

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES  
WEDNESDAY March 11, 2020  
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

Sloppy Floyd Building  
200 Piedmont Avenue  
Atlanta, GA 30334

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Tom Wilson (Chairman)  
Faye Perdue (Vice-Chair)  
Sandy Adams (Secretary)  
Louise Hill  
Suzanne Dooley  
Craig Camuso  
Jonathan Taylor  
Vincent Martin  
Angela Mackey  
GVRA Executive Director Shawn Ryan (Non-Member)  
Jimmy Defoor (Chairman Emeritus)

**Introduction Honoring Sen. Greg Kirk**

~~Mr. GVRS Board Chair Tom~~ Wilson welcomed everyone in attendance, noting the many dignitaries who were attending in memory of ~~the late recently deceased~~ State Senator Greg Kirk. Mr. Wilson noted that Mr. Kirk played a key role in the creation of GVRA and was a lifelong advocate for individuals with disabilities. Ms. Hill said that Mr. Kirk was one of the finest individuals she has known. Ms. Adams noted that he was a man of outstanding character with a servant's heart and an unwavering eye towards leadership. He left a mark on so many men and women across the state of Georgia and beyond, Ms. Adams said. Mr. Defoor said he worked with Mr. Kirk on the legislation that created GVRA and that his legacy will last for years to come. Mr. Camuso noted that Mr. Kirk reached out to him upon his own nomination to the board, thanking him for his service to the greater mission of helping individuals with disabilities.

Mr. Wilson read a resolution honoring Mr. Kirk and presented Ms. ~~Rosalyn~~**FIRST NAME** Kirk with a framed copy of the resolution. Ms. Kirk thanked everyone for the kind words. Mr. Wilson recognized Rep. Patty Bentley. Ms. Bentley said that when her

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husband was in a car accident, Mr. Kirk came to the hospital and personally prayed with members of the family in addition to gifting them with a blanket. Ms. Bentley then presented the Kirk family with a commemorative blanket. Rep. Noel Williams said that Mr. Kirk helped him navigate his early years at the capitol and was a constant source of support. Rep. Bill Yearta said Mr. Kirk made an impact across every community he served, always available to give advice or to lend a helping hand.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Wilson called for a motion to approve the minutes from January 2020. Mr. Camuso motioned to approve, and Ms. Adams seconded. It was passed unanimously.

### **GVRA Staff Reports**

Chairman Wilson recognized GVRA Executive Director Shawn Ryan. Mr. Ryan noted that GVRA will have a new Director of [Property and Facilities](#) beginning on March 16. He said he anticipates the hiring of a new Chief Information Officer by the next board meeting. On the whole, he said, GVRA is at 70 percent capacity on the administrative side, and the remaining open positions will be filled in the coming weeks and months. He said that the Accenture report on Vocational Rehabilitation will be released to the field and to the public at large once it has been approved by the Governor's Office.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration will be visiting GVRA in [May the next several months](#), and GVRA has already begun to institute plans to address issues previously highlighted in a federal corrective action plan.

[Mr. Ryan](#)He noted that no directives have been given regarding teleworking due to the spread of coronavirus. Leadership is monitoring and will await direction from the Governor's Office.

Mr. Wilson recognized Vocational Services Director Christine Fleming. She reiterated what Mr. Ryan said about VR's ongoing efforts to address proposed corrective actions. She gave an overview of VR staffing, noting that many positions still need to be hired across the state. She highlighted VR performance goals, and while the goals run through the end of June, the agency is at this time on track to meet those goals as they pertain to applicants, eligibility, job readiness and employment rate, she said. The Accenture report coupled with the upcoming Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment should provide groundwork for VR as a whole moving forward. Ms. Hill asked whether the caseloads exceeded 300 clients per counselor, and Ms. Fleming said that while the numbers may appear as such, the inefficient organizational structure has artificially inflated these numbers. The board discussed the viability and benefit of the [Inclusive Post-Secondary Education](#) programs across the state, and Mr. Ryan noted that future allocation of agency funds will be contingent upon delivered outcomes.

Mr. Wilson recognized Director of Transition and Residential Services Lee Brinkley

Bryan. She gave an overview of transition services, including updates on Pre-ETS, the way data is monitored moving forward and a new “transition talk” email address to receive feedback from staff on transition training. She broke down how staff time tied to Pre-ETS services should be allocated through GVRA’s existing budget model. She gave a review of client numbers for GVRA’s two residential campuses.

Mr. Wilson recognized Director of Disability Adjudication Services Rita McWhorter. Ms. McWhorter gave an overview of DAS that included federal fiscal year 2019 accomplishments. She stated that DAS closed 99% of its budgeted workload, closing more than 125,000 cases total. The Cooperative Disability Investigations Unit accounted for significant federal savings and is now doing more criminal prosecutions. For federal fiscal year 2020, DAS has a workload goal of 116,210.

Mr. Wilson recognized Chief Financial Officer Monica Bradshaw. Ms. Bradshaw gave a breakdown of GVRA’s financial performance as of February 2020 as it extends through SFY 2020.

Mr. Wilson recognized Legislative Liaison Chuck Stone. Mr. Stone highlighted legislation ~~that~~ the agency has been tracking. This includes “Gracie’s Law,” which will prohibit providers from discriminating against potential organ transplant recipients due solely to the physical or mental disability of the potential recipient. ~~Mr. Camuso said Mr. Stone is doing an excellent job representing the agency.~~

### **New Business**

Mr. Wilson said that Rep. Tom McCall will soon be retiring from the Legislature, and he feels the board should honor Mr. McCall. He read a resolution honoring Mr. McCall. Ms. Adams motioned to adopt the resolution, and Mr. Camuso seconded. Mr. Defoor said that without Tom McCall, GVRA would not have been established as its own agency. It was passed unanimously.

### **SRC Presentation**

Mr. Wilson recognized SRC Chair Kate Brady. Ms. Brady said the SRC will delay nominating members, at the direction of the Governor’s Office, until ~~not be able to appoint members until after~~ the conclusion of the legislative session. She said she looks forward to working with GVRA and the GVRS board in the coming days.

### **SILC Presentation**

Mr. Wilson recognized Statewide Independent Living Center Director Shelly Simmons. She said the SILC recently had their ADA celebration. It was well attended and was a great educational opportunity for those in attendance. She said the recent SILC Conference was a great success.

Mr. Wilson said the next GVRS meeting will be in May. At that time, the board will hold its officer elections. Mr. Defoor noted that tomorrow marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the march on Washington to support the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mr. Wilson adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.