

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

December 15, 2009 1:00 PM

Video Conference sites:

James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, Rm. 9-035
Chicago, IL 60601

Mason Street, Rm. 104
Springfield, IL

Morse Library
ISS Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Anthony E. Rothert, Chairman
Dr. Seymour Bryson
Andrea M. Schleifer
Inez Torres Davis
Representative Angelo "Skip" Saviano
Senator Don Harmon

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Ira Silverstein
Kenley R. Wade
Kathleen Ryg

EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT

Chicago

Dr. Mary L. Milano	Executive Director
John H. Wank	General Counsel / Deputy Director for Programs
Helen Godlewski Brownfield	Director, Office of State Guardian
Bobbie Fox	Associate Director Human Services
Constance Umbles-Sailers	Confidential Assistant to the Director

Springfield

Carol R. Tipsord	Director of Fiscal Operations
Teresa Parks	Director, Human Rights Authority

EXECUTIVE STAFF ABSENT

Veronique Baker	Director, Legal Advocacy Service
Florence P. Martin	Private Secretary to the Director

Chairman Rothert called meeting to order at 1:07pm. A quorum was present.

This special meeting was called due to the lack of quorum in the December 8, 2009 meeting in order to bring to close business that need to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

In a general overview of the agenda from the December 8 meeting, Director Milano indicated the following items required immediate attention:

- Ratification of the Human Rights Authority (HRA) appointments and resignations. Director Milano reiterated that as of January 1, 2010 the Director has the authority to make these appointments and, in the event there was not a quorum at this meeting would do so; and
- Director's evaluation and compensation which would be decided in closed session.

The Commissioner's also received a basic outline of the presentation made to the Director of the Governor's Office of Management on Thursday, December 10, 2009. The final materials outlined aspects of what was orally presented: what we do is essential, efficient and effective. Compared to other agencies which perform similar functions our degree of efficiency and cost effectiveness would be virtually impossible to match. Charts included in the materials showed some of the disparities in case loads, in funding and expenditures. An example that was given showing the difference in cost between the State Appellate Defender and Legal Advocacy Service (LAS), both which deal with the denial of liberty (except in the case of LAS we go from file in many cases to the supreme court level) is a difference of \$6530 on the part of the State Appellate Defender and \$121 on the part of the Guardianship and Advocacy Commission.

The meeting with the budget director was lengthy and did not necessarily finish with a conclusion with the exception that discussions will continue and Director Voight recommended that we attempt to find alternative sources of funding for the agency's operations outside of the general revenue fund. We are pursuing the possibility of proposing fees and other activities, fees and institutions which may accept wards of the State that are in return for the privilege of housing wards of the State, fees on probate estates or on guardianships that are not public guardianships, etc.

Commissioners were also given examples of scenarios with respect to what the agency would look like if we were to cut 57 people, and a number of charts that correlate the areas of the agency's services to areas of poverty and of African American and/or Hispanic majority.

John Wank then made an appeal to those Commissioners that had yet to submit their completion of the annual ethics training. Additional copies of the materials were provided.

Motion was made by Vice Chairperson Schleifer to ratify the approval of all HRA nominations and resignations from both September and December meetings. Motion was seconded by Senator Harmon. Motion carried.

Motion was made to officially approve the June and September meeting minutes by Commissioner Schleifer and seconded by Commissioner Torres Davis. Motion carried.

Chairperson Rothert called for motion to move into closed session to discuss the Director's evaluation and compensation. Motion was made by Commissioner Schleifer and seconded by Commissioner Torres Davis. Motion carried and the Executive staff and Program Directors were dismissed for the remainder of the meeting.

John Wank and Director Milano returned as the meeting returned to open session. Commissioner Rothert articulated what occurred during the closed session:

- Decision was made to table the decision regarding the Director's compensation by a vote of 3 to 2;
- There was concern there may be negative implications for the Agency as a whole and for the Director if there was a pay increase at this time without guidance from the Governor's office; Chairman Rothert was directed by the members to seek informal feedback and report back to the Commission;
- Commissioner's agreed that if they got the guidance they'd be open to attending a special meeting before the next regular meeting;
- It was agreed that when the increase is done it will be retroactive from October 2009.

Representative Saviano made a point to say that all concerns are due to the current political climate and that Director Milano's performance was exemplary: the Commissioner's want to make sure that both the Agency and the Director are protected.

Director Milano stated she had experienced some difficulty in communicating with the Governor's office: there is an outstanding request to equalize the compensation among the entire staff, in which included the indication that she was among those persons but there has not been any response. Representative Saviano said they would try to track down the request and aid in communication.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Torres Davis, seconded by Commissioner Schleifer.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00.