

ILLINOIS GUARDIANSHIP AND ADVOCACY COMMISSION

**James R. Thompson Center, 100 West Randolph Street, Room 9-035 Chicago, Illinois
500 ½ Stratton Bldg. , Springfield, IL.
Lawson Hall 105 SIU, Carbondale, IL**

**Minutes of Video Conference Meeting
April 22, 2008
1:00 PM**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Saul Morse
Representative Kathy Ryg
Senator Don Harmon
Kenley Wade
Inez Torres Davis
Glen Jackson

EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Mary Milano, Executive Director
John H. Wank, General Counsel, Deputy Director for Programs
Bobbie Fox, Acting Director for Human Resources
Helen Godlewski Brownfield, Director of the Office of State Guardian
Danielle Welliever, Private Secretary to the Director
Gina Rossi, Confidential Assistant to the Director
Veronique Baker, Director Legal Advocacy Service
Carol R. Tipsord, Director of Fiscal Operations
Teresa Parks, Director Human Rights Authority

MEETING CONVENED

Chair Saul Morse called the meeting to order at approximately 1:10 pm. A quorum was present.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mary Milano

Budget: GAC has submitted their FY '09 budgets to the Governor's office as requested. Director Milano testified and key staff testified in both House and Senate Appropriations committees on the submitted budget. We had favorable responses to the testimony in both chambers.

We are trying to spend down the GAC fund in FY '08 sooner in the year than we would do otherwise in the event it is subject to a fund sweep. That purpose of the GAC fund is to provide for items and acts that benefit wards and for agency

emergency situations. Because of last year's amendatory veto to the budget, the GAC must defer payments (known as catch-up billing) to CMS for management and telecom fees in the last months of this fiscal year.

NGA regional training: The National Guardianship Association held its spring training in Rosemont. Staff was deeply involved in the planning process as members and leaders of the NGA and IGA.

Cermak, Cook County Jail:

Commissioner Appointments: Commissioner Appointments continue to pend. The personnel at Boards and Commissions has been occupied with other concerns over the last few months. We hope there will be a resolution soon to our Commissioner vacancy problem.

LEGAL AND PROGRAM: John Wank

NGA: More than 200 people attended the joint NGA and IGA training in Rosemont. A significant number of GAC staff were in attendance. Director Milano, and John Wank will attend the NGA national conference, as well as Veronique Baker and Madeline Sharko.

Auditor General Report: Each Commission member has received a copy of the report. The Auditor General conducts a biennial audit of every state agency. What is new this year for us is the number of material findings. The audit process was more adversarial than in the past. In some cases the auditors were not fully informed about current practices and the rationale behind them.

Commissioner Morse raised questions about other findings related to property control, timely deposits of funds and staff timekeeping. Director Wank explained the policies and procedures that have been put in place to address each of the findings.

One finding had to do with the understanding that the agency's General Counsel's would review of the Economic Interest Statements before they are sent to the Secretary of State's office, rather than contemporaneously or after the fact. Director Wank asked Commissioners to send him their economic interest statements before filing.

FISCAL REPORT: Carol Tipsord

We are about \$78,000 - \$80,000 short in FY '08. As Director Milano mentioned, we are planning to defer the facilities management and telecom payments until FY '09, expecting to catch up at the beginning of the new budget cycle.

Headcount: If the FY '09 budget request holds, we will be up to a total headcount of 117. We are now at 111.

Recent expenditures: .In the last few months the agency has lost one vehicle and we have been given permission to replace it just last week. Two other of our cars are also giving us problems. We have replaced a couple of computers, copy machines and a fax machine.

Audit Findings: Director Tipsord described the controls that have been put in place in her office to address the material findings of the Auditor General.

Chairman Morse questioned where the authority came from for the planned "catch up billing." Carol Tipsord explained that a bill was passed about 10 years ago to allow for the process.

ACTION ITEMS

Minutes: A motion was made to approve the minutes. It was seconded. No discussion. Unanimous approval.

HRA Appointments and Reappointments: There was a motion approve all with a single vote. It was seconded and unanimously approved.

HRA Removals: HRA Director Teresa Parks asked the Commissioners to support the removal of two HRA Regional members for neglect of duty (missing three consecutive HRA meetings). She described the specifics of each case, including the steps that had been taken to contact the member through written notice. Commissioner Jackson made the motion to remove both individuals. The motion was seconded and approved. There was no discussion.

Case Transfer: A request by the North Suburban Regional Authority to transfer a case to the Northwest Regional Authority due to of a conflict of interest. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to grant the case transfer request.

Enforcement Actions: Teresa Parks and John Wank of the history and facts concerning the two enforcement actions before the Commission.

Case # 06-100-907, Concepts Plus Incorporated/ Pine Terrace: A motion was made to ask Public Health to reconsider the agency's action on enforcement

Case # 07-050-9001, Achievement Unlimited/ Emma Place: A motion was made to ask the Director of Developmental Disabilities to reconsider the action taken by the Director of the CILA licensor.

During discussion of the motions it was decided that the requests for reconsideration would include the mention of future referral to the appropriate federal government agency for follow up if necessary.

Both motions were seconded and unanimously approved.

HRA Regional Authority End of Terms and Resignations: No formal action taken by the Commission. A request was made that letters be sent out thanking members for their service.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Office of State Guardian, Director Helen Godlewski: OSG working on two different initiatives: (1) transitioning wards into community placements. About 1000 GAC wards are being moved out of state operated DD facilities and into CILA's. We are arranging for pre-placement visits with CILA operators to preparer for the discharge placements. (2) Economic stimulus payments. We are working to determine which of our 5000 wards are eligible for the economic stimulus payments and are filing tax returns for them. DHS has determined that the payments will be treated as assets instead of income with a 3 months spend out period.

The movement of GAC wards into the community will put an additional burden on OSG staff as they will have to travel to more locations to make their ward visits.

Legal Advocacy Service: Director Veronique Baker

LAS represents continues to represent 600 to 700 clients per month on the strength of 9 attorneys. Patti Werner coordinated an ISBA training in Springfield that was well received and one of our other attorney's presented at that training. Andreas Liewald will be working with the department of mental health on training related to changes in the mental health code. We are expanding our area of representation Amy Szczeipaniak will take over the mental health call at Will County. Patty Werner represents out at Lake County as well as Cook County. We also will be meeting to try to plan how to address the new mental health code and, in reviewing our cases, whether there should be a possible constitutional challenge to the new code.

Human Rights Authority: Director Teresa Parks

HRA continues to have 2 vacant staff positions.

Teresa expressed her thanks to Ann Hicke, the graduate social work student intern for her work.

With the new appointments just approved by the Commission, there are only 6 member vacancies throughout the HRA regions.

The HRA has been involved in public awareness activities including presentations to a number of community groups, human service organizations and at a legal forum.

Cermak/Cook County jail update - there was some back and forth about the application of mental health code but in the end agreed to human rights protections to those in the jail portion of the facility. They are changing their policies, and will be training their staff on the new policies in May.

ADJOURNMENT

With a request from the chair, a formal motion was made to adjourn the public meeting of the commission and move immediately to a closed, Executive Session to discuss personnel issues. Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:25 pm.