

MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
HELD
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2012
AT
SAVANNAH RIVERFRONT MARRIOTT
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sandy Adams
Jimmy DeFoor
Marsha Farrow
Robert Green
Louise Hill
Greg Kirk
Fay Loggins
Amy O'Dell
Don Parks

Mr. Jimmy DeFoor, Chairman, called the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services (GVRS) Board meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. All Board members were present; therefore, a quorum was established and all decisions official.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded that the minutes of the August 8, 2012 meeting be approved. There being no questions or discussion, the motion passed unanimously by the Board.

BUSINESS

Greg Schmiege, Executive Director of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) stated that as a new agency, there is a growing process. Work is being done to have minutes as well as Board meeting dates and locations available electronically.

Mr. Schmiege recognized Linda Shepard, Chairperson of the State Rehabilitation Counsel and Fran Todd, Executive Director of LIFE, Inc.

Mr. Schmiege reported that the agency is 65 days old. The new logo for GVRA will be unveiled later in the day. There are little glitches here and there but that should be expected as we grow.

Budget wise, the agency really doesn't know how much was spent last year administratively. Governor Deal has asked for a 3% budget reduction for FY2013, which would be a recommendation for a \$605,000 cut.

1st Item

There were 36 administrative positions transferred from GDOL to GVRA on July 1st. Since that time, DHS supervisors and GVRA supervisors have been assessing the workload need for all of these positions, and it has been determined that there is not a need for all of these positions. Based on that, Mr. Schmiege is recommending a reduction in force of 16-18 positions effective as of September 7, 2012. The individuals impacted would be continued on payroll until October 31, 2012 giving them time to find other employment. In addition, the cost savings gained from the proposed RIF would serve as GVRA's 3% budget reduction for FY 2013.

2nd Item

In 1998, the Georgia Division of Rehabilitation Services implemented a CSPD program for Counselors to upgrade their credentials. In doing so they would be given a 10% increase in salary. There were 16 individuals who passed the CRC who did not get the 10% increase. Kinji Davis estimates that providing these salary increases will cost \$132,733.96 for this year. Mr. Schmiege asked the Board to approve this increase. A Board member asked if you are asking the Board for permission to decrease personnel then how could you ask the Board to approve a 10% increase when the budget is not yet known? Mr. Schmiege stated that Item 1 and Item 2 are two separate issues. The CRC salaries come from the 110 program which is a Federal match formula, meaning that the state only has to fund 20% to obtain 80% funding from the federal government. The GDOL employee positions come from 100% state funds. Mr. Jimmy DeFoor stated this issue should have been addressed 10 years ago. Georgia Rehabilitation Services made a commitment and a number of Counselors and Supervisors were never compensated for their achievements. There were constraints by the parent organization (GDOL) by their lack of understanding of the issue or the fact that there were no comparable jobs

within that organization. Mr. Schmieg stated we need to show, as a Board, that we are supportive, and it is the right thing to do for those 16 individuals. Due to his previous involvement, Mr. DeFoor recused himself from voting or chairing this discussion and asked Louise Hill, Vice Chair, to assume the role of Chair for the discussion of this topic with the Board. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to support the 10% increase.

3rd Item

Mr. Schmieg stated that GVRA has no financial officer. The Office of Planning and Budget posted a position for a budget director. Five candidates applied for the position. There has been one person identified as a top candidate for this position. The salary is \$100,000 annually. This is a fair salary considering this position covers all five programs within GVRA. Mr. Schmieg asked the Board to approve the hiring of this position as soon as possible. Mr. Jimmy DeFoor stated that Mr. Schmieg has been working with a skeleton staff and that a budget director is a must. This would be the first step in understanding the budget. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to support the hiring of a budget director.

Miscellaneous

- Looking at GTA (Georgia Technology Authority) to build a new website
- Relocating personnel housed within GDOL locations by the end of the year
- Moving toward severing all ties with GDOL; co-located staff space is very expensive
- Planned statewide visits by Greg Schmieg, Twyla Crump, and Ava Searce to each Region to meet with public, private, and advocates in order to gain information to better serve Georgians with disabilities
- Jimmy DeFoor recognized Tom Wilson as a person who has been instrumental in getting the ball rolling toward Rehabilitation Services becoming a stand-alone agency
- Topics to discuss at the next Board meeting are budget, programs, involvement and input on how to improve services

Greg Schmieg then introduced Butch McMillan, State VR Director for Mississippi, as guest speaker. Mr. McMillan shared experiences and insight into being a Disability Services (DS) Unit as well as a DS Agency. He spoke about cash flow and matching funds. He stressed the importance of having a good relationship with legislators and having a Congressional liaison. A member of his team shared information regarding structure of the unit and stressed the importance of front line staff being the right people with the right personality. The success of their program is communication, communication, communication.

Board member Louise Hill passed out a draft for the Board to look over regarding methods of input. This subject will be discussed at the October meeting.

The Board are all members of NRA/GRA; an example of their commitment to the program.

Jimmy DeFoor thanked GRA members for their hospitality. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

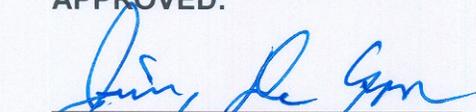
THE NEXT MEETING

The next Board meeting will be on Wednesday, October 10, 2012 in Atlanta. Eventually there will be a yearly schedule of meetings available with rotating locations.



Marsha Farrow, Secretary

APPROVED:



Jimmy DeFoor, Chairman