

**MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

Marriott Riverfront Savannah
100 General McIntosh Drive
Savannah, GA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Wilson (Chairman)
Faye Perdue (Vice-Chair)
Sandy Adams (Secretary)
Louise Hill
Craig Camuso
Angela Mackey
Diane Davis
Johnathan Taylor
GVRA Executive Director Shawn Ryan (Non-Member)

Mr. Wilson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. He thanked everyone for attending. Mr. Wilson called roll.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Davis motioned to approve the minutes from May 2019. Ms. Adams seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously and will be posted on the GVRA website.

Client Testimonial

Johannah Castro spoke of her time with GVRA. She said that without VR help, she wouldn't have the job that she has today.

GVRA Staff Reports

Mr. Wilson recognized GVRA Executive Director Shawn Ryan. Mr. Ryan noted ongoing efforts made by Accenture, a consulting firm hired to help improve GVRA structure and efficiency. The firm has recommended changes to the agency, and those changes will be implemented in the coming months. Mr. Ryan said that details about these changes will be communicated with staff, providers and partners alike. These efforts will help reform the culture at GVRA, he said, helping to further its efforts to accomplish its mission.

Angela Mackey suggested the creation of an advisory council with members of the business community to help bridge the gap between GVRA clients and employers. Mr. Ryan said that efforts like these can be implemented once the structural changes have been completed. He said that in the future, training will be a larger priority for GVRA, and it will specifically be expanded at the programmatic level. Mr. Wilson praised the reorganizational efforts thus far, saying he has complete trust in the direction that Mr. Ryan is taking the agency.

Mr. Wilson recognized Vocational Services Director Dr. Christine Fleming. Ms. Fleming reviewed updates to the corrective action plan. She gave a breakdown of staffing in Vocational Rehabilitation, noting that more and more staff members will be transitioning into counselor roles as they pass their respective CRC exams.

Ms. Fleming discussed the six common performance indicators for WIOA, noting that Georgia and other states are still working to capture some of the information related to the indicators outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. In the last 18 months, she said, the agency has served nearly 40,000 people, with nearly 3,500 of these cases being closed due to successful employment.

Ms. Fleming discussed the goals and objectives in the latest strategic plan, including improving performance and morale as well as returning prestige to Georgia VR as a recognized national leader.

Both Ms. Fleming and Mr. Ryan gave an update of provider relations efforts. Mr. Ryan said he's worked to clean up existing contracts and ensure that all provider contracts are current. It's crucial, he said, to ensure that providers are successful because their success directly correlates with GVRA success. He said he anticipates the agency hiring someone to fill the provider relations role within the next several weeks.

Mr. Wilson recognized Dr. Lee Brinkley Bryan, Director of Residential and Transition Services. Ms. Bryan noted that the number of clients served at GVRA's RWS campus swelled tremendously in recent years, growing almost five fold since 2014 to 940 students in the most recent fiscal year. She said that she's working with staff to ensure follow up for students who have found work to ensure their successes are counted. This comes in addition to multiple other goals laid out in the SFY 2020 plan for RWS. She said she's working with staff at Cave Spring Center to increase enrollment among those with sensory disabilities, effectively returning the campus to its original use.

Ms. Bryan gave an overview of transition services, saying that historically, the agency has not had a plan when dealing with this population. The ultimate success of transition, she said, will hinge on implementing it on a local level and not painting the entire state with such broad and generalized brushstrokes.

Mr. Wilson recognized GVRA CFO Minerva Nixon. Ms. Nixon presented the budget as it related to the close of SFY 2019. All programs came in under budget this past year. Ms. Nixon noted the sources of revenue in the most recent SFY. She briefly broke down the financial situation for SFY 2020.

Mr. Wilson recognized Communications and Marketing Director Robin Folsom. She gave a brief update on the renewal of the main GVRA website and the development of an intranet for use within the agency.

SILC Presentation

Kelly Rhyne presented in the stay of SILC Director Shelly Simmons. The SILC has grown to include coverage of 83 percent of the state. SILC members continue to educate and advocate for center expansions. Those who are interested should visit www.silcga.org.

SRC Presentation

Lisa Leiter presented in the stay of SRC Chair Rossany Rios. She noted that the SRC held its quarterly meeting earlier in the day. Ms. Leiter spoke on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment which will be completed in the coming year.

Public Comment

Charles Hall with GATES said he appreciates the efforts of GVRA staff in mending the relationship with providers.

Adjournment

Mr. Wilson adjourned the meeting at 3:33 p.m.