

**cWelfare to Work Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature
Minutes of the January 10th, 2014 Meeting**

Present: Richard Koubek, Chair; Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; James Andrews; Jacky Horsley; Don Friedman; Ellen Krakow; Rob Greenberger; Debbie Joseph; Marjorie Acevedo; Charles Fox; Leg. Monica Martinez; Barbara Egloff; John Nieves; Peggy Boyd;

Excused: Kimberly Gierasch; Sr. Lisa Bergeron; Nina Leonhardt; Michael Stoltz; Jeff Reynolds; Gwen O'Shea; Michael Haynes; Joan Travan

Absent: Gwen Branch

Guests: Roger Clayman, Executive Director, Long Island Federation of Labor; Anita Halasz, Executive Director, Long Island Jobs with Justice

1. **Election of Commission Chair and Vice Chair:** Mr. Koubek reminded the Commission that the Chair and Vice Chair are elected for a two-year term at the same time that a new Suffolk Legislature is sworn in. Peggy Boyd moved and Marjorie Acevedo seconded a motion to re-elect Richard Koubek Chair and Kathy Liguori Vice Chair. Ms. Liguori thanked the Commission but also noted that the time is approaching to consider new leadership. Mr. Koubek agreed that, in two years, the Commission may need other members to step up as Chair or Vice Chair. Both he and Ms. Liguori thanked the members for their confidence and for their many hours of service. Mr. Koubek pointed out that the Commission has excellent working relations with the new Presiding Officer, Legislator DuWayne Gregory, the new Deputy Presiding Officer, Legislator Jay Schneiderman and with the Republican Minority Leader, Legislator John Kennedy. Mr. Koubek welcomed Legislator Monica Martinez who will serve as the Chair of the Legislature's Human Services Committee.
2. **Minutes:** Minutes of the November meeting were adopted unanimously on a motion by Kathy Liguori, seconded by Don Friedman.
3. **DSS Shelter Policies:** Mr. Koubek asked John Nieves to report on the status of the congregate care shelters, noting that it was a significant accomplishment for the Department to secure two of these shelters given the long-standing opposition to such shelters from local civic groups.
 - a. Mr. Nieves stated that DSS did not close any Temporary Housing Assistance (THA) sites or cancel provider's contracts when the Department opened the two larger scale facilities in western Suffolk. Mr. Nieves stated DSS opened the two large-scale facilities to house families that were in motels without any case management services and noted the enormous expense incurred by the County when homeless people are sheltered in motels. He described on-site services that are provided at THA sites such as counseling services and child care versus the virtually non-existing services when in motels. Mr. Nieves also stated that the homeless families are now receiving better services at a lower cost to the Suffolk county taxpayers.
 - b. Peggy Boyd expressed concern about the hostility to the children from the Hauppauge shelter who are entering the Hauppauge school system. She also

expressed concern about the resolution introduced by Legislator John Kennedy that would close the Hauppauge shelter. Mr. Nieves stated that less than a dozen homeless students temporarily residing at the Hauppauge THA site have been placed in the Hauppauge School District, which has about 4100 children according to their website, and the additional children equate to less than half a percent of the Hauppauge school district's entire student body. James Andrews pointed out that some of the opposition to the shelter and its children may have been triggered by the fact that the homeless children were placed in the most crowded elementary school, thereby causing that school to have to redistrict incoming neighborhood children to a different elementary school. Kathy Liguori and Mr. Koubek both stated that this indicates bad student-personnel planning on the part of the school district.

- c. Ellen Krakow stated that she has found many school district officials somewhat uninformed about the McKinney-Vento federal requirements for school districts that are receiving homeless children from shelters. Peggy Boyd added that many district officials are not clear as to what documents can legally be required of children entering school systems and that some homeless families are unduly burdened by these documentation requirements. Legislator Martinez said that the Brentwood School District liaison is very involved in educating the community about McKinney-Vento. Barbara Egloff offered to have the Eastern Suffolk BOCES administrator who is responsible for enforcing McKinney-Vento speak at the next meeting of the Commission to provide information on what school districts are required to do, under the provisions of McKinney-Vento, for homeless children.
- d. Mr. Koubek asked Mr. Nieves what the Department would like the Commission to do to support the Hauppauge shelter. Mr. Nieves said he would check with the Commissioner and report back to Mr. Koubek and Mrs. Liguori.
- e. Ms. Boyd asked Mr. Nieves about what appeared to be more stringent eligibility requirements for homeless people to be admitted to THA sites. Mr. Nieves stated that 94ADM20 and 96ADM20, which govern eligibility for homeless applicant/recipients, have been in force for close to twenty years, but have not been enforced to the letter. He said that DSS currently uses an assessment tool and conducts collateral contact to former landlords to determine THA eligibility for each homeless person. He said that the Department is making every effort to provide THA especially during the extreme cold weather and that it will continue to be as flexible as the regulations allow during the cold months. Ms. Boyd said that, in her experience, homeless people have great difficulty providing the documentation required by DSS. Mr. Friedman stated that he believes the regulations are now being enforced with too much restriction or that they have been misinterpreted but that positive discussions are taking place with the Empire Justice Center and Nassau Suffolk Law Services to resolve this issue. Ellen Krakow said that Nassau Suffolk Law Services has been pleased by Commissioner O'Neill's willingness to meet to resolve the issues around shelter eligibility.

4. **Child Care Committee:**

- a. **Public Hearings:** Chair Kathy Liguori stated that the eight hours of child-care public hearings produced a wealth of information from numerous experts in the field. She also noted that the focus groups which preceded the formal hearings gave parents opportunities in more intimate settings to tell their stories. She reiterated that the on-line parent survey has already yielded 100 responses. Other surveys are being collected at centers. She noted that there were few providers who were able to leave their work sites to testify and that there may be need for a special evening forum to provide them with an opportunity to testify. She will convene a meeting of the Child Care Committee in the next several weeks to debrief the hearings and to discuss a providers' forum. Marjorie Acevedo stated that she learned a great deal about this complex industry during the hearings. Mr. Koubek stated that one over-riding take away from the hearings is to educate legislators and the public that early-childhood education is a complex responsibility that requires professional training and that it cannot be done by anyone. It requires training and skills that transcend good parenting skills. Rob Greenberger said that one goal of the report is to market early childhood learning and child care so that people understand it is much more than "babysitting." He was especially impressed with the fact that 85% of a child's brain development takes place before the age of 5, yet almost all public spending on education is directed at children over the age of 5. Mr. Friedman reminded the Commission that he reported on a workshop he attended in the fall that made this same point. Mr. Koubek told Mr. Friedman that his workshop report should be folded into the Commission's findings.
 - b. **CCBG Letter:** Mr. Nieves stated that, with the departure of New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Gladys Carrion, the appointment of an Acting Commissioner and the coming State budget negotiations and child-care allocations, the Commission should send a letter to OCFS reaffirming our support for a change in the funding formula while thanking OCFS for the additional \$1 million in funding received for 2013 and noting the positive impacts of the additional funding. Mr. Nieves reported that DSS is drafting its own letter and that he will share this with Mr. Koubek and Ms. Liguori. Ms. Liguori moved and Ellen Krakow seconded a motion that the Commission send a letter to OCFS: (1) thanking them for the increased funding; (2) again asking for a change in the Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) formula so that it reflects the actual demand for child care; (3) informing OCFS of the child-care hearings that focused in part on the need for additional funding. The motion passed unanimously. The letter will be drafted after receipt of the DSS letter and will either be voted on electronically or at the next Commission meeting. Several Commission members stated that the core of the CCBG problem is that the State needs to increase the overall funding for child care. Mr. Koubek said that this is a matter the Commission needs to take up with the legislature and the Governor, not OCFS.
5. **Employment Assessment Committee:** Mr. Koubek reported that he, Ms. Liguori and Legislator Gregory had a very productive meeting with DSS Commissioner John O'Neill and John Nieves in November to discuss improving communication and cooperation between the

Commission and DSS. At that meeting, Commissioner O'Neill promised a response to the ADA policy proposal by January 18th. The Commissioner had some serious concerns about burdens he believes the policy will place on his Department. These will be discussed once the DSS assessment of the proposed policy is received.

6. **IDA Scoring:** Mr. Koubek pointed out the growing media attention being placed on income inequality, including reports that both major parties are now taking up this issue. He noted that a *New York Times* report on poverty, marking the 50th anniversary of the War on Poverty, concluded that, despite all the programs that have helped people, such as Food Stamps and the Earned Income Tax Credit, the real causes of poverty need to be addressed including: the loss of unionized jobs, the outsourcing of jobs; stagnant American wages. He pointed out that the Commission's poverty report addressed one small area involving jobs and wages – Industrial Development Agency (IDA) grants and tax reductions that are given to companies in return for the promise that they will create jobs. He pointed out that State Comptroller Tom DiNaploi has issued numerous reports citing good IDA grants as well as many that take advantage of the system, accepting the IDA incentives while not creating new jobs or creating low-paying jobs. Following a request by Suffolk County IDA Chair Anthony Manetta, the Commission's IDA Committee met on January 6th and drafted a scoring tool that the IDA could use to assess applications for IDA grants. The draft scoring tool is appended below. Long Island Federation of Labor Executive Director Roger Clayman spoke about the importance of monitoring IDA grants so as to distinguish good IDA recipients from those that are exploiting the system. He noted that the Suffolk IDA has generally done a good job of relating IDA incentives to real job creation. Mr. Koubek stated that he attended a press conference called by County Executive Steve Bellone in the spring of 2013 at which Mr. Bellone condemned the Marriot Corporation for building its new hotel in Islip with out-of-state, non-union workers, despite the fact that the Town of Islip provided them with a significant IDA tax reduction. Kathy Liguori suggested that the scoring tool be re-ordered so that the benefits more directly related to poor people rather than the union benefits lead off each section of the tool. The Commission consensus was that union benefits are major vehicles for reducing poverty and should receive prominence in the tool. James Andrews stated that the IDA scoring tool goes to the heart of the Commission's mission and he asked for time to share it with DOL Commissioner Sammy Chu and senior DOL staff. Mr. Koubek said that this would provide excellent feedback. The scoring tool will be voted on at the February meeting. Ms. Acevedo agreed with Mr. Clayman that the County IDA is doing a good job, but that the town IDAs sometimes do not. She thought that the scoring tool might provide a model for all Suffolk IDAs to use and would also raise the standard of IDA grants at both the town and County levels.
7. **Sunday Bus Service:** Mr. Koubek announced that Sunday bus service began on January 5th and that, on the first weekend, over 1,000 riders utilized the buses. He reminded the Commission that the ten routes reach 70% of the low-income communities the Commission had identified as needing Sunday service.
8. **Commission Goals:** Mr. Koubek reviewed the 2013 Commission goals, almost all of which were acted on. He asked members to think about 2014 goals which will be discussed at the next meeting.
9. **Next Meeting:** Mr. Koubek stated that several members have expressed a desire to move the regular meetings off the second Friday of the month. This will be discussed at the next meeting which will be February 7th.

**Proposed Scoring Tool To Measure Poverty-reducing Community Benefits
Offered by Suffolk County IDA Applicants**

This scoring tool can be used to evaluate poverty-reducing community benefits Suffolk County IDA applicants are willing to offer in return for an IDA incentive. The specific scores for each benefit and compliance evaluation strategies are to be developed.

Community Benefits Agreed to By IDA Recipients Score (to be determined)

Short-term Benefits during Construction Phase

- Negotiates a Project-Labor agreement ___
- Utilizes an approved New York State Apprenticeship Program ___
- Does outreach to minorities within the context of a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program ___
- Hires community contractors ___
- Hires minority contractors ___
- Hires local community workers ___
- Develops in an economically distressed community ___

Long-term Benefits after the Business Begins Operations

- Permits unionization of workers (neutrality agreement) ___
- Pays the Suffolk County Living Wage ___
- Hires people with mental or physical disabilities ___
- Hires local community workers ___
- Hires minorities ___
- Hires long-term unemployed people ___
- Hires local high school and college graduates ___
- Hires public-assistance clients from the SWEP program ___
- Hires ex-offenders who are in reentry programs ___
- Provides work settings for BOCES and college vocational-training students ___
- Provides internships for high school and college vocational-education students ___
- Provides on-the job training for skills development and career advancement ___
- Provides training and/or professional development opportunities through partnerships with colleges and career training centers ___
- Provides child care assistance to workers:
 - Child care subsidies for low-wage workers ___
 - In-kind assistance (e.g., playground equipment) to child care providers utilized by workers in return for parents receiving tuition discounts ___

TOTAL ___