

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

Minutes of the December 13, 2018 Meeting

Present:

Richard Koubek, Chair
Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair
Chanee Hammonds for Ayesha Alleyne (Wyandanch Homes and Property Development Corporation)
Christina DeLisi (Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory)
Barbara Egloff (Eastern Suffolk BOCES)
Greta Guarton (LI Coalition for the Homeless)
Don Friedman (Empire Justice Center);
Michael Haynes (LI Cares/Harry Chapin Food Bank)
Richard Krebs, (SC Department of Labor)
Traci Barnes for Dennis Nowak (Acting Commissioner, SC Department of Social Services)
Beth Zweig (Nassau/Suffolk Law Services)

Excused: Peggy Boyd (Family Service League); Charles Fox (EOC-LI); Kim Gierasch (Suffolk County Department of Health); Karen Klafter for Legislator Tom Donnelly; Arlene Jackson (Suffolk County Community College); Christian Limbach (SC Association of Municipal Employees); Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds (Family and Children's Association/LICADD); Michael Stoltz (Association for Mental Health and Wellness); Luis Valenzuela (LI Council of Churches)

Absent:

Rachel Seiler (Community Development Corporation of LI)

Guests: Darnell Tyson, Suffolk County Department of Public Works; Nicole Duckham, County Executive's Office

1. **Minutes** A motion to accept the November minutes, made by Christina DeLisi, seconded by Barbara Egloff, passed unanimously.
2. **SCCC/SWEP Pilot:** Chair Richard Koubek reminded the Commission that a meeting with Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory four years ago led to the SCCC/SWEP pilot which was designed to create a hub at which SWEP clients could simultaneously pursue college studies, their SWEP work assignment and receive child care. He noted that the child care piece did not work out because SWEP clients could not accommodate the SCCC child-care hours and preferred child care closer to their homes. The pilot initially had some success placing SWEP clients at SCCC for study and work. However, retirements at SCCC over the past two years slowed the pilot.
 - a. Mr. Koubek thanked SCDOL SWEP Director Richard Krebs and SCCC Assistant Dean for Continuing Education Arlene Jackson for helping coordinate two meetings in the fall designed to revive the pilot. Both SWEP and SCCC staff convened in October and November to identify strategies for reviving the pilot. Key personnel at SCCC were identified as were SWEP policies already in place to encourage SWEP work/study opportunities at SCCC.

- b. Mr. Krebs noted that the decline in Public Assistance rolls has limited the number of SWEP clients eligible for SCCC enrollment. In addition, he stated that the economy currently offers many job opportunities for SWEP clients who prefer paid work over study. Mr. Krebs also stated that the paid Work Study openings at SCCC are prioritized for SCCC students while the unpaid Work Experience internships are geared for SWEP clients. He noted that it would be very helpful to the pilot's success if the County funded more paid Work Experience opportunities for SWEP clients at SCCC to fulfill their work requirement while they are pursuing college courses.
 - c. Mr. Koubek noted that SCCC staff member Tania Velazquez, College Director of Career Services/Cooperative Education, has assumed responsibility for coordinating the pilot at all three SCCC campuses. One issue is the attendance reporting requirements for both students and their professors. Another is securing on-campus coordinators for the pilot at Brentwood and Riverhead. A meeting will be held in March to determine outcomes and progress.
 - d. Barbara Egloff pointed out that Eastern Suffolk BOCES is now accepting SWEP clients in work/study assignments in a cooperative program with Family Service League. Both Mr. Krebs and Ms. Egloff stated that public transportation is a problem for SWEP clients wishing to access these work/study programs.
3. **Suffolk Bus Report:** Mr. Koubek welcomed Darnell Tyson, Deputy Commissioner of the Transportation Division of the Suffolk County Department of Public Works, for a report on the Suffolk bus system. He stated that the Commission has long supported increased State funding for Suffolk bus because public transportation is critical to SWEP clients and working-poor Suffolk residents. Mr. Tyson confirmed that the typical Suffolk bus rider earns about \$24,000 a year. He noted that the Commission was part of the coalition that worked with Legislator Jay Schneiderman to introduce Sunday service several years ago. An update on Suffolk bus service is among the Commission's 2018 goals. Mr. Tyson then began his presentation.
- a. **Existing Conditions** •45 routes •2,729 bus stops
•16,243 average weekday ridership •\$17k daily revenue •\$116k daily expenses
 - b. **Geography** •2ndLargest county in New York •Population: 1,493,350
•Area: 900 square miles •Primarily served by four east west highways and the LIRR
 - c. **Funding:** 32% of funding is from the State; 50% from County funds. This is significantly less county funding than Nassau provides while Nassau receives significantly more State funding. Mr. Koubek stated that the Commission is fully prepared to work with community allies and the Bellone Administration to increase State funding for Suffolk buses in the 2019 State budget.
 - d. **Technological Innovations:** Mr. Tyson described the AVL system that now allows riders to locate their buses electronically using a phone app, electronically counts ridership and has allowed for the redesign of certain routes based on ridership data. AVL will be eventually be used for system-wide reassessment of bus lines. Other innovations include new fare boxes, improved signage, additional bus shelters and the introduction of smaller buses that are more fuel efficient for less-travelled routes.
 - e. **Suffolk County Mobility Study:** Mr. Tyson explained a mobility study that was conducted between 2016-2018 to improve the Suffolk bus system based on ridership patterns and socioeconomic analyses. Study Recommendations:

- Community Outreach through Technology & Strategic Partnerships
 - Utilize Data and Technology for Transit Planning
 - Continue to invest in What's Working
 - Develop a County- wide Mobility Brand
 - Pivot from a transit provider to provider of "Mobility Services"
 - Reinvest in high performing fixed-routes Continue coordination and integrated planning of transportation investments
 - Implement demand-responsive Mobility Solutions through Pilot Programs
 - Develop & Implement Design Guidelines Institute Processes and Policies to support a modern mobility system
 - Identify rider patterns to inform service planning
 - Measure system performance to prioritize investments
 - Conduct ridership surveys and analysis
 - Have clear contractual agreements on data ownership
 - Develop "Umbrella Brand" for multiple mobility services
 - Developing a single website as Mobility Information clearinghouse
 - Package Rebranding with Transit investment
 - Engage riders through Technology
 - Capitalize on strategic County partnerships
4. **Impact of Federal Immigration Policies on Suffolk County:** Mr. Koubek reported that the Commission's immigration study and community resources compendium will be presented at the December 18th General Meeting of the Legislature followed by a press conference on December 19th.
 5. **Supportive Housing Report:** Mr. Koubek stated that the Commission's presentation of the supportive housing report to the Legislature's Education and Human Services Committee has been postponed until February, 2019 due to scheduling conflicts.
 6. **TANF/State Policy Updates:** Don Friedman stated that with the election of a Democratic New York State Senate majority, chances have improved for, among other initiatives, adoption of the Home Stability Support program to replace a very limited pilot for New York City and Rochester that the state legislature approved in 2018. This program would significantly supplement the public assistance rent allowance to approach Fair Market Rents. Mr. Friedman also outlined draft "TANF discussion" ideas circulated in Congress last years. These drafts contain a number of progressive concepts including: increased reliance on case management; an increase in the periods of time allotted for engagement in drug and alcohol treatment programs; greater flexibility for states to customize welfare work rules; including poverty reduction as a stated purpose of TANF; and emphasis on immediate needs such as securing housing. It remains to be seen how many of these discussion ideas will be translated into new TANF legislation.
 7. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be January 18th.