**Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Council**

**August 14, 2019**

**Meeting Minutes**

Council Members in Attendance: Carolyn Peters, Th.D., Chair, John Moore, Jane Gerhardt, Jeremy Morris, Margie Hegg, Michael Kirkman, Matthew Sauer, Ph.D., Carlo LoParo, jw Smith, Ph.D., Vice-Chair, Karis Spence, Kevin Miller

OOD Staff: Assistant Director Erik Williamson, Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired Program Manager Sarah Kelly, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Deputy Director Susan Pugh, Employer and Innovation Services Deputy Director Kristen Ballinger; Chief Legal Counsel Matt Lampke, Chief of the Office of Communications Kim Jump, Legislative Liaison Alex Moorman, Business Relations Specialist Dennis Young, OOD Council Liaison Shirley Marchi, Eric Muller, OOD Division of Information Technology, Marlena Smith, OOD Interpreter

Guests: West Virginia Executive Director of the State Rehabilitation Council Sherry Taylor, Lisa Haywood, Assistant Attorney General, Allison McKay, Disability Rights Ohio Attorney, Eric Rathburn, Assistive Technology of Ohio Public Policy Director, Carolyn Knight, Executive Director, Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, Mark Seifarth, Former Chair of the Developmental Disabilities Council, Pete Moore, President and CEO, Ohio Provider Resources Association, Laura Rex, FTX, Jordy Stringer, Exec SE Independent Living, Michael Leiterman, National Federation of the Blind, Emily Turner, Ohio Association Food Industry, Monica Drora, Ohio Department of Education, Jane Allinder, interpreter, Christine Woodruff, Captioner/CART

**Welcome and Introductions**

OOD Council Chair Dr. Carolyn Peters welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves.

**Approval of Minutes**

Vice-chair jw Smith moved to approve the April 10, 2019 minutes, seconded by Council member John Moore. Motion carried.

**Employer and Innovation Services Update**

Kristen Ballinger, Deputy Director of the Division of Employer and Innovation Services, provided a copy of the business relations report. She also shared a five-minute presentation of the Disability Etiquette and Awareness training video prior to its release to State of Ohio employees. Governor DeWine signed an executive order establishing Ohio as a disability inclusion state and model employer of individuals with disabilities. A requirement is that all State of Ohio employees participate in regular disability etiquette and awareness training. OOD and the Ohio Department of Administrative Services developed an e-learning curriculum for all State of Ohio employees. Individuals with disabilities provided all testimonies and narratives in the video. The training covers five main different disability types - physical, visual, hearing, mental health, and intellectual developmental disabilities. Two OOD Council members are in the video – vice chair jw

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Smith and John Moore. Also, state employees and individuals from community rehabilitation programs were interviewed.

After reviewing the video, Council member Matt Sauer asked about the message regarding a mental health disability because it is the only time the video had a still photo. Ms. Ballinger stated, a still photo was used in the video to break up the scenarios. A different image was included to break up the scenarios. The message is that anybody can have an invisible disability. Council member jw Smith stated, it would be nice to find a second person so she does not come across as speaking for all individuals who have a mental health disability. Council member John Moore stated a person with multiple disabilities is missing from the video.

In addition, Ms. Ballinger reported October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the dates, locations and schedule of OOD’s Statewide Job Fairs are included in the update provided in Council members’ packets.

Lastly, Ms. Ballinger stated Dennis Young has joined the Employer and Innovation Services team as a business relations specialist. He will lead the vocational apprentice program where OOD will be exemplifying the governor’s executive order to assist individuals who are receiving OOD services to gain access and exposure to state government. OOD will support individuals to participate in the apprenticeships and will fund the wages.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program Update**

*Combined State Plan*

Deputy Director Susan Pugh stated she and BSVI Deputy Director Greg Dormer attended a meeting with the Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation. They are coordinating the development of the Combined State Workforce Plan. There is a section in the Plan that includes the OOD Council’s input into the strategies that OOD is employing to serve individuals with disabilities.

The Plan is due April 1, 2020 to the federal government. The Plan is sent to the US Department of Labor and the US Department of Education because some of the programs involved are under Labor and others are under Education. The VR Plan is under Education.

The first draft of the Plan has to be sent to the Office of Workforce Transformation by November 15, 2019. Then a public comment period for the whole plan will be held in January 2020. Based on public feedback, there are adjustments to the Plan and then the Plan is finalized and approved by the Governor’s Executive Workforce Board. After approved, the Plan is submitted to the federal government.

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The Plan needs the OOD Council’s input. There is a high focus on students in higher education, engagement with drug court, pre-employment transition services, and participant focus group feedback.

In addition, VR area managers are working on a plan for 2020 for the participant focus groups. Quarterly, each area manager conducts a focus group of people receiving services and other interested parties to ask questions about services. Two of the focus groups focused on transition and rehabilitation technology. The area managers look at different areas to focus on for their quarterly meetings.

Dr. Peters stated it is important that our constituency know who we are and they won’t know that if Council members don’t show up at these focus groups that are held in our area.

Vice-chair Smith asked about how the customer satisfaction surveys are sent. Ms. Pugh stated customer satisfaction surveys are sent to everyone at case closure. It’s on their closure statement in writing on the hard copy with a link to how they can go to the survey, and for anyone who has emails in our system, they get the survey e-mailed to them.

There seems to be a lot of confusion about who is an OOD counselor versus who is the provider. Should VR implement a survey related to provider services or individual services. People do not know where services are coming from.

OOD has provider scorecards that explain demographics of provider services, outcomes, data, percentage of people that get a job when they are referred for placement, wages earned, and types of jobs obtained. Surveys are provided to individuals at all closures, not just successful closures.

*Services for the Visually Impaired*

Assistant Deputy Director Sarah Kelly reported BSVI is working on outreach on how to build up partnerships and outreach efforts towards the blind and visually impaired community. She has met with 11 out of the 12 Centers for Independent Living to start building the capacity for those partners to help OOD in outreach efforts.

In addition, a counselor was assigned to the Ohio State School for the Blind. OOD is working on getting a counselor assigned to the Ohio School for the Deaf.

BSVI implemented a newsletter to share information about BSVI and to get feedback from the community.

Ms. Kelly and BSVI Deputy Director Greg Dormer visited Minnesota to see best practices they had in place.

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Ms. Kelly stated BSVI applications have continued to increase – up five and a half percent as of the end of July. Outreach efforts are making a difference.

Vice-chair Smith stated, I really want to thank Director Miller for funding and supporting your tip to Minnesota.

**Chair’s Comments**

Dr. Peters stated it is imperative that the Council continue to read when we are not in meetings and take in as much as we possibly can. We have been provided with a lot of information. A recommendation is that for this upcoming year that we extend our business meeting so that we can take more time to build this relationship and develop plans and committees to do the work that we have been asked to do.

All Council members are to have Ethics training completed by December and to send a copy of their completed certificate to Shirley Marchi. Also, at our next meeting the Council will need to set 2020 meeting dates.

In addition, Dr. Peters suggested moving the public comment to the beginning of the meeting so if the public wants to make a comment they can leave and don’t necessarily have to stay for the full meeting.

Council member Gerhardt agreed that two hours is not enough to get work done, but four or five hours is a big ask for people. She also stated there should be a lot of commitment on the part of the Council members when they are in their community to attend the job fairs and to do their best to attend the focus groups.

Michael Kirkman stated Council and committee meetings are subject to Ohio Sunshine laws and have to be in person rather than by phone. He agreed with extending the meetings.

Regarding the meetings, Assistant Attorney General Lisa Haywood stated all meetings and subcommittee meetings need to be open and must have a quorum.

Mr. Kirkman stated the Council must develop deliverables and have a written work product, that is then reviewed by the Council and voted on in a public session. This is best done by a smaller workgroup or committee that can work with staff, do drafts, circulate the drafts then to the full Council. Then the full Council can deliberate; vote on it in an open meeting of the Council. The Council has two deliverables due. One is the narrative and recommendations for the State Plan - November; the other is the annual report - December.

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Dr. Smith stated, we are here to listen to OOD and support them, but they need us to really be the entity that we all need to be right now.

OOD Director Miller stated there are job fairs, consumer focus groups and it would be great if the Council members could attend these events and meet directly with the consumers, parents, providers and the OOD staff.

Council members discussed the options of extending the meeting. OOD Chief Legal Counsel Matt Lampke stated the agenda has to have a start time but the Council can determine internally when to end the meeting. An end time is not necessary on the agenda.

Council member Dr. Sauer moved to extend the Council meetings to three hours beginning with the November meeting. The time of the meetings would be 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Discussion: Council member John Moore stated, an agenda needs to be established that clearly has the bulk of the time for working on projects and committee work because the Council will end up talking through that time and then the time will end. For example, from 10:00 to 11:30 or 11:45, there can be public comment and then have an hour or an hour and a half to work on projects together. The last hour or hour and a half to work on projects together and get those accomplished.

Council member Jane Gerhardt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

After discussion, Council members agreed to meet from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Council members agreed to place public comment at the beginning of the meeting due to transportation issues or COTA times. This would allow the public to get to transportation on time.

**National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC)**

Sherry Taylor, Vice President and Treasurer of NCSRC and staff of the West Virginia (WV) State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), stated she is not a state employee, rather an employee of the SRC. Ms. Taylor serves on the executive committee of the WV VR agency.

The NCSRC started in 2005. As volunteers of the NCSRC, more information was needed about how to write comments for the annual report and the State Plan. The meetings began with a half-day session, evolved to a whole day, then two days. The NCSRC holds two conferences per year – one in the Spring; and the other in the Fall. During the Conferences, best practices are discussed, speakers are invited to discuss

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policies, how to write bylaws, annual reports, consumer satisfaction surveys, etc. Ms.

Taylor stressed the importance to build attendance in the OOD budget for Council members to attend the NCSRC Spring and Fall Conferences.

The NCSRC created a guidebook for SRCs. It is located on NCSRC website. The NCSRC will be launching an Institute for Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) guidebook for state rehabilitation councils. Training modules are being worked on and those will be uploaded to the NCSRC website soon.

Ms. Taylor provided information about surveys, printing costs, and a formal written assessment of the survey.

Ms. Taylor discussed the agenda for the NCSRC Fall conference held in October in Jacksonville, Florida. Agenda items include a training presentation on VR 101, launching the IRI guidebook, a panel of VR directors and four SRC chairs to discuss how to build a good rapport with the VR agency. She also stated national SRC calls are held four times per year and encouraged OOD Council members to participate.

Ms. Taylor stated the SRCs are mandated to do the consumer satisfaction surveys. The OOD Council Annual Report is due to the Rehabilitation Services Administration on December 31st of every year.

Mr. Kirkman asked what Ms. Taylor would recommend the Council work on next. Ms. Taylor responded, setting a good agenda with the time slot is important. Committees should focus on annual report and state plan recommendations.

Council members agreed to create two subcommittees. One subcommittee for the OOD Annual Report, the other for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) VR Combined State Plan Recommendations.

Council member John Moore moved to create the Annual Report Subcommittee,

Discussion: Council members John Moore, Matt Sauer and jw Smith, with Carolyn Peters (ex-officio member) to be on the Annual Report subcommittee

seconded by Vice-chair Smith. Motion carried.

Council member Sauer moved to create the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act VR Combined State Plan Recommendations subcommittee.

Discussion: Council members Jeremy Morris, Jane Gerhardt, and Carlo LoParo, with Carolyn Peters (ex-officio member) on the WIOA VR Combined State Plan Recommendations subcommittee.

seconded by vice-chair Smith.

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Council members agreed on the date and time of each subcommittee as follows: The Annual Report: September 24 at 10:00 a.m. The VR Combined State Plan Narrative and Recommendations: September 23 at 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Council member Morris requested the key areas of the VR Combined State Plan be sent to the committee members prior to the meeting. Ms. Pugh agreed to send the information.

**Public Comment**

Mark Seifarth stated he was thrilled to see the internship availabilities in the last budget. He stated people with disabilities need to see public policy as a possible employment outcome and he would like to see a couple of interns at the Statehouse so public policy makers can see people with disabilities every day making an impact.

**Adjourn**

Council member Jane Gerhardt moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by jw Smith. Motion carried.