

## Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board

April 27, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Approved

A meeting of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board was held on April 27, 2011 in the Conference Room of Building 158, North County Complex, Hauppauge at 2:00 pm, Chairperson Beverly Cody presided.

### **PRESENT:**

#### **GROUP A**

Frank Krotzschinsky, Esq.	Representing County Executive Steve Levy
Jack Caffey	Representing Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay
Linda O'Donohoe	S.C. Dept. of Social Services
Lew Johnson	Representing S.C. Department of Public Works, Design & Construction Division
Timothy Rothang	Representing Legislator Kate M. Browning
James Kokindo	Representing S.C. Human Rights Commission
Chris Chatterton	Representing SCDPW Transportation
Donna Passin/Carolyn Bossert	S.C. Department of Labor
Barbara Falkman	S.C. Department of Health Services/Div. of Services for Children with Special Needs

#### **GROUP B**

Beverly Cody	Member, Secretary & Acting Chair
Debbie Epple	Member, S.C. Department of Civil Service/Public Info.
Kleo King, Esq.	Member, United Spinal Association

#### **GROUP C**

Teresa Strum	Member, Western Suffolk BOCES
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#### **GROUP D**

Roy Probeyahn	Member
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**GUESTS:** Doug & Erin King

**STAFF:** Heidi Zeitler, Senior Clerk Typist, Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services

**EXCUSED:** Terry Maccarrone, Valerie Lewis, Glenn Campbell, Esq., Jodi Nicastro, Rep., Ingo Gloeckner, Mitch Shapiro

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF February 23, 2011:** Beverly asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes as distributed. Chris said minutes should be corrected to reflect the following, *the base fare will go up on June 17 and Sunday service will begin on July 3, 2011 for the S92 and 10C routes only.* Lew made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected and Teresa seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were unanimously approved.

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**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:** Beverly had nothing new to report but reminded everyone to please email Heidi with information for the Annual Report.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Architectural Barriers** – Lew reported that new stairs and a ramp are being installed at the Suffolk County Info. & Technology Building in the North County Complex, Hauppauge. The Veterans Administration will be opening a new Veteran's East End Clinic next week in the Riverhead County Center. They have 4400 sq. feet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and before that they installed a new elevator on the outside of the building plus they added more handicapped parking spots. It's located on the west side of the north side of the building. The Office of Handicapped Services in the Riverhead County Center is also being relocated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor off the new lobby.

**Community Partnership** - Frank had nothing new to report.

**Education** - Teresa had nothing new to report.

Roy said the Federal government has contacted New York State and they have an objection to the IEP designation and how it identifies handicapped individuals inappropriately. There has been some conversation in eliminating the phrase, individualized education program diploma, but there is growing public input for keeping the word diploma. Roy is working with Sen. LaValle and Sen. Flanagan to write a one house bill and then try and get a sponsor in the assembly for it.

**Housing** - Vacant.

**Legislation** – Vacant.

Beverly asked what it looks like as far as layoffs for county personnel. Jack said at this point we are in a very deep hole and the legislature is looking to put something together. Tim said at yesterday's general session of the legislature they introduced a number of resolutions to alleviate a lot of these problems in an effort to avoid layoffs. Yesterday Leg. Jon Cooper introduced a resolution for another lag payroll to mitigate the budget shortfall.

**Transportation** – Vacant.

Donna came to today's meeting not as a representative from the S. C. Department of Labor but as a concerned citizen regarding a housing discrimination case she became aware of and would like to bring to the board's attention hoping we could assist. An individual with a mental health disability wanted to rent an apartment in a condominium and because they were renting, according to the condo by-laws they would need to be approved by the board. She was requesting an accommodation of a service animal to help assist her to live independently so she supplied a doctor's note stating that her service animal was needed.

After the meeting this person was notified that in order for the board to consider her request to become a renter in this condominium that she would have to submit a letter from a therapist, physician stating that she was able to live independently and that she was not a threat to herself or others.

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She would also have to add the condo association as an additional insurer on her renter's insurance policy. Even though she felt this was highly discriminatory in nature she wanted to show good faith and presented this info. to the board. She got the note from a therapist, she got the renters insurance and added the condominium on it. She was notified by letter that she was denied approval to rent so she sought counsel. Then the board requested a million dollar policy to protect their interest in the condominium and told her she would have to get a note from a physician because she had submitted a note from a therapist stating she could live independently. Frank had suggested she speak to someone at Long Island Housing Services. Jack suggested reaching out to her legislator, John M. Kennedy, Jr. to help. Donna said if you are an owner instead of a renter in this condo you are allowed to have a dog and there are special provisions for that but as a renter you are not allowed. The condos attorney told her attorney that they were concerned because of her mental health disability and because they had problems with other renters in the past and they didn't want to take a chance. A complaint is going to be submitted to the S.C. Human Rights Commission which does takes time but in the mean time she is being denied the ability to rent this apartment. Frank said L.I. Housing Services is the agency that deals with fair housing complaints and S.C. Human Rights does as well. OHS will happily work with both agencies to work on this complaint. Kleo said L.I. Housing Services will try and reach out to the condominium first and then their avenue is to go to HUD or go to court. As of right now the owner is holding off renting the unit to anyone else until this situation can be resolved.

**Employment** – Donna said she brought some information that Frank requested on Opportunity Work Tax credits.

#### **COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:**

**Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services** – Frank reported that OHS has been very busy with many calls that are reflective of the current economic situation. People are having problems paying their LIPA and oil bills. A number of those calls were referred over to the Suffolk County Commissioner's response line and were resolved promptly. SILO requested a meeting with Chief Deputy County Executive Chris Kent, County Executive's Office regarding several issues pertaining to people with disabilities, which the County Executive's Office was open to discuss.

**Suffolk County Parks** - Terry was excused.

**S.C. Department of Social Services** - Linda said she will start bringing Medicaid statistics and CDPAP numbers to the board meetings as well. Linda announced there will be a DSS Advocacy Training next week which will be held in the auditorium of the H. Lee Dennison Building from 9-12:00 Monday-Thursday.

**Suffolk County Office of Public Information** - Debbie reminded everyone that the VETS Stand Down Event is this Friday, April 29, 2011 from 10 am – 2pm at the Health, Sports & Education Center at Suffolk Community College, Brentwood Campus. Anyone who needs more information can call (631) 853-8387.

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**Old Business** – Kleo brought flyers regarding the 2011 Disability Leadership & Policy Summit which will be held at Hofstra University on June 1, 2011. You can register online at [www.unitedspinal.org/events/sumit/](http://www.unitedspinal.org/events/sumit/)

**New Business** – None.

**S.C. Department of Health/Division of Children with Special Health Care Needs** – Barbara had nothing new to report.

**S.C. Department of Public Works/Transportation Division** – Chris said the public is being solicited to come down and give comments about the public transit system and SCAT paratransit service at their regularly scheduled Public Works and Transportation meeting at the legislature on May 3, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. Transportation Division will be looking into the denial rate for paratransit service. Right now they are a little bit above the federal guidelines for denials. Denials happen when someone requests a paratransit trip and are told they can't have the trip they requested at that specific time.

The denial rate is at 3% which means 3% of the people calling are not getting the trips they are asking for. The Division is going to create strategies which they will present to the Suffolk County Disabilities Board and to the public through public hearings. Some of these strategies could include a shorter reservation period. Right now reservations are made up to seven days in advance. Looking at the best practices of neighboring counties has shown that making your reservations within 3 to 4 days window is a lot better and leads to lower cancellations. They are thinking about a 'no show' or late cancel abuser policy and possibly a stricter registration process through the S.C. Office of Handicapped Services. Beverly asked Chris to bring statistics of SCAT trips, denials, number of scat users and scat buses to future board meetings.

Doug King said he spoke to Glenn Campbell, SILO and Garrett Hulett this morning and they had some questions and concerns about the new bill which will be providing service to other routes in the county. Doug is in the process of setting up a meeting between SILO and Leg. Jay Schneiderman office so they can go through some of the issues. Doug said two meetings ago it was decided to do a sub-committee for the transportation committee which Doug was elected Chair of.

Frank added that our office put out an email blast for the May 3<sup>rd</sup> DPW Committee meeting which was put out by the request of the members of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board. Jack added that when the vote was made the county employees from the sub-committee abstained from that vote.

**S.C. Human Rights Commission** - James reported that the S.C. Human Rights Office in Riverhead will be moving from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The Commission will be working with SILO in the near future addressing accessibility issues.

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Roy reported that the Task Force on Aging Out had a very successful Brunch in February with many elective representatives in attendance but OPWDD is still going to be suffering some cuts. The good news is there is a \$900,000 RFP on the table which has now gone out. They received 54 responses from 35 heads of agencies to offer family support services expansion to the tune of \$900,000, provided it survives negotiations. If the cuts come down they will have to possibly cut some programs. Group homes will continue to be developed for individuals who are aging out of residential schools up to age 21 years of age, with no cuts. OPWDD also has a new Commissioner, her name is Courtney Burke. On May 4<sup>th</sup> by invitation only Commissioner Burke will be having a listening tour with parents of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Roy also reported that he testified at the Governor's Medicaid forum which was held at Hofstra University and was limited to 2 minutes per person.

**S.C. Community Development** – Vacant.

**S.C. Library System** - Valerie was absent.

**SILO** - Glenn was excused but in his absence requested Heidi to hand out a flyer announcing that SILO's Transportation Committee will be hosting a Riders' Educational meeting. Location: SILO, 3680 Route 112, Coram, NY, on May 14, 2011 from 10am – 2pm. Let your Concerns be heard regarding Suffolk County buses or SCAT. Instruction and help will be offered. For further information please call Garrett Hulett at (631) 880-7929. [transitfeedback@siloinc.org](mailto:transitfeedback@siloinc.org) to reserve a seat.

**ADJOURNMENT**: Roy made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jack seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m. The next meeting will be held on May 18, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference room, Building 158, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge.

Respectfully submitted,

*Heidi Zeitler*