

**Welfare to Work Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature
Minutes of the October 12th , 2012 Meeting**

Present: Richard Koubek, Chair; Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Charven Pierce for Legislator DuWayne Gregory; Ray O'Rourke; Peggy Boyd; Charles Fox for Marcia Spector; Ellen Krakow; Bridget DePasquale; Kimberly Gierasch; Roni DeKooning for Michael Stoltz; James Andrews; Roland Hampson; Gwen Branch; Don Friedman; Marjorie Acevedo; Rob Greenberger; Lori Andrade; Gwen O'Shea

Excused: Michael Haynes; Jeff Reynolds; Frank Casiglia; Barbara Egloff; Debbie Joseph; Nina Leonhardt

1. **Minutes:** Minutes of the September meeting were adopted unanimously on a motion by Marjorie Acevedo, seconded by James Andrews.
2. **Child-Care Funding:** Richard Koubek thanked the Commission for the e-vote on the Commission's child care report regarding the negative impacts that the OCFS/CCBG funding reductions would have on the child-care industry and the larger Suffolk economy. Mr. Koubek reported that David Koritz, an Economics Professor formerly with Buffalo State College and Roger Williams College, reviewed the report and found its findings quite solid.
 - a. Mr. Koubek announced that the press conference to release the report, which was going to be held on October 15th, was postponed until November 16th because Legislator John Kennedy believed that there was a chance that positive negotiations between the County and OCFS might resolve the issue. Unfortunately, he subsequently learned from Legislator Kennedy that these negotiations, to his knowledge, were not taking place.
 - b. The report will be presented to the Legislature's Human Services Committee at 10AM on November 16th, followed by a press conference at 11:00 AM. The report will be sent to every Suffolk County legislator and every State senator and assemblyperson representing Suffolk, all of whom will be invited to the press conference.
 - c. Kathy Liguori reported that she met with Legislator Tom Cilmi who understood the economic impacts of the OCFS/CCBG reductions. He spoke about the Suffolk County budget and expressed his concerns about contract agencies that he claimed duplicate services and pay high executive salaries. He is interested in attending a future Commission meeting. Several Commission members expressed surprise at Legislator Cilmi's claims about nonprofit executive salaries and it was suggested that he take up this issue with Human Services Chair, Legislator DuWayne Gregory.
 - d. Ms. Liguori also reported on a very positive meeting she had with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's staff regarding the child-care funding cuts. The aide was going to ask Senator Gillibrand to contact the Governor's office regarding the formula used to allot CCBG funds to Suffolk. The aide also agreed that the federal and State governments need to provide adequate child-care funding. She asked for personal stories of families hurt by the cuts that were recently provided to Ms. Liguori by the Child Care Council of Suffolk. Ms. Liguori also reported on a recent media

story about a judge in Mount Kisko who removed a DSS freeze on child-care intakes. Mr. Koubek further reported that Nassau County has reduced its child-care eligibility level from 275% to 200% of FPL. Gwen O'Shea stated that the Nassau County Executive's budget justifies this reduction, in part, by the fact that Suffolk County has reduced its eligibility to 100% of FPL. A number of Commission members expressed concern that Nassau would use Suffolk's unique funding reductions to justify a decrease in eligibility.

3. **Suffolk Health Centers:** Kimberly Gierasch again reported that Suffolk County's Department of Health (SCDOH) does not plan to re-apply for Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) status for the Suffolk health centers because they failed to qualify for this status. She again stated that several of the County's centers, in addition to the Coram Center, may be taken over by Hudson River Health Care (HRHC) which is an FQHC. She noted a great deal of confusion and unnecessary concern by employees, advocates and the public about these negotiations. She stated that FQHC status actually raises the quality of services while bringing additional federal funds to the centers. While a number of Commission members agreed that FQHC status via HRHC would likely be a positive move, there was also concern that Suffolk may be using the FQHC process as a vehicle for privatizing and off-loading its public-health responsibilities. The John J. Foley Nursing Home sale to a private contractor was cited as another example of privatization. Richard Koubek and Don Friedman both noted that public health institutions accept responsibility for exceptionally vulnerable patients and clients who are often eschewed by private institutions, such as young quadriplegics who will require lifetime care.
4. **Staffing:** Roland Hampson reported that SCDSS is in need of additional staffing but that the County Executive's 2013 budget did not contain the kinds of draconian staffing reductions that were proposed by outgoing County Executive Steve Levy for 2012. He said that discussions for staff restorations were taking place with the County Executive and that he did not see a need for the Commission to take a position at this time. James Andrews took the same position as Mr. Hampson regarding SCDOL in the 2013 budget proposal.
5. **Employment Assessment Committee:** Chair Robert Greenberger distributed a draft disabilities assessment tool for comment by Commission members. He noted that this tool, when completed, would be incorporated into the SCDSS/ADA policy that the Committee is developing with SCDSS and would be used in SCDSS intake process to identify persons with disabilities. A number of Commission members welcomed discussion of this tool, noting that the Commission has unsuccessfully sought a similar tool since its inception in 2003. Mr. Koubek noted that the tool might be useful for all intakes and not just those suspected of having a disability. The tool was well received by the Commission, with only minor editorial suggestions.
6. **Poverty Report:** Richard Koubek shared with the Commission a draft outline of the Suffolk poverty report. The outline was well received. The Commission then entered an extended "brainstorming" session on what recommendations should be included in the report. Mr. Koubek stated that the testimony received from the hearings and focus groups provided excellent descriptive and analytic stories and data on the nature and extent of poverty in Suffolk. However, the primary responsibility for developing County recommendations would fall on the Commission. Poverty Hearings Committee Co-Chair Don Friedman suggested a template that might show short-term and long-term, practical and visionary actions by the County while acknowledging the need for State and federal interventions as

well. Some broad topics were discussed such as transportation, education and training, job creation and economic development. It was agreed that the Poverty Hearings Committee would meet on November 5th to begin outlining specific County recommendations.

7. **Next Meeting:** Due to a conflict with the Child Care Council of Suffolk's annual event, the November 9th Commission meeting was changed to Thursday, November 15th 9:30 AM, SCDOL One Stop Center.