

Williamsport Citizens Advisory Committee

March 16 2017

Present were: Chris Tsai, Pat Sterner, Scott Miller, Joanne Mondell, Michelle Howe (via phone), Susan Newcomer, Karen Retorick

Robin Kiess has a work place injury and was unable to attend today but will attend in the future. Shirley Abernathy was unable to attend today's meeting.

Welcome & Introduction: Chris Tsai welcomed new members Michelle Howe and Susan Newcomer. Current members introduced themselves and their program.

Approval of Minutes: Karen made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Susan seconded the approval of the minutes.

Chairman's Report – unable to make the Harrisburg training due to family member needing help to get to a medical appointment.

Events:

Job Fair for Youth on 4/26/17 from 11 AM to 2 PM at Williamsport Area High School. This job fair is for the students.

OVR Job Fair in May 2017 – date to be determined since our Business Service Representative needs to coordinate with employers.

Various job fair events in southern counties

- **Columbia County - Thursday, March 9** Berwick Country Club, 473 Martzville Rd, Berwick, 18603
- **Snyder County - Thursday, May 4** VFW, Selinsgrove Post 6631, 940 US Rt 522, Selinsgrove, 17870
- **Montour County - Tuesday, May 23** Frosty Valley Country Club, 2201 Bloom Rd, Danville, 17821
- **Sunbury - Thursday, June 15** Shikellamy High School, 115 Fairmount Ave, Sunbury, 17801
- **Paxinos - Wednesday, September 20** Masser's Banquet Hall, Rt 61 & 487, Paxinos, 17860
- **Union County** - October (Date & Location TBA) Lewisburg, 17837

Overview of WIOA – Chris handed out an Overview of Title IV Workforce Incentive Opportunity Act (WIOA) which Amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. WIOA is aimed at increasing opportunities particularly for those individuals with disabilities who face barriers to employment and invests in the important connection between education and career preparation.

Highlights of Changes to Rehabilitation Act Programs

Increase Services to Youth with Disabilities: throughout WIOA especially in the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, there is a significant emphasis on the provision of services to youth with disabilities. To that end WIOA:

- Emphasizes the need for youth with disabilities to have more opportunities to practice and improve their workplace skills to consider their career interests and to get real world work experience.
- Requires State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to make “pre-employment transition services” available to all students with disabilities.
- Requires State VR agencies to set aside at least 15 percent of their Federal VR program funds to provide pre-employment transition services to assist students with disabilities to make the transition from secondary school to post-secondary education programs and competitive integrated employment which requires wages at minimum wage with personal interactions with non-disabled populations.
- Allows State VR agencies to prioritize serving students with disabilities
- Allows State VR agencies to support advanced training in STEM and other technical professions. (STEM = Science, Technical, Engineering, Math)
- Dedicates half of the Federal Supported Employment program funds to provide youth with the most significant disabilities with supports they need including extended services to enable them to obtain competitive employment.

Q. What help is available from a college for a student with a disability?

A. Each college has a Disability Services Office and the student must request help from the Disability Services Office.

WIOA changes coming in the future

- Eligibility process for OVR
- Application will be shorter
- Training for advanced degrees within a related existing field.

For a Service Provider/Program to be considered as a competitive integrated setting the following requirements must be met:

- Job must pay at least \$7.25 per hour – minimum wage
- Must be around the general population – persons without disabilities.
- Program length cannot be permanent

Some sheltered workshop employees will not be able to work for regular business. Some population it is very meaningful to get up and go to work at a sheltered workshop. Q. Are the workshops going to be penalized? A. No. The purpose of WIOA is to allow those who have potential to earn a higher wage to have the opportunity to do so and meanwhile work in an integrated community setting, but the law does not prohibit the existence of a sheltered workshop. The difference is that a job program/facility which does not meet the above criteria will not receive funding from the state.

Member Recruitment: Chris passed around a letter to hand out to recruit new members.

Video on inspiring individuals with disabilities

Next meeting: June 15 2017

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Mondell

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