

MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2015
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

GOODWILL SMYRNA CAREER CENTER
LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
3205 SOUTH COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA, GA 30080

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jimmy DeFoor
Sandy Adams
Louise Hill
Fay Loggins
Bob Green
Don Parks

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jonathan Taylor
Amy O'Dell

Jimmy DeFoor, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

During roll call, Mr. Defoor announced that Marsha Farrow has resigned from her position on the board and thusly as board secretary.

Call for Nominations

Mr. DeFoor moved to consider nominations to fill the vacancy of the secretary position. Motion was made by Fay Loggins and seconded by Don Parks. Motion was made by Don Parks to nominate Sandy Adams and seconded by Fay Loggins. Motion was made by Bob Green to close the nominations and seconded by Fay Loggins. The motion to elect Sandy Adams as secretary was passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. DeFoor moved to consider the minutes. Motion was made to approve the minutes by Sandy Adams and seconded by Bob Green. The motion was passed unanimously.

Consumer Presentations

Mr. DeFoor welcomed Zach Thomas and Scott Dekowski. As Zach's VR counselor, Scott introduced Zach. Zach shared his journey through the Business Enterprise Program as a visually impaired client. He explained how BEP has helped him to overcome so much in his life, and he thanked GVRA for giving him the opportunity and the resources he needed to succeed.

Provider Showcase

Mr. DeFoor welcomed Cheryl Cornett, VP of Career Services with Goodwill, to speak on behalf of Goodwill of North Georgia. The presentation began with Regional Manager Margaret Johnson introducing two speakers to share their stories. Britney Lightfoot and George Vanacky spoke about how they came to Goodwill through VR. Brittany and George both said that Goodwill has given them great opportunities and has allowed them to be successful in their lives.

Cheryl spoke about Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). She informed the board that Goodwill will serve more than 50,000 people and put over 16,000 to work this year alone. She went into detail about all of the parts that go into successfully placing people into jobs. She also informed the board that she presented to the House Appropriations Committee on behalf of GVRA and Goodwill of North Georgia.

Mr. DeFoor introduced GVRA Executive Director Greg Schmiege for the Executive Director's Report.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Schmieg began by presenting the 2015 and 2016 state budgets. He stated that all programs within the agency are on budget through the year. He informed the board that the Legislature is still discussing additional money for VR.

Mr. Schmieg gave an update on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. He discussed how the focus of WIOA has shifted from client-driven training to job-driven training as well as the major elements of WIOA. He informed the board that drafts for regulation are due by July 2015.

Mr. Schmieg also gave an update on the GDOL MOU. He informed the board that the SFY 15 MOU has still not been executed. He stated that GVRA has submitted a one page addendum and are still waiting on the redline version response. He also informed the board that GVRA will need to build an alternate IT infrastructure while GDOL still provides IT support.

Mr. Schmieg then gave an update on the employee satisfaction surveys. He stated that they decided to focus on DAS as the first program to address. He noted that they already met with Stone Mountain DAS and Athens DAS but still need to meet with Dalton DAS, Thomasville DAS and Savannah DAS. Once all are complete, they will work to create a plan of action for improvement. The results will be given to the board once complete.

Mr. Schmieg addressed issues with the G.R.A.C.I. system. He stated that it is still a dysfunctional case management and billing system and that the data it produces is still questionable and unreliable. He informed the board that GVRA CFO Jimmy Wilson is working with each CRP outside of G.R.A.C.I. to get them paid and current. He also informed the board that GVRA has hired an Applications Consultant as of March 16th to hopefully get the G.R.A.C.I. situation resolved.

Mr. Schmieg closed his report by informing the board of new additions to the GVRA staff. GVRA HR Director Marya Calhoun introduced Tania Scott, HR's new Training Manager, and GVRA External Affairs Director Kevin Harris introduced Robin Blount, External Affairs's new Disability Community Liaison. Robin gave a presentation explaining all of her duties and accomplishments in her new position. Mr. Schmieg also informed the board that GVRA has hired a marketing firm called MODO MODO to help tell GIB's story.

SRC/SILC Comments

No representatives present.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

Sandy Adams spoke to the board about Transition Services issues in the school system. She stated that she wants to help increase opportunities for professional services for special education students. She introduced Pam Brown, Department Head for Special Education at ECCHS, to give a presentation on these issues. Pam informed the board of teachers' frustrations with students not being able to succeed with their special education programs. She emphasized that the students need VR in school for training to gain skills that can help them succeed in life after school. Mr. Schmieg requested that he and Pam work together to create a plan to try to improve these school conditions.

Public Comment

Bob Green commented that an employer seminar was held Friday, March 6, 2015 during which they set up a job fair for April 24, 2015. He informed the board that they had a great outcome and that information regarding the seminar will be sent out.

Adjournment

Mr. DeFoor adjourned the board meeting at approximately 3:23 pm.

The next GVRS Board meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2015. The location has yet to be determined.