

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

**Minutes of the January 18, 2019 Meeting**

**Present:**

Richard Koubek, Chair  
Ayesha Alleyne (Wyandanch Homes and Property Development Corporation)  
Christina DeLisi (Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory)  
Karen Klafter for Legislator Tom Donnelly  
Charles Fox (EOC-LI)  
Kim Gierasch (Suffolk County Department of Health)  
Greta Guarton (LI Coalition for the Homeless)  
Don Friedman (Empire Justice Center);  
Jeanne Durso for Arlene Jackson (Suffolk County Community College)  
Richard Krebs, (SC Department of Labor)  
Christian Limbach (SC Association of Municipal Employees)  
Dennis Nowak (Acting Commissioner, SC Department of Social Services)  
Donna Raphael for Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds (Family and Children's Association/LICADD)  
Luis Valenzuela (LI Council of Churches)

**Excused:** Peggy Boyd (Family Service League); Barbara Egloff (Eastern Suffolk BOCES); Michael Haynes (LI Cares/Harry Chapin Food Bank); Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Michael Stoltz (Association for Mental Health and Wellness); Beth Zweig (Nassau/Suffolk Law Services)

**Absent:**

Rachel Seiler (Community Development Corporation of LI)

1. **Minutes** A motion to accept the December minutes, made by Greta Guarton, seconded by Don Friedman, passed unanimously.
2. **Suffolk Bus Report:** Chair Richard Koubek asked the Commission for reactions to the December presentation on Sunday bus service. Those who spoke commended the presenter, Darnell Tyson, for his thoroughness and clarity. There was consensus that the Commission should again support additional State funding for Suffolk bus and that securing public support for bus service is very difficult in a suburb that is automobile centric. However, the fact that Suffolk bus serves primarily poor people makes this a priority for the Commission.
3. **Impact of Federal Immigration Policies on Suffolk County:** Mr. Koubek reported that he presented the Commission's report at the December 18<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of the Legislature where each member of the Legislature received a copy along with the accompanying community resources compendium. The following day, a press conference was held in the lobby of the Legislature. Speakers included Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory, Anita Halasz, Executive Director of Long Island Jobs with Justice, Fr. William Brisotti, Pastor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church in Wyandanch and Noelle Campbell, Director of the Gerald Ryan Outreach Center in Wyandanch. The press conference was covered by News 12, Telemundo and Newsday.

4. **Supportive Housing Report:** Mr. Koubek and Greta Guarton agreed that the presentation of the report to the Education and Human Services Committee should be in April, after the special election to fill Monica Martinez's seat.
5. **2019 Meeting Calendar:** It was agreed that the Commission will move its meeting dates to the second Thursday of each month except for these dates that accommodate the Legislature's calendar: May 10, July 12, December 13.
6. **Child Care:** Mr. Koubek and Karen Klafter reported that the Child Care Commission has postponed its March 4<sup>th</sup> summit until after the special election to replace Monica Martinez who served as Chair of the Commission. Instead, the Commission will host a public-policy forum on Saturday, February 9, 10:00-12:00 in the legislative auditorium. Aimed at child-care providers, the forum will unveil a set of State budget priorities to assist Long Island child-care providers, including additional funding for the child-care subsidy for working-poor families. The draft of the budget priorities was shared with the Commission.
7. **IDA Scoring Tool:** Mr. Koubek reported that he attended the Vision Long Island November 30<sup>th</sup> Smart Growth Summit's panel on IDAs at which a number of people complained that IDAs do not do a good job educating the public about the benefits that accrue to communities from IDA tax breaks. This perception was reinforced in an extensive *Newsday* article on January 13, 2019, about growing public hostility toward IDAs. John McNally, one of the Suffolk IDA staff with whom Commission members met in the spring of 2018 to discuss the Commission's scoring tool, told Mr. Koubek that the staff passed the tool on to the IDA Board and that the Commission should next meet with a board member. Consequently, with growing public criticism of IDAs, Mr. Koubek asked Roger Clayman, Executive Director of the Long Island Federation of Labor and a member of the committee that drafted the Commission's IDA scoring tool, to set up a meeting with Kevin Harvey, an officer in the IBEW 25 electrician's union and a member of the Suffolk IDA Board. Mr. Koubek noted that the IDA scoring tool would help the Suffolk IDA persuade the public that it is providing community benefits when it grants a tax break to a company.
8. **Commission Goals:** Mr. Koubek provided the Commission with its 2018 goals and, upon reviewing them, noted that all had been addressed except for the goal of exploring strategies to encourage Suffolk contract agencies to accept SWEP clients. Richard Krebs stated that this goal is being pursued by SCDOL through personal contacts with agencies and that Commission action is not needed at this time. There was consensus to carry over most of the 2018 goals except for the assessment of the County's ADA policy and assessment of the opioid epidemic which is being addressed by a separate commission. Discussion of the child-care goals was tabled to the February meeting due to the absence of Kathy Liguori. The Commission then discussed new goals for 2019 and reached consensus on updating its 2012 report on Suffolk poverty with current poverty statistics in the context of addressing barriers to self-sufficiency in Suffolk County, including:
  - a. Creating a clearing house of in-demand jobs that pay self-sufficiency wages. The data would include Suffolk occupations most-in demand, growth-rates of in-demand occupations and their wage scales, training opportunities and requirements, etc.
  - b. Mental health services available to social-services clients to help them attain self-sufficiency. This goal may also include the Commission revisiting the issue of an OTDA/SCDSS mental health screening tool.

- c. The role that case management plays in helping poor people attain self-sufficiency.
  - d. The importance of financial literacy.
9. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Thursday, February 14th.