

MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
HELD
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2012
AT
TWO PEACHTREE STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sandy Adams
Jimmy DeFoor
Marsha Farrow
Robert Green
Louise Hill
Greg Kirk
Fay Loggins
Amy O'Dell
Don Parks

Mr. Jimmy DeFoor, Chairman, called the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services (GVRS) Board meeting to order at approximately 1:00 pm. He welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting in GVRS beautiful, new Board room. All Board members were present; therefore, a quorum was established and all decisions official.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Marsha Farrow and seconded by Fay Loggins that the minutes of the September 5, 2012 meeting be approved. There being no questions or discussion, the motion passed unanimously by the Board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Greg Schmieg, Executive Director of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), acknowledged the following guests: Barbara Hites, Nathan Holmes and Jerry Noone from the SSA Atlanta Regional Office; Clay Buckley; Pat Puckett of the Statewide Independent Living Council; Anisio Correia of the State Rehabilitation Council and the students from RWSIR's Vocational Rehabilitation Unit.

Update

- GVRA did move forward with the personnel recommendation to the Board at the September 5 meeting. We did a reduction in force of 17 positions on September 7.
- The Budget Officer selected decided not to come on board; therefore, we are still in the process of recruiting a Budget Officer.
- Keith Horton has agreed to come on board as the Deputy Director of GVRA.
- We are still continuing to look at moving GVRA staff out of the 18 co-locations with DOL. We have already given a 60 day notice to six locations. We will move staff out of those locations as we find alternate sites in order to avoid paying a sublease on those locations.
- We began transitioning out of IT support from DOL completely during the course of this year. VR new case management system, Georgia Rehabilitation Agency Client Information (GRACI) is an important piece of support. The software vendor will serve as the host. In addition, GVRA has talked with DOL about changing the way the IT support is delivered and will begin to take certain pieces away from DOL.

Mr. Schmieg continued by stating that our philosophy is inclusive with our partners, stakeholders and advocates; therefore, during the month of September, 12 Visioning Sessions were held in the following order: Valdosta, Albany, Macon, Rome, Savannah, Augusta, Athens, Gainesville, Atlanta, Decatur, Columbus and Newnan. The sessions were extremely productive.

Program Update

- 1) At Warm springs, Bill Bulloch has been working aggressively on a partnership with the Medical College of Georgia now known as the Georgia Regents University of Augusta (GRU) in the hopes of making the Roosevelt Warm Springs hospital a teaching campus of GRU.
- 2) BEP is having its annual vendor conference the weekend of October 19-20.

- 3) Every agency had to submit a 3% budget reduction. GVRA submitted \$605,000 through a reduction in force for FY13 and by not filling those positions that amount will be our 3% for FY14.
- 4) VR 110 Grant – A slide presentation was made by Greg Schmiege outlining the following:
 - There are two fiscal years. The State fiscal year (7/1/2011 – 6/30/2012) and the Federal fiscal year (10/1/2011 – 9/30/2012)
 - VR grant is administered under the Federal fiscal year.
 - For the first nine months of the Federal fiscal year (10/1/2011 – 6/30/12, this agency was administered by another agency. Our best estimate is that this agency spent 66,000,000 and drew down \$55,000,000 of Federal funds without knowing if there were enough state matching funds to support these funds.
 - RSA has not accepted the reports submitted by the other agency as yet.
 - RSA issued a letter advising GVRA that the Federal fiscal 2013 grant award, which started October 1, was issued as a “high risk award” with a special condition, stating that GVRA is not allowed to spend any Federal funds until there is an assurance of adequate state matching funds.
 - The Governor’s Office and OPB are fully informed.
 - Because of this, and the recommendation of RSA, Greg Schmiege issued a directive to the VR Program that effectively immediately all “Priority Categories” are closed temporarily until this can be resolved. That means there will no new VR services provided unless the individual is in an active plan status.
 - Greg Schmiege continued by stating the other agency has submitted all eight outstanding reports to RSA. The next step is for RSA to accept all eight reports and approve them. Once approved, we will know how much money was available for the first nine months of the year. Greg Schmiege is very optimistic that this situation will be resolved.
 - Once we get through this situation, GVRA has to have a spending plan that will allow us to monitor how VR services are authorized on a regular basis, so we will not find ourselves in a similar situation as the other agency. We should only spend Federal funds if we are assured the state funds support them. The money should only be spent within the parameters of the Federal law.

On another topic, the Governor’s Office has made the new appointments to the Statewide Independent Living Council’s (SILC) Board. RSA has knowledge of those appointments.

Greg Schmiege then addressed the Visioning Sessions again. He stated they received great ideas, comments, input from all locations. At these sessions, there were private providers, SILC and SRC members, public providers, special education teachers, transition counselors, mental health counselors and advocates.

The Executive Director then identified the following major themes identified in these sessions.

- Organizational Structure, Functions and Processes
- Transition from School to Work
- Supported Employment and Customized Employment
- Vocational Training
- Assistive Technology
- Special Populations
- Innovation and Research
- Strategic Partnerships (employers, private providers, state agencies, etc.)
- Barriers to Employment
- State Policy

OLD BUSINESS

Louise Hill, Vice Chair, made a presentation concerning public input and comments. The Board will travel to different location to give clients and stakeholders an opportunity to address the members. The draft document was shared with each member. Jimmy DeFoor called for a motion on the proposed guidelines for input and comments. A motion was made by Sandy Adams, seconded by Marsha Farrow and approved unanimously.

Lynda Terry of DHS Accounts Payable gave a slide presentation of the state and agency guidelines for reimbursement of travel expenses. An Excel form was created for the GVRS Board members to use. She explained the necessary items to be filled in on the form. The information will then be entered into the Concur system, and when approved, the travel reimbursement will be issued.

Jimmy DeFoor then discussed the Board meeting schedule and locations. The schedule will be placed on the website once it has been approved. Marsha Farrow then mentioned that Peggy Venable requested a visit from the Board during the GRA conference. Peggy Venable will be contacted to arrange a visit to Whigham, GA. A motion was made by Bob Green, seconded by Greg Kirk and approved unanimously to accept the Board meeting schedule as it stands with the exception of including a visit to Whigham, GA.

At the suggestion of the Executive Director, a Board Liaison Assignment list was created. Each Board member will be paired with a program manager to establish a working relationship to help facilitate the knowledge of the full Board. Each Board member received a copy of the proposed listing of the assignments. Bob Green requested to be assigned to Warm Springs as well as Cave Spring. A motion was made by Louise Hill, seconded by Marsha Farrow and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Greg Kirk addressed the Board concerning the invitation of Ross Mason to one of the Board meetings. Greg Kirk will contact Mr. Mason to ascertain what date is convenient for him to attend a Board meeting.

Jimmy DeFoor asked if anyone had comments or questions. There being none, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:48 pm.

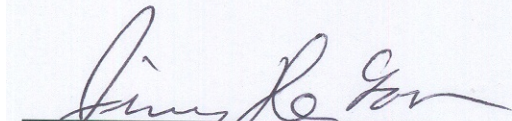
THE NEXT MEETING

The next Board meeting will be on Wednesday, November 14, 2012 in Cave Spring.



Marsha Farrow, Secretary

APPROVED:



Jimmy DeFoor, Chairman