

## **PITTSBURGH BBVS 02/05/16 CAC MEETING MINUTES**

The CAC meeting was convened at the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services, Pittsburgh District Office located at 531 Penn Avenue on February 5, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

In person attendees were Catherine Getchell, Tom Burgunder, Bill Chrisner, and Rich Fischer.

Telephone attendees were Angela Hadbavny who joined the call after the meeting began, Carla Hayes, Christine Hunsinger, Susan Lichtenfels, Barb Peterson, Terri Lukes and Robert Nagy.

The minutes from the November 2015 meeting were unanimously accepted as previously distributed.

Next the participants turned their attention to CAC membership. Catherine needs contact information which includes name, telephone number and email address for Angela and Terri.

Bill Chrisner does not want to be a member. A motion was made by Tom Burgunder to add Christine and Rich to the CAC and to retain everyone who has previously been a member of CAC. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Joe Wassermann and Mike Zaken were unanimously elected Co-chairs of CAC.

Chris Hunsinger and Tom Burgunder ran for the position of secretary of the CAC. After describing their reasons for running, individual verbal votes were taken, and Tom Burgunder was elected Secretary.

The Mentorship Program. Catherine began by thanking Rich, Michael, Emily, and Joe for being on the Mentorship Subcommittee. They developed good questionnaires and an info packet for prospective Mentors and Mentees. The program was conceived to reach out to those individuals who may have been routed to the Homemaker program in the past which cannot presently offer

assistance. The ideal Mentee is a person who doubts his/her ability to work or who is unsure he/she has the credentials required to qualify for work. The Mentee would be matched with a blind or visually impaired person who is working or who is recently retired. Ideally the Mentor has work experience in a field similar to what the Mentee is interested in. The Mentor should have relatively good independence skills, and have a positive attitude. Catherine already has three Mentors on the list. She is also building a list of Mentees. Catherine invited CAC members to become a Mentor. She will supply the questionnaire and info packet. The target Mentee population are adults. Mike suggested reaching out to the Bold group for additional mentors.

The STEM Event. Catherine hopes to conduct the Science Technology Engineering Math career expo (STEM) event again this fall. A date has not been chosen. A contract has not been negotiated. Catherine thought some issues may be able to be avoided if the event is scheduled at an off-campus venue that is convenient to CMU and Pitt students and faculty.

White Cane Day. Barb said Blind and Vision Rehab Services of Pittsburgh is planning for White Cane Day. A date has not been selected.

Mike noted that as president of PCB, Sue authored comments regarding the state plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. She summarized those comments for the benefit of CAC. She said the career link center has both Jaws and ZoomText. PCB is encouraging them to add NVDA (Nonvisual Desktop Access). There also is concern how frequently the software is being updated. The request is that software should be updated as part of ADA recertification. PCB endorsed the idea of the Citizen Advisory Committees and encouraged OVR to make sure they are meeting in every district. The other concerns relate to personnel development. Statewide there is a 37% vacancy rate among O&M instructors. An additional 33% are expected to retire within five years. PCB is encouraging the state to hire more instructors. Concerning assistive technology instructors, PCB would like such people to meet minimum standards before being hired. Finally PCB would like the hiring process to be streamlined to reduce the time between initial interview and hiring. The PCB comments can be discussed at the upcoming March 30 meeting.

Catherine provided a Pittsburgh District staff update. OVR's Human Resources Department has said that a new hire must complete their child

abuse clearances, state police check, and FBI fingerprinting before receiving a start date. Once the fifth social worker commences employment at the end of February, the local office will be fully staffed. One of the four O&M instructors is an annuitant. She is working three days a week to reduce the back log and to help train the paid intern. One of the four is a paid intern who is expected to become a full time employee at the end of the Intern period. Larry Shock's counselor position was filled with an experienced counselor from New Castle BVRS Office. The four vision rehab therapists positions are filled as are clerical and management positions. When Chris (the Annuitant) uses her allotted days by August, the office hopes to hire an O&M intern. There is a huge O&M shortage nationally.

Budget. The governor allocated an additional \$5 million for the Vocational Rehab Program. This pulled down an additional \$18 million from the Federal Government. With changes to the Work Force act, 15% of the budget must be spent on pre-employment transition services. This means the state does not have to cut services to people who have graduated from high school. It also helps with personnel costs. No increases to the ILOB program or specialized services program.

The SSP program is going well. They need to recruit more hearing SSP's. It is administered by the Center for Independent Living of Central PA.

Throughout the meeting, reference was made to the public meeting scheduled for March 30. Mike asked for 15 minutes to make a presentation on behalf of CAC.

Bill Chrisner from the Rehab Counsel offered two comments. The Counsel is very concerned about the Citizen Advisory Committees throughout the state. It has been convening conference calls with the CAC chairs. The Counsel is trying hard to make sure all of the CAC's at all offices are functional. The Counsel believes they should have a majority of people with disabilities. They view the CAC's as the only formal access point to OVR or BBVS.

The Counsel has been trying to figure how civil service and non-civil service state jobs can have an expedited employment program for people with disabilities like the Federal Government does with Schedule A. OVR has concluded this must be legislated.

The Counsel hopes to meet with Christine Tartaglione to see about getting something introduced to achieve this goal. The Counsel meets quarterly in Harrisburg. The next meeting will be March 2 followed by meetings in May, August, and October.

Heidi is the vice-chair of the Counsel and she coordinates the Counsel's work with local CAC's.

Mike extended kudos to Rich for reactivating the local CAC and to Catherine for improving it.

Tom suggested Mike and Joe as co-chairs should distribute communications to the CAC. Mike said they and Catherine would discuss that issue.

Chris suggested a group mailing list be set up. Mike agreed to organize the list.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday May 6 beginning at 10a.M.

Respectfully submitted: Tom Burgunder, Secretary