

**Welfare to Work Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature
Minutes of the February 10, 2012 Meeting**

Present: Richard Koubek, Chair; Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Legislator DuWayne Gregory; Michael Stoltz; Ellen Krakow; Gwen Branch; Bridget DePasquale; Rob Greenberger; Barbara Egloff; Don Friedman; Nina Leonhardt; Debbie Joseph; Roland Hampson; Barbara Stootoff for Eric Lopez; Roger Podd for Pam Killoran; Gwen O'Shea for Rushka Tcholakova

Excused: Jeff Reynolds; Michael Haynes; Frank Casiglia; Joan Grant; Peggy Boyd; Kimberly Gierasch; Marcia Specht

1. **Minutes:** Minutes of the January 13th meeting were adopted unanimously on a motion by Kathy Liguori, seconded by Barbara Stootoff, following an addition regarding the name of the new legislative committee to which the SCDOL will report: the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing and Consumer Affairs Committee.
2. **Legislator Gregory:** Commission Chair Richard Koubek welcomed Legislator DuWayne Gregory, who now holds a seat on the Commission because he serves as Chair of the Legislature's Human Services Committee. Legislator Gregory expressed his support for the work that the Commission has done over the years and stated that he looks forward to working with the Commission.
3. **Sober Homes:** Mr. Koubek distributed a letter to the New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) that he helped Legislator Kate Browning draft. The letter referred to the Commission's 2012 sober homes report which observed that OASAS Supportive Living Services housing appeared to be sober homes and therefore would fall under OASAS regulatory jurisdiction. Also distributed was a December, 2011 response from OASAS Chief Counsel Rob Kent acknowledging that sober homes could be considered Supportive Living Services housing. This was a significant reversal from Mr. Kent's previous position that the New York State Legislature would have to make a statutory change to OASAS regulations for sober homes to be considered Supportive Living Services housing. Mr. Koubek stated that Legislator Browning is arranging a tele-conference with OASAS to pursue this matter.
4. **Local Law 23 and the Hidden Cove Motel:** Mr. Koubek distributed a summary of a meeting he, Kathy Liguori and Peggy Boyd had with Legislator Jay Schneiderman regarding Local Law 23 and the Hidden Cove Motel. The Commission members expressed their concern to Legislator Schneiderman about local opposition to the Hidden Cove Motel being used as a shelter. He responded that this is a typical reaction from local residents and that neither he nor Southampton Town officials seem interested in pursuing legal action against SCDSS on this matter. Local residents may file a suit, however, although Legislator Schneiderman has brokered a meeting between the leader of the neighborhood opposition group and CHI, which runs the shelter. Legislator Schneiderman also expressed interest in working with SCDSS to draft language that would amend Local Law 23 so that a sliding scale might be established to raise the 12 family limit in each shelter proportional to the

rise in the homeless population. While SCDSS has received a definitive written statement from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) that State regulations supersede Local Law 23, Roland Hampson stated that SCDSS might be willing to consider amending Local Law 23. He will bring suggested language for the amendment to the March Commission meeting.

5. **Child-Care Funding:** Child Care Committee Chair Kathy Liguori reported the Committee continues to study the State's allocation formula for the Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) awarded to SCDSS by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS.) She stated that it appears that SCDSS has caught up with its payment schedule to providers but that there may still be billing issues. She also noted that some providers will struggle with the new child-care rates that could result in diminished quality of service. The next step will be to convene the full Committee to clarify what will be asked of OCFS regarding the allocation formula. Gwen O'Shea suggested that the Health and Welfare Council of LI might convene a meeting of providers to clarify their concerns.
6. **Sunday Bus Service:** Mr. Koubek reported that the six private bus companies that ran Suffolk's bus service have been reduced to three companies. The implications of this consolidation on service remain unclear and will be monitored by the Commission in 2012. He also stated that Legislator Schneiderman is asking County Executive Steve Bellone to meet with stakeholders about getting federal funds for Sunday bus service.
7. **Employment Assessment Committee:** Chair Rob Greenberger reported that the letter to nonprofits regarding new lines of communication with SCDSS has been completed and will be mailed in the coming weeks. The "Did You Know?" flyer is complete, but the Committee is now addressing concerns that SCDOL has raised about its possibility of clients being notified meetings, which SCDOL feels they may not be able to do because of staffing shortages. Mr. Koubek announced that Commission members are meeting with SCDOL Commissioner Sammy Chu on February 23 at which time this issue will be addressed. Mr. Greenberger also reported that the work on the new SCDSS Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy is close to completion. Mr. Koubek thanked the Committee for their very hard work on these projects.
8. **Commission Hearings on Suburban Poverty:** Don Friedman, Co-Chair of the Poverty Hearings Committee, reported that the Committee met on February 9th and agreed that there will be at least three hearings: one at the Hauppauge legislative auditorium; one at the riverhead auditorium; one at a mid-Suffolk location, 4-6 PM, that is accessible to buses in order to accommodate working people. The Committee is delimiting the focus of the hearings to:
 - a. How poverty is measured;
 - b. Descriptions of Suffolk County poverty drawing from statistical data and personal experiences;
 - c. Analysis of any unique qualities of Suffolk County and suburban poverty;
 - d. Analysis of the "near-poor" and "new poor" in Suffolk County;
 - e. How federal welfare policies impact SCDSS;

- f. Suffolk policy issues that impact poor people such as transportation, funding for health care centers, child care. The report to the Legislature following the public hearings will contain specific policy recommendations.

The Committee will meet again on February 23 at 11 AM in the legislative conference room to focus on speakers who will be invited to testify at the hearings.

9. **Commission 2012 Priorities:** Mr. Koubek distributed the Commission's 2011 priorities, noting that all but one of the 11 priorities had been addressed. The one not addressed, analysis of the new State DOL employment policies, will be reassessed for 2012. Mr. Koubek noted that many of the 2011 priorities could carry over to 2012. It was agreed that the poverty hearings will be added as a priority for 2012 and that several of the 2011 priorities related to employment assessment and SCDSS and SCDOL services (such as evening hours) could be condensed. The draft 2012 priorities and the Commission's report to the Legislature will be taken up at the March meeting.
10. **Next Meeting:** Friday, March 9th, 9:30 AM, SCDOL One Stop Center.