

**Welfare to Work Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature**

Minutes of the February 10, 2017 Meeting

Present:

Richard Koubek, Chair
Christiana DeLisi (Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory)
Charles Fox (EOC-LI)
Don Friedman (Empire Justice Center)
Richard Krebs, SC Department of Labor
Lisa Pinkard for Legislator Monica Martinez
Jeffrey Reynolds (Family and Children's Association/LICADD);
Michael Stoltz (Association for Mental health and Wellness)

Excused: Ayesha Alleyne (Wyandanch Homes and Property Development Corporation); Peggy Boyd (Family Service League); Sr. Lisa Bergeron (Catholic Charities); Barbara Egloff (Eastern Suffolk BOCES); Kim Gierasch (Suffolk County Department of Health) Greta Guarton (LI Coalition for the Homeless); Michael Haynes (LI Cares/Harry Chapin Food Bank); Ellen Krakow (Nassau/Suffolk Law Services); Nina Leonhard (Suffolk County Community College); Christian Liambach (SC Association of Municipal Employees) Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Commissioner John O'Neill (Suffolk County Department of Social Services); Rachel Seiler (Community Development Corporation of LI); Luis Valenzuela (LI Council of Churches);

1. **Minutes:** Chair Richard Koubek thanked all for attending this meeting one day after a major blizzard and he apologized for not cancelling the meeting due to what turned out to be more difficult driving conditions that he had anticipated, with many offices and schools closed or having delayed openings. He noted that this was the first time since the Commission was created in 2003 that it did not achieve a quorum. Approval of the minutes was tabled because there was no quorum.
2. **Suffolk Bus Cuts:** Mr. Koubek reported that on January 30th he spoke at a press conference organized by Vision Long Island in support of additional State funding for Suffolk buses. His statement read at the press conference called attention to the burden that bus cuts place on low-income workers. Suffolk County Legislative Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory and Nassau County Legislative Presiding Officer Norma Gonsalves also spoke, as did representatives of community, labor and business groups. The press conference called for: additional State bus funding for both Nassau and Suffolk; returning a portion of the MTA tax to help fund buses; should Uber be permitted in Nassau and Suffolk, assigning a portion of its revenues to fund buses. Christina DeLisi confirmed a report Mr. Koubek heard that Presiding Office Gregory is coordinating a bi-county, bi-partisan bus trip to Albany in support of additional State funding for each county's bus system.
3. **Supportive Housing Work Group:** Mr. Koubek reported that the Work Group is meeting immediately following today's Commission meeting.
4. **Child Care Commission May Summit:** Lisa Pinkard reported that the Child Care Commission's plans for the May summit are moving forward with speakers being lined up and workshop titles formalized.
5. **2016 Commission Goals:** There ensued a discussion of the 2017 goals as modified at the January meeting with a focus on the following.

- a. “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 toward the goal of creating SCDSS/SCDOL ‘hub centers’ for the delivery of multiple SWEP services, including work experience, education, training and child care.” Mr. Koubek again reiterated that the pilot should be used as a platform to explain to the Education and Human Services Committee of the Legislature the constraints that federal TANF laws and regulations place on SWEP clients and SCDOL.
 - b. It was agreed that the SCCC pilot should be linked to this goal: “Monitor changes in federal TANF laws and regulations that may be implemented by the Trump Administration with special attention to educational and training opportunities for SWEP clients.” There was discussion about the utility of holding Commission public hearings to tell the stories of SWEP clients struggling with federal restrictions on educational and training opportunities. Richard Krebs agreed to provide the Commission with data on the number of SWEP clients who have participated in education and training activities.
 - c. Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds led a discussion of this proposed goal: “Assess the impact of opioids on communities/people of lower socioeconomic status” suggesting that this be added to the goal: “with special attention on the impact on young people.” He also stated that the Commission should revisit the sober homes issue, which is related to the lack of both housing and treatment options for people addicted to alcohol and drugs. Dr. Reynolds stated that the Sober Homes Oversight Board has a pilot for enhanced payments to sober homes providers in return for adherence to strict guidelines, which is showing some promise. The two providers are Brighter Tomorrows and Community Housing Innovations. Dr. Reynolds noted that this is a very small pilot and does not significantly affect the many sober homes that operate with minimal or no government oversight. Mr. Koubek suggested that the Welfare to Work Commission have a joint meeting with the Sober Homes Oversight Committee to update progress on this issue as well as the State’s continued unwillingness to accept oversight of sober homes. There was consensus to hold this meeting in the spring.
6. Next meeting: March 10, 9:30AM at DOL