

MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
WEDNESDAY, July 11, 2018
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Hilton Garden Inn—Athens
390 E. Washington Street
Athens, GA 30601

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sandy Adams
Dianne Davis
Jimmy DeFoor
Faye Perdue
Tom Wilson
Louise Hill
Angela Mackey
Vincent Martin

Mr. Wilson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

GVRA Staff Reports

Mr. Wilson recognized GVRA Executive Director Sean T. Casey.

Mr. Casey commended Mr. Wilson on his new board chairmanship and thanked him for his service.

Mr. Casey thanked Carl McCrae—who recently retired from TEAM 26—for his dedication to GVRA. Mr. Casey also commended Dale Arnold—who retired in late June—for his service to the organization, noting that Lee Brinkley Bryan would be serving as the interim Vocational Services Director until the position is filled. Dr. Bryan is not an applicant for the position on a permanent basis.

Mr. Casey said that the position of liaison to the SRC, SILC and GVRS boards has been posted and will be filled shortly.

He welcomed Patrice Meadows as the organization's new Marketing Manager. He commended Ms. Meadows for meeting the demands of the Office of Marketing and Communications during the brief absence of Communications and Marketing Director Robin Folsom.

Mr. Casey noted the passing of former RWS Director Frank Ruzycki.

The June graduation at Roosevelt Warm Springs was a tremendous success, Mr. Casey said. Of the 54 graduates present for the ceremony, 51 percent were employed as of the time of graduation.

The organization now has a new case management system (AWARE), and he thanked Business Applications Director Deborah McCloud for the work of her team in implementing the new system.

Mr. Casey said the 14-member Employment First Council is currently being filled with individuals from different advocacy groups and demographics. Meetings have been scheduled with the agency leaders whose organizations will hold a seat on the Council.

Charlie Miller has been named the GVRA Legislative Liaison. He served as an integral part of the team during the legislative session, Mr. Casey said, and he will do much for the organization moving forward.

Mr. Casey will be holding a series of town hall meetings across the state in the coming months to continue the dialogue between his office and coworkers across the state.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Wilson called for approval of the May 2018 minutes. Mr. Defoor moved to approve the minutes, and Ms. Davis seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

GVRA Staff Reports Continued

Mr. Wilson recognized Deputy Executive Director Kevin Harris to discuss GVRA operations and give a workforce report. All board members were presented with a full staff directory. Mr. Harris gave an overview of administrative offices and programs, noting organizational and reporting structure. Office and program staff were further broken down by demographics. Individual facilities projects were broken down per quadrant and office. He thanked Cece Walker for compiling internal survey responses. All but two programs have received these surveys, and the remaining surveys will be completed by the end of the year. Actions taken as a result of the surveys were presented to the board.

Mr. Wilson recognized GVRA Chief Financial Officer Minerva Nixon. She detailed GVRA's fourth quarter year to date estimate in regards to financial performance. She said the organization will meet the Aug. 3 deadline for closing out the fiscal year. She noted that GVRA Fiscal is preparing for the 2018 financial audit. She said that due to a lack of state matching funds, GVRA will soon relinquish its RSA federal funds. At the same time, she said, the state will be requesting funds for certain areas.

Mr. Wilson recognized DAS Director Rita McWhorter. She noted that while DAS is still understaffed, it is improving staff retention. Automation, streamlining processes and employee engagement has contributed to DAS's success and the improvement of morale across the board, she said.

Mr. Wilson recognized Customer Care Supervisor Chuck Stone. Mr. Stone detailed the type of feedback his team gets from the general public, noting the trends regarding complaints and referrals and noting how this information is documented. In addition to fielding calls and emails from the public, he said his unit also serves as a resource for staff across the state.

Mr. Wilson recognized Interim Field Services Director Lee Brinkley Bryan. She said much will be accomplished at an upcoming VR leadership meeting, including an AWARE update, a review of the strategic plan, critical training needs and other pressing issues. In addition, work is being done currently on setting SFY 2019 operational goals at Roosevelt Warm Springs and Cave Spring Center.

Mr. Wilson recognized Assistant Director of Transition Services Shelley Kraft. She gave an overview of a recent career technical instructor training for transition-focused career specialists. In addition, GVRA is expanding its E3 program statewide. This includes further developing the organization's partnership with the High School High Tech program, the development of a manufacturing and performing arts academy and the development of a financial literacy app. GVRA will also be repurposing Academic Transition Teachers to serve exclusively VR clients.

Mr. Wilson recognized Dr. Jim Stephens to give an overview of the Carl Vinson Institute's training and contracts agreements with GVRA. He said Carl Vinson has implemented multiple training modules with GVRA staff, and they'll soon be adding additional trainings for employees.

SILC Presentation

Mr. Wilson recognized Shelly Simmons, Executive Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council. She noted that Georgia will soon be eligible for a grant that would help expand services for target populations. She said the SILC is working to address stigmas surrounding the idea of affordable housing and to develop a waiting list for qualified individuals who are looking for affordable housing. She said the SILC will soon host an event detailing what the centers have been doing and give an overview of what the organization is working to accomplish the next legislative session. The SILC board meeting will be held telephonically next week.

SRC Presentation

Mr. Harris gave the SRC presentation. The next SRC meeting will be Aug. 6 and 7 in Savannah. Following a joint SRC/GVRS luncheon, SRC Chairman Rossany Rios will be conducting a joint training on the mandates and responsibilities of the SRC. The SRC is looking forward to the hire of a new board liaison.

Old Business

No old business

New Business

Mr. Wilson honored retiring Chairman Jimmy Defoor by giving him—on behalf of the board—the title of Chairman Emeritus. His career contributions were recognized in a proclamation by Governor Nathan Deal. Board members shared memories of working with Jimmy and thanked him for his service and his dedication to the mission of serving individuals with disabilities. Mr. Defoor said that he appreciates everyone he has worked with over the years, thanking them for their hard work in overcoming adversity and moving the collective mission forward.

Adjournment

Mr. Wilson adjourned the meeting at 3:23 p.m.