

**Welfare to Work Commission  
Of the Suffolk County Legislature  
Minutes of the January 13, 2012 Meeting**

**Present:** Richard Koubek, Chair; Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Michael Stoltz; Peggy Boyd; Pam Killoran; Ellen Krakow; Jeff Reynolds; Bridget DePasquale; Don Friedman; Debbie Joseph; Roland Hampson; Barbara Stootoff for Eric Lopez; Rushka Tcholakova; Josh Slaughter for Leg. Kate Browning

**Excused:** Barbara Egloff; Rob Greenberger; Michael Haynes, Nina Leonhardt; Frank Casiglia; Frederick Combs for Joan Grant; Gwen Branch; Kimberly Gierasch

**Guest:** Dr. Edward Hernandez, SCDSS

1. **Greeting from SCDOL Commissioner Sammy Chu:** The new Department of Labor Commissioner, Sammy Chu, began the meeting by offering greetings to the Commission. He looks forward to working with the Commission. Chair Richard Koubek stated that members of the Commission would like to meet with him, which he agreed to do in February.
2. **New Commission Member:** Mr. Koubek introduced Rushka Tcholakova who will be representing the new Commission seat awarded by the Legislature to the Health and Welfare Council of LI.
3. **Minutes:** Minutes of the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting were adopted unanimously on a motion by Pam Killoran, seconded by Kathy Liguori.
4. **Election of Commission Officers:** Chair Richard Koubek and Vice Chair Kathy Liguori indicated their desire to serve another two-year term as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. Mr. Koubek asked if there were any other nominations. No nominations were forthcoming. Michael Stoltz moved and Debbie Joseph seconded a motion to re-elect Richard Koubek as Chair and Kathy Liguori as Vice Chair of the Welfare to Work Commission, 2012-2013. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Koubek thanked the Commission, on behalf of himself and Ms. Liguori, for their continuing support and for their hard work which is yielding results.
5. **New Suffolk Legislature Committees:** Mr. Koubek announced that the Suffolk Legislature has divided its Health and Human Services Committee into two separate committees: Health and Human Services. The Commission will work most closely with the Human Services Committee which is chaired by Legislator DuWayne Gregory and also includes Legislators Kara Hahn, Kate Browning, Louis D' Amaro and Edward Romaine. The Health Committee will sometimes deal with issues related to the Commission's work. The Health Committee is chaired by Legislator William Spencer and includes Legislators Kate Browning, Sarah Anker, John Kennedy and Edward Romaine. The Government Operations, Personnel, Housing and Consumer Affairs Committee will have responsibility for the SCDOL.
6. **Child-Care Funding:** Child Care Committee Chair Kathy Liguori stated that the Commission members of the Committee met on January 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss how the Commission should proceed with the New York State Office of Children's and Family Services (OCFS) regarding their formula used to determine Suffolk County's

Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) allocation. The Commission members had questions regarding the County's practice of building child-care rollover funds (unspent State CCBG funds) while using federal funding (e.g., the 2008 allocation cuts, the ARRA stimulus monies) which might cause SCDSS to appear to OCFS to be underutilizing their CCBG monies. These and other technical questions are being developed by the Committee to be submitted to Ken Knappe at SCDSS to clarify all of the facts before any decisions are made as to whether the Commission will meet with lawmakers and perhaps OCFS to discuss the State's CCBG formula for Suffolk County and related issues.

7. **Sunday Bus Service:** Richard Koubek reported that he has been in dialogue with Legislator Jay Schneiderman regarding Sunday bus service. As previously reported, there is a \$1 million shortfall in County funds for regular bus service. Legislator Schneiderman believes that there may be federal funding available for County-wide Sunday service (the East End will again have summer Sunday service in 2012.) He believes it is important to get County Executive Steve Bellone on board to secure the federal funds and he is working on a meeting with the County Executive for this purpose. Members of the Commission will be invited to attend.
8. **Sober Homes:** Mr. Koubek reported that Governor Andrew Cuomo's Suffolk representative, Scott Martella, is arranging for an Albany meeting in February with Commission members, Legislator Browning, SCDSS staff, representatives of the Governor's office and representatives of the New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and other interested parties to discuss the sober homes problem in Suffolk County. Mr. Koubek suggested that members of the newly-created Sober Homes Oversight Board also be invited. Some Commission members suggested that this be a tele-conference.
9. **Homeless Shelters:** Mr. Koubek announced that Legislator Jay Schneiderman has agreed to meet with himself and Commission members Peggy Boyd and Kathy Liguori on January 31<sup>st</sup> to discuss the Hidden Cove Motel and Local Law 23.
10. **Employment Assessment Committee:** In the absence of Chair Rob Greenberger, Ellen Krakow reported that discussions between SCDSS and the Committee continue to be fruitful. Language for a SCDSS letter to non-profit agencies regarding the new channels of communication for non-profit agency case managers has been finalized. The letter will be mailed in the near future. The Committee will meet again on February 6<sup>th</sup> to continue working on the new SCDSS Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy. SCDOL has now entered the discussions with concerns about both the ADA policy and the "Did You Know?" flier, each of which may offer services that SCDOL is not staffed to provide. These concerns were addressed at the January Committee meeting and will be revisited on February 6<sup>th</sup>.
11. **Commission Hearings on Suburban Poverty:** Kathy Liguori moved, and Jeff Reynolds seconded, a motion that the Welfare to Work Commission hold public hearings in the spring of 2012 on Suffolk County poverty. The motion passed unanimously. Don Friedman will chair a Poverty Hearings Committee. Roland Hampson is seeking approval to co-chair the committee which will also include these Commission members: Richard Koubek; Kathy Liguori; Bridget DePasquale; Peggy Boyd; Gwen Branch; Ellen Krakow; Rob Greenberger; Jeff Reynolds. The Commission then entered into an extended discussion, continued from the November

Commission meeting, on the shape that the public hearings will take. Don Friedman stated that the subject of suburban poverty, even when confined to Suffolk County alone, is very broad and that the Poverty Hearings Committee will need to delimit the focus. There was Commission consensus that:

- a. The hearings need to profile both those who fall under the Federal poverty level (FPL) and the many so-called “near poor” who earn under 200% of the FPL. Many of the “near-poor” are working poor people who do not qualify for government-assistance programs.
  - b. The hearings should profile Suffolk County’s “new poor,” people who have fallen on economic difficulties since the Great recession started in 2008, Unemployed people and those whose homes are in foreclosure would be represented here.
  - c. There will be a need for multiple hearings, or perhaps, the hearings divided into specific topics such as: housing; jobs; children; education; etc.
  - d. The policy issues need to be very specific and, where possible, local, with a focus on State and County policies.
  - e. Both public and private efforts to support poor people should be profiled.
  - f. In addition to the hearings, there may be a need to hold smaller focus groups as was done with the sober homes hearings.
  - g. Mr. Friedman will poll Poverty Hearings Committee members for a first panning meeting, possibly in early February.
12. **Next Meeting:** Friday, February 10th, 9:30 AM, SCDOL One Stop Center.