

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

Minutes of the June 6th, 2007 Meeting

Present: Pam Killoran; Peter Barnett; Gwen Branch; Michael Stoltz; James Andrews; Edward Hernandez; Barbara LoMoriello; Nina Leonhardt; Rosemary Dehlow; Robert Greenberger; Patrick Tracy; Idania Aponte; Kathy Liguori; Ken Zone; Wendy Smalls; Richard Koubek

Guests: Rosemary Dehlow; Mary Weiler; Pat Gyscek; Joan McGay; Sabrina StJohns

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the May 14th meeting were amended and approved unanimously on a motion by Peter Barnett, seconded by Nina Leonhardt.
2. **TANF Letter:** A motion by Gwen Branch, seconded by Michael Stoltz, was made to approve sending the TANF letter and supporting rationale to the SC congressional delegations as well as Senators Schumer and Clinton, with a cc to the SC Legislature.. A discussion ensued on Hatch Law limitations that prevent government officials from lobbying the government on public-policy issues. Several questions were raised about the need by some members of the Commission to secure the approval of their agency administrators before voting for the TANF letter. A motion was made by Robert Greenberger, seconded by Nina Leonhardt, to table the TANF letter motion, subject to an e-mail vote by June 15th. The motion to table passed unanimously.
3. **Child Care Agency Reimbursements:** Ed Hernandez reported that the reimbursement time had risen slightly to 44 days. Mike Stoltz stated that there is a related problem with the County: slow approval of contracts. He said that some contract agencies are still without approved contracts six months into the contract year. Mr. Stoltz called attention to an advocacy group, "Smart Governments for Strong Families," formed by the Health and Welfare Council of LI to improve both the Suffolk County contract reimbursement and contract approval processes. He pointed out that many small agencies are suffering because they must secure bridge loans, with interest, to cover their expenses, pending the approval of their contracts. The Commission agreed by consensus that Jerry Vazquez, the head of this HWC advocacy group, should be invited to address the Commission when they have completed a report on the contract/reimbursement system.
4. **Prompt Payment Bill:** Kathy Liguori reported on Interim Resolution 1510, sponsored by Leg. Vivian Vioria Fisher, that would require prompt payments (i.e., within 30 days) for child-care agencies. She noted that not all child care providers are affected by the current resolution because non-contracted agencies are not included in the wording.
5. **Affordable Housing:** Richard Koubek distributed a June 6th *Newsday* article indicating that the LI Regional Planning Board, under the leadership of Director Michael White, had approved a 25 point plan that includes several of the Commission's recommendations included in the *Affordable for Whom?* report: a housing needs assessment; town by town housing goals; a regional housing summit.

The Commission agreed by consensus that a letter should be sent to Mr. White and the Board commending them for their decisions.

6. **Education/Training Pilot:** Nina Leonhardt reported that 13 students entered the first pilot cohort (in April), with 7 actually beginning the program and 5 graduating. She noted that the short lead-in time to begin the April cohort, caused by the error made by the Legislature in assigning the funds to Catholic Charities, may have resulted in the disappointing results. An extensive discussion ensued on how the pilot can be improved so that more clients enter and complete the program when the second cohort begins on July 9th. It was agreed that the Education/Training Committee would hold an emergency meeting within a week to iron out any barriers or problems that may have arisen in the pilot.
7. **SCDSS Extended Hours:** The Commission continued its discussion of extended hours. Richard Koubek announced that he followed through on the concern expressed at the May meeting about the lack of public transportation for evening hours. He contacted Clifford Hymowitz who heads a County Transportation Commission, who informed Dr. Koubek that he is administering a \$15,000 Brookhaven Town grant, as per a federal requirement, to identify transportation access (public, taxi and volunteer) to social service sites (food pantries, SCDSS centers, parish outreach centers, health centers, etc) in the five western Suffolk towns. Dr. Koubek also reported that CSEA President Nick LaMorte would be reaching out to SCAME President Cheryl Felice on June 22nd to open a conversation of extended hours. Ed Hernandez pointed out that there are several on-going contractual disagreements with SCAME regarding overtime that could impede the union's cooperation on this issue. Others noted that the County could adopt extended ours without the support of the union. Mr. Hernandez indicated that SCDSS might consider allowing clients into the centers beyond the current 3PM closing deadline. The Commission agreed to continue discussing this issue at the July meeting.
8. **RAP:** The Westchester RAP discussion was tabled until the July meeting.
9. **Next Meeting:** July 25th, 9:30 AM at SCDOL One Stop Center.