

MINUTES OF MEETING
GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES BOARD
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Wilson (Chairman)
Faye Perdue (Vice-Chair)
Sandy Adams (Secretary)
Craig Camuso
Suzanne Dooley
Louise Hill
Vincent Martin
Jonathan Taylor
GVRA Director of Administration Jonathan Buxton (Non-Member)

Introduction

GVRS Board Chair Tom Wilson welcomed everyone in attendance. Chairman Wilson recognized board member Ms. Louise Hill, 2020 UGA Honor Hall Recipient, the highest award given by the College of Family and Consumer Services.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January 13th meeting were passed unanimously.

GVRA Staff Updates/Reports

Director of Administration – Jonathon Buxton

Director Buxton updated the board on current agency and program highlights. He addressed the agency's ongoing response to COVID – 19, a one-time bonus payment for eligible employees and the agency's lease portfolio of statewide properties. Program highlights are below.

- **Roosevelt Warm Springs/Cave Spring Center**
Director Buxton addressed upcoming repairs of the RWS portico as well as planned slope re-grading across the CSC campus. Phase II of the RWS return to campus plan is scheduled for March 15, and will include 28 students. He gave an update on student numbers for RWS for 2020.
- **Business Enterprise Program**
Director Buxton noted that RSA's Financial Relief Funds have been made available to State Licensing Agencies to provide payments to offset losses of blind vendors that occurred during calendar year 2020. The BEP is working with partner organizations to explore opportunities for blind vendors in the private sector.
- **Disability Adjudication Services**
DAS processed 38,643 cases for Federal Fiscal Year 2021 (through February 2021), Director Buxton said. The program has on-boarded 34 new hires with more expected in mid-March, May, July and September. DAS is transitioning to a new case management system with an expected completion date of September 30.
- **Georgia Industries for the Blind**
GIB currently has 66 employees, and their current Direct Labor Blind Ratio is 69.7%, Director Buxton said. New products currently being manufactured include a Piston Parts Kit, Parachute Deployment Bags, Windshield Wiper Kits and Pleated Disposable Masks.

Agency Financials – The agency is currently in good standing with the budget. Director Buxton did explain the high percentages on the equipment, capital outlay and contractual services line items.

Vocational Rehabilitation – Dr. Christine Fleming, VR Director

Director Fleming provided an update on the reorganization status of the VR Program, a map of the new districts and the VR internal organization charts. Director Fleming provided client and staff numbers as of February 10th. Dr. Fleming reviewed case data number from AWARE, and she gave an overview of VR staffing patterns.

Statewide Independent Living Center (SILC) – Shelly Simmons, Executive Director

Executive Director Simmons, shared the SILC legislative agenda with the board.

New/Old Business – Tom Wilson, Board Chair

Chairman Wilson announced that at the May 2021 meeting the board will elect new officers. There was discussion around having in-person board meetings starting in July. The board will address this at their May meeting. There was no old business to discuss.

Public Comment

No public comments were made or submitted.

The meeting was adjourned a 2:30 p.m. The next meeting date is Wednesday, May 12th, 2021 via ZOOM.