

MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
~~WEDNESDAY, August 10, 2016~~ **WEDNESDAY, September 7, 2016**
~~9:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.~~

~~SLOPPY FLOYD BUILDING~~ HYATT REGENCY SAVANNAH
~~2 WEST BAY STREET~~ 00 PIEDMONT AVENUE SE
~~WEST TOWER – 20th FLOOR~~ SCARBROUGH BALLROOM
~~SAVANNAH, GA 31401~~ ATLANTA, GA 30334

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

Jimmy DeFoor, Chairman, called the meeting to order at ~~1:10 p.m.~~ 9:10 a.m.

Chairman DeFoor welcomed new board members Dianne Davis and Angela Mackey. Ms. Davis and Ms. Mackey introduced themselves and spoke briefly of their background in the disability community. Mr. Green, Mr. Wilson, Ms. Adams, Mr. DeFoor, Ms. Hill and Mr. Taylor spoke of their backgrounds and introduced themselves to Ms. Davis and Ms. Mackey.

Mr. DeFoor thanked the interpreters for attending. ~~Debbie Gay, recently named as a new Deputy Superintendent of the GADOE.~~

Approval of Minutes

Mr. DeFoor moved to consider the minutes ~~for of August 2016~~ for July 13th. Motion for approval was made. ~~was made to approve the minutes by Mr. Wilson Tom Wilson and~~ seconded by Mr. Green and Ms. Adams ~~Bob Green.~~ The motion was passed unanimously.

~~Consumer Presentation~~

~~Mrs. Lauren Knox, Assistant Capabilities Director for the West Quadrant, introduced Melissa Williams, a CRC in the Carrollton office. During the past fiscal year, Ms. Williams successfully closed 36 cases. She has been a CRC for four (4) years and works~~

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~~with a number of populations and programs: developmentally disabled, transition, Agribility, and additional special populations. She truly enjoys her job and wants to serve more people.~~

Executive Director Report

~~GVRA Executive Director Greg Schmieg noted several items in the board packets including a brochure from Blaze Sports and the GRA/SERNA Conference agenda.~~

~~Mr. Schmieg noted the final publication of the WIOA guidelines. These included a Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) mandate that would require the agency to spend fifteen (15) percent of its federal match for transition services for students with disabilities—the only portion of WIOA that has a financial mandate. This will expand the agency caseload to include a younger population and will raise new challenges as to how to serve this population as it exists in school districts across the state. While the spirit of the law likely applies to public schools, the aim of the agency is to reach students regardless of what school they may attend. Mr. Schmieg said the GVRB Board will play an integral role in shaping the efforts to serve this population.~~

~~Mr. Schmieg discussed the Roosevelt Warms Springs Long-Range Master Campus Plan. There was a meeting on 9.14.16 with the RWS Development Fund Board and primary partners to begin the process of establishing a long-term plan for the campus. The goal for the roughly 960-acre campus is to expand its service population beyond exclusively VR clients by opening it up to partners who will provide funding and help integrate the campus to a wider population. Mr. Schmieg welcomed board members to a future planning meeting on 10.14.16 that will include members of Gov. Nathan Deal's office among others. Mr. Green agreed to attend on the board's behalf.~~

~~Mr. Schmieg noted the recent State Rehabilitation Council public hearings across the state. The hearings centered on the proposed order of selection, and there was much feedback and questions regarding the proposed order. The SRC will prepare a report on the hearings that will be available at a later date. Mr. Schmieg said it is crucial to have an open and clear relationship with the SRC—in addition to the GVRB Board—moving forward.~~

~~Mr. Schmieg said that the UGA Institute on Human Development and Disability will soon conduct a consumer satisfaction survey of current and closed VR clients. The goal of these surveys is to gain a clearer understanding of how agency clients view their work with the agency.~~

~~Mr. Schmieg discussed the recent publication of a VR performance audit performed by the Georgia Department of Audits. The audit notes that the agency should focus in the future on tracking outcomes both internally and as they relate to providers. He said that the Project Horizon initiative will address much of the concerns contained therein and further efforts to address the issues raised in audit are already underway. Much of the problems with data collection can be traced back to the LIBERA case management~~

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system, and the agency is actively working to implement a new, more functional CMS. GVRA COO Jimmy Wilson briefly discussed the status of the new CMS. Mr. Schmiege asked the board to work with the agency to address the findings in the audit.

Mr. Schmiege told the board why he believes the Project Horizon initiative is crucial to the future success of the agency. It hinges on three points, he said: the why, the goal and the how. The reason the agency is undergoing the transformation is to dramatically increase the number of positive outcomes for clients, and WIOA creates the right opportunities at this time to expand services and reach as many potential clients as possible. The goal, he said, is to serve 100,000 individuals with disabilities annually, assisting 50,000 of those every year to find and maintain a job. To do this, the agency is rethinking and redesigning how it—and its providers—serves its target populations. It will align all its resources toward the greater mission and engage, train and empower staff to perform as well as possible. Mr. Schmiege and Mr. DeFoor agreed that the GVRS Board will play a significant role in shaping the agency moving forward.

In addition to Project Horizon, Mr. Schmiege said, the success of the agency relies on its continued and strengthened relationship with the GVRS Board. To help guide board relations, the agency will hire a Board Liaison; an offer has been made and that individual will likely be on staff before the next board meeting. The agency will also host an all-day board training prior to its October meeting on 10.12.16. The training will include WIOA, Project Horizon, transition services, SRC Public Hearings feedback and the consumer satisfaction surveys, and four (4) ELT members attended the RSA One Day Final Regulations Conference and returned late last night. During the conference, it was learned that the Federal Regulations would be made publicly available any day, and the VR component would go into effect 30 days after publication. Primary focus was given to transition/PETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services), supported employment and organizations with 14-Cs. Jennifer Page and Dana Skelton-Sanders attended on behalf of the SRC.

GVRA sent 50 people to the Georgia WIOA Convening held on August 1-3 at the Cobb Galleria. The training focused on new roles for the four (4) partnering agencies and developing the networks and relationships that will be necessary for implementing the WIOA law.

The five (5) public hearings, hosted in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council, will begin tomorrow across the state and continue through the next couple of weeks month of August. The proposed Order of Selection/Policy is the primary purpose of the hearings. The new Order of Selections will combine the current order into three (3) categories.

GVRA will hold their initial planning meeting with the Governor's Office and State Properties Commission the Roosevelt Warm Springs long range Campus master plan on August 11 and a presentation will be given to the RWS Development Fund Board on August 19.

~~The GDOL MOU continues to progress. DAS and VR check writing services are no longer needed and are now done in house. The transition to an independent IT network should terminate be complete on or about September 30. The six (6) co-locations from GDOL that cannot be terminated due to the bond rating have been questioned by RSA due to the high costs of the sub-leases, and GVRA continues to work with State Properties Commission on these.~~

~~BEP is moving forward with a commercial franchise kiosk (Jimmy's Seaside Fries) in one of the malls in the Atlanta area. We are also developing relationships with Marco's Pizza that could lead to management opportunities for VR/BEP clients.~~

~~Progress continues on the consumer satisfaction piece survey through the partnership with UGA, which will provide a baseline satisfaction score.~~

~~GVRA is working to building a new transition unit services with the goal of offering VR services in every middle school and high school in Georgia. Initially, GVRA is attempting to partner with the 50 Intensive Districts as identified by Georgia Department of Education (GADOE), in addition to the E3 model being piloted in six school districts.~~

~~The agency transformation, known as Project Horizon, is scheduled to kick off January 1, 2017. Jimmy Wilson is working to develop organizational budgets. During the last 45 days there have been several provider focus groups and a presentation was made to GATES. Executive Director Schmieg discussed a statistical analysis of more than 46,000 cases in Georgia that will allow GVRA to better plan and serve clients in the near future.~~

~~Progress continues on the case management system from Libera to an the Aware system.~~

~~More than 30 states currently use the Aware system. To date, four (4) months have been spent preparing for the switch, and a kickoff meeting was held with Alliance earlier this month. The project is scheduled to be a 24-month transition implementation, with a targeted go-live date of May 2018.~~

~~The agency will be hiring a full-time Board Liaison. The goal is to hire have this position in place by the September meeting.~~

Old Business

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SRC/SILC Comments

Jennifer Page with the SRC spoke on the availability of the transcripts and reports from the SRC Public Hearings. Ms. Page asked about the availability of the questions for the consumer satisfaction surveys. She noted that the public hearings were held in a total of five (5) locations across the state, and all materials were provided in accessible formats. In total, one hundred and seventy two (172) individuals attended the hearings. She briefly discussed the questions and comments the SRC received at those hearings.

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Shelly Simmonds from the SILC discussed an effort by individuals throughout the state targeting representatives to get them to visit the centers and learn about their programs. Currently, there are 59 counties not being served. They are asking for \$750,000 to begin services. She also discussed the SOHOST initiative, which focuses on housing opportunities.

Chris Moder presented on behalf of the SRC. The public hearings will also include a written means via the website to ensure people can provide input without actually attending the hearings. Chris expressed his positive impression of the WIOA Convening Conference and the three (3) breakout session for GVRA: Employment through the Eyes of a Client, Employment through the Eyes of a Client and Employment through the eyes of an Employer. He mentioned a study that shows a 48 percent lower turnover rate and 34 percent fewer accidents for people with disabilities.

New Business

Sandy Adams proposed to hold the October Board meeting at the Elbert County campus of Athens Technical College in Elberton, Georgia. Motion was made by Bob Green and seconded by Tom Wilson. The motion was passed unanimously. No new business.

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Public Comment

No public comment.

Adjournment

The next GVRS Board meeting is scheduled for ~~September 7 at 9:00 a.m., prior to the GRA Conference at the Hyatt in Savannah, Georgia.~~ October 12, 2016 in Elberton, GA at a specific location TBD. The board discussed holding a training event at the same location prior to the next meeting.

Mr. DeFoor adjourned the board meeting at approximately 2:48 p.m. 11 a.m.