**State Rehabilitation Council (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) Minutes**

**Date & Time:** May 18th 2020, 1pm – 3pm

**Location:** Department Of Labor, 45 Commerce Dr., Augusta Maine, Francis Perkins Room

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

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|  **Council Members[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
| **P** | Cheryl Peabody, *Chair* | **P** | Mary Adley |  |  |
| **P** | Jodie Hall | **P** | Suzanne Primiano\* |  |  |
| **P** | Emilie Montgomery | **P** | Wes Uhlman\* |  |  |
| **P** | Josh Howe |  |  |  |  |
| **P** | Libby Stone-Sterling\* |  |  |  |  |
| **P** | Darcy Gentle |  |  |  |  |
| **E** | Kelly Osborn |  |  |  |  |

**Guests:** Richard Langley

**Recorder:** Branden Densmore **Next Meeting:** June 15th 2020 **Minutes Approved: Yes**

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| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action**  | **Responsible** |
| **Introductions** | D.V.R meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm. Members and guests were welcomed. Introductions were given. | NA | NA |
| **Acceptance Of Minutes**  | D.V.R. discussed February, March, and April 2020 minutes, and no corrections were identified. Branden was thanked for creating a new D.V.R. minutes template.The February, March, & April minutes were ***accepted as distributed.*** | *Correct February minutes, and send PDF/Word versions to Cheryl for distribution.* *Send webmaster corrected April minutes, and do draft minutes for May 2020 meeting & send to Cheryl.**Distribute May minutes to council members.* | Branden DensmoreBranden DensmoreCheryl Peabody |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action**  | **Responsible** |
| **Director’s Report** | ***General Update***: While it is unclear what reopening means currently, energy has gone into preparing to do so. They have been paying attention to what’s happening on different levels, anticipating what challenges might be for staff and clients as things start opening back up. There have been some good program development things happening, like the virtual job shadow and career exploration workshops, and many other trainings for staff.V.R. finished and sent a letter in support of the congressional delegation, asking for flexibilities for V.R. programs. The hope is that these flexibilities will help V.R. better serve clients.***Vacancies*:** V.R. team has *filled* the Casework Supervisor position in Portland. However, there is now a *vacant* Casework Supervisor position in Lewiston. This is a key position which they hope to fill as soon as possible. There is also a *vacant* V.R. Counselor position in York county, a *vacant* RC1 position, and a *vacant* Casework Supervisor position in Bangor.  | NONE | NONE |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action**  | **Responsible** |
| **Directors Report** | ***C.A.P[[2]](#footnote-2) Update***: Received final date for the transition of the C.A.P. grant, which has been awarded to D.R.M.[[3]](#footnote-3) Clients have been notified, and D.V.R. has received a fair amount of feedback & questions. Pam Waite will continue providing services while the C.A.P. grant is transferred to D.R.M.***Staff Trainings***: Many trainings have been happening during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the next two weeks V.R. is doing a Progressive Employment training through the Institute Of Community Inclusion. Also writing a letter of support for University Of Southern Maine for a long term training grant.***Public Meetings***: Continuing with weekly Zoom meetings on Thursdays at 2pm that are open to the public, providing information and update on what’s happening with Bureau Of Rehabilitation Services. | *Contact Libby Stone-Sterling for information regarding joining the weekly Zoom meetings.* | Any Member |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action**  | **Responsible** |
| **Directors Report** | ***State Plan***: Submitted D.V.R. State Plan earlier in the year, and may have received feedback but there was a glitch in the system that staff have been trying to resolve. It looks like they may have received feedback, but officially they have not received feedback. | NONE | NONE |
| **Guest Speaker** | *Richard Langley* from D.R.M. came to speak about the C.A.P. transition happening in June. D.R.M. has assembled a team to oversee the transition at their office. D.R.M wants to attend these meetings, and others like it, to collect feedback regarding the C.A.P., and have hired a new attorney who will be good at analyzing the system, spotting issues, and problem solving. She will be visiting the council at some point to introduce herself. | NA | NA |
| **How VR Helped Someone** | VR assisted a client to start their own business as a Guardian Ad Litem, working with several courts in the area. She had just gotten her business off the ground before COVID19 hit – VR had helped her with some business consultations, startup costs, and adaptive technology. Her business was just started and she had two cases, which was exciting. | NA | NA |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action**  | **Responsible** |
| **How VR Helped Someone** | COVID happened, the courts closed, and the VR client lost her connections with people she was learning from and networking with.VR has been helping this client currently to strategize on how she can continue to grow her business during these times. She has been attending some Small Business Administration workshops about maintaining small business during COVID, and has received and implemented some good suggestions. She has been reaching out to potential customers about her business, and also letting folks know about what she is doing in her personal life to help out during the crisis. VR also helped her craft a networking letter to reach out to different attorneys in the area. | NA | NA |
| **Other Business** | The council discussed the letter that Cheryl sent to the congressional delegates supporting the Department Of Education’s report to congress requesting fiscal flexibilities for spending VR dollars in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.On June 11th (from 2:30 – 3:30) the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils is having a national call.  | *Send out email with call information once received to council members.* | Cheryl Peabody |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action**  | **Responsible** |
| **Other Business** | Annual training is coming up, and it was agreed to be done in conjunction with Division for Blind and Visually Impaired. It was suggested to look at some of the data reports during the training. It was also mentioned that a topic to cover might be increasing membership and outreach to the business sector. | *Send email to Cheryl with suggestions for helpful topics to cover during the annual training.* | Any Member |
| **Announcements**  | Honorariums are being offered to members not otherwise compensated for attendance.June 2nd celebration of 100 year V.R. Anniversary. The next D.V.R. Council meeting will be held on June 15th via Zoom. | *Contact Cheryl to receive Honorarium.* | Any Member Not Compensated |
| **Public Comments** | Time was given for public comments. The time and dates for S.R.C. meetings have now been put up on the D.R.M. website, and emails have been sent regarding the council.The Maine Parent Federation has also been promoting S.R.C. meeting via social media and quarterly newsletter. | NONE | NONE |
| **Adjournment** | The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 pm. | NA | NA |

1. \* Indicates an Ex Officio non-voting member [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. C.A.P. -> Client Assistance Program [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. D.R.M. -> Disability Rights Maine [↑](#footnote-ref-3)