

**Welfare to Work Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature
Minutes of the February 13, 2015 Meeting**

Present: Richard Koubek, Chair; Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Lisa Pinkard for Leg. Monica Martinez, Dennis Nowak for John Nieves; Ellen Krakow; James Andrews; Sr. Lisa Bergeron; Luis Valenzuela; Ayesha Alleyne; Rob Greenberger; Charles Fox; Michael Stoltz; Don Friedman; Nina Leonhardt; Lauren Laurore for Steve Chassman

Excused: Peggy Boyd; Mike Haynes; Kimberly Gierasch; Marjorie Acevedo; Barbara Egloff; Ray O'Rourke; Joan Travan; Gwen O'Shea

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the January meeting were adopted on a motion by Sr. Lisa Bergeron, seconded by Mike Stoltz (Abstention: Dennis Nowak).
2. **Ad Hoc SCCC Committee:** Committee Chair Nina Leonhardt reported that one candidate for the pilot withdrew because she enrolled in a different school, therefore there are several child-care slots now open at Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) for SWEP participants in the pilot. The pilot period will be from January 2015 until December 31, 2017.
3. **Employment Assessment Committee and ADA Policy Proposal:** Don Friedman reported that he and Ellen Krakow would be meeting with the county attorneys immediately after today's Commission meeting to receive their review of the Commission's Americans with Disabilities (ADA) policy and their proposals for a county-wide ADA template. Ellen Krakow stated that she does not want to see the Commission's ADA policy proposal put on hold indefinitely and she hopes that, in each DSS center, there is a front-line worker and a supervisor with authority to make ADA reasonable accommodation decisions while the development of a countywide and DSS/ADA policy continues. James Andrews stated that he believes most clients with disabilities are receiving ADA services. Don Friedman stated that much of what is known about DSS/ADA compliance is anecdotal. Richard Koubek reminded the Commission that the ADA policy discussions have always been meant to catch those clients – especially if they have mental illness - who are undiagnosed, either because the existing State assessment tool is inadequate or because the client hides his/her illness or disability. Don Friedman noted that the best scenario would be for more ADA accommodations to be requested by clients. James Andrews pointed out that there are several computer-tracking systems (CMS, WMS and My Full View) used by DSS and DOL workers to enter data about clients, but these are not always available to or used by all the workers.
4. **Child Support:** James Andrews stated that he is currently working with Jane Smith at DSS, who is examining 230 child-support cases, with the goal of adjusting, where possible, the payments required of non-custodial parents so that these payments do not become disincentives to work, or to parent. He plans to convene the Committee to finalize policy recommendations that will be sent to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA.)
5. **Child Care Commission Resolution:** Mr. Koubek stated that he and Ms. Liguori are working on canvassing for a chair for the proposed child-care commission. They will also

review a draft of the legislation that was provided by Lisa Pinkard. Legislator Martinez would like to introduce the resolution in March.

6. **Child Care Report:** Kathy Liguori announced that a meeting with New York State Office of Children and Families (OCFS) Long Island Regional Director Robin Beller has finally been set for February 26th. At this meeting, Ms. Beller's concerns about the report's data and recommendations regarding the Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) formula will be discussed as well as her questions about how the report defined "quality" child care.
7. **Commission Goals for 2015:** Mr. Koubek continued the discussion of the Commission's 2015 goals that began at the January meeting. Mike Stoltz provided an overview of the health-system and mental-health goals. Kathy Liguori moved, and Charles Fox seconded a motion to adopt the goals as amended, which passed: Yes – 13; No – 0; Abstentions – 2 (James Andrews and Dennis Nowak.) The adopted goals are appended below. Mr. Koubek stated that the goals would be entered into the Commission's report to the Legislature that will be discussed and voted on at the March 20th meeting.
8. **FEGS:** Mr. Koubek announced that Rob Greenberger who has represented FEGS since the Commission was created in 2003 will be leaving to become Executive Director of the Suffolk Y Jewish Community Center in Commack. He thanked Mr. Greenberger for his wise counsel and many contributions to the Commission. Mr. Greenberger thanked the Commission for the opportunities it afforded him to serve the County. He also briefly explained that FEGS will be ending its operations in a few months due to a \$19 million deficit that was discovered late and quite suddenly in 2014. His departure from FEGS is coincidental to this situation. FEGS is currently transferring its contractual obligations to other agencies.
9. **Announcements:**
 - a. Mr. Koubek distributed a flier for the March 13th LI Jobs with Justice "Working But Still Poor" conference at Touro Law Center.
 - b. Mike Stoltz announced the Association for Mental Health and Wellness will be hosting a series of trainings, "Mental Health First Aid," to teach service providers how to help people who are developing a mental illness or are in a mental-health crisis. Just as CPR helps people assist an individual having a heart attack — even without clinical training— Mental Health First Aid will help providers assist someone experiencing a mental health related crisis. In the Mental Health First Aid course, participants will learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help. A schedule of training dates will be announced. Reservations are suggested.
10. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be on Friday, March 20th, 9:30 AM in Conference Room A of the SCDOL One Stop Center.

Commission 2015 Goals

1. Continue to disseminate the Commission's report, "Struggling in Suburbia: Meeting the Challenges of Poverty in Suffolk County," while pursuing these prioritized recommendations in the report:
 - a. Review and make recommendations about staffing levels and access to services at the Suffolk County Department of Social Services (SCDSS), Suffolk County

Department of Labor (SCDOL) and Suffolk County Department of Health (SCDOH).

- b. Monitor the privatization of the County's health centers under Hudson River Health Care and its impact on the provision of health-care services in Suffolk County.
 - c. Monitor Suffolk bus service as it relates to the needs of poor and near-poor people.
 - d. Create a scoring tool to measure supports provided to working-poor people by companies seeking a Suffolk County IDA benefit.
2. Continue to pursue recommendations in the 2014 Commission report, "Who's Minding the Kids? Meeting Challenges and Creating Opportunities for Quality Child Care and Early Learning in Suffolk County," with special attention to these prioritized recommendations:
 - a. Establishing a legislatively-created Child Care and Early Learning Commission
 - b. Supporting increased State funding for child care while continuing to address inequities in Suffolk's State Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) allocation due to the flawed CCBG formula used by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS.)
 3. Continue to plan, implement and evaluate a pilot for expanding on-site educational and work opportunities for work-eligible TANF and Safety Net (SN) SWEP clients at Suffolk Community College and Eastern Suffolk BOCES toward the goal of creating SCDSS/SCDOL "hub centers" for the delivery of multiple SWEP services, including work experience, education, training and child care.
 4. Continue working toward adoption and implementation of a Suffolk County and SCDSS Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy. In addition:
 - a. Monitor the effectiveness of the ADA "Did You Know?" brochure intended to educate individuals applying for public assistance about their rights and opportunities under the ADA.
 - b. Monitor the status and effectiveness of the nonprofit liaison communication lines crafted in 2012 by the Commission's Employment Assessment Committee in cooperation with SCDSS and SCDOL.
 5. Continue to explore Federal and State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) policies toward the goal of eliminating or minimizing disincentives for non-custodial parents to work.
 6. Assess the availability and accessibility in Suffolk County of housing opportunities for HUD-defined low-income families earning under \$52,550 for a family of four which is 50% of the HUD Suffolk Area Median Income (\$105,100 for a family of four.)
 7. Educate members of the Commission, the Suffolk Legislature and community-based service providers about the nature and impact of Governor Andrew Cuomo's Medicaid Reform Task Force transformation of New York's health-care delivery system. This transformation includes:
 - a. Medicaid Managed Care and health home-care management for all Medicaid-eligible recipients;
 - b. The "basics of Medicaid Managed Care" including hospital reform (Delivery System Reform Incentive Program), health home-care management for all

recipients; and the push toward physical health/behavioral health integration of care;

- c. Expansion of Medicaid waivers and funds through the Regional Centers of Excellent (e.g. Pilgrim State Psychiatric Center) to expand services to people with psychiatric disabilities.
8. Pursuant to the expansion of Medicaid waivers through Regional Centers of Excellence identified in goal (7,c) above, which include expansion of supported education and supported employment services, consider a program design(s) to provide additional supports to TANF and SN clients who have behavioral health challenges to help them successfully attain a college education and employment.
9. Continue to assess implementation of the recommendations in the Commission's 2010 sober homes report regarding policies and procedures to improve the oversight and delivery of services at sober homes in Suffolk County.