

State Rehabilitation Council Meeting

Atlanta, GA

January 18, 2017

9:30AM

SRC Members Present; Christopher Moder, Brian Mosley, Jennifer Page, Dana Skelton-Sanders, Kenneth Slade, Debbie Gay, Mike Prior, Lewis Wheaton, Kayla Wilson, Deborah Lovell, Peggy Veneable.

SRC Members via Conference Call: Steve Oldaker, Rossany Rios, (not appointed yet).

SRC Liaison: Robin Blount, Dana Skelton-Sanders, Jacqueline Gregory

GVRA: Jennifer Howell, Client Services Policy Unit Manager, Crystal Perry, senior attorney with GVRA over WIOA compliance, Dale Arnold, the Chief Client Officer Manager, heather Breeden, GVRS Board liaison, Raj Gandy, the Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, Ken Hise, Director of Employment Services, Deborah McCloud, Director of Application Management and the Implementation Project Manager for the AWARE Case Management application, Robin Blount, Disability Community Liaison, and the Statewide SILC liaison, Sean Casey, executive director. Teresa Eggleston Director of customer relations, Julie O'Conner, Customer Care Manager

Kip: Welcome again to the January 18 GVRA rehab counsel, the second day of the meeting Council. We plan to meet from 9:30 until 11:30. We will talk about VR (Indiscernible) crystal, and her new role. And also Jennifer and then we will talk a little bit about ethics.

Next up we have Dana to talk about VR101. I think it is part of our new process of training that we are obligated to learn a little bit at every meeting and that will prevent us from having a formal

training throughout the year. We will add the training segments here in that we don't have to set aside a full day for outside of VR. I am grateful for this. It was one of Dana's ideas.

DANA: If you will flip through your training course and manual, that will be the start -- >>: the first section I believe, if you will, flip -- it should be the policy period it has policy information. Deborah was really kind, she and I have a really great working relationship and she and I communicate really well. I do not think that is going to be a problem for the SRC especially when policy needs to make changes, especially for our public hearing and for our -- hopefully, we can do more of this type of meeting because that is something that we have not been doing and the actual federal rate said that is something we are responsible for. The first section is policy communication. I think I have five in here -- maybe -- is that correct -- and it just talks a little bit about the ticket to work changes. Now these are federal changes. These are cleaning up I guess our policy. Is that correct, Jennifer?

Jennifer: From the state audit, this policy has been updated since it was implement it in 1999, 2000, and I have coordinate it with the appropriate VR staff on that. And they updated it for me. So we are on track to meet the audit finding. It wasn't a detrimental policy for the client. It was just updating the actual policy and procedure. So we did not need a public hearing for that particular thing. And that is dated September 26 of '15. September 20 was the policy commit occasion, and it was the order of selection projected policy. Jennifer, would you like to follow-up that for me?

Jennifer Howell: the new category system is a 123 with 1 be in most recent. At the present time, all categories are open. A is the most an advocate -- then B and C? I sent out our first, and only policy memo for the year, November 15 and that was just a reminder to the staff, communications go out to the field about actual policy changes. So if they need to update the manual and print out a new copy -- policy memos are sent out just to clarify existing policy if I notice there is a trend or a problem with the

staff or our processing or understanding the information to make sure it is clarified. In this case, the policy memo went out -- this type of memo will go out with the referral services that we are providing to the client that are not eligible or don't need an order of selection. And it is a separate form that we use. And what they are supposed to do, the current process is if they have any clients that received any information with the referral, they provide that information to the clients with the referral source and they are supposed to keep a copy in the file with the client information and the author is also supposed to keep a copy. There should be a process in the office where they collect it at a central -- the office manager or the OA -- they keep that throughout the year and then prior to the deadline that I sent, they send it to me. I store it in a filing system and the policy unit if anyone should ever ask for it, we provided, but it is not a report submitted annually. It is just that we are supposed to house it. I haven't gotten to that part yet. But we are meeting the federal requirements, making sure it is being done, or probably when we revamp the procedural stuff, we will roll out a new training on the process. And so I always would try to incorporate that with my referral information because there are levels.

Robin: I just want to add -- you mentioned from the mandate disability -- you might have the SRC report because we did the information about the ADA -- it is an overview of the agency activity.

DANA: The next page actually is the Rehab Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. And I hear this, but needless to say, this is something that actually is majorly important. The discrimination of anyone receiving federal funds -- so we are kind of diving into this probably next time. It is thick if that makes sense. I just wanted to show this -- this is just a brief overview. And if you want to put it in your restaurant, reading material later, this is going to be one day, about a 30-minute discussion: the next page -- we are losing federal dollars to other states. Actually, I had this one created by the marketing department. It is a good little flyer. You can make copies of it. It has our logo on it and this just talks

about other states getting our funding. So this is something we can use with legislators.

KIP: I also have been recommending that we get this to the marketing people. We have got to figure out, what we are going to say for this. We cannot just ask them for money. We have to talk to them about our goals. But what are we going to talk about? It is a legitimate question. What are we going to talk about? Why are we asking for money?

Crystal: I will have to find it. It will take me a minute, but there was an article. This was before I came over here. As a matter even been before we came out of labor. I don't think so -- but I can remember it was highlighting the numbers -- it sticks out in my mind -- 52 million went back and was distributed -- it wasn't 52 million of our money, but ours was part of that. But 52 million went back and there was an article and it was disseminated to other states. There was a very good article about that and it was probably one of the more powerful ones about sending the money back. Let me see if I can find that. But it would be good to tag that on. I think your idea is great. Yes a quick visual, this is it. You are sending money back. What you could also do is you could adjust the bottom. So if you increased by \$500,000, this is how it was -- we could show the numbers -- there are a lot of real numbers people over here

Debbie: also, I think we can show a span of May be the last ten years or I also read -- I think I know what you are talking about, Crystal. One of the things they were saying -- there was a flyer about it too. Not only to the money go back to the federal treasury and there were three states that got our money. And the thing is -- it is our money. It is federal tax -- we need to emphasize that.

Jennifer Page: speaking of the assistance program. So I am looking at it now for the last 11 years and we have four staff members. Our CAP director, Charles Martin, Ashley the assistant director, Jennifer Page, the counselor advocate -- at Ashley and I

do the same job, but just have a different title and then Mr. Jones is our attorney who goes to the Ministry of hearings if the case goes that far and cannot be handled on the level where Ashley and I advocate and try to negotiate things for clients. And so I have been working with Jennifer Howell this whole time. And Julie O'Connor was also on policy at that time. And we always have had a great working relationship. So basically, when a client comes in, when they do their intake process, and they get a handbook, that is when they are first encountering -- okay this is CAP. Visit somebody you can call if they have questions, concerns, things like that. So usually when a client calls me, they are usually already a client. They have encountered VR. There in the process. There could be communication issues. I cannot get my counselor to call me back or things like that. So I have to send them a notice of relief because we have confidentiality issues and so in order for me to speak to a counselor, get a copy of the case file, anything like that, I have to have the release. So from there it starts me looking into the case. I call in investigation. Because I am trying to find out what has been going on. And so usually, we can work things out on the level with the counselor -- you know I will call Jennifer if I have a serious question where I am just kind of like I don't know what is going on. Can you give me some insight -- and so in that show, called the counselor, or speak to the manager, kind of see what is going on and then she can come back to me, give me more insight at that time. And we can decide yes, we need to have a meeting or she will say I advised them to do XYZ and get the case moving again. So sometimes I might lose a client and that way because the counselor has moved the case forward and the client is satisfied.

Crystal: I think prior to the last administration -- I think coming into the new administration, I don't think we will have any issues. I think there was not a lot of -- I guess sharing of information with us as a CAP. So I know for fact that Charles Martin, my supervisor reached out on several occasions to try to meet with him and it never happens. So in that regard, I am like okay. And so you know I am the kind of person that when you say I am

handling it, you handle it and it doesn't have to involve me. And my supervisor, when you say I have got it under control, that is how I let it be. So he said he was handling it. And, you know, I don't know if he ever got the RSA involved or anything like that, but I feel a lot more comfortable with Sean Casey and the direction that they are going in. And so it is kind of a wait-and-see. You know, we did that with the last administration.

KIP: You want to keep in mind that wherever we can help organizations like CAP, you know the federal government funds that are supposed to be of service to the customers -- but it is not effective if customers are not properly directed to us or the firm's Jennifer works.

DANA: The next group of paperwork -- -- the acronyms, if you are like me, you are like what does that mean? So you can flip over and this section says okay -- we are talking about the American Council for the blind or the ADA or the American to Seville these act -- the American Disabilities Act -- I want to make sure that was in here -- the next group of paperwork should be the law requirements.

Joy: This is probably something people may not think about, but everybody is not an auditory learner and some of the stuff -- like, you know, having the handouts and the power points and like that, find multiple ways -- to do the training -- because I know I don't learn just one way -- I have multiple ways -- and not only is it about a learning disability -- it also has to do with everybody learns different.

Deborah: Joy is absolutely correct. Obviously, I am an auditory learner, but I am also a braille reader and some things are just better to have the braille acronyms. It is so much easier to reference what it is.

DANA: We can contract and do the braille. We can do that for conferences that we do, and actually Robin actually got braille taken care of with the public hearings also. We have to document the public hearings. Not everybody reads it, but a lot a people do. I went ahead and put the actual application in here that I used when I work with a client informed and we actually met that.

Crystal: I will clarify a little bit of that. I will get it eventually. I just very clear about the interpretation of what that means for the SRC. It is similar to our board, but that is a procedural issue, the forms and things like that. So while we are going to go over, and we will be glad to provide you with some of that, we will not actually be able -- I mean, we are revamping the entire system of forms in our database. It would be like having the SRC sit with the four of us as she is mapping out the entire new Case Management System. That is really a procedural issue. And I have been doing research with other VR agencies across the country, as you can imagine. A lot a folks -- I mean, all of the agencies are making changes based on WIOA. Some of those are yes -- if it is a policy issue, if it is something that is going to drastically impact the client, whether positively or negatively, we are bringing that to the SRC.

Brian: So for clarity, the SRC would therefore not be getting those memos or anything that would inform us of the changes to those policies

Heather: the GVRA liaison. I can give one example of what does need to come to institutes like the board and the SRC. Chain -- things like changes to order of selection -- that type of thing -- as happened earlier this year, that needs to come from the board. They do not need to see that retroactively.

Brian: I think as a council, we would like to consider -- it is not just a new administration coming in from the SRC, they have not been in compliance or have not done

KIP: But literally -- I know that now -- sorry -- but it has been a few months ago -- but it seemed to us there has been improvement -- I mean intentional deceit -- I feel like that now -- but I feel like the new administrators, that they have made the changes that we have been fighting for. Especially with the WIOA because I feel like we will have more information. So Dana, you can thank her for working hard –

Robin: the main thing that the SRC ought to be pushed, and like I said it is rightfully so. The SRC needed somebody full-time, to check out the mandates. Those jobs were part time. You are the part time SRC liaison. So having a full-time person, administrative assistant allows you to have the discussion, to do training, had people talk about other mandates that we never touched. In 2014, was never touched. It was in the blue, but how are you going to get to that -- there was never a full-time position. And the SRC pushed it from being a full-time position.

KIP: We hope we can move forward with a new level of involvement. It is our desire. So thank you. Dana thought it was more important for all of us to learn as much as we can.

Crystal: I wanted to give you a brief update on the WIOA changes that have come forth over the last year. And I will be brief. But The definition of competitive, integrated employment. Now GVRA sets the goal, or has the goal of supporting individuals to go to work in competitive, integrated employment. And that can actually mean for Laura work -- full or part-time work -- for each individual, competitive employment actually can look like part-time employment, at that is what the individuals goal is, even if it is part-time, that can be something we support people to achieve. Also compensated at minimum wage or more. It is important that individuals are compensated at the rate that individuals without disabilities are compensated for doing the same type of work. For several years we haven't supported individuals to go into some minimum-wage work, but not only are we looking to make sure that people are supported to go into minimum-wage, but that their wages are equal to or the same as

other folks, doing the same type of work. It has to be in the community, not in the facility, and I will talk a little bit more about that in a moment. And there has to be opportunities for advancement. We are not just leaving folks at the front door, at an entry-level job. Integrated means that our clients interact with coworkers, customers, and vendors to the same extent as employees without disabilities in comparable positions, both within the work unit, and in the workplace.

Crystal: There is basically three bodies of government that are involved here. Picture 3 governing bodies over the sheltered workshop issue. You have DBHDD in our state who provides in that are in those sheltered workshops with money that pays the staff that takes care of them all day. Okay? That is what is called Medicaid labor. Then you have the U.S. Department of Labor wage and hour division and that is really the key here. They are governing how much people are allowed to get paid and whether sub minimum-wage certificates are up-to-date. Then you have RSA who governs our agency, and we are the body -- because we are the rehabilitation experts, we are the folks going out and providing the career counseling. But where the Department of Labor wage and hour division comes in is if they go in after July of this year, 2017, and there is not evidence -- there is not a piece of paper that says that Johnny had career counseling, that sheltered workshop is going to get assessed back wages because they were not allowed to be paid sub minimum-wage.

Heather: It is not uncommon for a sheltered workshop to be bankrupted by the US Department of labor in that situation. There is a sheltered workshop in Houston County that just got through a U.S. Department of Labor finding like that and it is really tough to do.

Rossany: From what I know this is with each agency. They have to be consistent and requirements and confidentiality levels -- so that is going to take some time.

KIP: I want to thank everybody for attending. I feel like this year we are moving forward so much better. I feel that this will translate to us working in the community, that when customers complain -- we went to this last year -- and it wasn't even our fault -- they were not being heard -- hopefully, my goal in this year is when they ask, somebody at VR will listen to them. Hopefully, they will say the SRC did. That is important to me. We want to help them achieve their goal. If it is a job requirement or some other circumstance I hope we can be a friend to that department. So thank you.

KIP: Thank you, everybody on the phone, everybody, if you have any questions, let us know. Meeting dismissed. 11:27 AM (EST)

