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

**Date & Time:** May 16th 2022, 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[[2]](#footnote-2)** | | | | | |
| **P** | Kelly Osborn, *Chair* |  |  |  |  |
| **E** | Cheryl Peabody, *Treas* |  |  |  |  |
| **E** | Libby Stone-Sterling\* |  |  |  |  |
| **E** | Allison Wiest |  |  |  |  |
| **E** | Mary Adley |  |  |  |  |
| **P** | Darcy Gentle |  |  |  |  |
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**Guests:** Julia Endicott, Jennifer Kimble, Patricia Ngara, Peaches Bass, Isaac Gingras

**Recorder:** Branden Densmore **Next Meeting:** July 18th 2022 **Minutes Approved: YES**

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| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Introductions** | Meeting was called to order at 1:02 pm. Members/guests were welcomed, and introductions were provided. | NA | NA |
| **Acceptance Of Minutes** | Corrections to the January and March minutes were not discussed because a **quorum could not be established**.  The acceptance of the January and March minutes was **tabled for next meeting**. | *Create May 2022 draft minutes and send to Kelly & Cheryl.*  *Distribute May 2022 draft minutes to SRC-DVR members for review.* | Branden Densmore  Kelly Osborn |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Directors Report** | Libby Stone-Sterling was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following updates via email.  **Staffing**: DVR continues to deal with the statewide and national tight labor market. We have a number of new hires across the state but we are also experiencing retirements, job changes, promotions, etc. which is offsetting new hires. We recently added the feature of a brief video from one our VRCs speaking about her job to postings for RCI and RCII positions.  One notable new hire is Christopher Montagna who is the new BRS Director of Systems Improvement and Quality Assurance. Chris comes to us with an extensive background in QA at DHHS.  **New Supervisor Training:** With all of our Casework Supervisor positions (8) filled around the state, we were able to launch a New Supervisor Cohort Training for Casework Supervisors this week.  Former Casework Supervisor and current Asst. Director Samantha Fenderson has taken the lead on developing the training curriculum. | *Reach out to Libby with any questions regarding the Director’s Report.* | Any Member |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Directors Report** | The training will complement the New Counselor Training that is available for new VR counselors. This is an exciting new resource and Sam and I are very much looking forward to learning how the training helps to support quality supervision and services in the field.  The training runs for 2.5 hours each week for the next three months.  **Summer Programming:**You all received information on our summer STEM-themed Step Up program at the University of Maine. We also have been invited to send DVR high school students who are interested in robotics to the DBVI-arranged Robotics and Cyber Academy that will be held at USM in July.  Online job clubs will run this summer and many young people will have their first jobs with support from DVR and our Community Rehabilitation Providers!  Last but not least, we are very excited about college bus tours for DVR youth clients.  The tours are scheduled over two weeks at the end of June. | NONE | NONE |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Directors Report** | **Summer Interns:**DVR will be hosting summer interns through the Margaret Chase Smith Summer Government Internship program as well as through direct connections with universities.  We’re very excited that a UMF student who interned with us this spring will return this summer after graduation to work as a Rehabilitation Counselor I – more proof that internships work as a great way to introduce the field of vocational rehabilitation!  **Business Services:**As DVR continues to focus on our dual customers through approaches like Progressive Employment – we have convened our business services staff for twice monthly team meetings.  We many new initiatives (including Apprenticeship) offering opportunities for employer engagement. We are clarifying our messaging and coordinating our outreach with our workforce system partners.  DVR has certified [Windmills](http://www.miltwright.com/products/windmills.htm) disability awareness trainers who are available to assist businesses to offer more inclusive workplaces. | NONE | NONE |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Directors Report** | **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** DVR Regional Manager Kim Desso, continues to lead the BRS workgroup on DEI with strong participation from across DVR, DBVI and SIQA units.  Kim recently participated in DEI leadership training for VR. The team has developed and delivered a series of three webinars for staff that were very well received and fit within MDOL’s DEI framework. The workgroup is also assisting to identify best practices within our VR operations. This led to a recent roll-out in our Aware case management system of the ability to included preferred pronouns as a field in the case record. This is something that has been very well received!  **Time to Eligibility:**As part of our ongoing efforts to determine timely eligibility for VR services, DVR is piloting the use of Rehab Counselor IIs as dedicated eligibility specialists (Portland and Bangor). These RCIIs will carry a much reduced caseload and will work with applicants to assist them to move through to eligibility and initial plan for employment. We’ll be monitoring to determine how helpful this approach as one of a number of strategies being implemented. | NONE | NONE |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Directors Report** | **BRS Meetings:**After holding monthly BRS Stakeholder sessions to share updates and gather feedback over the last few months, we have decided to move to every other month through the end of the year. | *See the Announcements section of these minutes for information on joining these BRS meetings.* | Any Member |
| **How VR Helped Someone** | There was a VR client who lost opportunities for employment due to COVID, and was guarded about trying again. But he decided to move forward, and staff helped him with his resume, cover letter, and advocacy.  The client was hired at Hannaford working Tuesdays and Thursdays. They have done job coaching, and helped him get long term supports in place. | *Gather more How VR Helped Someone stories.* | Any VR Staff Member |
| **CAP[[3]](#footnote-3) Update** | Hearing from clients recently who are fed-up with the system. Exit numbers are up. They are continuing outreach efforts, particularly with Case Managers, holding two virtual information sessions which had good turnout. | NONE | NONE |
| **121 Update** | Experienced a significant decrease in services since COVID. Been working with Department Of Education to get youth into soft job skills training. Also been meeting with their Native Liaison at High school for outreach. | NONE | NONE |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **121 Update** | Now participating in VR Hiring Committee. 121 is still short an Administrative Assistant, and they are considering opening another part time position with left over funding.  Will be presenting to CAP Youth – more information on this next meeting. | NONE | NONE |
| **New Business** | **Membership**: Discussed council membership and issue of being out of compliance with federal regulations.  Discussed outreach flyer made last year, and different ideas for increasing numbers.  **Ideas Discussed**   * Career Center Outreach * List Of Organizations * Outreach Video * Chamber Outreach * Close Out Surveys * Rotary Clubs * Member Orientation   It was decided to hold a Membership Work Session with a tentative date of June 27th from 1-3 pm.  Discussed holding Annual Meeting in October – the when, where, and what. Talked about possibility of having a hybrid training, and good locations to have it. | *Send confirmation email to council members about June Membership Work Session.* | Kelly Osborn |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Announcements** | The next regular SRC-DVR meeting will be held on July 18th via Zoom.  Honorariums are being offered to members not otherwise compensated for attendance.  Members are invited to join leaders from the Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services to learn about programming and opportunities for individuals with disabilities. They also want feedback as they strive for continuous improvement in service delivery. ASL and CART will be available.  Meetings are from 3-4pm, held on June 7, August 2, October 4, and December 6. | *Contact Cheryl to receive Honorarium.*  *Contact Libby for more information.* | Any Member Not Compensated  Any Member |
| **Public Comments** | Time was provided for public comment but none were given. | NONE | NONE |
| **Adjournment** | The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm. | NA | NA |

**People & Organizations Represented**

**Cheryl Peabody – Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)**

**Libby Stone-Sterling – Division Of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**

**Mary Adley – Department Of Education (DOE)**

**Kelly Osborn – Goodwill Industries**

**Wes Uhlman – Division Of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**

**Julia Endicott – Disability Rights Maine (DRM), Client Assistance Program (CAP)**

**Allison Wiest – Maine Parent Federation (MPF)**

1. State Rehabilitation Council, Division Of Vocational Rehabilitation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \*Indicates an Ex Officio non-voting member. See last page for list of organizations represented. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Client Assistance Program [↑](#footnote-ref-3)