

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE  
GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES BOARD  
January 8, 2025  
10:00 AM – 3:01 PM  
Tomy Nobis Center  
240 Interstate N. Parkway, Atlanta, Georgia 30339**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Tom Wilson, Chair  
Faye Perdue, Vice Chair  
Sandy Adams, Secretary  
Craig Camuso  
Chris Wells, GVRA Executive Director  
& Ex Officio Member

Louise Hill (virtually)  
Vincent Martin (virtually)  
Jane McCall (virtually)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Suzanne Dooley  
James Defoor

Johnathan Taylor

**Invocation**

Mrs. Faye Perdue, Vice Chair of the GVRS Board, offered the invocation for the January Board meeting.

**Opening and Welcome**

GVRS Board Chair Tom Wilson welcomed everyone in attendance, and the meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda**

Chairman Wilson performed a roll call and recommended the approval of the amended agenda.

On motion of Vice Chair Perdue, seconded by Mr. Camuso, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Agenda as amended.

Chairman Wilson recommended the approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the following:

- Approve Board Meeting Minutes from Previous Session
- Approve Budget Report

On motion of Secretary Adams, seconded by Vice Chair Perdue, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Consent Agenda as presented.

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**GVRA Staff Updates/Reports:**

**Executive Director Report – Executive Director Chris Wells**

Budget Reports

Executive Director Wells reviewed the FY2025 Budget and further shared performance measures for each area within the Agency.

Agency Spotlights

- Executive Director Wells highlighted those chosen as Employees of the Month for September 2024 through November 2024:
  - Sandra Butler, Fiscal Services Billing Supervisor, September 2024 Employee of the Month
  - Patricia Burns, Procurement Specialist at Roosevelt Warm Springs, October 2024 Employee of the Month
  - Dana Skelton, VR Supervisor at the Cleveland Office, November 2024 Employee of the Month
- Executive Director Wells shared examples of Staff Recognition and Celebrations with the Board.

Legislative Updates

- Executive Director Wells provided a legislative update to the Board, including bills becoming effective January 1, 2025 and specific bills we are watching during the 2025 Legislative Session.

Disability Adjudication Services (DAS)

- Executive Director Wells presented information on the two programs that DAS processes claims for, SSDI and SSI.
- Although DAS employees are state employees, the program is 100% federal funded and processes federal workers for the Social Security Administration (SSA). SSA establishes policies and procedures, establishes each state's program budget to include hires and personnel totals, and manages all IT infrastructure.
- Since 2020, DAS adjudicators have declined from 180 to 147, although the percent of cases processed accurately rose from 92% to 96%.

Vocational Rehabilitation Updates

Investment in Staff and Performance

- Saw the number of counselors rise drastically – from 88 in FY2021 to 170 in FY2025
- Expanded opportunities through degree requirements

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- Increased pay by 65%
- CRC Test and Certificate Reimbursements
- Saw the Number of Days from Referral to IPE Reduced from 166 to 51 in FY2025

### **The Bud McCall Post-Secondary Grant**

- Effective January 2024, the Amount of Grants Awarded Rose from \$1.867M to \$2.398M.
- The Number of Post-Secondary Students Served Rose from 313 in FY2024 to 524 in FY2025.

### **Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS) / Cave Spring Center (CSC)**

- The Number of Credentials Earned Rose from 35 in August 2023 to 311 in August 2024.
- The Graduation Rate Rose from 94% in August 2023 to 100% in August 2024.
- The Enrollment Rose from 16 in August 2023 to 96 in August 2024.

### **Pathways to Partnerships (P2P)**

Mrs. Shannah Mabry, Project Manager, Mr. Vincent Bass, Project Coordinator, and Ms. Julie Moilanen, Chief Officer of Polk County Schools and P2P Partner, shared information about the Pathways to Partnership (P2P) program and their mission to improve training and preparation of children and youth with disabilities in Georgia to eventually obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment in conjunction and coordination with other state, local, and private entities.

P2P has seen a growth of enrollment and receiving additional supports and services

- 1600% in Disability Connections
- 467% in Northwest Georgia CIL
- 900% in Walton Options

### **Tommy Nobis Center (TNC)**

Dave Ward, President and CEO of the Tommy Nobis Center, provided a tour of their center and shared the services offered through their School-Based Pre-ETS programs in Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Gordon, Gwinnett, Forsyth, Fulton/APS, and Paulding counties.

Mr. Ward shared information about their Summer and School Break GROW programs and their path for students in The Academy at TNC, which includes three months of classroom-based education, three months of job discovery and development, and six months of employment support.

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**Upcoming Events**

Brandeis Thompson, Community Engagement Manager, provided an update on the GVRA Day at the Fair and shared the following upcoming events:

- SenseAbility Week 2025 – CILs Showcase
- Transition Fair
- Career Fair
- GVRA Day at the Fair
- Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) Conference Host

**Old Business/New Business**

Chairman Wilson reminded the Board about upcoming Board meeting dates for 2025 and stated he will provide additional information as available:

- March 12, 2025 – Athens Technical College – Elberton County Campus, Elberton, Georgia
- May 14, 2025 – TBD
- August 13, 2025 – Roosevelt Warm Springs, Warm Springs, Georgia
- October 8, 2025 – Georgia National Fair, Perry, Georgia

**Public Comment & Adjournment**

Chairman Wilson opened the floor for public comment. Juliet Hardeman, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Chairman, shared the following:

- How to Strengthen Parent Voices
- Always seeking new SRC members
- Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Looking to Place Students Based on Their Interest/Preference/Availability
- SB10 and SB233
- Georgia Youth Challenge for Students on Military Bases
- Upcoming SRC Meeting – January 22, 2025

**Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Wilson called for a motion to adjourn.

On motion of Mr. Camuso, seconded by Vice Chair Perdue, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 3:01 p.m.