

**Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)**  
**State Rehabilitation Council Executive Committee**  
**November 14, 2023**  
**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Frederick Foard, Joliefawn Liddell, Madeline Nunnally, and Justin Spurlock.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Others Present:** Heidi Lawyer, SRC Member; Catherine Harrison, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs; Dale Batten, Deputy Commissioner, DRS; Barbara Burkett, DARS Policy Lead Program Analyst; Meghan Cox, DARS Policy Analyst; Elizabeth Patacca, Policy and Legislative Affairs; Lisa Robertson, DARS Policy Analyst; Liz Leitch, ASL Interpreter; Carrie Humphrey, ASL Interpreter.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Introduction of Members:** Spurlock called the meeting to order. All members and others present introduced themselves.

**Approval of meeting agenda:** No changes. Agenda approved by unanimous consensus.

**Approval of August meeting minutes:** No changes. Motion to approve presented by Foard, seconded by Nunnally and passed by voice vote.

**Matters of Public Comment:** There were no public comments received.

**Discussion:** Cox provided an overview of current SRC membership and recent appointments/reappointments. Foard asked for clarification on state and federal budgets as relates to agency expenditures, which was addressed by Deputy Commissioner Batten.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 10:06 a.m.

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**Meeting Handouts:**

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda
2. Draft Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from August 14, 2023

**Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)**  
**State Rehabilitation Council Quarterly Meeting**  
**November 14, 2023**  
**Draft Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Frederick Foard, Heidi Lawyer, Joliefawn Liddell, Talisha McAuley-Davis, Madeline Nunnally, and Justin Spurlock.

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Kathy Hayfield.

**Others Present:** Dale Batten, Deputy Commissioner DRS; Catherine Harrison, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs; Julie Jacobs, Director of Field Rehabilitative Services; Alison Shaner, WWRC; Kyle Congleton, WWRC; Clay Huie, WWRC; Barbara Burkett, DARS Lead Program Analyst; Lisa Robertson, DARS Policy Analyst; Meghan Cox, DARS Policy Analyst; Elizabeth Patacca, Policy and Legislative Affairs; Betsy Civilette, DARS Communications; Liz Leitch, ASL Interpreter; Carrie Humphrey, ASL Interpreter.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:14 a.m.

**Introduction of Members:** Spurlock called the meeting to order. All members and others present introduced themselves.

**Approval of meeting agenda:** No changes. Agenda approved by unanimous consensus.

**Approval of August meeting minutes:** No changes. Motion to approve presented by Lawyer, seconded by Foard and passed by voice vote.

**Matters of Public Comment:** There were no public comments received.

**Chairperson's Report:** The Chair reviewed the November 13 SRC Annual Retreat and November 14 Executive Committee meeting. He also noted the status of current appointment and recruiting efforts for Council positions/vacancies.

### **DRS Division Report**

DRS Deputy Commissioner, Dale Batten, gave a DRS update, that agency expenditures have increased and reached pre-COVID levels, but that the agency is being mindful of outcomes and expenditures based on predicted expenditures for the next fiscal year. All categories remain open for service and there is not currently a waiting list.

Julie Jacobs, FRS Director, also provided an update. FRS is regaining momentum and closely tracking information on demographics and outreach. She noted the successes of the rapid engagement model, which is being redefined as intentional engagement. The data points most closely associated with tracking intentional engagement are time in service and successful closures. FRS has 10% more clients in service status than last year. FRS has redesigned new counselor skills training. Jacobs attended CSAVR, along with other DARS representatives,

where recruitment and retention challenges continue to be discussed as they persist for all agencies.

### **Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center Report**

Alison Shaner, Director of Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, provided some general comments on the facility tour provided to the Council on 11/13. Shaner also delivered a presentation with general WWRC updates, including: individuals served, vocational training program updates on health occupations and information technology, the PERT program, and ongoing work.

Clay Huie, Driver Rehabilitation Specialist, delivered a presentation on WWRC's driving school training as currently administered and as envisioned to also be delivered virtually in the future.

### **2023 Annual Report Development**

Betsy Civilette, Communications Director, presented a design mock-up of the 2023 Annual Report based on the subcommittee's prior recommendations and received feedback from the SRC. She also covered the two success stories to be featured in the report and took the Council photo. Once drafted, the 2023 Annual Report will be provided to the subcommittee for additional feedback.

### **2023 Annual Report Recommendations Finalized**

Cox circulated draft SRC recommendations for the 2023 Annual Report based on feedback received at the SRC Retreat on 11/13. The recommendations were reviewed and additional changes were made in order to finalize the recommendations.

Motion to approve the SRC recommendations for the 2023 Annual Report presented by Lawyer, seconded by Nunnally, and passed by voice vote.

### **2023 Fair Hearings Report**

Elizabeth Patacca, Policy and Legislative Affairs VR Appeals Coordinator, provided a 2023 Fair Hearings Report (FFY 2022).

DARS received one request for Mediation, which was denied. DARS received three hearing requests. One request was denied because it was past the 60-day appeal deadline. One fair hearing was dismissed because the client did not show up for the hearing. One fair hearing was conducted on the written record as outlined in the VR Policy Manual and was ruled in favor of the agency. DARS received one request for review of impartial hearing officer decisions that was pending from FFY2021. The Designed Reviewing Official remanded the case back to DARS for another hearing. That hearing was dismissed because the client did not show up for the hearing. DARS was party to one civil action; the civil action was dismissed.

There are three hearing officers on contract that serve both DARS and DBVI. Training took place for all hearing officers on Thursday, November 9 and all three are now able to accept fair hearing cases.

### **Consumer Satisfaction Survey**

Barbara Burkett, DARS Lead Program Analyst, gave a brief update on the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

Burkett also presented the 2024 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between DARS and SRC for administration of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

Motion to approve the MOA presented by Lawyer, seconded by Foard, and passed by voice vote. Cox will secure signatures of Commissioner Hayfield and SRC Chair to finalize the document.

### **Policy Division Update**

Catherine Harrison, Director of the Division of Policy and Legislative Affairs, gave updates on proposed VR regulation changes resulting from the periodic review process. These changes are regarding: clarifying priority categories and ability to serve those at risk of losing a job, post employment services, removing references to extended evaluations, removing outdated financial participation provisions, and updating language on personal information use and disclosure.

### **Member Reports**

- Justin Spurlock: In office full-time; spoke to students are part of driver's education in October, also spoke to WWRC students yesterday.
- Heidi Lawyer: PEATC is currently in Transition University session. Contract with VDOE was finalized and PEATC will be starting those offerings. IEP University, Building Strong Parent Advocates, and SEAC training will begin November 21. Finishing up a SPED series and will begin another one in the new year. Had a very well attended Medicaid/Social Security training and have an upcoming Medicaid waiver training. Those are very popular sessions. Had 117 people participate in in the recent SSA/Waiver training. Parent Youth Empowerment Summit is set for September next year. Working on the DARS EPIC project and have completed drafts of student, parent, and DARS counselor training and parent and student resource documents. The student resources are in both text and visual formats. Once those are approved, PEATC will move forward with DARS on marketing and delivering the training.
- Frederick Foard: Appreciates that SRC serves more than perfunctory role and the agency's responsiveness to Council feedback.
- Joliefawn Liddell: dLCV completed voting surveys across Virginia; surveyed over 400 polling sites and awaiting results.
- Madeline Nunnally: Shared information about a DBVI event-- Pre-ETS weekend in Williamsburg with 10 mentors and 26 students plus their parents, would encourage DARS partners to collaborate on similar event.

**Matters of Public Comment:** There were no public comments received.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on March 11, 2024 at the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services Central Office in Henrico.

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**Meeting Handouts:**

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda
2. Draft Meeting Minutes from August 14 Meeting
3. WWRC Presentation: General Updates
4. WWRC Presentation: Driving Instruction
5. 2023 Annual Report Recommendations Working Draft
6. FFY 2022 Fair Hearing Decisions (Redacted)
7. Consumer Satisfaction Report Results
8. FFY 2024 Consumer Satisfaction Survey MOA