

**NYSCB State Rehabilitation Council Minutes**  
**Hilton Garden Inn, Troy, New York**  
**September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**SRC Attendees-** Cliff Perez, Chris Kchao, Meghan Parker, Don McManus, Maria Mucaria, Debbie Fiderer, Theresa Drum, Sandra Cote, Darla Miller, Alan Gallagher, & Miriam Cajuste, Carena Collura (VIA PHONE) & Erica Molina (on phone)

**NYCB attendees-** Commissioner Daniels, Lauren Corp, Julie Hovey, Julie Venneman, Tracy Breslin, & Colleen Ruck

**Introduction of SRC members, NYSCB liaisons & approval of June 2019 minutes, Meghan Parker, Chair-**Cliff Perez motioned to accept minutes and Maria Mucaria seconded. The SRC voted and all were in favor. Chair Parker reminded the group it was election day.

**NYSCB updates, Commissioner Daniels, Associate Commissioner, NYSCB-**Commissioner Daniels announced the annual town hall meetings: NFB's convention on 10/18/2019 from 9:00-11:00 am; ACB's convention on 10/25/19 from 10:00-12:00 pm. Commissioner Daniels encouraged the SRC to attend and NYSCB can assist in transportation support, if needed.

Commissioner Daniels reported that Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) was on-site during the Winter/Spring of 2018. Since the last SRC meeting in June, NYSCB was still waiting on their draft monitoring report. Over the summer, the draft report was received. RSA reflected a healthy system in NYS. The only other item was that NYSCB needs to improve their cost allocation system. This will not have a negative impact on our services regarding vision rehabilitation. NYSCB is waiting on the final report that includes numbers from 2017 thru 2018.

There has been a significant focus on the area of Elmira and the Southern Tier. Commissioner Daniels has worked with Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment (AVRE) and there are resources being found in Elmira, however with a series of limitations. Debbie Fiderer asked Commissioner Daniels if he had any idea of the size of the blind community in Elmira? He is working with government officials to get accurate data and feels that the urban areas appear to have more people who are legally blind. Maria Mucaria stated that since this area is where she resides, she is aware of the lack of public transportation and limitations on employment. She expressed how grateful she is that there is a lot of focus on this area. Theresa Drum offered to speak with the parent center in that community and obtain some feedback. Commissioner Daniels stated that the Elmira school district was working with service providers.

Commissioner Daniels recognized Chair Parker and the award she has recently received from National Council on Independent Living (NCIL). She was awarded with the advocacy award. It was also announced that Cliff Perez was named Vice President of NCIL.

Commissioner Daniels also reported Margo Downey took the TASC in Braille and he read her review to the SRC. Chair Parker suggested to Maria Mucaria to try and take the TASC in large print. Chair Parker would like to get feedback from Ms. Downey and the SRC before submitting the final report.

**Carrie Laney: New York State Preferred Source Program for People who are Blind (NYSPSP)-**Commissioner Ms. Laney presented to the SRC a PowerPoint (that was also handed out/emailed) to the SRC about NYSPSP and what has been going on over the past year.

**Election of Officers, Nominating Committee-** Maria Mucaria nominated Cliff Perez for Vice Chair and Meghan for Chair. Debbie Fiderer also nominated Cliff Perez for Vice Chair. Maria Mucaria asked the SRC three times for any other nominees. No other nominees were announced. Chair Parker moved to have Cliff Perez accept the Vice Chair position and Chris Kchao second the motion. All were in favor. Cliff Perez accepted being nominated for Vice Chair. Maria Mucaria asked the SRC three times for any other nominees for Chair. No one else was nominated. Theresa Drum motioned to have Meghan accept Chair and Cliff Perez seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Maria Mucaria, of the Nominating committee reported the slate for elections-Cliff Perez was Vice Chair and he accepted the nomination. Meghan Parker was nominated for Chair and she accepted the nomination. Since there were no other members selected to run, Maria Mucaria made a motion that Meghan Parker continue as Chair and Theresa Drum second the motion. The SRC voted and Meghan Parker will continue as Chair of the SRC. Chair Parker made a motion for Cliff Perez to be Vice Chair and Chris Kchao seconded. The SRC voted and Cliff Perez will be Vice Chair.

**Combined Plan Discussion, Julie Venneman-** Commissioner Daniels introduced Julie Venneman and announced her promotion to Associate Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Ms. Venneman discussed the current work NYSCB has been doing to update and revise the required vocational rehabilitation sections of the Combined State Plan. The SRC is required to comment on the state plan at each submission point. Comments provided by the SRC on will appear on the DRAFT NYSCB VR portion of the plan create description: Input of the State Rehabilitation Council. Once comments are provided to NYSCB, they are required to respond to each comment made as part of this description of the State Plan. Any rejections of the input or recommendations will be explained to the council. Comments are below:

SRC Comments to NYSCB's VR Portion of the NYS Combined State Plan, 9/19/19:

SRC Comment 1: In the SE goals section, description f, the hourly salary is listed as \$8.95/hour, this should be updated to reflect at least the goal of minimum hourly wage.

SRC Comment 2: Description c mentions that NYSCB remain a member of the Interagency Council for Services to Persons who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing. The SRC noted that this council is no longer active, and this should be researched and updated in the plan.

SRC Comment 3: The SRC noted that the dates indicated for new placement contracts and vocational evaluation contracts is a date in the future from the time of the comments, 2020.

SRC Comment 4: The SRC notes that at times, the responses and information seem to be repetitive.

SRC Comment 5: The SRC inquired why in description m: Order of Selection, we have the same response, that NYSCB is not implementing an Order of Selection.

SRC Comment 6: The SRC noted the track changes carry over in description l, regarding the number of staffs employed by NYSCB.

SRC Comment 7: The SRC noted the staff of NYSCB tend to be on the older side, as listed in description i.

SRC Comment 8: In description c, under the section on the NYS Promise Initiative, NYSCB indicates that we are on the steering committee and the language as written indicates that the initiative ended in July 2019. The SRC would like this to be updated with definitive information on the end of this initiative as well as any updates on the data results.

SRC Comment 9: In description p, there was a typo regarding the spelling of LaGuardia Community College.

SRC Comment 10: In description f, the SRC would like to have added language, including the Supported Employment in-person office by office training and follow up webinars to the last section of the paragraph containing the four SE goals for 2020.

### **Committee Reports-**

Transition: Chris Kchao reported they are discussing success stories, looking at data counselors reported about the lack of programs outside of NYC. Also New York State Education Department (NYSED) transition classifications need to be updated. Schools are still not aware of services and benefits. Last item was to encourage NYSED to complete the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Policy, Planning & Assistive Technology: Cliff Perez and Chair Parker reported that the process of the NLS cartridges has started and there will be professional readers hired to record these cartridges. Also, White Cane Day is October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Workforce Development: Debbie Fiderer reported that their goals are still in progress. They are setting vocational goals and training programs that need to be available and accessible.

### **Home Office Updates, Lauren Corp, AVRC, Julie Hovey, AVRC & Julie Venneman, AVRC, & Laura Murphy-**

Lauren Corp started her update commending the many children's programs that have taken place over the summer and the great attendance. This is the first year of the five-year socialization contract. There has also been great success in the Work Experience Training programs attended by youth.

Julie Venneman first reported on the State Plan and as discussed earlier, moving through the requirements and that NYSCB will need to initial our Internal review process by the end of October. The 30-day public comment period for the entire plan will occur by 1/16/20 and the Board of regents will review in January/February. This allows for the Governor's office to review and have it submitted to RSA by 4/1/20. The VR manual continues to move through the internal clearance process. Some back and forth continues with OCFS's Public Information Office to finalize and distribute, as well as have it up on our webpage. WIOA Annual Report, NYSCB has worked with ACCES-VR to submit this joint report. Common performance measures within WIOA are now out of baseline measures and NYSCB will need to begin negotiating rates for the common performance measures. The rates will then have to be updated in each state plan submission.

Ms. Venneman also reported out for Peter Herrig in his absence. Mr. Herrig has conducted training on Supported Employment in all seven district offices, this included NYSCB staff and at some sites invited partner providers. He will be following up with all the staff and providing two webinars to review forms, practices and reinforce what staff was trained on. Also, offices have begun providing data on Business Engagement efforts, putting us in compliance with one of the WIOA Common Performance Measures. This is the only WIOA measure that is jointly reported and not broken out by each agency.

Julie Hovey informed the SRC that for QA, HKNC was reviewed. There were no issues regarding services. NYSCB plans on reviewing VISIONA in November at their Rockland county site. Ms. Hovey visited two new contract agencies, Alphapointe and Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired of Northern New York (ABVINNY). She also reported that she was invited by New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to attend their Disabilities Awareness Day in October. There

will also be a White Cane Awareness Day at NYSCB home office in October. Chair Parker will be attending and presenting. The BEP Annual meeting is on 9/21/19. Debbie Fiderer asked for an update on BEP training. It was noted that Hadley is no longer doing the training. There are currently 63 blind managers actively licensed and working. There are only 3 sighted temporary managers. In a few weeks there will only be 2. Debbie Fiderer also asked for an update on the site's run by BEP on highways. Currently, there is an MOU being developed. There will probably be less stores, but all vending machines still owned and run by NYSCB. This includes coin operated washer/dryer, basically any machine that you can insert coins or bills into is considered a vending machine. NYSCB is currently unaware of any other bidders. There has been continuous recruitment for blind managers and a lot of younger people have little or no knowledge of BEP.

Laura Murphy updated the SRC on advertising for NYSCB. She stated that there are currently radio advertisements running in NYC and Buffalo. Also, an interview with Peter Herrig will air on the radio in Oneida county. Ms. Murphy is also working on placing ads in the free advertising section with newspapers. The NLS cartridge project is also complete. White Cane Awareness day will be on October 16, 2019 in Home Office in Rensselaer, NY. There are many attendees/speakers set; Commissioner Poole, Commissioner Daniels, Meghan Parker, NYS Police, BEP Manager, NFB & AFB representatives, and staff from NABA.

**Public Comment** – Aaron Baier expressed his concern for the lengthy process to be appointed a member of the SRC. Since the SRC needs more members, he offered to push to change the process to make it more efficient.

**Action Items for 2019 Annual Report, Meghan Parker, Chair-** Chair Parker informed the SRC that the federal report needs to be sent to RSA. Meghan Parker will send committee chairs their goals for the coming year and within the next month, she plans to meet with committees and go over these goals and see if there are others. General goals for the SRC will also need to be reported. One goal Meghan would like to propose is having the SRC more involved in the next consumer satisfaction survey. NYSCB conducts these surveys every three years.

### **Agency updates from Members-SRC**

Debbie Fiderer reported that HKSB has a new CEO, Kim Zimmer that started in July. She has a great background in blindness. The computer center at Baruch College has closed. Helen Keller however won the bid to have a computer center up and running through CCVIP. Classes are starting this Fall.

Don McManus reported that ACCESS-VR awarded a scholarship in vocational rehabilitation to a legally blind student. ACCES-VR has hired two blind interns and one new staff member who is blind.

Cliff Perez reported that the Capital District ACB chapter is sponsoring a "Dinner in the Dark" fundraiser on October 19<sup>th</sup> at the Elks Club in Albany. It will be an experience of eating in the dark and discovering the challenges and tricks. The fundraiser is to raise money to award a young person with a scholarship to become a better leader for the future. Tickets are \$50 and there will be prizes, raffles and baskets.

Theresa Drum reported that the NYS transition partners will continue for another year. Also, she is working on determining how to inform families of services and benefits.

Chair Parker announced that the ACB statewide convention is coming up in October.

**Action Items, & Deliberation and Discussion, Wrap-up & Agenda planning for November meeting & Adjourn –SRC**

Topics proposed: Louise Werner back for a session on BEP training, Supported Employment. Maria Mucaria announced this was her last meeting because she is unable to attend in November and could only attend moving forward if another person is not approved yet. Motion to adjourn made by Theresa Drum and a second from Maria Mucaria. The SRC voted and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by;

NYSCB Staff