

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Council

November 18, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Council Members in Attendance: Dr. Carolyn Peters, Dr. Jo Hannah Ward, John Moore, Jane Gerhardt, Alison McKay, Jeremy Morris, Margie Hegg, Lisa Hickman, jw Smith, Kevin Miller, Tanyia George-Olds, Dr. jw Smith

OOD Staff: Assistant Executive Director Erik Williamson, BVR Deputy Director Susan Pugh, Chief Legal Counsel Matt Lampke, EIS Deputy Director Kristen Ballinger, BSVI Deputy Director Greg Dormer, Chief of Communications Kim Jump, Program Administrator Shirley Marchi, Information Technology Eric Muller, Information Technology Jennifer Ezell, Marlena Smith, OOD Interpreter

Guests: Lena Smith, Interpreter, Montanna Stanley, CSCC Student Interpreter, Jordyn Derham, CSCC Student Interpreter, Mary Vannus, Interpreter, Harris Capps, Melissa Bacon, OCALI, Emily Turner, Ohio Association of Goodwills

Welcome and Introductions

Due to technical difficulties with Council Chair Peters, Council members appointed John Moore as acting Chair of today's OOD Council meeting.

Acting Chair John Moore welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves. Mr. Moore welcomed new council member Jo Hanna Ward to the Council.

Approval of Minutes

Council member Moore moved to approve the August 12, 2020 meeting minutes, seconded by Council member Gerhardt. Motion carried.

OOD Council Chair Peters was able to connect to the call. Acting OOD Council Chair Moore returned the gavel to Dr. Peters who took over the meeting as Chair.

Written Public Comment

Council members received a written comment from Harris Capps about Competitive Integrated Employment and Special Wage Certifications under the FLSA14. BVR Deputy Director Pugh addressed how OOD and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities work together. OOD partners with DODD who provides an array of services for individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. She stated in Fiscal Year 2020, which concluded September 30, 2020, OOD's vocational rehabilitation program served 8,575 individuals who are eligible for county board services and assisted 1,213 county board individuals who are eligible to obtain competitive employment. Ms. Pugh stated she will follow-up with Mr. Capps after the meeting.

2021 Council Meeting Dates

OOD Council members agreed to the following 2021 Council Meeting dates: January 20, 2021, April 21, 2021, August 18, 2021, August 18, 2020, and November 17, 2021.

OOD Council's Annual Report Subcommittee Update

Annual Report Subcommittee Chair Moore moved to approve the subcommittee meeting minutes, seconded by subcommittee member Gerhardt. Subcommittee member Smith abstained. Motioned carried.

Chair Moore provided the draft OOD Council's Annual Report letter for consideration to the full Council. The Annual Report letter is due to the Rehabilitation Services Administration by December 31, 2020. Council members recommended two minor changes.

Subcommittee member Smith moved to approve the OOD Council's Annual Report letter with the two minor changes, seconded by subcommittee member Gerhardt. Motion carried.

Shirley Marchi will make the changes and send to the Governor's Office and the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

OOD Status Update

OOD Director Kevin Miller thanked OOD staff for their commitment to provide quality services to individuals with disabilities. He stated OOD staff, leadership, and support from Governor DeWine has been phenomenal. OOD has placed over 3,100 individuals into jobs over nine months. The number continues to grow. In October, during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), the job fairs were a tremendous success. Several employers wanted a specific hiring day just for them. We partnered with Meijer and had over 30 people hired in one day.

Director Miller stated OOD is providing technical assistance on how to improve working remotely.

In addition, Director Miller stated there are 300 plus providers in the community across the state, like the Independent Living Centers, CCDs, and Sight Centers. Everyone is pulling together. We have strengthened our relationships with our partners.

Furthermore, Director Miller stated he is very proud to say the OOD staff are engaged. To be more diverse and inclusive, OOD will be hiring someone to head up OOD's diversity and inclusion efforts. We will constantly evolve and be committed to a direction of inclusion.

Council member Smith asked Director Miller what challenges keep you up at night? Director Miller responded he is very concerned that OOD does not go on a wait list. It takes days to get on a wait list and decades to get off the waitlist. Also, he is concerned with the level of stress that staff are under. Within the last 30 days, OOD had two staff members die. Also, people who need our services, they want to take a pause and are not ready to go out and work. Their level of anxiety is up, and they don't want to go out and expose themselves because they have secondary conditions. He is also concerned about how does OOD maintain our integrity to taxpayers and to our staff who have a partner who is unemployed, kids at home with school.

Council member Gerhardt stated OOD has done amazing work with Meijer. The hiring and everything they are doing. Great job the OOD staff are doing.

OOD Annual Appeals Report

OOD Chief Legal Counsel Matt Lampke reported on the Annual Appeals Report. He stated this past fiscal year, OOD received a total of 51 new appeals with a carryover of six from the prior fiscal. The total is 57 appeals this year, compared to 65 appeals last year. Mr. Lampke stated 32 of the 57 appeals were resolved. Seven of the appeals were resolved with a hearing officer decision. All decisions were resolved in OOD's favor that OOD followed all the RSA and OOD policies and regulations. There are an additional seven appeals carried over to this fiscal year.

In addition, Mr. Lampke reported with the assistance of IT his office began conducting remote meetings using Microsoft Teams. Approximately 75 percent of the individuals took advantage of remote options. For other individuals, due to connection issues we opened our conference room so they could appear in person.

Council member Smith asked if we get back to normal, will Legal continue to provide remote hearings? Mr. Lampke stated the model we adopted allows virtual and in-person meetings.

Council member McKay stated she noticed that the past two years the request for mediation has been remedial. Why isn't this being utilized more and how does Ohio compare with other states? Mr. Lampke said he will investigate this and follow-up with Council members at their next meeting.

Employer and Innovation Services Update

Employer and Innovation Services (EIS) Deputy Director Kristen Ballinger referred Council members to her report. She stated OOD hosted five virtual hiring events in several areas throughout Ohio to facilitate interviews for employer partners and OOD candidates. OOD facilitated 231 interviews for 165 job seekers with 35 employers

throughout the state. There have been 29 confirmed hires to date. OOD also hosted a Meijer Hire Day to facilitate interviews for open positions throughout the state. Forty-eight interviews were conducted with 25 confirmed hires to date.

EIS Deputy Director Ballinger stated since May 2020, EIS has hosted free monthly web-based training for employers.

Ms. Ballinger stated the OOD Council members have received a link to a draft version of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey for individuals with disabilities. She welcomes Council member's feedback.

Council member McKay asked, how do employers get connected with EIS? Ms. Ballinger stated, they can reach out to one of the five Business Relations Specialists (BRS) who will reach out to them and schedule a time to meet with them to develop a relationship. These five BRSs cover all 88 counties.

Council member Gerhardt stated the CSNA was very clear.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Update

BVR:

BVR Deputy Director Susan Pugh referred Council members to the Remote Services report. Ms. Pugh reported in March 2020 OOD transitioned to serving participants remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, many of OOD's vocational rehabilitation providers also initiated the use of technology to deliver services to OOD participants. OOD recognized the need to do an assessment of this service delivery model. OOD provided stakeholder/outreach efforts by telephone/remote, an OOD provider survey, and remote services think tank. She asked the Council for their feedback.

Council member McKay asked if there were any trends on people who have jobs but due to the pandemic have new needs related to work environments. Are people reaching out to make them aware of OOD services? Ms. Pugh stated we developed our REACH service and included closed cases in process so we could reach out to people who we placed in a job to see if they are having any problems in the job. OOD has been working hard to get information out. Ms. Ballinger stated the EIS team is working with employer partners, for example, with a call center to a virtual environment and reaching out to help source candidates for that. Through training, EIS discussed disability accommodations considerations with employers in a remote work environment. EIS is supporting our employer partners. In addition, Ms. Pugh stated many of our vocational apprentices working in state government have transitioned into home site and have been able to continue in those positions.

Ms. Pugh referred Council members to the Customer Satisfaction Survey Report and asked Council members if they had any questions. Council member Smith asked that the survey be sent to all consumer outreach groups. He stated he likes the survey and is pleased with question five. However, questions 9-13 with neutral strongly disagree, they bear worth watching. Ms. Pugh stated we can get more information and make sure questions are tailored to meet what that person's experience was so that we can really understand better.

In addition, Ms. Pugh stated there is an upcoming VR Policy Public Comment about Comprehensive Assessment; Confidentiality; Custody; Guardianship and Power of Attorney; and Residence and Immigration.

Also, Ms. Pugh stated Administrative Rules 3304-2-53 and 3304-6 were filed with Joint Committee on Agency Rule (JCARR):

Lastly, Ms. Pugh stated, there is an upcoming Participant Focus Group on Informed Choice.

BSVI

BSVI Deputy Director Greg Dormer reported while the overall program numbers for the year were down, BSVI experienced a smaller decrease in performance numbers than many other states and saw a double digit increase in average hourly wages. BSVI also did a better job of moving eligible individuals into a plan in 2020 compared to 2019. In 2021 applications for BSVI services increased each month from July through September.

Berna King has moved into the BSVI Program Manager role previously held by Sarah Kelly. She has been meeting with partners and providers over the last few weeks and has begun reviewing the BSVI Multi Point Plan to update and help craft the direction of the division. Director Miller, Erik Williamson, Greg Dormer and Berna King presented an update on the program at the National Federation of the Blind Ohio Statewide Convention.

Further, Mr. Dormer stated BSVI staff held meetings in each of the five regions in August and September for all BSVI/ILOB counselors and their supervisors. These meetings were done in lieu of the annual BSVI Statewide Meeting this year.

Lastly, Mr. Dormer stated Katie Frederick is presenting at OCALI-Con on Thursday November 12, 2020 as part of a panel on "Travel Guide for Navigating Systems for Children with Deafness and Blindness."

Council member McKay stated Ohio used all its Supported Employment funding or relinquished that funding. What is the budget for that moving forward? Ms. Pugh responded the VR program is a formula grant, there is a certain amount determined by a formula for

each state to draw down. OOD did not draw down all its funds. We did not match it for the program.

Council member McKay asked if there is a budget process of how it projects money? Ms. Pugh responded that the state is currently going through the biennial budget process and OOD will know more once the Governor establishes or releases his executive budget.

Chairs Comments

Dr. Peters reminded Council members that the Implicit Bias Training was to be completed by November 9, 2020. She also reminded Council members to complete the mandatory Ethics training by December 31, 2020.

If Council members would like to have their emails on the OOD website to let Shirley Marchi know via email.

Dr. Peters stated she would like to have Council members think about participating in at least one subcommittee (WIOA, VR Policies, Annual Report). Council members are to send their preferred subcommittee choice to Shirley Marchi. This topic will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

Council members Discussion/Comments

BVR/BSVI/EIS Reports: Council member Dr. Smith requested that the reports be moved on the agenda so BSVI Deputy Director Dormer is not always last on the agenda.

Public Comments: Council members asked about verbal comments during a Council meeting. Council member Gerhardt stated maybe use comments in a chat. She has concerns about public comments getting out of control. The comments could be accepted over the phone and then brought up in the meeting.

Public Comment

As stated earlier, Mr. Harris Capps submitted comments. BVR Deputy Director Susan Pugh will contact Mr. Capps to discuss his comments.

Adjourn

Council members adjourned the meeting.