |  |
| **P** | Amber White | **E** | Nathanael Batson |  |  |
| **P** | \* Elissa Rowe[[2]](#footnote-2) | **P** | Kathy Despres |  |  |
| **E** | Darcy Gentle | **P** | \* Isaac Gingras |  |  |
| **P** | Nancy Moulton | **P** | Jessica Cavanaugh |  |  |

**Members of Public:** Peter Diplock, Kelly Chadbourne, Diane Frigon, & Megan Marquis.

**Recorder:** Branden Densmore **Next Meeting:** June 2024, TBA **Minutes Approved: YES**

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| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Introduction** | SRC-DBVI meeting was *called to order at 10:02:* introductions were provided.  *A quorum was established.*  The meeting agenda was approved as presented as there were no additions. | NONE | NONE |
| **Chair Report** | Andrew Maclean attended the *NCSRC[[3]](#footnote-3) conference*.  *Announcement*: Cheryl Peabody is leaving the SRC-DBVI at the end of June. A sense of loss pervaded the discussion, and the Executive Committee is working out how to fill the gap. | NONE | NONE |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Chair Report** | A possibility discussed was expanding Branden Densmore’s role as the councils Administrative Associate; a meeting has been set with him to discuss toward the end of May.  Cheryl Peabody remains open for phone calls and/or questions related to council work. | NONE | NONE |
| **Public Comment** | Time given for public comment, but none were given. | NA | NA |
| **Minutes** | The SRC-DBVI discussed the February 2024 minutes.  No corrections identified, the minutes were accepted as presented. | *Send February minutes to webmaster for posting.*  *Create May draft minutes and send to Cheryl.*  *Distribute May draft to council members.* | Branden Densmore  Branden Densmore  Cheryl Peabody |
| **Director’s Report** | **Staffing**: Turnover continues to be an issues caused mostly by retirement.  Cheryl Peabody leaving, loss of institutional knowledge.  Karen Faser (BRS[[4]](#footnote-4) Director) left, Libby replaced her, and Sam Fenderson now acting director of DBVI. That position has been posted and interviews are happening.  There is an Administrative position still not filled. | NONE | NONE |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Director’s Report** | Filling that position been a long process: Interviews held, people declined. The administrative tasks are spread out among staff.  Vacant region 3 VR Counselor position filled and they start Monday.  3 vacant (and hard to fill) O&M[[5]](#footnote-5) positions currently, one since last year. O&M positions are highly specialized, and they are offering 12 hour summer positions to try and attract more possibilities.  Really considering and open to out of the box ideas on how to fill these positions.  They put out an internal memo about becoming an O&M, TVI[[6]](#footnote-6), and VRT[[7]](#footnote-7), all positions notoriously hard to fill.  Also talking with people they know personally about choosing these as a career pathway, and discussing possibility of doing internships.  Money is available to pay for O&M, TVI, and VRT education.  *Idea*: *Discussed possibility of Goodwill Job Coaches going into O&M, TVI, or VRT positions.* | *Add “Public Messaging” objective to State Plan.*  *Send promotional O&M, VRT, TVI flyers to Kathy Despres for distribution.*  *Follow up on Goodwill Job coach idea with Kathy Despres.* | Elissa Rowe  Nancy Moulton  Elissa Rowe |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Director’s Report** | *Idea*: *Discussed possibility of creating O&M, TVI, & VRT Apprentice opportunities.*  **Apprenticeship**: Meet with folks at University Of Massachusetts, the folks that offer Masters level degrees for O&M, TVI, and VRT.  Reported that some States – outside of New England – do in fact offer O&M Apprenticeships.  **Staffing**: Conversation moved back to the staffing challenge.  Need expressed for an organized plan around recruitment, and if the SRC-DBVI should help.  DBVI staff would be happy to help brain storm.  *Question: Where does information about becoming an O&M, VRT, TVI need to be?*   * High schools * Job Fairs * Job Shadows * Bring Child To Work Day * Get Current O&M, VRTs, TVIs involved * Fun Events/Career Exploration * DOE[[8]](#footnote-8) Virtual Events * Virtual Job Shadow Platform (Pathal): REELS people watch. | *Continue considering this idea in more detail.*  *Reach out to multiple people in DOE about O&M, VRT, TVI positions.*  *Look into if DBVI is on Pathal.* | Peter Diplock  David Emberley  Peter Diplock |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Director’s Report** | There is no existing SRC-DBVI committee to address the staffing challenges. | *Create sub-committee to address O&M, TVI, and VRT staffing challenges.*  *Identify DBVI staff members to help new sub-committee brainstorm.* | Executive Committee  Elissa Rowe |
| **BEP[[9]](#footnote-9) Update** | Currently have 4 licensed managers in State.  Looking for other possible mangers, and they could job shadow current managers.  There are also online courses folks can take to learn the ropes.  Opened a new site in Gorham town office.  Gross sales just over one million dollars for last federal fiscal year… Numbers creeping back up since COVID.  Challenging getting new people into the program, BEP and Self-employment is not for everyone.  BEP looking for ideas and input.  Cross Café manager done at the end of August, and difficult finding replacement. | *Contact Diane Frigon for links to courses.*  *Contact Diane Frigon about Cross Café Manager position.* | Anyone Interested  Anyone Interested |
| **Conference Update** | Andrew attended the NCSRC meeting with SRC folks from around the country. | NONE | NONE |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Conference Update** | There were between 15 and 20 states represented, and the only other New England state there was Connecticut.  Different states have different SRC structures: some have paid staff, some are combined DVR/DBVI.  All SRCs seem to be facing similar challenges, like staffing, community outreach, producing annual reports, etc.  Elissa Rowe reported on the CSAVR[[10]](#footnote-10) meetings she attended as well.   * Automated Case Manager Scheduling Software * Data On Rapid Engagement * Internal/External Technology * Case Manager signature collection software * Staff Retention and STAY interviews * Giving SILC Case Manager support through grieving process | NONE | NONE |
| **Announcements** | Honorariums are offered to members for attendance.  The next SRC-DBVI meeting on June 19th was cancelled, it falls on Federal holiday. The next SRC-DBVI meeting TBA. | *Contact Cheryl to receive honorarium.*  *Discuss and identify next meeting date and send to members.* | Members Not Compensated  Executive Council |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Announcements** | There will be an open position on the Executive Council at the end of June when Cheryl leaves. | NONE | NONE |
| **Adjournment** | Meeting was adjourned at 11:58am. | NA | NA |

**People & Organizations Represented**

**Andrew MacLean (Chair) – Maine Medical Association**

**Cheryl Peabody (Vice Chair) – State Independent Living Council (SILC)**

**Allen Kropp (Treasurer) – Drummond Woodsum**

**Elissa Rowe – Division For Blind & Visually Impaired (DBVI)**

**Peter Diplock – Division For Blind & Visually Impaired (DBVI)**

**Nancy Moulton – Catholic Charities Maine**

**Sherry Belka – Disability Advocacy Seat**

**Kathy Despres – Goodwill Industries**

**David Emberley – Department Of Education**

**Amber White – Iris Network**

**Kathrina Ringrose – Disability Rights Maine, Client Assistance Program (CAP)**

**Darcy Gentle – Wabanaki Vocational Rehabilitation Program**

**Roger Fuller – Disability Advocate**

**Nathanael Batson – Disability Advocate**

**Isaac Gingras – Maine State Workforce Board**

**Jessica Cavanaugh**

1. State Rehabilitation Council - Division For The Blind And Visually Impaired [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \*Indicates Ex Officio, Non-voting member [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. NCSRC -> National Council Of State Rehabilitation Councils. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. BRS -> Bureau Of Rehabilitation Services. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. O&M -> Orientation and Mobility. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. TVI -> Teacher Of Visually Impaired. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. VRT -> Vision Rehabilitation Therapist. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. DOE -> Department Of Education [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. BEP -> Business Enterprise Program. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. CSAVR -> **Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation** [↑](#footnote-ref-10)