

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services

Montgomery, Alabama

Thursday, September 15, 2022

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

AGENDA

Call to Order	Eddie Williams, Chair
Prayer	
Verification of Quorum	Karen Freeman
Verification of Open Meeting Act Notice	Eddie Williams
Approval of Agenda	Eddie Williams
Approval of Minutes for the July 7, 2022 meeting	Eddie Williams
<i>New Business:</i>	
Board Member Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr. Jimmie Varnado Congressional District 2	Eddie Williams Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Commissioner
Swearing-in Ceremony – New Board Member <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ms. Kimberlin L. Love	Ashley Hamlett, General Counsel
ADRS Operations Plan FY 2022 – 2023	Shay Cannon, Chief Financial Officer
ADRS Personnel Staffing Plan FY 2022 – 2023	Tracy Bird, Human Resource Development Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Approval – ADRS Operations Plan FY 2022-2023Approval – ADRS Personnel Staffing Plan FY 2022-2023	Eddie Williams Eddie Williams
Division Updates	Executive Leadership Team
Commissioner’s Comments	Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw

Announcements:

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services **proposed** meeting dates for **2023**:

- Thursday, March 2, 2023 – 10:00 a.m., ADRS, Montgomery/State Office
- Thursday, June 15, 2023 – 10:00 a.m., ADRS, Montgomery/State Office
- Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 10:00 a.m., ADRS, Montgomery/State Office
- Thursday, December 7, 2023 – 10:00 a.m., ADRS, Montgomery/State Office

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services meeting dates for **2022**:

- *Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022 – 10:00 a.m., ADRS, Montgomery/State Office*

Board Business/Discussion

Eddie Williams

Adjourn

Eddie Williams

- Reception honoring Mr. Jimmie Varnado

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
560 South Lawrence Street
Montgomery, Alabama
Minutes
Thursday, September 15, 2022

Call to Order:

Mr. Eddie Williams, Board Chair, called the in-person, open public meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Prayer:

Dr. Graham Sisson, Jr., Executive Director of the Alabama Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD), opened the board meeting with prayer.

Verification of Quorum:

Board members present (in-person): Mr. Eddie Williams, Board Chair; Mr. Kevin Kidd; Mr. Jimmie Varnado; and Mr. Charles Wilkinson. A quorum was declared.

Mr. Williams, board chair, expressed his appreciation to Ms. Kimberlin L. Love, upcoming board member, for her attendance at the board meeting.

Mr. Williams reported that Mrs. Penny Foster, Board Vice-Chair, was participating via conference call due to recovery from knee surgery. Mr. Mitch Strickland was not feeling well and was unable to attend the meeting.

Conference Call: Mrs. Penny Foster and Ms. Michelle Glaze.

Verification of the Open Meetings Act Notice:

Pursuant to the proclamation dated March 3, 2022, the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services' board meeting was conducted in-person and open to the public. The Open Meetings Act allows for electronic participation except to establish a quorum. The Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services requires four members to attend in-person to establish a quorum, but other members may participate electronically.

Mrs. Karen Freeman verified that the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services meeting for September 15, 2022, was posted on the Alabama Secretary of State's website on July 13, 2022, at 9:24 a.m.

The meeting announcement and registration information were posted on the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' public website at the following link: <https://rehab.alabama.gov/about/meet-our-board> with a registration deadline of Friday, September 9, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. CDST. Meeting registration was not necessary for in-person participants, but registration was required for those preferring to participate via conference call. A conference call line was established for board members and the public participating electronically. Upon registration for the conference call, participants received an email with instructions and the telephone number to call. Mrs. Penny Foster, Board Vice-Chair, and Ms. Michelle Glaze participated in the meeting via conference call. There were not any requests from the public. Interpreter services were provided by Mr. Josh Brewer.

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Williams asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Varnado and seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. The motion was approved.

Approval of Minutes for July 7, 2022 Meeting:

The board meeting minutes for the July 7, 2022, meeting were mailed prior to the board meeting. Mr. Williams stated that if there were no corrections, the minutes would stand approved as presented. The board meeting minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

New Business:

Eddie Williams, Chair
Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw,
Commissioner

Board Member Recognition:

Special Recognition – Mr. Jimmie Varnado, Congressional District 2

On behalf of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, Mr. Williams presented Mr. Varnado with a certificate of appreciation from Gov. Kay Ivey recognizing him for outstanding service on the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services. Mr. Varnado performed his duties with the utmost expertise and professionalism. Mr. Williams thanked him for his hard work and dedication to the Board.

On behalf of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Commissioner and the Executive Leadership Team, Commissioner Burdeshaw presented Mr. Varnado with a certificate of appreciation in recognition and gratitude of 14 years and 4 months of dedicated service to the Board. His leadership, personal and civic engagement in the district, willingness to serve, and steadfast advocacy have been an integral part of the department's successes. As a member, vice-chair, and chairman of the Board, Mr. Varnado found and mentored new board members, built relationships with staff and the families that the department serves, took the helm through transitions in leadership, and always found ways to actively engage in the mission. Mr. Varnado's active participation and leadership will be missed. "Thank you" does not adequately convey the appreciation for his countless contributions.

On behalf of Gov. Kay Ivey, Mr. Dave White, Senior Policy Advisor, expressed appreciation to Mr. Varnado for his service and dedication to the Board. He also expressed appreciation to Mr. Williams and Commissioner Burdeshaw for their service to the Board.

There was a reception honoring Mr. Varnado immediately following the board meeting. Commissioner Burdeshaw and Mr. Williams extended an invitation to everyone attending the meeting to join in the celebration honoring Mr. Varnado.

Swearing-in Ceremony – New Board Member: Ms. Kimberlin L. Love

Mr. Williams and Commissioner Burdeshaw welcomed and introduced upcoming board member, Ms. Kimberlin L. Love. Ms. Love is a native of Montgomery and has served in several leadership roles for national leaders in communications and logistical planning. Currently, Ms. Love is the Practice Administrator for River Region Dermatology and Laser, Inc.

Ms. Love's appointment will begin October 1, 2022, as a representative of business and industry for the Second Congressional District. The Board position will become vacant September 30, 2022, when Mr. Varnado's term expires.

Mrs. Ashley Hamlett, General Counsel, administered the Oath of Office for Ms. Love as a member of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services. Ms. Love expressed her willingness and eagerness to commit her time and energy to the well-being of people in Alabama with disabilities.

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Operations & Personnel Staffing Plan - FY 2022 – 2023

Mrs. Shay Cannon, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the ADRS Operations Plan for FY 2022 – 2023, Executive Budget Office (EBO) Form 8. Mrs. Cannon expressed her appreciation to Mr. Matt James, Assistant Chief Financial Officer, and Mr. William Hansen, Budget Accountant, for their assistance in preparing the ADRS Operations Plan. Mr. James and Mr. Hansen are invaluable members of the Accounting/Purchasing/Budget team.

Mrs. Tracy Bird, Human Resource Development Director, reviewed the ADRS Personnel Staffing Plan for FY 2022 – 2023, Executive Budget Office (EBO) Form 9.

Mr. Williams moved to approve and adopt the ADRS FY 2022 – 2023 Operations Plan (EBO Form 8) at the spending level of \$232,102,475 and the ADRS Staffing Plan (EBO Form 9) at the staffing level of 863.50 full-time equivalent positions, and that the board gives authority to the Commissioner and Chief Financial Officer to revise the Operations Plan within these spending and staffing levels. The motion to approve the ADRS Operations & Personnel Staffing Plan for FY 2022 – 2023 was seconded by Mr. Varnado, and the motion was approved.

Board Members' Questions and Division Updates:

The Executive Leadership Team members were provided an opportunity to answer any questions and give updates to their written reports.

Commissioner's Comments:

Commissioner Burdeshaw provided an update on the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** Funding Plan. ADRS will receive \$7 million in the first tranche of legislative-appropriated ARPA funding on October 1, 2022, the start of the new fiscal year.

The purpose of the ARPA funding plan is to alleviate the loss of or delay in receipt of health services due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ADRS will use and distribute funds to improve and enhance health care and health care related services to infants, children, and adults with disabilities in the following programs: Early Intervention, Children's Rehabilitation Service, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and State of Alabama Independent Living/Homebound.

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported Helen Baker, Executive Director of the **STAR (Alabama's Assistive Technology Resource)** program, recently retired. The **Assistive Technology Act** was passed by Congress and signed as the Technology-Related Assistance Act of 1988. It's often called the Tech Act and was reauthorized in 1994, 1998, and 2004. The purpose of the Tech Act is to assist Alabamians with disabilities by improving access to assistive technology that enables them to live more productive and independent lives. While ADRS has housed this program for many years, ADRS has begun a concerted effort to braid funding from the Tech Act with the ADRS Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology (RE&AT) program. The Tech Act can train and share items through a lending library but cannot purchase demonstration equipment or loaner equipment for evaluation purposes. The efforts to braid these funding streams is already paying dividends for quality service provision by expanding the reach for assistive technology training and new partnerships.

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported the State of Alabama **Client Assistance Program (CAP)** is a federally mandated program (34 CFR Section 370), which advises and informs clients and client-applicants of all services and benefits available to them as authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended 29 U.S.C. Section 732. In Alabama, these programs are provided through the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Division of ADRS and through a statewide system of Independent Living Centers. Alabama is one of only a few states in the country in which the agency housing Vocational Rehabilitation Services through ADRS is the designated agency for administering CAP. The Governor holds the authority for designation of the agency responsible for operating CAP in accordance with Section 112 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Federal regulations, 34 CFR Section 370.2(c), indicates that this designation should be an agency independent of any agency that provides treatment, services, or rehabilitation to individuals with disabilities. ADRS has been allowed to continue as the designed state CAP agency because of its status as such prior to 1984 under 34 CFR Section 370.2(d). For the reasons listed in 34 CFR Section 370.2 (c), ADRS, the Alabama Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD), and SACAP approached Governor Ivey about redesignating CAP to the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP). ADAP receives 8 of the 9 protection and advocacy grants for people with disabilities in Alabama. CAP is the ninth protection and advocacy grant.

After initial discussion with the Governor's staff, Governor Ivey announced her intent to redesignate the program. Commissioner Burdeshaw and Dr. Graham Sisson, Executive Director, Alabama Governor's Office on Disability have been actively working with the Rehabilitation Services Administration through the redesignation process that requires specific notifications, public comment periods, and public hearings. ADRS will receive an official letter of redesignation. Once that occurs, the change would become effective 15 days after ADRS is notified. Commissioner Burdeshaw expressed her appreciation to Dr. Sisson and Mr. Dave White, Senior Policy Advisor, Governor's Office, for their assistance throughout the redesignation process to diligently facilitate a smooth transfer.

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported the **2022 AlabamaWorks! Conference** was held in person at the Hyatt Regency - The Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham on September 7 – 9, 2022. ADRS and the Governor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities highlighted award winners during an afternoon session, ahead of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, in October. For the second year, ADRS staff presented multiple concurrent sessions. The sessions focused on the untapped talent within the disability community and services offered by vocational rehabilitation. Mr. Charles Wilkinson, District 6, presented on the topic, Creative Recruitment Strategies (An Untapped Talent Resource). The disruptive changes of the pandemic have created new opportunities for workers with disabilities. Now more than ever, employers realize individuals with disabilities bring tremendous value to any business or organization if given a chance.

Commissioner Burdeshaw was recently contacted by a representative of the **White House, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)** about the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and Early Intervention System. The representative visited ADRS on August 9 - 10, 2022. The team at OMB focuses on programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education. This was his first site visit since COVID, and each representative only gets one site visit per year. He chose Alabama after reaching out to other staffers at the Office of Special Education and the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the only state that was mentioned by both programs for innovative work was Alabama. This was a productive site visit as many questions were answered about specific programs and services. There was also discussion about policy concerns impacting ADRS at the state level and how policy changes might support quality service provision.

Commissioner Burdeshaw and Mr. Kevin Kidd, District 4, announced the **Fourth Annual Governor’s Job Fair for People with Disabilities** is scheduled for Wednesday, October 5, 2022 in from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Mobile Civic Center.

Announcements:

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services meeting date for **2022:**

- **Thursday, December 1, 2022 – 10:00 a.m., ADRS, Montgomery, AL**

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services **proposed** meeting dates for 2023:

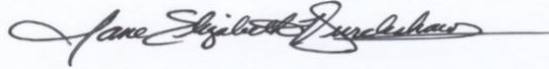
- Thursday, March 2, 2023 - 10:00 a.m., ADRS, Montgomery/State Office
- ~~Thursday, June 15, 2023 – 10:00 a.m., ADRS Montgomery/State Office~~
- Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 10:00 a.m., ADRS Montgomery/State Office
- Thursday, December 7, 2023 – 10:-00 a.m., ADRS Montgomery/State Office

The proposed June 15, 2023 board meeting was changed to June 22, 2023 due to a scheduling conflict. Mr. Williams requested the board members review the proposed meeting dates for 2023 and if there are additional scheduling conflicts, please reach out to Mrs. Karen Freeman at 334-293-7201 or karen.freeman@rehab.alabama.gov.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Minutes were taken by Karen Freeman.

Respectfully submitted:



Jane E. Burdeshaw, Commissioner

Approved:



Eddie C. Williams, Chair