

MINUTES OF MEETING
GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES BOARD
Wednesday, July 13, 2022
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Wilson (Chairman)
Sandy Adams (Secretary)
Louise Hill
Johnathan Taylor
Suzanne Dooley
GVRA Executive Director Chris Wells (Non-Member)

Introduction

GVRS Board Chair Tom Wilson welcomed everyone in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

The board unanimously approved the agenda for the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the March 2022 meeting were unanimously approved. Mrs. Dooley motioned to approve, and Mrs. Adams seconded.

GVRA Staff Updates/Reports:

Executive Director – Chris Wells

GVRA Executive Director Chris Wells updated the board on the Employee of the Month Awards for April and May. Mr. Ronald Jones VR Counselor, in Dallas, GA for April 2022, and Mrs. Angela Jones of GIB in Bainbridge, GA for May 2022.

Executive Director Wells began to cover program highlights that fell under Client Services stating that this program has Effective July 1, 2022, ALL priority categories are open. Interviews are ongoing for Counselor, PES, and OA positions (as of July 1, 2022 – 17 candidates have been selected statewide). Ten (10) interns from local post-secondary institutions are being hired as Part Time Counselors and will work in GVRA Field offices statewide this Fall semester. This will bring the total number of interns to 13 as there are currently three (3) on staff. Four (4) retirees continue with special projects and providing support to clients and the field staff. Seeking to hire additional retirees.

Executive Director Wells went on to mention how training was conducted for the Pre-Employment Transitions Specialists at RWS and included the release of the new pre-ETS curriculum. Training will be on going as new PESs come on board. Employment Services staff will be trained at RWS this month to ensure job roles and responsibilities are understood and effectively put into practice.

RWS Field office has been created as a department. The three (3) counselors assigned there will work to provide transitions services to the surrounding counties to increase VR service delivery in the schools effective this upcoming school year.

The next program highlighted was Disability Adjudication Services, Director Wells stated:

- Closed 71,434 total cases through June 2022– on target to meet budgeted workload goal for FFY22
- 3-Month Rolling Quarter Initial Case Accuracy Rate through May 2022 – 94.3% (June rates are not yet available)
- Hired 37 new employees Federal Fiscal Year to Date – next Adjudicator Trainee Class is scheduled for August 2022.

Director Wells also highlighted Georgia Industries for the Blind stating ISO Certification – completed virtual ISO audit at the end of June 2022 with one minor discrepancy.

GIB submitted for price increases – production items (34) submitted for process increases were approved by NIB; they now go to GSA for final approval; no price increases submitted in over five years. GVRA/GIB Hosted Catalog to go live July 1, 2022. GIB Production – OT and Temps helped increase overall production the last three (3) months; backorders the last two weeks of June are back over a one (1) million in sales due to the breakdown of machines.

The next program highlighted was Residential Services (Admissions), Director Wells stated Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS) projected 17 admissions for the March registration deadline, 30 projected admissions for the April deadline. With Cave Springs (CS) anticipating 10 admissions following Spring Break with a Goal of 133 students enrolled students by June 1, 2022. Director Wells then transitioned to the program highlight about our Transition Services stating that GVRA will be doing a Virtual Job Shadowing (VJS)- Working with the Georgia Department of Education on a targeted rollout to 9th graders. Director Wells also emphasized developing Entrepreneurial Training for youth and young adults working with RWS and BEP on the development and implementation twice monthly Transition forum, with the next forum to be hosted from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Feb. 22.

Director Wells also highlighted Business Enterprise Services acknowledging that the Business Enterprise Program has started working on BEPro- Plan to start the implementation process in September. MOU with the City of Atlanta – working on MOU to provide food service in Café 55 initially, and possibly the Newsstand and Health & Fitness Center. Inter-Agency agreement with the Dept of Revenue (DOR) – providing café and vending services for past two months.

Finalizing the layout, and purchase of equipment of the RWS Café – trying for a soft opening in September.

Director Wells also pointed out our Transition Services program highlights stating Hosting Bi-Weekly Transition forum every other Tuesday from 6:00pm - 7:00pm. We have had around 74 families or educators to attend. Working with State Rehabilitation Council to conduct Transition Stakeholder across the state beginning in September of 2022. Worked with GaDOE to do a targeted roll out of Virtual Job Shadow program to 9th graders.

This was an effort to increase referrals for that age range, and to give us a four-year cohort to follow to track usage and trends in utilizing the software.

Administration Update -- Jonathan Buxton, Director of Administration

Mr. Buxton reviewed agency expenditures through roughly half of the state fiscal year. GVRA expenditures are trending appropriately for this period of the state fiscal year.

Mr. Buxton gave an overview Information Technology of Network Infrastructure Upgrades, Fiscal and Budget, Year End Closeout, Budgetary Compliance, and Contractor Monitoring.

Facilities:

Office Relocations
Fleet Updates
GIB HVAC
Roosevelt Warm Springs Campus Upgrades

Communication and Outreach

Website Updates – Target Date of 09/01/2022
Updating Contact Information on 3rd Party Sites

Georgia Inclusive Postsecondary Education Consortium, Mark Crenshaw

Mr. Crenshaw open his statement by explaining what the Georgia Inclusive Postsecondary Education Consortium program is and does. Explaining the Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium is a group of people dedicated to ensuring that every Georgia student has access to learning after high school, regardless of intellectual or developmental disability. We are colleges and universities, we are community support agencies, we are families, and we are K-12 educators. Together, we are ensuring that every Georgia student with an intellectual or developmental disability can realize his or her full potential.

Georgia Inclusive Postsecondary Education Programs are expanding Fall 2022!

Albany Technical College - LEAP
Columbus State University - GOALS
East Georgia State College - CHOICE
Georgia Institute of Technology - EXCEL
Georgia Southern - EAGLE Academy
Georgia State University - IDEAL
Kennesaw State University - Academy for Inclusive Learning & Social Growth
University of Georgia - Destination Dawgs
Georgia College & State University

Leveraging Education for Advancement Program (L.E.A.P) - Regina Watts, Director of Special Needs & L.E.A.P. Program

Once Mrs. Regina Watts presented, she explained what exactly L.E.A.P does for the higher education community. The Leveraging Education for Advancement Program (LEAP) is an Inclusive Postsecondary Education Program (IPSE). The LEAP program at Albany Technical College (ATC) is designed to provide students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, ages 18 and older, an inclusive post-secondary college education experience. LEAP focuses on developing academic, personal, and self-advocacy skills that lead to employment. Each participant works closely with an academic transition teacher and a trained mentor to assist students in meeting their academic and social needs. LEAP students receive a personalized postsecondary education. Mrs. Regina Watts also went over the statistics of the program, highlighting

How are we doing in preparing our students for a brighter future?

Number of Graduates = 8

4 will complete requirements summer semester
Number competitively employed = 5
Number employed in their field = 3
100% of the 5 are still employed years after graduating
Minimum rate of pay among the graduates is \$7.25
The highest rate of pay among the graduates is \$15 per hour

100% are prepared to live increasingly independent lives, advocate for themselves, pursue careers of their choice and provide the potential for increased earnings long-term.

The percent of people who are better able to say what they want or say what services and supports they want or say what is important to them is 100%.

The number of people with developmental disabilities who participated in supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others, and/or systems is 100%.

New/Old Business – Tom Wilson, Board Chair

Announced the GVRA Service Award for Former Board member Angela Mackey

Public Comment/Adjournment

Caitlin Hyatt – G.A.T.E.S.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M.

Official Minutes Statement

The foregoing Minutes for the July 13, 2022, Regular Meeting of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Board were approved and adopted by the Board at the Board's meeting on September 14, 2022.

Faye Perdue, Vice Chair

Date