

**Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Annapolis – Legislative Event
February 23, 2016**

Members – Present

Jeff Moran, Chair
Cindy LaBon
Joseph Barrett
Tom Lavery
Marsha Legg
Anil Lewis
Diane Pabich
Sue Page
Barry Shaw
Christy Stuart
Michael Whitehill

Members Unable to Attend

Christopher Conklin
Andrew Cohen
Will Stocker
Jani Willis
Zosia Zaks

DORS Liaisons to Council

Kimberlee Schultz, Public Relations and Quality Assurance
Sue Schaffer, Blindness & Vision Services

Guests

Nick Brooks
Laurie Elinoff
Adele Connolly
Mike Breeden

Support Staff

Sandy Bowser

Introduction and Approval of Minutes

The Chair, Jeff Moran welcomed guests and members to the Council meeting. The minutes from the November 18, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

Discussion of Visits with Legislators and Legislative Issues

There were 27 face-to-face appointments made with legislators today. Laurie Elinoff and DORS staff accompanied members to their meetings and also distributed literature to offices that were not being visited today. The meeting was held in the Miller Senate Building and was sponsored by Senator Jim Brochin.

Jeff Moran

Senator Eckardt was not available but the legislative aide informed Jeff that they have a constituent that is having issues with DORS. Jeff took the information and discussed with Tom Lavery. Delegate Christopher Adams was very interested in the literature that was presented. They discussed the sub-minimum wage bill – Ken Capone Bill that is being proposed in committee now.

Kim Schultz

Kim did not have scheduled appointments but delivered literature to her home district – Carroll County. Kim spoke to several of the legislative aides and explained some of the talking points on the bulletin. Kim feels that speaking with the legislative aides is sometimes better than speaking directly with the legislators.

Joe Barrett/Sue Page

Joe and Sue dropped literature off to Delegate Impallaria and Delegate McDonough. Senator Jennings was in a meeting so information was left with the legislative aide. The meeting with Delegate Szelia's staff went very well.

Delegate Terri Hill has proposed a bill regarding insurance companies picking up some of the costs for vehicle modifications for individuals who use wheelchairs. Sue and Joe met with Delegate Hill regarding this bill, supplied the number of individuals that DORS provided vehicle modifications to and, the cost/range within the last 3 years. They also discussed vehicle modifications for individuals who use wheelchairs. Joe was able to tell his success story regarding his vehicle modifications.

Anil Lewis/Diane Pabich

Anil and Diane met with Delegate Conway – the meeting and was not well received by the Delegate. The meeting with Delegate Robinson went very well and she was very attentive and engaging. The meeting with Senator Pugh also went very well. Senator Pugh has been very supportive of issues in the past and Anil feels that she would be a good advocate for services, if needed.

Barry Shaw/Mike Breeden

Barry and Mike met with Delegate Young, Delegate Sydnor and Senator Nathan-Pulliam. All meetings went very well. Barry expressed that the folks in the front office seem to be the key in getting the Council's message across to the legislators. Barry was able to share his success story with the legislators. Delegate Pat Young was very interested in DORS and wanted to know if there were any programs, activities or meetings that he could attend. Barry invited Delegate Young to attend one of the MSRC meetings or a monthly graduation ceremony at WTC. A few of the front office staff had constituents that had concerns with DORS services. Mike obtained the information, will investigate and follow-up with the constituents and the legislators.

Cindy LaBon/Toni March

Cindy and Toni had great meetings with the District 17 legislators – Delegate Gilchrist, Delegate Platt, Delegate Barve and Senator Kagan. The legislators were very interested in the PETS initiative. Cindy provided three success stories of individuals who participated in DORS and are now successfully employed. Cindy informed the legislators that she has worked with several individuals who are now off of Social Security Benefits and working due to DORS services.

Michael Whitehill

Michael met with Senator Hershey. The legislators in District 36 are very active in the local Chamber of Commerce and Michael sees them on a regular basis. Senator Hershey is interested in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and how PETS and the budget is going to work for this program.

Tom Lavery/Adele Connolly

Tom and Adele met with the legislators in District 4 and all went very well. Senator Hough admitted that he never heard of DORS. He was very interested, perceptive and took time to listen. Delegate Ciliberti was interested in the DORS program, took a lot of notes and wanted to know the budget. The response from the legislators was very positive and all were interested in the PETS program.

Christy Stuart/Marsha Legg/Laurie Elinoff

Christy, Marsha and Laurie met with all four legislators. The conversations went very well and they felt that due to their trio that consisted of the Council, Adult Providers and the Cil that the legislators were able to hear different aspects from the agencies that work with individuals with disabilities. Laurie was very well known to the legislators and praised by Senator Reilly who said that she has a infectious personality but a firm delivery.

Chairperson's Report – Jeff Moran

Nomination/Discussion of Vice-Chair

Discussion was held concerning the vacancy of the MSRC Vice-Chair. Jeff Moran nominated Anil Lewis. The Council members voted and unanimously elected Anil Lewis as the Vic-Chair for the MSRC Council.

Laurie Elinoff

DORS and the MSRC thanked Laurie for her dedication and hard work working with the Council. Laurie very graciously accepted the praise and is very happy and proud to be a DORS alumni. She said there is no place that she would rather be than with the State Rehabilitation Council.

Future MSRC Agency Items

Invite Delegate Pat Young

Employers

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

Directors Report – Sue Page

Sue Schaffer Retirement

Sue Schaffer, Director, Office of Blindness & Vision Services will retire effective April 1st. Sue has worked for the Agency for 38 years. Thank you to Sue for her service, dedication, and hard work to DORS. There is a Retirement Celebration planned for March 17th at WTC.

State Legislative Budget and Federal Legislative Update

MSDE Budget hearing was held in January. MSDE has submitted the budget; DORS budget is slightly higher than last year. The budget is not final until the General Assembly finalizes discussions. The 2016 budget does list a reduction in state workforce – included in this is abolishment of vacant positions. There is no mention of a Volunteer Separation Program.

Statewide Needs Assessment 2016

VR agencies and SRCs are jointly required to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment every three years. The CSNA is the basis for the state plan goals, objectives, and strategies. The CSNA has the following required information goals:

The VR service needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment; individuals with disabilities who are minorities; individuals with disabilities who are unserved or underserved; and individuals with disabilities served through the statewide workforce investment system.

The SRC will be involved as a partner with VR in the following stages in the CSNA process:

- Planning the assessment goals
- Collecting data and providing community links
- Review findings
- Developing recommendations
- Informing the state plan goals

The last CSNA was conducted in 2013 and was a team effort. A team for the 2016 CSNA will be put together within the next few weeks to begin planning and organizing. The 2016 Public Meetings will be a part of the CSNA.

MD WIOA State Plan

WIOA requires the state to submit to Department of Labor and Education a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. The Governor has decided to combine its workforce efforts across multiple agencies into one Combined State Plan. This allows the State to bring in more than the CORE Partners. The CORE Partners consist of: Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs, Adult Education & Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, and DORS. Because Maryland has opted to do a Combined State Plan it brings in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, The Vets, Second Chance Former Offenders and the Trade Act to work together to increase employment opportunities.

The Draft Plan was submitted for public comment in January. The Steering Committee met, reviewed all comments, made revisions and will submit to the Governor on March 22nd. The final Plan is due April 1st.

Vacancies

DORS continues to experience a significant amount of vacancies. Below is a listing of vacancies as of February 3rd.

OFS – 15 – 9 Counselor

WTC – 7

OBVS – 9 – all Counselor

PETS Update

There have been 6 additional Counselor (contractual) positions allocated for the PETS Program. Each region will receive one counselor with the exception of Region VI which will receive two due to the large population. These Counselors will work exclusively with Transition Students that are still in high school. Interviews for hiring will take place the end of February, beginning of March with the anticipation of the counselors starting sometime in April.

Delayed List

The DORS Delayed List is currently at 24 months and the current Pending Caseloads are a little over 19,000.

Overview of DORS

Sue Page presented to the Maryland State School Board – Sue was invited to the State School Board to give a presentation on DORS services. This was a good opportunity to inform the Board members on the type of services that DORS provides, particularly to students with disabilities. A great deal of time was spent discussing Transition services.

Committee Report

Policy and Planning Committee – Tom Lavery – one policy change is the PETS implementation. Six new staff will be hired, assigned caseloads and work with the school systems to provide accurate information.

Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee – Kim Schultz

Membership Committee – Anil Lewis

Blindness and Vision Services Committee – Anil Lewis

Employment/Career Development Committee – Michael Whitehill – Michael is working on scheduling meetings. He would like the first meeting to consist of a DORS briefing; and the anticipated second meeting to be held with Jackie Gaston and Jani Willis to discuss the US Business Leadership Network to see where the private sector is moving.

Since it has been quite some time since the Committees met on a regular basis, Sue and Sandy will work on updating the assignments through email with the MSRC members.

The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 4, 2016, Workforce & Technology Center, Baltimore.

Respectfully submitted

Sandy Bowser
MSRC Staff Support