

**Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (FRCB)**  
**Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**Double Tree Hilton**  
**101 S. Adams Street**  
**Tallahassee, Florida**

May 9, 2019- Location-Ballroom

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Chair Mikey Wiseman Kelly called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

Council Members Present:

Mikey Wiseman, Robert Doyle, Howard Bell, Paul Edwards, Robert Kelly, Paul Kurtz, Bruce Miles, Kim Carr, Tracie Inman, Jorge Hernandez, Misty Porter, Louise Peyton

Council Members via Phone:

Dwight Sayer, Patricia Lipovsky, Denise Valkema

Council Members Absent:

Rose Conry, Nicole Attong

Council Staff:

Selena Sickler, Tami Oates

DBS Staff

Bridget Giles, Ana Saint-Fort, Wayne Jennings, Charlie Hittinger, Mitchell Clark, Amanda Freeman, Amanda Kelly, Brian Hudnall

**Adoption of Agenda**

Robert Kelly made a motion to accept the agenda. Paul Edwards and Paul Kurtz seconded. The motion passed.

## Director's Report

Director Doyle presented his report.

### DBS Staff Promotions

- Robin Goldstone-Garcia - Program Administrator Business Engagement
- Bryan Hudnall- Deputy Director
- Amber Kelly - Chief of External Affairs
- Amanda Freeman - IT Manager
- Nancy Brown – DA in Tampa
- Mireya Hernandez – Program Administrator

### Mitchell Clark Filled Positions in Budget

- Arlinda Thompson – Budget Officer
- Tia Newman – Oversees the contract team
- Stella Lewis – Contract Manager
- Rachael Eastman – Contract Manager

### Additional Positions Filled:

- Stephanie Brown - Audit Coordination
- Lisamarie Vanmeter – DBS Training

### Legislative Accomplishments:

- The Commissioner was able to receive increases in funding for safe schools, mental health, social media, scholarships and school choice. Other areas receiving additional funds include the expansion in apprenticeship funds and grants, science teachers and assistance helping individuals finish their degrees.

### DBS Budget:

- The DBS budget is slightly lower than last year.
- \$100,000 reduction in Babies budget.
- \$200,000 reduction in FL Agencies Serving the Blind Children's Program.
- A million dollar reduction relating to available budget authority to the federal trust fund.
- A special appropriation of \$85,000 was given to the Lighthouse of Collier.

#### Contracts:

- DBS decided not to eliminate the adult program, however, the number of people being served by each CRP was cut to three.
- Contract were changed to look at a combination of how many people a CRP serves and how many units of service a client receives.
- Contracts include travel allowances for CRP's to meet with clients.

#### Gifts and Donations Update:

- \$5.9 million in the fund
- Contracts are routing to support funding for core projects: FL Agencies Serving the Blind - \$25,000; Center for the Visually Impaired - \$30,000; \$14,700 - FL Outreach Center, Miami Lighthouse - \$25,000.

#### Data

- CSARV presented information on national trends relating to Voc. Rehab. A 25% decrease in the number of individuals applying for VR services nationwide for 2010 – 2018.
- DBS is beating the national average in most categories. DBS has experienced a 10.5% decrease in the number of individuals applying for VR services.

#### **VR Report**

Bridget Giles, Bureau Chief, presented an overview of the VR Report SFY 2018-2019 3rd Quarter.

The division served 3487 consumers; the total number of closed cases is 452; the number of unsuccessful closures is 221; the number of unsuccessful closures after receiving services is 118; the number of successful closures is 231.

The top 5 reasons for unsuccessful closures were unable to locate or contact, refused services or no further services, failure to cooperate, does not require VR services and moved out of state.

Bridget reported that DBS is in the process of developing a case closure checklist. Mikey suggested FRCB collaboration.

### **Lighthouse of the Big Bend**

Kim Galban-Countryman, Executive Director, presented an overview of the number of employees, the service area and services offered. Achievements for the year included growing participation in Dining in the Dark and Power-Up TKO Tournament. The Lighthouse has participated in 29 outreach activities since 10/1/18. Future plans include a rebranding with a new logo and name.

### **District 2 - Tallahassee**

Wayne Jennings, District Administrator, presented a report. Wayne recognized District 2's outstanding staff. He recognized Charlie Hittinger for doing a great job at helping counselors and RT's understand the division's policies and procedures as well as improving documentation within a client file. He recognized Wanda who has been in her position for 30 plus years.

### **Vocational Evaluation Update**

Paul Edwards presented an update. He stated that over the past 4-5 months, the vocational evaluation tool has been utilized 15-20 times. Evaluators and users of the tool are being asked to provide feedback to determine the degree to which the tool is usable. Paul stated the feedback received has been positive. The Blind Services foundation is considering funding the project for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Dr. Karen Wolffe is working on a proposal. There are a couple of components that are being considered to be added to the project for year 3.

### **Social Security Reimbursements**

Robert Doyle reported that DBS has seen an increase in the amount of social security reimbursements which he attributed to the implementation of a new software program and the creation of a dedicated staff person that focused in the area social security reimbursements. He reported that the additional money received has been used to supplement the older blind grant. Director Doyle stated the goal of allocating an extra \$250,000.00 and increasing the older blind contracts with the CRP's. Director Doyle stated a long term goal of DBS was to have a person from each district receive training to become CWIC certified.

### **Common Performance Measure**

Robert Doyle presented a report for July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017. Successful VR Closures: 854; Number Found Employed 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR after Exit Date: 489, 57.2%; Median Earnings for clients Found Employed 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR after Exit Date: \$18,384;

Number Found Employed 4<sup>th</sup> QTR after Exit Date: 459, 53.75%; Median Earnings for Clients Found Employed 4<sup>th</sup> QTR after Exit Date: \$19,812; Number Obtained Postsecondary Credential while in Program or within One Year after Exit Date: 52, 6.09%; Number Found Employed by Same Employer One Year after Exit Date:341, 39.93%.

## **Adjourn for Lunch**

### **Employer Recognition**

Charlie Hittinger, Assistant District Administrator, recognized Sodexo with the Employer Recognition Award.

### **Dual Cases between DBS and VR**

Ana Saint-Fort and Stevie Fenton presented a report. Team members involved in managing dual cases include: The Client, The Counselors, The Rehabilitation Techs, Assistant DA, Program administrator, Program Consultants. The agreement between DVR and DBS is the MOU. The DBS Team will refer to DVR those individuals who have one-eye pathology or other disabilities which result in a substantial impediment to employment. The DVR Team will refer to DBS those individuals who have a bilateral visual impairment which with best correction results in a substantial impediment to employment. Separate IPE's will be developed cooperatively by both division counselors with the client. Evaluation and training may be provided at a facility wither in-state or out-of-state. Both counselors and the consumer will actively participate in all job placement efforts. In exceptional situations, individuals who are deaf-blind may require services from both DBS and DVR to achieve their vocational goal and objective. Should there be a dispute between the divisions, the Area Administrator/Area Director from the grieving division shall provide written communication to the Area Administrator/Area Director of the other division which identifies the dispute, proposed action, and a summary of factual, legal, and policy grounds. A written response, which includes proposed solutions to the dispute, shall be provided by staff from the receiving division within 45 days. Should further action be required, both the appropriate Area Administrator and Area Director will submit a joint report to the division directors for resolution.

Mikey suggested to continue further discussion about best practices.

Tracie Inman made a motion to create a committee to look at Dual Cases. Paul Kurtz seconded the motion for purposes of discussion. The Council had a discussion. Mikey called to question. Tracie suggested to add the discussion to the next agenda. She withdrew her motion. Paul Kurtz withdrew his second.

### **Bureau of Exceptional Education & Student Services**

Leanne Grillot presented a report. Currently, (2018-19 school year) 14.1% of students in Florida public schools have been identified as a student with a disability. In 2018-19, roughly 9000 students in Florida have been identified as a student with a sensory impairment. The 2017-18 standard diploma graduation rate of students with visual impairment was 85.6%. The rate of students with disabilities in general was 79.6%. For the 2019-2020 school year, all tests will be offered in only UEB. The revision to Rule 6A-6.03014 Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students Who Are Visually Impaired, was effective August 23, 2017. The new rule removes exclusionary language and brings our eligibility standards in line with the Federal guidelines.

### **Career Source Capital Region**

Dan McGrew presented a report. CareerSource Capital Region service area includes Gadsden, Leon and Wakulla Counties. Services offered include one-on-one career advising, interviewing and resume-writing assistance, employment workshops, labor market information and access to a resource center equipped with computers, printers, fax machines and copiers. Services to employers include recruitment assistance, skills assessments for applicants, customized training, and information on tax incentives. CareerSource partners with DBS by providing tours for new DBS Employment Specialist. DBS reviews assistive technology and makes recommendation for on-site accommodations. DBS staff regularly participates in the CareerSource Capital Region Career Center Partner Council – a consortium of agency and education partners in the area aimed at increasing collaboration. DBS staff regularly bring clients to CareerSource Capital Region Hiring Fairs throughout the year.

### **Career Source North Florida (CSNF)**

Diane Head presented a report. The service area includes Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, and Taylor Counties. CSNF has partnered with DBS by cross-training staff, coordinating for assistive devices and software, and referral. In the future, CSNF would like to work closer with DBS to assist in job

development, job placement, and grant projects, including apprenticeship expansion and customer service training. In the new Program Year, CSNF will initiate a monthly meeting to focus on employer services, coordination, and placements.

### **FSU Visual Disabilities Program**

Sandra Lewis presented a report. Florida State University offers the only university program that prepares professionals to work with individuals with visual impairments in the state of Florida. The organizational structure of the Visual Disabilities Program at FSU changes based on a variety of factors, including in response to accreditation requirements and needs of the College of Education. Students who are preparing to be TVIs can add 12 hours of additional coursework plus a separate internship if they also wish to develop the competencies necessary to work as O&M specialists. Over the last five years, we have graduated 118 unique students who were prepared to work as TVIs and of these, 83 (70%) were also prepared as O&M specialists.

### **TCC Student Services**

Emily Ratini-Reich presented a report. The Accessibility & Resource Center (ARC) helps students access and use educational support services at TCC. The Student Accessibility Services Office assists students in receiving educational accommodations, academic advising and other educational support services. Eagle Connections is a post-secondary comprehensive transition program for individuals with documented intellectual disabilities. The Division of Blind Services visits the TCC campus at least once a week in order to serve our visually impaired students directly and in their educational environment.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Director Doyle presented a summary of data related to conflict resolution between August 2018 and March 2019. There were 20 conflicts registered. Tampa and Sunrise districts had 4 each and Miami had 3. Seven of the cases involved college services. Director Doyle stated he would make a plan to have this data available at the FRCB quarterly meetings.

Mikey stated that the FRCB was required to review the redacted decisions regarding administrative hearings. Director Doyle stated he would make the data

available if that was correct. Mikey will get the exact verbiage and send it to Director Doyle.

Howard Bell stated that the correct title of the agency he represents is Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights Florida.

Paul Edwards made a motion to recess until tomorrow morning. Bruce Miles seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned.

## **Friday, May 10, 2019**

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Chair Mikey Wiseman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

### Council Members Present:

Mikey Wiseman, Robert Doyle, Kim Carr ,Bruce Miles, Robert Kelly, Jorge Hernandez, Misty Porter, Paul Edwards, Howard Bell, Louise Peyton, Paul Kurtz, Tracie Inman

### Council Members via Phone:

Denise Valkema,

### Council Members Absent:

Rose Conry, Nicole Attong

### Council Staff:

Selena Sickler, Tami Oates

### DBS Staff

Bridget Giles, Wayne Jennings, Ana Saint-Fort,

Paul Edwards made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from Daytona 2019. Paul Kurtz seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## **FRCB Meeting Location May 2020**

Director Doyle asked for consideration to move the FRCB meeting scheduled in St Petersburg October 2019 to Jacksonville in order to coincide with the NCSRC conference.

Paul Edwards made a motion to move the October 2019 meeting to Jacksonville contingent on getting accommodations and having the May 2020 meeting in St Petersburg. Louise Peyton seconded the motion. The Council had a discussion. The motion carried.

The Council had a discussion regarding an alternate location for May 2020. Paul Edwards made a motion for Pensacola. The Council had a discussion. Paul withdrew his motion for Pensacola. Paul made a motion for Panama

City/Pensacola for May 2020. Mikey called for roll call as follows: Nicole Attong-Absent, Howard Bell-Yes, Kim Carr-Yes, Rose Conry-Absent, Leanne Grillot-Absent, Jorge Hernandez-Yes, Tracie Inman-Yes, Paul Edwards-Yes, Robert Kelly-Absent, Paul Kurtz-Yes, Patricia Lipovsky-Absent, Bruce Miles-Yes, Louise Peyton-no, Misty Porter-Absent, Dwight Sayer-Absent, Denise Valkema-Yes, Mikey Wiseman-Yes.

Paul Edwards moved that the FRCB hold a one day meeting and roll over into NCSRC. Paul moved to not hold a public forum and to allow DBS flexibility in deciding on the date. Bruce seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Paul Edwards moved to have 5 volunteers attend the NCSRC if the entire FRCB could not get approval to attend. Kim Carr seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### **Agenda Items**

- CSNA
- FSU Client Satisfaction Survey-Minna Jia
- DBS Recognition Awards
- SSP (Support Service Provider) Informational / Educational Session – Tracie, Selena and Robert Kelly will work together.
- Updates to Organizational Structure-Director Doyle
- Statewide Plan Update
- Local FILC Representative
- CareerSource Representative
- Robin Goldstone Garcia – Employment Placement Specialist. If not July, then October.
- Innovative Areas of Employment – Certification through Microsoft

**Old Business** – no old business

### **New Business- NCSRC Conference in Bethesda, MD.**

Denise Valkema presented an overview of the NCSRC conference held in Bethesda, MD April 5-6, 2019.

The Council had a discussion regarding the trusting and collaborative nature of the relationship between the FRCB and DBS. Director Doyle appreciated the working

relationship between DBS and the FRCB. Paul stated the FRCB is the top 1 or 2 in the country in terms of the amount of work that is done. Mikey recognized the positive relationship with Howard Bell, the CAP representative.

**Open Discussion** – no discussion

**Sunshine Laws**

Brent McNeal, Deputy General Counsel, presented an overview of the Florida Government in the Sunshine Manual, 413.0118, FL Statute and 286.011.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.