

**CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR HARRISBURG DISTRICT BVRS
AND BBVS ----- Wednesday, March 9, 2016**

This meeting was called to order by Stephanie Varner, CAC Chair, at 12:00 p.m. We met in the conference room of BVRS and BBVS. Present at this meeting were Stephanie Varner, Chair, Cathy Long, Secretary, representing Capital City Chapter, Pa. Council of the Blind, John Horst, Director of Community Affairs, Pa. Council of the Blind, Fred Bell, parent of an adult VR customer, Frank Abror, CAC Coordinator, BBVS, Ruth Lotz, Assistant District Administrator, BBVS, Nicole Wade, District Administrator, BBVS, and Ron Davis, Business Services Counselor, BVRS. Note: the conference call line was open for individuals to call in and participate. No one did.

Next Stephanie asked for the reading of minutes from our December 2015 CAC meeting. The following corrections will be made and disseminated as the final version of these minutes: Frank cannot vote, make motions, or second motions, so any mention of that activity should be stricken from the final version of the minutes. Also, a VRT Specialist referred to as working in Central Office will be changed to Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist. This refers to the person who works with colleges and universities to solicit and recruit qualified VRT's and O&M Specialists to work for BBVS in Pennsylvania.

Frank stated according to the CAC guidelines, CAC is an advisory to BBVS and BVRS. He explained that since we are advisory only and we have regulations and by-laws, we must go by the rules, and even though our Chair had requested that a meeting date be changed and felt over-ruled when it was not done, the reason is because the guidelines state this Committee must meet quarterly. Any recommendation or direction this Committee provides to agencies does not bind agencies to take any action on the recommendation(s).

With these corrections in mind, John Horst made a motion that minutes for December 2015 CAC meeting be approved and disseminated as final. I didn't hear a second to this, but nevertheless, we voted and all those eligible to vote responded in the affirmative.

Cathy commented that she would like BBVS to send announcements of CAC meetings to blind associations who have Radio Reading Service programs. Note: the only one we know of in the Harrisburg BBVS and BVRS District territory is Vision Resources of Central PA, located in Harrisburg, PA. Nicole Wade responded to this request. She stated she had not known of this request until she reviewed the draft minutes of December. She stated she will send the announcements to Danette Blank, Director of that organization, for review. We would like that announcement to be put on the Radio Reading Service two weeks prior to the meeting and every day until the day of the meeting. Nicole stated she will see to it that communication between Danette and Nicole begins on this matter. Danette's e-mail address is as follows: dblank@vrocp.org. Fred Bell, who works for VROCP as a driver, has made inquiry about this issue with Danette. She is cooperative, but would like to see the document and then decide about putting it on the Radio Reading. This is understandable. Stephanie stated in the past she had asked if we could send our announcement about CAC meetings to the local radio stations. We were told no, because the Labor and Industry Press Office would have to be involved in that. However, the Radio Reading Service is a closed circuit system and only people who cannot read or hold a standard printed book have the receivers to hear what is being broadcasted. Those are the people who are our stakeholders. We are thankful for Fred's inquiry to Danette. Now let BBVS staff take it from here. Ruth asked if BBVS should send a little blurb about the CAC mission statement, who we are, etc. along with our announcement. We agreed that would be appropriate. We also agreed after much discussion that the agenda for any particular CAC meeting should not be included when providing announcement of meeting times and locations to Danette Blank.

Stephanie stated she has some by-law questions and will get back with Frank at another time to discuss these things with him. Cathy asked for an e-mail version of it. Stephanie really wants the whole thing, handbook, guidelines, by-laws, all in Braille. The web site for this information is as follows: <http://www.parac.org/CAC/index.html>. Note: Nicole sent this web site to me the day after our CAC meeting. Ruth said some of it is on the OVR web site. She was looking at the CAC Handbook but could not find the web site while we were meeting.

At this meeting we did not have a BBVS report, and even though we had a BVRS person in attendance, he was not prepared at this meeting to give a report. He promised to come to future CAC meetings. To be fair, the reading of the minutes took practically half of the meeting. Secretary recommends that further reading of draft minutes be discontinued if all in attendance agree that they have received and have read them.

John Horst talked about the OVR State Plan. OVR spells out what they are going to do, and now OVR has combined the State Plan with the Department of Education. In the document on page 108, the Rehabilitation Council recommended that OVR take more interest in and support CACs. OVR responds with a list of things they promise to do based on the recommendation. John suggests we look at it. In the document OVR implies that much more support will be given. Even though this is a combined state plan for a five-year period, each entity has a separate part of that big overall plan. We are not sure if there will be annual supplements to it. Note: this combined state plan has come into being because of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act which was passed. Finalization of the regulations for the Act are in process. That also re-authorized the Rehabilitation Act. Therefore, the feds have allowed states more leeway and the state plan process has been stretched out more, waiting for final regulations to come down. Since John was commenting about this proposed plan, Stephanie would like to read it. John will send the link of that web site to Stephanie. Her e-mail address is s.varner63@gmail.com.

Frank wanted to talk about expanded activities of the CAC and more frequency of meetings. What are we going to do about that? With one minute left for this one-hour meeting, we agreed to have a conference call to talk specifically about this issue. We agreed to have a conference call on Wednesday, April 13, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. Use the Free conference call number as follows: 712-432-0800. Password: 200723 pound. Nicole and Ruth will be in State College. Therefore, Frank, Stephanie, John, Fred, and Cathy will meet. Frank will report to Nichole and Ruth the results as appropriate. During the conference call Stephanie wants to talk about how many meetings we should have. She has also written down some of her ideas and wishes to present them.

Nicole thanked everyone for attending this meeting. BBVS will help to work on improving the number of individuals who attend CAC meetings. She addressed the question of timeliness of services. She indicated if a customer is not getting answers, please call management. They are responsive.

Elections. Fred Bell is not interested in serving as Vice-Chair. We need someone else to run when we get more people, and this should be one of the priorities on our next CAC meeting agenda.

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. It carried successfully.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, June 8, 2016 at 12:00 p.m. Place to be announced.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy Long,
Secretary