Call to Order
Mikey welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Evaluation/Planning
• Don Alveshere, Bureau of Program Accountability Chief, explained the basics of Financial Participation (FP) and said VR has been evaluating the process and have 4 draft recommendations. #1-Change the maximum amount customers pay from 100% to 80%. #2-Move higher education from the exempt category to non-exempt. The Feds do not require it to be exempt and people who have the means to pay for it should. #3-Instead of filling out the Financial Participation form each year, customers will fill it out only once or as their situation changes. #4-There have been changes in the Dec. 2017 tax bill regarding dependents so the agency is matching language in order to be consistent. Financial impact-changing 100% to 80%, estimates show that it would decrease the portion of what people pay by 10%. Moving higher education to non-exempt would produce a savings of approximately $3million per year. Molly said it sounded like it was well thought out and there were grounds for doing it. Ann opposed the change and said that in the 5 year performance report, the highest $ are in physical and mental restoration. Amanda agreed with Ann that post secondary tuition support is needed and asked how it translates to student costs.

Don-there are certain people who are exempt from FP (SSI, SSDI or public assistance) who will not be impacted; no FP expected from them. VR is looking at what is as equitable as possible for participants. They look at expenses, number in family,
disability related work expenses, all which come off before evaluating what the FP should be. Most customers don’t participate at all.

Julie - The driver is staff in the field who feel like, as they see the case by case situations, they see inequities. This will address the inequities with people who have the resources to pay for tuition. It will help control costs; more money for transition services. Can be waived on a case by case basis. Don - they looked at 18 states and FL is not out of line. Some states use many other criteria like stocks in the mix but FL has avoided that.

Ann said draft tuition policy affect transition students and folks interested in careers. Major expenditures could be cut in other areas, like physical restoration; this policy targets transition kids too much. Allison - When contracts are paid, it puts those costs into the physical restoration category so those figures are inflated. They are currently working with programmers and financial folks to get a better picture. Ann - might be better to have the real expenditures before making the decision.

Don clarified that the service category is training, not specifically higher ed.; after grade 12 (voc. schools, etc.). Mikey sees the need for closing the loopholes and remodeling the brand especially when it comes to schools. In Miami, schools advertise financial aid and finding a job and that means sending them to VR. New coding would give a better picture. There are a few arteries of exemption available for those in need.

Allison - We want to make sure those who really have the need are supported by VR. 10% will be affected by this. Don’t want to close categories and this is one step in the process. Mikey asked how will this affect someone coming into a new job and needing specific equipment to do the job. Allison gave an example of an individual who needs a note taker. Those services are crucial for them to be successful. Tuition will help but it’s not necessarily tied to them as an individual with a disability.

Federal exempt categories - assessment to determine eligibility, counseling and guidance, referrals to other agencies, job related services, rehab technology, post-employment services. Don - when changing the cap from 100% to 80%, logic is that they can still get assistance with their career track.

Ann - What is the outcome? Does the council have time to look at more numbers? Do they need the support of the council? Is it preliminary? Allison - yes. Final recommendations aren’t even put together. Just informing the council now and will bring to the council for review and recommendations later. Then they’ll be incorporating the recommendations that all are in agreement on and then moving forward with rule-making, giving people additional opportunity to comment. Hope to have it go into effect July 1, 2019. Mikey - Will persons in service with a plan be grandfathered in with old rules? Don said yes so there is no change in the middle for them, which is not how every agency does it. Julie - Technical difficulties on how it will be implemented but they are working on it. Ann - asked that the council see the draft before it’s finalized.

- Libby - CSNA had been extended through the end of Feb. due to Hurricane Michael. The survey closed in Dec. and they should receive a draft mid-late February. Preliminary response numbers are 151 from partners, 1,826 individuals, 322 from VR, 29 from employers, 2328 responses total. San Diego State is analyzing data now,
developing findings and recommendations. Libby said the survey could be discussed on the February conference call.

- Ann noted that on the 722 report, no mediations were reported. Last page-issues resolved were in disputes, nature of IPE and costs of services. Appeared to go through the hearing process; Julie said yes.
- Since a quorum was established, the full council adopted the agenda and approved minutes from 11/8. Minutes were not approved from the December 13 rule meeting workshop. Ann said there were no comments from the council or CAP. Minutes will be rewritten.

**Legislative/PA**
- Patrick explained that the Facebook page has not gotten much attention in recent times. Mikey moved to end the FB page. Patrick said the language could stay in the By Laws for now. Julie suggested looking into shutting down as opposed to deleting it (public records law). What’s there may have obligations associated with it. Mikey said we should reach out to Legal as to whether it should be inactivated or deleted due to a possible public records request. Mikey withdrew his motion until guidance from Legal.
- Lucy gave a legislative update, that committees were now meeting and base budgets were being determined for all agencies. Members are coming up for visits in a couple weeks. Got talking points for educating new members and those who have been around for a while. If they get a question, tell them you’ll get back with them and tell Lucy, whose card is included in the packets. It’s better for them to contact her for tracking purposes. Strategy for Jan. 23rd-Meet on the 10th floor at 8:30 for prep, where legislators will be divided out for each member. Plan is to support 5 members going out for outreach. May be helpful for Michael to pair with an experienced member for a couple visits then he can continue on his own. Will make sure all packets are delivered if members can’t meet with them all. Visits will be grouped as efficiently as possible. Roy said that an FRCB member would be participating with our members. They are developing their plan and materials now. Mikey, Donte, Michael Adamus, Ann and Patrick will be participating. Lucy said VR is requesting a continuation budget only. Members should stick to who we are, what we do and the return on investments. If they ask what we need, tell them nothing right now. Stick to education aspects. Lucy said SB68, for the Transportation Disadvantaged, was looking into more accessible transportation. The bill is on the agency’s monitoring list so she will let Kim and Roy know to keep members posted. Mikey reminded everyone of the talking points and margins as they are set up and that members are visiting legislators to let them know what VR does and how they serve their constituents. They are not there to lobby; only to educate and advocate.

**Executive**
- Senior Management Team (SMT) update-Allison addressed the Federal shutdown, saying, in Sept., Education was funded for the whole federal fiscal year so the shutdown doesn’t affect VR. SMT meetings are held every other month, with the next one being the last Friday of January. Project priorities have shifted to spending time on 2 projects from outside VR-the statewide travel system DMS is implementing and a new method for processing P-Card expenses, P-Card Works, which should go
into effect in February. Other 2 large projects-getting documentation for VR Works being put into case management system and looking at the systems in place for Pre Employment Transition Services (PETS) and how it can be improved and streamlined for all. It’s a big project that may take several months but will improve service delivery. Too early to give more information. Mikey asked if they expect to hold focus groups on the project. Julie said the agency has been doing that the last couple of years, talking to providers, staff, each other and documenting new performance indicators. Now there’s an opportunity to put ideas from all stakeholders into action. Julie said the CSNA will be factored in but doesn’t think there’ll be many surprises. Mikey offered the council as a sounding board. Julie said there may have policy changes or clarifications which will come out of it so there will be opportunities for council feedback. Allison said that the Panama City office is still closed but the owner will allow VR to use the front part of the office so staff can start working with PC customers again. Anticipated opening of partial office is scheduled for Jan. 22nd. Lucy’s position has been posted as a legislative affairs and internal/external communications specialist. They hope to overlap with her before she leaves in May. Allison commended Lucy on her hard work for the agency. New DOE Commissioner Corcoran has started in his new position; new Chief of Staff-Alex Kelly, who Allison will report to, will be coming to VR on Monday afternoon.

- Roy discussed the draft 2020 calendar presented in the materials. Mikey is hoping the council will meet in south Area 6 as the Keys need attention. Executive committee said they are good with moving forward with the draft calendar.
- November 2019 meeting - There have been discussions about aligning the meeting with the NCSRC meeting. A call is scheduled with NCSRC about it. Should have info by the quarterly to present to the council.
- Federal checklist - Ann feels the council has met the mission and the list was filled out accurately. Allison agreed. Patrick motioned to approve. Michael seconded motion. No discussion. All in favor as completed. Approved. Roy recommended it be a full council vote.
- Budget - Mikey said that the council is doing well with cutting down on expenses so there is 360,000 of 500,00 left for the second half of the year. Pat motioned to approve budget. Michael seconded. No discussion. All in favor. Approved. Will take to full council. Donte pointed out that there was a cancelled meeting. Mikey said the council will continue to monitor expenses.
- Oct. Action Items complete except for those in progress. Will have a discussion on Action Items at quarterly. Action Items document should be a living document.
- Libby said the potentially eligible customers were added to the survey in December.
- Full council vote: Federal checklist and budget to accept as presented-Ann motioned; Bob seconded. All in favor. Approved. Roll call-approved.
- Comments: Patrick told the council that he will be moving to Lakeland. He will be moving on 2/14.

Vote: Federal checklist and budget approved.

Adjourned