

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

Minutes of the March 12, 2020 Meeting

Present:

Richard Koubek, Chair
Ayesha Alleyne, Vice Chair
Legislator Sarah Anker
Christina DeLisi for Presiding Officer Robert Calarco
Diana Torres for Legislator Sam Gonzalez
Don Friedman (Empire Justice Center)
Jeanne Durso for Arlene Jackson (Suffolk County Community College)
Christian Limbach, (SC Association of Municipal Employees)
Eric Lopez (SC Department of Labor)
Donna Teicher for Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds (Family and Children's Association)
Jose Veliz (EOC-LI); Kim Gierasch (Suffolk County Department of Health);
Luis Valenzuela (LI Council of Churches)
Paola Arango for Beth Zweig, (Nassau Suffolk Law Services)

Excused

Peggy Boyd (Family Service League); Barbara Egloff (Eastern Suffolk BOCES); Greta Guarton (LI Coalition for the Homeless); Michael Haynes (LI Cares/Harry Chapin Food Bank); Alicia Marks (Marks of Excellence Child Care Center); Traci Barnes for Commissioner Frances Pierre (SCDSS); Michael Stoltz (Association for Mental Health and Wellness)

Absent:

Rachel Seiler (Community Development Corporation of LI)

1. **Conference Call:** Chair Richard Koubek thanked the Commission members who were able to join the conference call for the March Commission meeting. The conference call format was used instead of an in-person meeting due to the coronavirus pandemic.
2. **Minutes:** A motion to accept the February minutes, made by Luis Valenzuela, seconded by Christian Limbach, passed unanimously.
3. **Public Charge Regulations:** Mr. Koubek asked that DSS, DOH and DOL representatives on the Commission urge their respective department commissioners to disseminate the Public Charge resource prepared by the Empire Justice Center and modified/adopted by the Commission at its February meeting.
4. **Commission Goals for 2019 and 2020:** Mr. Koubek led a discussion of the 2020 Commission goals. There was consensus that most were carryover goals from 2019 although there were several modifications or additions. The Commission reached consensus to adopt these goals for 2020 (new or modified goals are underlined):
 - a. Update the Commission's 2012 report, "Struggling in Suburbia: Meeting the Challenges of Poverty in Suffolk County" with current poverty statistics and assess the feasibility of conducting public hearings on barriers to self-sufficiency and paths put of poverty including:
 - 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

- The role that case management plays in helping poor people attain self-sufficiency.
 - The importance of financial literacy.
- b. Assess on-site educational and work placements for work-eligible Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Safety Net (SN) Suffolk Works Employment Program (SWEP) clients at Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) and Eastern Suffolk BOCES.
 - c. Monitor 2019 federal and State changes in TANF law and policy with special attention to education and training opportunities for SWEP clients.
 - d. Review and make recommendations about staffing levels and access to services at the Suffolk County Department of Social Services (SCDSS), Suffolk County Department of Labor, Licensing and Consumer Affairs (SCDOLL&CA) and Suffolk County Department of Health (SCDOH).
 - e. Pursue adoption of a scoring tool to measure supports provided to working-poor people by companies seeking a Suffolk County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) benefit.
 - f. Support additional State funding for the Suffolk County bus system.
 - g. Continue to pursue recommendations in the 2014 Commission report, “Who’s Minding the Kids? Meeting Challenges and Creating Opportunities for Quality Child Care and Early Learning in Suffolk County,” with special attention to supporting increased State funding for child care while continuing to address inequities in Suffolk’s State Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) allocation due to the inadequate CCBG formula used by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS.)
 - h. Continue to monitor Single Point of Access (SPA) housing placements for Suffolk residents suffering from mental illness.
 - i. Continue to assess the impact of federal immigration policies on Suffolk County.
5. **Commission 2020 Report to the Legislature:** Mr. Koubek led a discussion of the draft 2020 report to the Legislature which now contained the 2020 Commission goals in #4 above adopted by consensus. A number of editorial changes were recommended to the draft annual report. On a motion by Paola Arango, seconded by Ayesha Alleyne, The Commission voted 11 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstention (Jeanne Durso) to delete from the annual report the statement that “DSS does not provide case management” and to retain the statement that “the primary statutory responsibility of DSS is monitoring eligibility for benefits and compliance with regulations” and to add this statement recommended by DSS: “DSS refers all eligible individuals to Health Homes. Health Homes offer comprehensive care management to individuals who are enrolled in Medicaid and have two qualifying chronic conditions.” Don Friedman moved and Ayesha Alleyne seconded a motion to adopt the draft report as amended with the 2020 goals identified in #4 above, which passed unanimously.
6. **Next Meeting:** April 9, 2020