

Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board

December 4, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Approved

A meeting of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board was held on December 4, 2013 in the Conference Room of Building 158, North County Complex, Hauppauge at 2:08 pm, Chairperson Roy Probeyahn presided.

PRESENT:

GROUP A

Frank Krotschinsky, Esq.	Representing County Executive Steven Bellone
Marjorie E. Acevedo	Representing Presiding Officer's Horsley's Office
Linda O'Donohoe	S. C. Department of Social Services
Chris Chatterton	Representing SCDPW Transportation Division
Vinny Cassidy	S.C. Department of Labor
Lorena Gonzalez	S.C. Human Rights Division

GROUP B

Joseph Delgado	Member
Michelle Santantonio	Member
Kleo King, Esq.	Member

GROUP C

Teresa Strum	Member
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GROUP D

Roy Probeyahn	Member, Chairperson
Garrett Hulett	Member
Clifford Hymowitz	Member
Sandy Silver	Member

GUESTS: Robin Mayr, Brenda DeJong, Patricia Furino

STAFF: Heidi Zeitler, Principal Clerk, Suffolk County Office for People with Disabilities

EXCUSED: Douglas King, Beverly Cody, Barbara LoMoriello, Rep., Legislator William, Mike Stoltz, Diane Gaines, Joani Madarash, Albert Rizzi, Mitch Shapiro, Glenn Campbell, Esq., Barbara Falkman, Kleo King, Esq., Valerie Lewis, Diane Gaines

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 30, 2013: Roy asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes as distributed. There were none, Marjorie made a motion to accept the minutes as distributed and Garrett seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE: Roy spoke about the response letters we received in regard to our letter of opposition to Sagamore Children's Psychiatric Center closing. One letter was from State Assemblyman Robert Sweeney and it had six additional assembly signatures.

The other letter was from Acting Commissioner John V. Tauriello, State of New York Office of Mental Health in response to our letter of opposition to Sagamore Children's Psychiatric Center closing.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Roy has approval from the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities that Roy serves as Chairperson for the Community Board, to present to the Community Board, Div. of Mental Health to send a similar letter in opposition to the closure of Sagamore. L.I. Citizens Task Force on Aging Out meeting has agreed to send a letter as well.

Roy has been attending the regulation committee regarding the reformation of OPWDD's way of doing business. The state proposal has been submitted to Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). The deadline date came and went and the committee isn't getting any answers from CMS.

Roy spoke about OPWDD's "Front Door" initiative, which is single point access for people with developmental disabilities that prioritizes individual choices, needs, and desires in making decisions.

Architectural Barriers - Lew was excused.

Community Partnership - Frank had nothing new to report.

Education - Teresa said a request for a waiver has gone to the State Education Department to help reduce repetitive testing.

Chief Operating Officer for Western Suffolk BOCES worked very hard to put together an articulate letter which represented 18 districts, to Commissioner King on how to address the various issues regarding the Common Core.

508 ADA Compliance Committee – Albert was excused. Roy said progress is moving slowly but they expect to see alternate formats for the website.

Housing – Michelle said she wants to help pass local legislation to outlaw source of income discrimination. Michelle said many people are denied equal access to housing because landlords won't take subsidies. The County has prepared legislation and once it's proposed Michelle will be asking for the board's support once the language is readied.

Michelle said there is also a coalition organized through the office of "Make the Road New York" with at least 20 organizations working in that effort as well.

Michelle also reported that L.I. Housing Services has received funding from the Long Island Community Foundation to do some work with homeless shelters to provide fair housing training for staff and residents.

Michelle said she would forward the coalition's efforts to Heidi so she can circulate it to board members.

Legislation – Vacant.

Garrett reported that on November 23, 2013 he had a meeting at Suffolk Bus and Valerie, Chris, and Brenda attended. They spoke about several issues including Sunday service and how it will affect the community. One problem that was brought up was that guide dogs have been reported to be sliding around on the buses, so Suffolk Bus and DPW Transportation will be looking into getting

mats to help prevent this from happening. Another issue discussed is that Brookhaven is one of the larger towns and seems to have been left out of the Sunday service routes.

Chris said DPW Transportation recently bought 51 slightly smaller SCAT buses within the last year and they have 143 SCAT buses in the fleet. He also said Sunday Service routes were determined with Legislator Schneiderman, Commissioner Anderson, County Executive's office and they determined by ridership including Saturdays and their potential for Sunday Success.

Garrett said that in 2011 when SILO was against Sunday service, they met with Legislator Schneiderman and Garrett provided statistics which proved that there should be at least 12 routes countywide. The cost analysis was less than the 4 million dollars over a 3 year period. These 12 routes would have covered a lot more area and it would have given more eligibility to more SCAT riders.

Garrett said Suffolk County carries 200,000 more SCAT passengers than Westchester and 100,000 more than Nassau County and this is because the fixed route system has never been properly funded. This is the only county that doesn't have travel training for passengers or interviews new applicants when they apply for paratransit.

Joe said there are 1.4 million people in Suffolk County but yet what we spend in transportation is less than what other smaller urban areas spend on their transportation. Joe feels that Suffolk County hasn't received enough in state transportation funding.

Chris said there is only a certain amount of routes that can be provided with what money is available.

Frank said he had two separate meetings which included County Executive's office and Bus Company officials and the purpose of the meetings was to strategize on how to get more money from Albany. Everyone is on the same page and strong attempts are being made to change it.

Marjorie said every legislator knows that the state has fallen behind on what monies come to the county.

Cliff said Suffolk County has never spent all the state operating assistance it gets for transportation, it always goes into the general fund. Cliff said Suffolk County pays 26 million dollars to the MTA for station maintenance and for stations that aren't even open anymore. When Steve Levy was an assemblyman the legislature agreed to make a public utility of station maintenance, which means it can only be changed with legislation in Albany. Cliff doesn't understand why this hasn't been changed.

Marjorie announced that Legislator Horsley will be leaving December 18th; a new legislature will be coming in as well with a new Presiding Officer.

Garrett said he and Joe met with Senator Zelden's office and they are putting a letter together requesting twenty million dollars in additional funding. There are plans to meet with Senator

Fuschillo in the New Year and a lobbying trip is scheduled to Albany for January 28th.

Cliff said Town of Brookhaven's Human Services Division's buses are just sitting in the parking lots because at first they were going to be privatized but instead ended up getting cut because it was determined to be a waste of taxpayers' dollars.

Cliff also mentioned that the Town of Brookhaven received a New Freedom Grant from the federal government. It's a web based tool which can do an inventory of all transportation assets in the town.

Cliff also spoke about the NYSDOT Section 5310 Grant Program; this is when funds are used to purchase accessible buses for not-for-profit organizations throughout the State of New York. The program funds 80% of the vehicle purchase cost, with the remaining 20% provided by the applicant organization as the local match. There are no operating funds provided under this program, and recipients are responsible for 100% of their ongoing operating expenses for buses awarded through the 5310.

Transportation: Valerie was excused.

Employment – Vinny reported that an Access VR representative will be giving an orientation on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 2:00-3:00p.m.

Joe wanted to know if any money was coming through the Dept. of Labor for disabled veterans to be used for job opportunities. Several suggestions were given: Contact Tom Ronayne, Director of Veterans Services for Suffolk County, United Way has a Program for disabled Veterans and Northport VA Hospital opened a new department for veterans with disabilities. Marjorie said S.C. Dept. of Labor has a contact that works with disabled veterans. Sandy said the Veterans Administration provides services to veterans with disabilities but it has to be service related and it has to be a certain percentage of service related disability.

COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:

Suffolk County Office for People with Disabilities - Frank reported he attended 3 different planning meetings in last month or two. One was age friendly communities which Frank spoke about at our last meeting. There is an initiative for future planning to plan communities and developments on Long Island that would be usable for people of all ages. This initiative is in the early stages and Frank was very happy that our office was included. There is Welfare to Work initiative scheduled for this Friday with a planning meeting included. Frank will push the three basics, transportation, jobs and housing. The Labor Dept. will be receiving money specifically for people with disabilities, to engage them into the workforce and Frank was asked to be involved with that initiative also. The Limited English Proficiency initiative is an initiative from the County executive's office to bring the county into compliance with the civil rights act of 1964, with regard to having information and services accessible to people who have difficulty with the English language. Each Dept. was asked to come up with a plan and there was a presentation based upon this at Turo Law School. Frank was one of the presenters, because our department and the police department had the best plans for this initiative. Frank said he put a provision into his plan so that people with visual impairments have to be accommodated as well. Frank said there was a bill proposed by Leg. Robert Calarco to put the county's adopted budget onto the website within 30 days or 3 months of it being adopted. Marjorie wasn't sure if it was tabled or not.

S.C.D.P.W./Division Transportation – Chris supplied SCAT paratransit monthly statistics for 2013. (see attached email)

There was discussion about the number of cancel at the doors and trips outside the window and the possibility that they are related in some way.

Cliff mentioned again that travel training is essential in order to keep numbers down. Cliff said there is a direct correlation between the accessibility of the bus stops and bus routes. The more accessible the fixed route bus system the lower the cost of paratransit.

Frank feels conditional eligibility is a part of this and travel training is important too.

Garrett said the 2014 budget states there is money for the Compliance Officer, does anyone know anything more about this.

Chris said last year it was approved in the Omnibus for the position to be approved for half of the year and suggests someone might want to look into it further.

Roy asked Frank to look into this and Chris said he could supply Frank with more information.

S.C. Parks - Terry was excused.

S.C. Department of Social Services – Linda had nothing new to report except that the new DSS Commissioner was confirmed by the legislature.

Marjorie would like a list of all the people on this committee and what organization they are affiliated with.

S.C. Dept. of Health/Division of Children with Special Health Care Needs - Barbara was excused.

S.C. Human Rights Commission – James was excused.

S.C. Community Development - Vacant.

SILO - Joe distributed flyer for SILO's Consumer Holiday party for December 20th from 12:00-3:00 p.m. Joe also announced that Commissioner King has appointed him to the specialized school board for Little Flower.

Acces-VR – Sandy said Suffolk County continues to lead the state in terms of placements and quality jobs. Sandy spoke about their new Core Rehab Services (CRS) Contract and the first training of 3 begins tomorrow. Vendors will learn how to read the definitions, provide services and how to bill appropriately.

Supportive employment has always been done by an hourly coaching and now it will be milestones and people will only get paid if they achieve something. They will also now be offering (2) different quality bonuses. If it's a job that's over \$10.50 an hour or 30 hours a week the vendor would get a quality bonus for that as well. Their office has been restacked and they have hired a new counselor and new Integrated Employment Specialist.

They just had a presentation on Career, Development Occupational Studies (C-DOS), which is the new certificate that takes the place of the IEP diploma. Sandy requested they give them more of a

focused approach because when the kids graduate they will come to them because employers don't know anything about these new certificates. Eastern Suffolk BOCES helped them to create a public service announcement to reach out to employers. They just started a partnership with the Urban League of Westchester to help assist mature workers.

Suffolk County Rehabilitation Council - Joani was excused.

Old Business - None

New Business - Cliff reported that Carnegie Mellon and SUNY Buffalo University received a 4 million dollar grant to do research on universal design of buses. Cliff was selected along with another person to sit on the Transportation Research Board (TRB) committee to observe the ACRP Project 07-13: Enhancing Airport Way finding for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities.

ADJOURNMENT: Joe made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Sandy seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m. **The next meeting will be held on January 29, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference room, Building 158, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge.**

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Zeitler

