

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**  
**WEDNESDAY, September 6, 2017**  
**9 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

Calloway Gardens Lodge  
4500 Southern Pine Dr, Pine Mountain, GA 31822

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sandy Adams  
Dianne Davis  
Jimmy DeFoor  
Jonathan Taylor  
Louise Hill  
Tom Wilson  
Bob Green  
Angela Mackey

Mr. DeFoor, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m.

Jennifer Howell, on behalf of the Georgia Rehabilitation Association, welcomed the GVRS board to the GRA conference.

Mr. DeFoor also welcomed the State Rehabilitation Council.

Mr. DeFoor called the roll. A quorum was met.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. DeFoor called to consider the minutes of the July 2017 board meeting. Ms. Adams motioned to approve the minutes, and Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously. These minutes have been posted to the GVRA website.

**GVRA Staff Reports**

Mr. DeFoor recognized GVRA Executive Director Sean T. Casey. Mr. Casey noted that next month marks his one-year anniversary with GVRA. He said the organization is preparing for the upcoming 2018 legislative session. Mr. Casey noted that the agency has increased its number of clients served by roughly 20 percent over the previous year. He said that Roosevelt Warm Springs has achieved a recent placement rate of nearly 50 percent over its last two graduation cycles. Mr. Casey highlighted the top client earners and total client income for recent years. He said GVRA will demonstrate the legislature's return on investment in supporting the agency by highlighting these numbers.

He said the Rehabilitation Services Administration recently traveled from Washington D.C. to meet with GVRA staff and discuss agency accomplishments and where improvements can be made. A draft of their report will be made available to the board in the next few months.

Mr. Casey noted that he traveled to local offices over the last calendar year to meet staff face to face and discuss his vision for the future.

He said VR team members have been examining business processes to maximize efficiency. The rollout of those processes will take place on Oct. 1.

He said that GVRA Employment Services has been busy filling vacant positions and met recently to conduct a training for those new employees, an event which included members of the Poses Family Foundation.

A few weeks ago, staff were given an internal customer service survey, with its purpose to generate feedback regarding their interactions with GVRA's nine administrative offices.

GVRA also met with a group of retired staff members. This group will continue to meet in the coming weeks and months and will help guide the agency mission.

Roosevelt Warm Springs is in the process of seeking accreditation for its CNC robotics program. They should receive that accreditation shortly. *[Ed. Note: This accreditation was received shortly after the meeting concluded.]*

Mr. Casey said that the Office of Communications and Marketing is currently running radio and TV ads to help spread the message and attract new clients.

Disability Adjudication Services continues to increase its rolling accuracy rate, making it the number one DAS in the region and the number two DAS in the country per this metric.

Congressman Drew Ferguson recently visited Georgia Industries for the Blind and recognized GIB for its efforts to serve individuals who are blind and low vision. GIB is also hosting a cookout for all first responders in recognition of the events of Sept. 11.

Mr. Casey said that GVRA Human Resources is currently planning a leadership summit for November of this year.

Mr. Green asked about the possibility of employees telecommuting in the future. Mr. Casey said the agency is exploring policies to this regard and will continue to look into this topic.

Ms. Hill said that the report to the legislature should include success stories of clients as well as hard numbers, and Mr. Casey agreed.

Ms. Mackey said this report should also include stories about businesses that demonstrate good practices in hiring individuals with disabilities.

Mr. DeFoor recognized Director of Vocational Services Dale Arnold and Director of the WIOA Compliance and Policy Unit Crystal Perry regarding the RSA monitoring visit. Mr. Arnold said that RSA gave the agency good feedback regarding its activities surrounding transition. He said the agency will soon hire 12 career specialists to work in local school systems. He said that the funding stream will ensure that these individuals maintain a transition caseload.

RSA commended GVRA for how it is tracking supported employment funds.

Mr. Arnold said the agency has four core partners and has indicators it must obtain through these joint partnerships. These must be met by 2019.

RSA also conducted a performance review, which will give GVRA a baseline in terms of how it should adjust business processes moving forward.

Ms. Perry said the RSA visit was a good opportunity to receive technical assistance in regards to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. She said that the One Stop initiatives will need community engagement to be successful, and the agency is working to make sure this happens.

The RSA visit, she said, also allowed GVRA to collect and analyze data to best set the course for the future.

Mr. DeFoor welcomed Deputy Executive Director Kevin Harris. Mr. Harris discussed GIB updates, noting that the program is looking to manufacture new products to help maintain viability. He noted the quarterly sales trends for GIB and highlighted the reserve funds on hand, the whole of which has grown to \$1.3 million. GIB maintained a zero incident rate in the most recent state fiscal year.

He shared the recent agency turnover rates, saying the agency is working to improve these numbers.

Mr. DeFoor welcomed Cece Hockett who discussed the internal customer satisfaction survey. She outlined the agency administrative offices and discussed some of the preliminary results. She noted that Internet Technology and Communications and Marketing had the most positive responses. The next survey will be done within the next six months.

Mr. DeFoor recognized Director of Deaf and Blind Services Denine Woodson. She provided a brief update on sensory services, saying the group is working towards greater outreach and intake and helping staff learn best practices in helping the sensory populations. She said staff are also working to help ensure that sensory populations are being paired with appropriate employers to help meet their staffing needs.

Mr. DeFoor recognized Director of Communications and Marketing Robin Folsom. Ms. Folsom reiterated that GVRA is now advertising on major TV, radio and online outlets. These are being used to target employers, clients and parents of transition-age youth. The agency is also coordinating video projects to help the CNC program at RWS to gain accreditation, to highlight the agency's partnership with the employer Sodexo and to translate the client handbook into American Sign Language.

### **SILC Presentation**

Mr. DeFoor welcomed Executive Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council Shelly Simmons. She said the SILC is working on its state plan and is working to expand its Home Access Program. She said the waiting list for home modifications has grown. The SILC legislative agenda for 2018 will focus around center expansions across the state. It is also planning on conducting legislative visits for the upcoming session.

### **SRC Presentation**

Mr. DeFoor recognized Rossany Rios. She noted that the State Rehabilitation Council met the day before and currently has full membership. She said the SRC continues to work to be the voice of the client and aid in the mission of GVRA.

### **New Business**

Mr. Wilson proposed that the board honor GRA for its service to the agency. He read a formal proclamation to this end. A motion to approve the proclamation was made by Mr. Wilson, and it was approved unanimously.

Mr. Wilson noted that Mr. DeFoor recently celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, and he led everyone in wishing Mr. DeFoor a happy birthday.

Mr. DeFoor reminded board members that they will be touring Roosevelt Warm Springs the following day.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. DeFoor adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.