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

**Date & Time:** September 9th 2024, 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** | Allison Wiest | **P** | Jennifer Kimble |  |  |
| **P** | Issac Gingras |  |  |  |  |
| **P** | Samantha Fenderson\* |  |  |  |  |
| **A** | Mary Adley |  |  |  |  |
| **A** | Darcy Gentle |  |  |  |  |
| **A** | Patty Ngara |  |  |  |  |
| **E** | Sierra Wood |  |  |  |  |

**Guests**: Dylan Sullivan, Sophia Phoenix, Megan Marquis, Jenny Ardito

**Scribe:** Branden Densmore **Next Meeting:** October TBA **Minutes Approved: YES!**

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| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Introductions** | The meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm.  Members/guests were welcomed, and introductions were provided. | NA | NA |
| **Minutes** | The council discussed two sets of draft minutes, one for July and one for January 2024.  A quorum could not be established.  The minutes will be sent to members for remote approval. | *Create draft September minutes and send to council members for review.*  *Send out draft July/January minutes for correction and approval.*  *Send corrected (approved) minutes to Webmaster for posting.* | Branden Densmore  Branden/Samantha  Branden Densmore |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Director’s Report** | **Staffing**: There are two regional manager positions open, central and northern. These have been posted and interviews are happening over the next two weeks. They are hoping to have this issue wrapped up by the end of September.  There’s been a lot of hiring that’s happened over the last six months. However, DVR has been unable to fill two Rehabilitation Assistant positions.  The funding on these positions is only good until next year; they are running out of time.  VRC[[3]](#footnote-3) 1 and VRC 2 folks do targeted outreach naturally, as part of their job, but lately they haven’t been because of staffing constraints.  VR would like to open the waitlist for categories three and four by the end of the year, currently looking at how to do this effectively.  **Grant** **Funding**: Multiple VR grants were discussed. The DIF[[4]](#footnote-4) grant started on 10-1-24, and is targeting youth in the criminal justice system. | *Write report about opening the wait list, effects on staff, impact on caseload, regional analysis, etc, and share with council.* | Samantha Fenderson |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Director’s Report** | With the DIF grant, VR Is working with the Department of Corrections and particularly Long Creek Detention Center as well as kids who have been part of the correction system in general. They need a program manager and VRC 1 for this grant.  With the *Pathways to Partnerships Grant*, the current manager is moving to DBVI[[5]](#footnote-5). VR has posted this position. This Is a five year grant and in October we will have used two of those years.  **October**: Critical month… Disability employment month. VR is reaching out to employers and supporting their clients in reaching out to employers. They are currently updating a calendar of events for the month of October related to disability employment.  **OBH[[6]](#footnote-6)**: VR exploring partnership with OBH. Currently training on IPS[[7]](#footnote-7) model used in the behavioral health world. Looking into creating a pilot program based in the IPS philosophy. | *Update and send October event calendar to council members.* | Samantha Fenderson |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Director’s Report** | **Executive Partners**: SRC-DVR has officers currently and therefore no executive committee.  Samantha attended a SRC-DBVI executive committee meeting, and they had an idea of having combined executive committee meetings To explore systemic issues and ways that the councils can work together as well as identifying separate issues.  **Survey**: VR is holding a leadership meeting tomorrow about the customer satisfaction survey results.  They are looking at the survey results and how these results can fit into the state plan, where to start, what to focus on, strategy, etc. | *Send Jennifer Kimble Customer Satisfaction Survey Results.* | Samantha Fenderson |
| **Priority Topics** | **Side Note**: *Samantha needs approved budget for the SRC-DVR Annual Report.*  **Officers**: Currently SRC-DVR has no officers. Allison Weist agreed to be Chair. However, a quorum could not be established, so she couldn’t be voted in.  Discussed leadership opportunities of other officer positions as well. | *Send Samantha Fenderson Approved SRC-DVR Budget.*  *Send out email to council members for a remote vote on Allison becoming chair.*  *Email Branden Densmore if interested in Vice-Chair or Treasurer Opportunities.* | Branden Densmore  Branden/Samantha  Interested Member |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **Priority Topics** | **By-laws**: The SRC-DVR By-laws were discussed. They should be reviewed annually or semiannually… but these haven’t been updated since 2013.  **Idea**: *Have a separate meeting specifically about the By-laws.*  **Side Note**: *Guest Dylan Sullivan was in attendance and would like to be added to our distribution list. Also interested potentially in becoming a member.*  **Membership**: Update provided about Boards & Commissions. Branden was able to connect with their new executive assistant Vincenzina. He wants Branden to send one email containing ALL new applicants AND renewals.  **Website**: Branden in communication with Roger Fuller (Webmaster) about SRC-DVR website. Roger purposes creating a whole new website using a platform called first magic. Roger has many reasons for the switch: the website would be more attractive, accessible, easier to use, etc. | *Review old and updated SRC-DBVI By-Laws for ideas on what to change in SRC-DVR By-laws. Then bring it to discuss at next meeting.*  *Add Dylan to our contact list and send him information on becoming a member.*  *Review Member Appointment process document sent by Samantha.*  *Look into Reappointment process, determine what exactly members need to do.*  *Send out email to council containing Rogers reasons for switching, accessibility information, examples of websites built with first magic, and cost analysis.* | Branden Densmore  Branden Densmore  Branden Densmore  Branden/Samantha  Branden Densmore |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **CAP[[8]](#footnote-8) Update** | The Client Assistance Program advocate with Disability Rights Maine shared all of the programs that they help people with disabilities work with including: Vocational Rehabilitation, Wabanaki VR, Division of Blind and Visually Impaired, Division of Deaf, Late Deafened, and Hard of Hearing, and Independent Living Services with Alpha One.  The CAP has been sharing information about the Client Assistance Program to people with disabilities in community support programs that seem hesitant to reach out to VR again after a previous negative experience.  After learning about the Client Assistance Program people seem more apt to try to connect with VR again. Outreach has been previously conducted in Cumberland County, Hancock and Washington County, and Aroostook this year.  The CAP also supports individuals with disabilities in accessing work place accommodations or if there's potential workplace discrimination. | *Put CAP Update as a regular Agenda item for each meeting.* | Branden Densmore |
| **Topic** | **Discussion** | **Action** | **Responsible** |
| **CAP Update** | A recent success story was that the CAP advocate helped a person with a disability that was not receiving minimum wage, or a wage comparative to their non-disabled peers - to access equal wages, and receive backpay for the wages they should have received in the first place. | NONE | NONE |
| **Announcements** | Honorariums are offered to members not compensated for attendance.  The Annual Joint Training date of October 21st won’t work because VR directors will be out of State at a conference.  The October training is now TBA. | *Contact Branden to receive an Honorarium.*  *Reach out to the SRC-DBVI Executive Committee to find date for Annual Training, and email SRC-DVR members.* | Any Member Not Compensated  Samantha Fenderson |
| **Public Comments** | Time was provided for public comment, but none were forthcoming. | NONE | NONE |
| **Adjournment** | The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 pm. | NA | NA |

**People & Organizations Represented**

**SRC-DVR Council Members:**

**Isaac Gingras – State Workforce Board**

**Allison Wiest – Maine Parent Federation**

**Jennifer Kimble – Maine Medical Vocational Services**

**Samantha Fenderson – Director Of Division Of Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Members Of The Public:**

**Sophia Phoenix – Disability Advocate**

**Megan Marquis – Disability Rights Maine**

**Jenny Ardito – Goodwill Industries**

**Dylan Sullivan – University Of Maine**

1. SRC-DVR 🡪 State Rehabilitation Council, Division Of Vocational Rehabilitation [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \*Indicates an Ex Officio non-voting member [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. VRC -> Rehabilitation Councilor [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. DIF -> Disability Innovation Fund [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. DBVI -> Division for blind and visually impaired. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. OBH -> Office Of Behavioral Health [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. IPS -> Individual Placement Support [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. CAP -> Client Assistant Program [↑](#footnote-ref-8)