

**Welfare to Work Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature
Minutes of the January 9, 2015 Meeting**

Present: Richard Koubek, Chair; Lisa Pinkard for Leg. Monica Martinez, DSS Commissioner John O’Neill for John Nieves; Ellen Krakow; Peggy Boyd; James Andrews; Marjorie Acevedo; Jacky Horsley-Guillot for Ray O’Rourke; Charles Fox; Mike Haynes; Nina Leonhardt; Barbara Egloff; Kimberly Gierasch;

Excused: Kathy Liguori; Sr. Lisa Bergeron; Luis Valenzuela; Ayesha Alleyne; Joan Travan; Gwen O’Shea; Michael Stoltz; Don Friedman; Rob Greenberger

Guests: Tom Grecco, DSS; Christa Higgins, DSS;

1. **Minutes:** Chair Richard Koubek thanked the members of the Commission for attending this meeting despite a heavy and unpredicted morning snowfall. Having attained a quorum, the minutes were adopted following several corrections on a motion by Marjorie Acevedo, seconded by DSS Commissioner John O’Neill.
2. **Ad Hoc SCCC Committee:** Committee Chair Nina Leonhardt, via a remote telephone connection, reported that she had met with the Vice President and two child-care officials from Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) regarding the pilot program to expand the current use of SCCC as a DSS/DOL Suffolk Works Employment Program (SWEP) educational and work site. The pilot could begin in the spring semester, 2015.
 - a. Ms. Leonhardt noted that this expansion of a program launched by the Commission, DSS and DOL some years ago, is in keeping with the concept of “hub” centers introduced by James Andrews and currently being used in Erie County, that provide multiple services to SWEP clients. The SCCC officials agreed to add three slots each to the child-care facilities at the Selden and Brentwood campuses for this pilot (one infant; one toddler; one Pre-K) to accommodate SWEP clients seeking to be placed on the SCCC campuses for their SWEP work/educational activities.
 - b. Ms. Leonhardt noted that the child-care services are not provided during the summer - although the SCCC work activities continue over the summer months - and that the Committee had agreed that off-site child-care providers should be identified near each of the three SCCC campuses as well as near the BOCES campuses that will participate in the pilot.
 - c. Commissioner O’Neill expressed concern that the use of off-site child care at the Riverhead campus while on-site child care is available at the Selden and Brentwood campuses might skew the pilot. Ms. Leonhardt reported that there were child-care services at the Riverhead campus but they were discontinued in 2005 due to lack of use. She stated that the area near the Riverhead campus has many child-care providers that could be utilized by SWEP clients participating in the pilot.
 - d. James Andrews and Mr. Koubek both noted that additional funding may be needed for the pilot for such services as expanded child care. Ms. Leonhardt

stated that it would be better to get the pilot rolling in the spring of 2015 and then ask for additional funding if needed.

- e. Mr. Andrews from DOL and Tom Grecco from DSS said that they will begin identifying potential candidates for the pilot.
 - f. Mr. Koubek reported that the Suffolk Department of Public Works (DPW) is holding two public hearings on the bus routes that will be receiving Sunday and extended evening service. He asked if DOL, DSS and BOCES might want to testify about needed routes, which would be of assistance to SWEP clients participating in the pilot. Barbara Egloff of BOCES said that evening service would be of great use to BOCES. She and Mr. Koubek agreed to consult after the meeting about whether it would be useful for BOCES to testify at the DPW hearings.
 - g. Mr. Koubek reminded the Commission that a DSS/DOL/Commission presentation will be made to the Legislature's Human Services Committee sometime in the spring outlining the complex federal work rules that apply to SWEP clients as well as the "hub" pilot underway at SCCC and BOCES. One reason this presentation has been postponed is to allow time for the new DOL Commissioner, Frank Nardelli, to assume his responsibilities.
3. **Employment Assessment Committee and ADA Policy Proposal:** Ellen Krakow reported that the county attorneys are now reviewing the Commission's draft ADA policy she and Don Friedman created comparing the Committee's draft ADA policy with the existing DSS/ADA policy, as well as other existing County ADA policies. She said that not much has happened in recent weeks while the attorneys have been studying the policies. She reiterated that Deputy Assistant County Executive Luis Montes conveyed County Executive Bellone's strong desire that there be a county-wide ADA policy. She noted that this policy would then need to be adjusted to meet the individual and very differing needs of each major department, such as DSS, DOL, Health, the police, etc.
 4. **Child Support:** James Andrews stated that he has been working with DSS to identify priority issues related to the State's child-support rules that are disincentives for fathers to work because the payment and penalties for non-payments consume most or all of their wages. He said that he will convene the Ad Hoc Child Support Committee to discuss strategies for achieving these three priorities: (1) Lowering the State and/or federal 9% interest rate imposed when a non-custodial parent fails to meet the child-support requirements; (2) Improving the State's call-in center that often provides misinformation as well as their website which is difficult to navigate; (3) Possibly requesting a waiver for non-custodial parents to pay the principal only and not interest on their child support during the first 6 to 12 months of work, thereby incentivizing them to work.
 5. **Child Care Commission Resolution:** Lisa Pinkard reported that Legislator Monica Martinez plans to introduce the resolution creating a Child Care Commission, perhaps in February. She, Mr. Koubek and Kathy Liguori have been working on the "Whereas" clauses for the resolution as well as the names of people/organizations who will serve on the new commission.
 6. **Commission Goals for 2015:** Mr. Koubek reviewed the Commission's goals for 2014, noting that most of them had been addressed.
 - a. Tom Grecco spoke about the sober homes goal, noting that while the State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) does not define and hence

regulate sober homes, DSS has gone forward through the Sober Homes Oversight Board to create a pilot program that will provide increased DSS shelter payments for sober homes that provide enhanced services and meet certain quality requirements, such as on-site supervision. He noted that several providers responded to the DSS Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and that the program is close to being launched contingent upon providers securing sites and budgets which concur with the RFQ.

- b. Kimberly Gierasch addressed the health-clinics goal, noting that progress has been made toward transforming all but the Dolan Center into Federally Qualified Health Centers administered by Hudson River Health Care. The Dolan Center will remain affiliated with LI Jewish/North Shore Hospital System.
 - c. Mr. Koubek stated that most of the 2014 goals will likely be carried over into 2015.
 - d. Peggy Boyd suggested that a new goal be added that would explore the County's mental-health delivery system. Commissioner O'Neill suggested a goal that would assess housing for low-income Suffolk residents. Both of these suggested goals will be explored at the February meeting when the 2015 goals are established..
7. **Meeting Schedule for 2015:** The Commission reached consensus to continue meeting on the second Friday of each month.
 8. **Announcements:** James Andrews commended Mike Stoltz for hiring as a Clubhouse case manager a veteran with a criminal-justice degree who had been on public assistance.
 9. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be on Friday, February 13th, 9:30 AM in Conference Room A of the SCDOL One Stop Center.