

SRC-DVR¹ Minutes

Date & Time: March 10th 2025, 1pm – 3pm²

Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendance Key: P = Present E = Absent (Excused) A = Absent (Unexcused)

Council Members ³					
P	Allison Wiest	P	Jennifer Kimble		
P	Issac Gingras	P	Megan Marquis		
P	Samantha Fenderson *	P	Jenny Ardito		
P	Joshua Weidemann	P	Dylan Sullivan		
E	Darcy Gentle	P	Andrew Smith		
P	Patty Ngara	P	Lynn Feely		
E	Sierra Wood *				

Guests: Sophia Phoenix

Scribe: Branden Densmore **Next Meeting:** May 12th 2025 **Minutes Approved:** **YES!**

Topic	Discussion	Action	Responsible
Introduction	The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm, and a <u>Quorum was established with 11 members in attendance.</u> Members/guests were welcomed and participated in an ice breaker activity. The chair reviewed the meeting Agenda, and the following item was added to the agenda: <i>Release of information – personal information being shared with multiple people in VR.</i>	<u>NA</u>	<u>NA</u>

¹ SRC-DVR: State Rehabilitation Council, Division Of Vocational Rehabilitation

² Pre-meeting Held From 1230pm – 1pm

³ *Indicates an Ex Officio non-voting member

Topic	Discussion	Action	Responsible
Minutes	The council discussed the January 2025 Draft minutes. <u>A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as presented.</u> The motion passed: In Favor: 9 Abstention: 1 Opposed: 0	<i>Prepare the January 2025 draft minutes and send them to Webmaster for posting online.</i> <i>Create draft March minutes and send them to council members for review.</i>	<u>Branden Densmore</u> <u>Branden Densmore</u>
Workgroup Recap	SRC-DVR held its first Focus Workgroup Meeting on February 10th, and a review of the meeting was provided. <i>Note: previously the SRC-DVR only held Regular Business Meetings on the odd numbered months.</i> <i>Last meeting it was decided to hold additional "focus work group" meetings on even numbered months.</i> <i>The reason for holding focus workgroup meetings was/is to give council members the time needed to conduct the work of the council, making substantial progress with fulfilling the mission of the SRC....</i>	<u>NONE</u>	<u>NONE</u>

Topic	Discussion	Action	Responsible
Workgroup Recap	Focus work group members identified <u>4 priority areas</u> for the council: 1. Program Assessment/Improvement 2. Membership Recruitment 3. Bylaw Update 4. Member Orientation After discussion, there was a consensus that the Executive Committee would work on creating suggestions for By-Law updates, which haven't been done since 2013. It was also agreed that they would work on developing a membership orientation process. The other two priorities – membership recruitment and program assessment/improvement – will be the priorities of the focus workgroup sessions. Council members were asked to think about the following question for the next focus group meeting: <u>What do you see as a significant challenge for VR, and what might a possible solution be?</u>	<i>Analyze the SRC-DBVI Bylaws which were updated using WIOA language in 2018 and generate update suggestions for the SRC-DVR Bylaws.</i> <i>Compile Bylaw update suggestions and send them to full council for review.</i> <i>Coordinate with Allen Kropp around providing a membership orientation presentation on April 14th</i> <i>Get data reports for focus workgroup to review.</i> <i>Think about the question asked and bring ideas to next focus work group meeting for discussion.</i>	<u>Executive Committee Members</u> <u>Branden Densmore</u> <u>Allison Wiest</u> <u>Samantha Fenderson</u> <u>Council Members</u>

Topic	Discussion	Action	Responsible
Directors Report	CSAVR⁴: Samantha and Sean will be attending the CSAVR spring conference and will bring back relevant points for council discussion. Federal Freeze: There was a freeze put on federal funding 3 weeks ago. VR hasn't had any issues, but they continue to monitor the situation. DOE⁵: The DOE was created in the 90s and VR falls under their management. The feds are currently talking about dismantling DOE, and if that happens VR would likely be moved under another branch of Government like DHHS or DOL. LD46: An Act to Establish a Grant Program to Increase Postsecondary Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities or autism spectrum disorder. This grant would allow higher education to be more inclusive and have more options. Staff: There was only one job reposing which is good improvement – for a Portland VRCII.⁶	NONE	NONE

⁴ CSAVR -> Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

⁵ DOE: Department Of Education

⁶ VRC -> Vocational Rehabilitation Councilor

Topic	Discussion	Action	Responsible
Director's Report	VR is looking to bring on a paid summer intern through Margaret Chase Smith, to help with their summer programs this year. VR is conducting a new VRC training course with 20 participants. <u>Vertical Harvest:</u> A disability friendly business centered around providing fresh produce to the community. VR attending two info sessions at the Career Center. It was noted that they might be a good candidate to sit on the council in a business, Industry, and labor seat. <u>DOE:</u> In the planning stages of the Youth Summit with "Lets Talk" tables which will help students with things like career exploration and resume writing. This event will involve 12 schools with around 150 students each. <u>IPS</u>⁷: As noted in previous meetings, DVR is working with the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), implementing the IPS model with five Community Health and Behavioral Health Centers. DVR now has 5 VRCs trained in the IPS model.	<i>Reach out to vertical Harvest about possible SRC membership.</i> <i>Check out Vertical Harvest job opportunities HERE.</i>	<u>Branden Densmore</u> <u>Any Interested Member</u>

⁷ IPS - > Individual Placement and Supports

Topic	Discussion	Action	Responsible
	They are currently working on procedural guidance and will start working with three agencies in March: Community Health and Counseling, Sweetser, and Aroostook Mental Health Services. <u>Virtual Reality:</u> DVR leadership meeting with folks at Transfer, a company providing Virtual Reality Technology for job training and experimentation. Currently creating a contract for a pilot project in the Bangor office. <u>Summer Programs:</u> <i>VIBE</i>⁸ – 2-week program in conjunction with DBVI focused on youth ages 14 to 18. <i>Bus Tour</i> – 2 one-week collage bus tours, one in the north and one in the south. Each trip has about 40 students who travel to and live on various collage campuses to get a good feel for what collage is like. <i>Step Up</i> – Program with UMaine for students on the Autism spectrum.	NONE	NONE

⁸ VIBE -> Venturing into Independence & Building skills for Employment

Topic	Discussion	Action	Responsible
CAP⁹ Update	Megan Marquis provided a CAP update to the council. They have been conducting outreach in various Clubhouses throughout the State, and are working on an outreach plan for Peer Centers, Psych Hospitals, Recovery Centers, etc. CAP is also planning a presentation for this year's Hope Conference. CAP is still seeing issues around the timeliness of payments for VR clients, and issues with informed choice (for employment goals and choice of providers) being included in employment plans.	<u>NONE</u>	<u>NONE</u>
Priority Topics	Joint Training: Council discussed the possibility of holding joint SRC DVR/DBVI training which never happened last year. Treasurer's Report: Jenn Kimble delivered a treasurer's report, where she outlined where SRC-DVR is now and where it will likely be in the future. The Administrative costs and honorariums were identified as areas where SRC-DVR is off budget.	<i>Follow up with DBVI about the possibility of holding joint training.</i>	<u>Executive Committee</u>

⁹ CAP -> Client Assistance Program

Topic	Discussion	Action	Responsible
Announcements	Honorariums are offered to members not compensated for attendance. The next Regular SRC-DVR Business Meeting will be on May 12th from 1pm to 3pm. There will be a premeeting that same day from 1230pm to 1pm. The second Focus Workgroup Meeting will be held on April 14th from 1pm to 3pm.	<i>Contact Branden to receive an Honorarium at srcscribe@gmail.com.</i> <i>Send group email with Zoom link, agenda, minutes, etc.</i> Prepare for Focus Workgroup meeting.	<u>Members Not Compensated</u> <u>Branden Densmore</u> <u>Executive Committee</u>
Public Comments	Time was provided for public comment, but none was given.	<u>NONE</u>	<u>NONE</u>
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 pm.	<u>NA</u>	<u>NA</u>

People & Organizations Represented

SRC-DVR Council Members:

Isaac Gingras – State Workforce Board

Allison Wiest – Maine Parent Federation

Jennifer Kimble – Maine Health (Vocational Services)

Samantha Fenderson – Director Of Division Of Vocational Rehabilitation

Jenny Ardito – Goodwill Industries

Dylan Sullivan – Disability Advocate, University Of Maine Liaison

Lynn Feely – Disability Advocate

Sierra Wood – Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Megan Marquis – Disability Rights, Client Assistance Program

Andrew Smith – Statewide Independent Living Council

Joshua Weidemann – Disability Advocate

Darcy Gentle – 121 Program Director

Patty Ngara – Disability Advocate

Members Of The Public:

Sophia Phoenix – Disability Advocate

Branden Densmore – SRC Administrator

Suzanne Primiano – Vocational Rehabilitation Intake Unit

Sean Keegan – Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Director

Jenn Williams – State Independent Living Council Director