

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2014  
1:00pm – 3:00pm**

GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY  
2 PEACHTREE STREET, NW  
5<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
ATLANTA, GA 30303

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sandy Adams  
Jimmy DeFoor  
Bob Green  
Louise Hill  
Fay Loggins  
Amy O'Dell  
Don Parks

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Marsha Farrow

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**July 16, 2014**

Mr. Jimmy DeFoor, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services (GVRS) July Board meeting.

Mr. DeFoor called the GVRS Board meeting to order at 1:05 pm with the roll call.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. DeFoor moved to consider June board meeting minutes be approved and asked if there were any additions or corrections to those minutes. There was one minor correction to the June board minutes.

Mr. DeFoor asked for motion for June meeting minutes to be approved. Motion from Don Parks, motioned seconded by Fay Loggins that the minutes of the June 9, 2014 Board Meeting be approved. Call for vote for approval of the June Board Meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously by the board.

Mr. DeFoor thanked the interpreters for their help and assistance.

**CONSUMER PRESENTATIONS**

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program**

Bill Barnes and Scott Karlen presented a success story about James Strickland. Mr. Strickland's work plan is to continue to farm his land in Pine Mountain, GA. Bill and Scott worked with the Assistive Work Technology (AWT) staff at the University of Georgia, Tifton Campus, to install automatic gates on Mr. Strickland's farm. These accommodations provided better gate access to ensure his mobility and allowed him to continue the operation of his family farm.

**Community Rehabilitation Program**

Christine Horne, Community Development Manager with Bobby Dodd Industries, introduce Jessie Leonard to the group. Jessie is currently employed with Bantam & Bidy restaurant located in Atlanta, GA. Jessie thank Ms. Horne for assistance in getting him employed at his job and Ms. Horne informed the group that Jessie is well received by his employer and co – workers.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**Georgia Rehabilitation Association**

Mr. DeFoor announced a special presentation to Senator Butch Miller. The board and Mary Wareham, a member of the Georgia Rehabilitation Association (GRA), presented the Governmental Affairs and Public Service Award to Senator Miller, acknowledging his continued support to people with disabilities.

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

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director, Greg Schmiege began his report with a similarity of the agency to group dynamics: As a new agency we form, storm and norm. The agency is now growing from norming to performing.

#### **SY 14 Review**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>BENEFIT</b>
1. Transfer of RWS hospitals to GRU	Reduction of state funds to support the hospitals and thus available as VR match
2. RWS transformation of VR Services	Expansion/development of unique VR services
3. RWS capital bond projects "matched"	Critical campus improvements in VR facilities with 50% federal funds
4. RWS moved under VR in state budget	Greater flexibility in use of state funding
5. VR spending in line with budget	Stabilization of VR financial operations
6. VR waiting list ended	Only one of two southeastern state with all priority categories open
7. VR increasing partnerships with CRPs, advocates and organizations	Increased capacity, capability and potential for VR match
8. VR audits underway	Establishment of VR baseline
9. DAS improved relationship with SSA	Collaboration with SSA regional office
10. DAS overall exceptional performance	High-performance with objective results
11. BEP continued good performance	Dependability
12. GIB on budget	Prepared to diversity sales (commercial)
13. Reduction of GDOL MOU costs	Increase in state funds available for client services
14. Additional agency infrastructure	Increase in capability and capacity
15. Relocation to Sloppy Floyd building	More appropriate and smaller space

#### **PROGRAM UPDATES**

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR)** - Update provided by Denine Woodson, introduction of the VR leadership team. All categories are currently open to serve clients. Staffs are working diligently to remove clients off the waiting list. Staffs have been working with the new client registry system Georgia Rehabilitation Agency Client Information (GRACI). VR is in the process of looking at innovated ways to work the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to serve clients. Denine acknowledged Human Resources for their hard work in filling the vacant positions within the VR program. In the near future, they are hoping to have skills training for all VR staff.

**Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute (RWS)** - Update provided by Bill Bulloch, introduction of the RWS leadership team. He provided an update of the transfer of the hospital from RWS to Georgia Regents Health System. RWS will be more focused on individualized VR services for students.

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Accountability is the new goal for RWS, this will be done by updating their Program Model where it will focus on the students from their entrance to exit in the program and the creation of a new student database. RWS is hoping to increase the number of students they are serving. Improvements are being developed to the buildings and landscape, including the golf course to be leased to the Warrior Alliance.

**Cave Spring** - The goal is to integrate the services at Cave Spring with RWS.

**Disability Adjudication Section (DAS)** - Andrea Williams introduced the DAS leadership team. DAS has been dealing with the retention of Adjudication staff. Social Security has given DAS approval to hire 91 adjudicators and they were granted an additional 20. Eighty-four of these will be adjudicators and the remaining will be support staff. To fill in the gap, DAS will hire temporary adjudicators. DAS continues to meet the SSA quality assurance standards of 97% and accountability is expected from staff at all levels. Richard Eskridge is working with the State Properties Commission and building management to assist with repairs and upgrades to the Stone Mountain location.

**Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** – Raj Gandy introduced her leadership team. BEP has established a mandate by January 1, 2015 that all facilities must have some form of accountability in place. Raj is currently in negotiations with Fedora Outlier to train the blind vendors on using I Pads and other forms of technology to assist with accountability. BEP is looking for new work sites, staff are now required to do 15 facility analyses. BEP is looking forward to working with the Business Relations staff to assist with new opportunities for blind vendors. The program is in the process of putting a succession planning in place. This should assist with the hiring and retraining when staffs are planning to retire or leave the agency.

**Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)** – Jimmy Wilson introduced the operations of GVRA, Human Resources, Facilities, Information Technology and Finance. Marya Calhoun and her staff in HR are currently working on establishing training programs for staff along with an employee recognition program. Facilities have hired two new staff to assist Richard with statewide facility site visits. Facilities are working on consolidating/centralizing all projects at the agency level and they're also working on the transfer of the agency's telecommunication and data lines from Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) to GVRA. IT has a new director; Mike Riley, he's currently creating the agency's IT department. He's in negotiation with GDOL on the revision of the agency's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Finance department is composed of three units; Budget, Accounting and Grants. The Budget unit has been completely transferred to GVRA. By FY15 the Accounting and Grants units will be under GVRA. Kevin Harris introduced the Office of External Affairs. He acknowledges his staff for their hard work in area of Communications; keeping staff updated and to make sure that the agency is uniformed in marketing, Business Relations, working with our internal and external partners to create more opportunities for our VR clients; Constituent Services, to ensure that the agency is more proactive with clients than reactive, Planning and Policy to make sure that the agency and staff are aware of policies and procedures.

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**OLD BUSINESS**

No old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**SY15 Pay Increases** - Greg Schmieg requested the board to approve a pay increase plan effective July 1, 2014 for staff at BEP, Cave Springs, GVRA, RWS and VR that meet the eligibility criteria. He also requested a pay increase for staff at DAS contingent upon SSA approval.

Motion by Sandy Adams  
Second by Faye Logging

The motion was unanimous.

**GRA Conference** – Greg has decided that only 100 staff; those that are in need of CRC Credits will be in attendance at the upcoming 2014 conference. He has also asked the board not to meet at the conference site, but to hold the Board meeting in Atlanta.

Motion by Don Parks  
Second by Amy O'Dell

The motion was unanimous.

**SRC and SILC Relation with GVR Services Board** – Greg recommended to the board that every board agenda be edited to include an opportunity for a member from the SILC and SRC to present at their meetings.

Motion by Bob Green  
Second by Louise Hill

The motion was unanimous.

Jimmy DeFoor proposed adopting a meeting schedule for remainder of the calendar year. The September 10 meeting will be held at Twin Towers, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm and November 12 at a location to be determined. Members were encouraged to provide input for the November meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

If you have input regarding the Board Meeting, please send via e-mail to Communications Manager, John Boan - [john.boan@gvra.ga.gov](mailto:john.boan@gvra.ga.gov).

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business for discussion, the Board meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:45pm

**THE NEXT MEETING**

The next Board meeting will be Wednesday, September 10, 2014, time to be determined, Twin Towers, 200 Piedmont Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30334.



Marsha Farrow, Secretary

**APPROVED:**



Jimmy DeFoor, Chair

