

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

**Minutes of the December 8, 2017 Meeting**

**Present:**

Richard Koubek, Chair  
Barbara DeFina (Suffolk County Community College)  
Christina DeLisi (Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory)  
Barbara Egloff (Eastern Suffolk BOCES)  
Kim Gierasch (Suffolk County Department of Health)  
Gabrielle Fasano for Greta Guarton (LI Coalition for the Homeless)  
Richard Krebs, (SC Department of Labor)  
Commissioner John O'Neill (SC Department of Social Services)  
Jeffrey Reynolds (Family and Children's Association/LICADD)

**Excused:**

Ayesha Alleyne (Wyandanch Homes and Property Development Corporation); Sr. Lisa Bergeron (Catholic Charities); Peggy Boyd (Family Service League); Don Friedman (Empire Justice Center); Charles Fox (EOC-LI); Michael Haynes (LI Cares/Harry Chapin Food Bank); Ellen Krakow (Nassau/Suffolk Law Services); Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Christian Limbach (SC Association of Municipal Employees); Lisa Pinkard for Legislator Monica Martinez; Michael Stoltz (Association for Mental Health and Wellness); Luis Valenzuela (LI Council of Churches)

**Absent:**

Rachel Seiler (Community Development Corporation of LI)

1. **Public Hearing on Federal Social Welfare Funding Reductions:** Commission members discussed the October 10<sup>th</sup> public hearing on the potential negative impacts that the proposed federal budget might have on Suffolk County human-services programs. Chair Richard Koubek pointed out that the Commission heard three hours of testimony from 13 nonprofit and government agency representatives as well as Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory, Education and Human Services Chair, Legislator Monica Martinez and Legislator Leslie Kennedy. There was very positive consensus about the testimony and resulting report sent to all Suffolk County legislators as well as the County Executive, major department heads and State and federal elected officials who represent Suffolk County. Mr. Koubek noted that he spoke with Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory on December 7<sup>th</sup> about the possibility of holding a joint press conference with the County Executive on how the proposed federal tax bill, projected to add \$1.5 trillion to the federal debt over ten years, might lead to even further human-services cuts. The Presiding Officer agreed to speak with the County Executive about a date for this press conference.
2. **Supportive Housing Work Group:** Mr. Koubek stated that the Work Group continues to meet. It is crafting recommendations to be included in their report to the Legislature which may be ready by the end of 2017 or early in 2018. He distributed copies of the report's major findings and draft recommendations to date. The Commission reviewed the draft recommendations. Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds suggested that sober homes might be given greater attention in the report and recommendations since this issue intersects with supportive housing. He noted that the NYS State Rosenthal bill proposes a work group to

address the lack of regulation of sober homes. Mr. Koubek suggested that Dr. Reynolds attend the next Supportive Housing Work Group meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> to raise this issue. Dr. Reynolds also asked that Legislator Monica Martinez be approached about taking the lead on the Sober Homes Oversight Board now that Legislator Kate Browning is leaving that role due to her term limit. There was also extensive discussion about the difficulty of placing people with multiple diagnoses or co-occurring disorders in certain supportive housing settings, which may not suit their needs or where their behavior might violate that provider's regulations. The report will address these challenges.

3. **Welfare to Work Commission Goals:** Mr. Koubek distributed the 2017 Commission goals for review. Most of the 2017 goals received Commission attention.
  - a. Regarding the privatization of the County's health centers, Kim Gierasch stated that service delivery is proceeding as planned and that there have been few complaints from the public or from advocates.
  - b. Regarding the IDA tool, Mr. Koubek stated that he briefly reached out to Sarah Lansdale at the Suffolk Planning Commission but needs to follow up with her to set a meeting with IDA staff.
  - c. Regarding the SCCC pilot, Barbara DeFina stated that staff changes at SCCC had temporarily stalled the child-care portion of the pilot. Richard Krebs noted that 28 DOL/DSS clients are currently placed in SCCC courses, which is slightly lower than previous counts. He will provide data on SCCC work assignments. It was agreed that the pilot needs to be reexamined in 2018.
  - d. Regarding support for the adoption of a County-wide ADA policy, Commissioner John O'Neill stated that he believes the County policy is now completed but he will check with the County Attorney's office. In the interim, DSS has begun a required on-line training for all staff. He also noted that Michael Stoltz has been assisting the Department with staff training on how to recognize and deal with mental-health issues.
4. **Child Care Commission:** Mr. Koubek announced that the Child Care Commission summit will be on Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at SCCC.
5. **Announcements:**
  - a. Mr. Koubek announced that a Martin Luther King interfaith service and choir concert will be held on January 14<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign
6. **Next meeting:** January 12<sup>th</sup>.