

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**December 6, 2016**

**Video Conference Sites**

Chicago: James R. Thompson Center, Room 2-025  
Springfield: Capitol City Training Center, 130 West Mason Street, Room 104

**Members Present**

Anthony E. Rothert, Chairman  
Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey  
Dr. Sharon Jenkins-Collins

Representative William Davis  
Representative Michael McAuliffe  
Brian N. Rubin

**Members Absent**

Inez Torres Davis  
Senator Don Harmon

Andrea Schleifer, Vice-Chairman  
Senator Ira Silverstein

**Executive Staff Present**

Dr. Mary L. Milano  
Bobbie Fox  
Kenya Jenkins-Wright  
Gloria Lasley  
Gia Orr  
Teresa Parks  
Constance Umbles-Sailers  
Michelle L. Braker  
Florence P. Martin

Executive Director  
Director, Human Resources  
General Counsel  
Director of Finance and Fiscal Operations  
Director, Community Rights, Relationships & Resources  
Director, Human Rights Authority  
Confidential Assistant to the Director  
Private Secretary to the Director, Springfield  
Private Secretary to the Director, Chicago

**Executive Staff Absent**

Veronique Baker

Director, Legal Advocacy Service

**Other Staff Present**

Kelly Phelps  
Nicholas Hengels-Chinn

Meeting was called to order at 1:13 pm. A quorum was present.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Dr. Mary L. Milano**

Director Milano began by saying there was good news to report: the Agency has hired a new, permanent Director for the Office of State Guardian (OSG). Six candidates were interviewed, all with diverse backgrounds; however the person that has been selected is Barry Lowy. Mr. Lowy has worked with a number of our lawyers throughout the state; he is the supervising attorney for Equip for Equality (EFE) located in Springfield for the Abuse and Neglect Issue team. He is a senior attorney and has been with EFE for 17 years. He has served as lead counsel for several of the class action suits that have impacted the Agency. He is a graduate of Lake Forest College and Tulane School of Law and is very, very active in the Illinois State Bar Association, particularly around disability issues, and extremely knowledgeable in guardianship and in restoration of rights—essentially the process from beginning to end. Director Milano believes that he will be a good fit and that the Agency could not have found anyone else with more spot on qualifications. Chairman Rothert and Commissioner Rubin both agree that Mr. Lowy will be an asset to the Agency. His tentative start date with the Agency is January 9, 2017 and he will be located in the Springfield office.

The Agency has also been awarded its first grant. It is for the Legal Advocacy Service (LAS) to work with the Cook County Health and Hospital systems to extend and expand their legal capacity to effectively manage agreed outpatient treatment orders: to hopefully reduce the confinement and improving the treatment of persons who would otherwise be committed or become potentially part of the jail population. We have retained a contract lawyer, Matthew Davison, who is a graduate of John Marshall Law School (JMLS) and he will be located at the Read field office and will also be commuting between some of the various mental health facilities. Mr. Davison spent a year with the Agency as a volunteer LAS attorney; he is in private practice but he has extraordinary experience because he was very dedicated to us a few years back as a volunteer. Our portion of the grant is a little under \$100K.

The Agency has been doing very well with hiring. We received a release from the Governor's office to hire within the Technical Advisors (Attorney) positions, so we are looking forward to hiring both LAS and OSG attorneys and excited to be able to fill positions in both our Peoria and Champaign offices. We also now have an LAS attorney in the Chicago office. We're trying to hire as fast as we can; we have a number of retirements coming up in the future. The Agency is also in the process of interviewing for a Paralegal who will support both OSG and LAS.

Lastly Director Milano reported that there are 2 interns working for the Agency one of which is Matthew Vickers, a graduate student in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and is working on legislative policy and for the third year we will have a high school intern from Perspective Charter Schools.

## **LEGAL REPORT**

**Kenya Jenkins-Wright**

Counsel Jenkins-Wright reported that there are no overarching legal issues at this time; however she wanted to remind the Commissioners, who are required, to be sure to complete their yearly ethics training and submit the signed certificate of completion that is included in the training materials.

At the last meeting it was mentioned that the Agency was approached by a reporter, Mike Behrens, for an investigative report. There was a 2 part series in the Chicago Tribune that had a couple of follow-up stories and opinion pieces which were primarily focused on the Department of Human Services (DHS). Counsel Jenkins-Wright has worked with a communications liaison and has explained the Agency's position. She is happy to report that the Agency was not included in any of the articles. There are rumors that more stories may be forthcoming and the Agency will continue to keep a clear record of all that happens so that we can properly speak to the reporter and explain what OSG is doing.

Counsel Jenkins-Wright spoke to one of the latest stories which involved Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) facilities owned by Rubin Goodwin that DHS closed for health and safety issues. OSG had 12 or 13 wards living in one of those facilities and once we were aware of the issues, little by little the relocation process began. Kelly Phelps, former interim OSG Director, worked very diligently to be sure all details were executed properly so relocation would go smoothly and all OSG wards have been removed from the facility. It was reported in the paper on the day of this meeting that things had not been going smoothly and DHS had to go to court to force Mr. Goodwin to follow through with relocations. Mr. Goodwin was trying to make a case that he didn't have to comply, but DHS was successful in court and the process to remove the wards proceeded.

Representative Davis asked for clarification regarding the relationship between the Guardianship and Advocacy Commission (GAC) and DHS. He asked if the impetus to move the wards was solely from DHS as a result of their inspection and process or was there someone from GAC that knew that the wards were in a situation and perhaps should not have been there. Director Milano explained that where some of our wards are placed is not always a matter of our choice, nor is it a matter of what is the optimal placement; it is where they can be placed. Mr. Phelps explained in further detail: we (GAC) don't necessarily have control of where the wards go. We must rely on contractors from DHS, for example, a hospital: DHS contracts a preadmission screening agent that has the knowledge and ability to figure out what funds the ward has and what place is appropriate for them to go, then a pass agent will send them there. At that time we have the opportunity as the Guardianship Representative to object to that placement; whether it's a known hazard, if we've had problems there in the past etc. Many times we don't have any knowledge but rely upon the social workers and pass agents to place our wards. Once we visit the facility, if we see something that is a problem we report it to the appropriate agency. If looking at this from a legislative point of view, nursing homes are heavily regulated and are inspected by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). However, the framework that we work within-developmental disabilities and mental illness-we have a variety of agencies that inspect, license and even if licensed may be certified by a different agency. You may be licensed by DHS and certified by IDPH; you may be inspected by the Department on Aging or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Director Milano also explained there are 2 sorts of competing interest at work. There has been a lot of pressure and movement in the social services in mental health areas and the courts to say that whenever possible we'd like to place people in the least restrictive types of settings and in the community. This has been a philosophy of the State for some time. On the other hand, the CILA industry that operates these facilities is not regulated to the same extent as other kinds of facilities. There has been a push to get additional regulation and more attention to the group homes and CILA settings, but thus far the regulations are woefully inadequate and the help and support structures are not there in most cases to deal with the kinds of issues that occur. A lot of the operators of CILAS are the same people that

operate or who have operated in the past nursing homes and other institutions that have come under question. We have also been looking at are there ways in any of these facilities, that once there are violations found being able to do something more than what is being done now: can admissions be closed off, can payment be stopped; however, the Medicaid regulations are such that the process becomes very complicated.

She also explained that one of the many constraints that the Agency (GAC) works under has to do with the fact that our statute requires that we visit each ward at least 4 times a year. Our Guardianship Representatives (GRs) carry caseloads of 150 or more wards. When compared to a DCFS caseworker, admittedly under court order, it may be 10 or 15; the recommended caseload by National Guardianship bodies is 30. The Cook County Public Guardians is able to visit monthly, but they only take cases with money so it is out of the pockets of the wards and/or ward's family. We don't have this ability because we don't have the staff because we don't have the appropriation. We also have wards that are not easy to place either because of funding issues or their own set of special needs, characteristics, behavior, etc. She believes that our GRs do an exceptionally good job of staying aware of conditions generally and also try to cooperate across divisions. In the event a GR is visiting a facility and sees something that should be investigated that is in the purview of the Human Rights Authority (HRA) they will make that referral, and vice versa. They have contacts with other agencies and are very attentive to the Press—not just the Press in terms of whether it is going to be bad for us—but if they hear about something that has happened at a facility where one of their wards resides, some have been known to get up in the middle of the night and drive 60 or 70 miles to visit a ward.

Commissioner Davis asked if there was an opportunity for GAC to create a better relationship/be more proactive with DHS, Aging, etc., because in the long run—if something goes wrong—we're the Agency that's responsible for the wards. Director Milano responded that for the first time in her experience, during the final months of the Quinn administration, the 'human services cabinet' (Juvenile Justice, DHS, Public Health, Aging, GAC and all of the Directors) met weekly with someone from the Governor's office as a roundtable. However, there must be someone who steps up to say give credence to the other agencies and their services and what they can contribute both by conversation and by expertise, no matter what their size or place in the configuration. Currently there's something called the Human Services Transformation Task Force, but we're not a part of it even though we no doubt deal with people with the same types of disabilities as anyone. Both Representatives Davis and McAuliffe agreed that there needs to be a way to elevate the status of GAC so that the Agency isn't always just picking up the pieces and that the Agency can begin to have some input on how the pieces are put together.

## **FISCAL REPORT**

**Gloria Lasley**

CFO Lasley gave a brief overview of the summary that was included in the Commissioner's meeting packets. On November 30, 2016 the current headcount for the Agency was 97 with the maximum allowed being 108. Hiring has been an ongoing process in addition to several staff who will be retiring and we're hoping to get through the course of the year to the maximum of 108. Generally the staff gives lots of notice as to when they're about to retire, but it is still difficult to tell what will happen by June how many more will decide; we anticipate about 3 or 4 more that will retire between December and January timeframe.

The General Revenue funding that we received in FY17 is \$9 million and \$2.3 million from the GAC fund. In FY18 our maximum headcount is going down to 106, which does not represent the loss of 2 headcount, but represents the transfer of them to the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT). DoIT is headed by Secretary Designate Hardik Bhatt which consolidates all of the IT staff from all agencies into their organization. Our 2 full-time IT personnel now work for DoIT, but will remain within the Agency as far as we can tell; they remain on our payroll and are included in the FY17 headcount, but for FY18 they will go on the DoIT headcount and our Agency will get billed and reimbursed. Director Milano stated that the concern of most of the Agency Directors is that the reimbursements will continue to rise without the ability to control the expenditures: you pay whatever they bill you. CFO Lasley pointed out that it is in legislation that they must be very transparent about all of the chargebacks, but those details haven't been mapped out yet. As DoIT works with the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) there's a lot of information forthcoming which has caused a bit of guesswork in the FY18 budget. The FY18 appropriation request-what we call our maintenance budget-has been approved by the GOMB to be included in the budget book and is an increase of FY17. The GAC fund went from \$2.3 to \$2.4 million: the \$100K increase is the headcount that we're paying for with previously mentioned grant funds because we have to pay for it upfront and then we'll get reimbursed. The General Revenue Fund (GRF) is up to \$10.9 million, which is not a very big increase from where the Agency has been historically, but is an increase from where we were in FY17 when we shifted a lot of the operational costs to the GAC fund as we have done for the last couple of years. We have a little over \$500K increase in personal services fund request; this is to fund us getting back to where we need to be in headcount so we are able to replace retirees and absorb the new retirements that are forthcoming. There are over 20 people, which is about 23-24% of our staff, eligible to retire between now and the end of the next fiscal year. The Agency is striving to get ahead of those retirements, get as full a headcount as possible and we also have some monies budgeted within the GAC fund in the event we are fortunate enough to identify good candidates ahead of the maximum headcount that we're allowed in the GRF, OMB will let us get some transitional hires in on our payroll on our other State funds so as people leave we move them over. We have a very senior workforce right now, so the challenges are significant in the next couple of years; long term it is good—our average salary will go down, assuming we'll hire at entry levels which is a big assumption as people come in from other agencies as well. Personal services also includes the payouts: as people retire they generally max out the amount of benefit time that they were able to carry over so we pay them out, on average, \$15K of banked benefit time per retiree. Individuals who have been with the State for a very long time have sick and vacation day payout which can be significant. There is also an amount included for staff bonuses because there is talk about moving away from annual increases and doing non-pensionable bonuses.

Historically for our staff we pay salary, social security and Medicare out of our appropriation, but the group insurance and the retirement pick-up has come from some other bucket that's not appropriated to us so those costs are not included in the Agency's appropriation request. However; for the DoIT staff we do have to pay that this time, we are going to get charged back for that: this is an addition request for an increase in appropriation to cover. The retirement payout for FY18 is approximately 54% of salary and the group insurance is \$24K per person. There are estimated contractual services for the DoIT consolidation: many agencies within the State that have been consolidated agencies for some time and we were not one of those but now we will be. What this means is that we will have access to centralized IT support line for support for all basic desktop, laptop, servers, etc., and they will bill us for this per piece of equipment. We have asked for a quote on those charges but DoIT hasn't provided it

yet so the amount shown in the summary is based on published rates to other agencies that are already consolidated under CMS.

Representative Davis asked if hiring additional GRs to decrease the large caseloads was part of the Agency's goal to get to the desired 108 headcount. CFO Lasley responded that most of the vacant headcount is for guardianship staff and attorneys to support the caseloads; from different perspectives they work together to support wards—one is legal and the other on more of a social work role. It is the social work role that carries the large caseloads. Director Milano says the Agency is working to hire on the OSG side both at the GR level and at the legal level. We are also adding a paralegal position and a type of General Executive/Administrative position as well as another Office Assistant for the West Suburban office. On the OSG side there's a balance between the caseworkers and the support that can be given to them. If the Agency were to hire, for example, 10 new GRs, it would not make a substantial difference in caseloads. It may in some offices, but not the kind of reduction necessary to bring them down to line with national norms. There are also have large workloads on the (LAS) and needs on the Human Rights Authority (HRA) side where the staffing is equally lean. In this fiscal year the LAS has an estimated 8000 cases covered by 11 attorneys; and we're spending an average of \$250 per case which is extremely low. With regard to the HRA we only have about 10-11 staff members at any time and there are large parts of the State that don't have any representation or ability to go in and investigate. An improved case management system will also alleviate some issues in that workers would be able to work via mobile means more easily, keep much better data on and in areas that the Agency wants to look into in terms of enhancing the lives of our clients.

## **MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES**

**Gia Orr**

The Agency's 1<sup>st</sup> quarter EEO report and CMS state plans for African-American, Asian and Hispanic employees have been submitted. We continue to be underutilized in the Asian employee field and with retirements within the next year we stand for the next fiscal year's report to have a few more unutilized categories. Our Illinois Performance Rating System report (IPRS) 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report has also been submitted as well, and we are well into 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter report which is due in January with all of our new measurements.

Management initiatives include:

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- Education and support assistance for individuals with disabilities on understanding their rights as indicated in the MHDE code. The Agency is working towards this with legislation and the Governor has the Governor's Day of Service where they have been polling agencies on what type of service projects could the Governor's office put into play. GAC submitted for a marketing campaign with volunteers. Ms. Orr has an upcoming follow up call with the Governor's office to figure out what the campaign would look like; she has already created a plan and submitted it and hopes to discuss it to see what volunteers from the outside that will participate in the Governor's Day of Service. The plan is very simple: we need people to go into places, especially where our visibility is low, and post not only our intake numbers but information pertaining to who the Agency is and what it does.

- Insuring quality guardianship training to protect persons with disabilities quality of life in integrated or home based settings. The Agency also has legislation that it will be putting forth in this area.
- Developing training modules for proactive, reactive and retroactively reaching out to all citizens, wards providers and caretakers which keeps the demographic population in line with services or able to request services be facilitated. TBA: pending successful roll out of internal employee training module. It is Ms. Orr's hope that once the internal module is in place—pending start date is January 2017—the Agency will be ready to begin external training.
- Forecasting demographic trends utilizing multiple data measures that allow for data informed decision making on human capital and our resources. This is on hold for now: it was found that the information from the last Census is very disjointed, particularly when it comes to the State of Illinois. We are hoping that we can manipulate data from some other areas and for the upcoming Census the Agency has submitted some questions from this arena that we would like asked on Census questionnaires for the State.
- Expanding facilitation of services by regions of need like the high needs demographic. We're hoping that this can be tackled with the Governor's Cabinet on Youth and Children. Ms. Orr is working with the apprenticeship group with Julio Rodriguez, DCEO and IDES. Ms. Orr believes there are a lot of different people pinning for the same thing. GAC has their population that it would like to see and in our eyes we say if we could just get 5 -7 people and show that they can be more productive citizens rather than in day treatment programs. There is no funding for these projects, they're looking for braiding of funds from agencies and we, as well as several other agencies, do not have funds to braid.
- Early Childhood Education workforce development. Teachers Kindergarten through college must be trained, certified and have the proper credentials, etc., but for teachers in Early Childhood Education these are not required. The individuals who service our children from birth to the start of Kindergarten have not been at the same level that we expect people who are practicing, educating or caring for children should be. It is a project that is near and dear to First Lady Rauner, there will be money for funding because Early Childhood is the new "little black dress" in education—in the next 6 months \$3 billion specifically—with a sizeable allotment being given to Illinois.
- Increasing ward's age 18-27 viability and eligibility for restoration of rights. Thanks to former Interim OSG Director Kelly Phelps data is finally compiled for this study. There are about 27 wards that could be eligible for full or partial restoration; however, the Agency would have to put some systems in place to get this expedited.
- Support employees; provide professional development and relevant materials. Our beta group has been working and manipulating the system and November 15<sup>th</sup> is when the window opened; December 15<sup>th</sup> is when the window closes. Some of modules that are being offered are: Psychiatric Medications: Use, Side Effects and Practices, Mental Health Assessments with Cultural Considerations, Restraint and Seclusion, Occurring Disorders: Treatment and Support for Persons. This will be a very fruitful tool for new employees because so much institutional knowledge leaves with retirees, we must be sure that new employees are just as knowledgeable even though they are gaining the knowledge through computer based learning. A survey will go out December 19<sup>th</sup> with completion due after the New Year.

## ACTION ITEMS

Motion was made by Commissioner Rubin to approve the minutes from the September 20, 2016 meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Berry-Bailey. Motion passed and the minutes were approved.

## PROGRAM REPORTS

### Office of State Guardian (OSG) – Director Milano

Director Milano acknowledged the amazing efforts of Kelly Phelps during his time as Interim Director of OSG. His tenure was to only be 3 months but was slightly longer and although he has returned to his original position within LAS, he has graciously agreed to be on available to lend a hand until the new Director begins in January 2017. Simultaneously the other LAS attorney, Kelly Choate, has been doing all of the LAS work out of Springfield which has not been easy as there are some very difficult institutions in terms of the hospital community.

On behalf of Dr. Milano, Ms. Orr gave an update on projects that were introduced at the September 20, 2016 meeting:

- **South Suburban Office:** In the previous meeting there wasn't enough data to substantiate the need for a South Suburban office, but through further investigation and data gathering it has been confirmed that it is a necessity for the Agency. In thinking about the caseload, Mr. Phelps investigated and gathered data on the Kankakee area to see if there was a need for another worker or if the workers in the Champaign office could carry the caseload. It was determined that the Kankakee area requires its own worker. It was suggested that at the next meeting there be some brainstorming as to how to co-ordinate and configure this area of the state and the various possibilities: should there be one worker and a South Suburban office with that person working from there to cover Kankakee or should they be given mobile office so they can work in the Champaign office if they wanted or stay in the field—whichever works best based on the location of their home office.
- **Feasibility Study:** This involves the concept of people working teams, pulling people out of the offices more and giving them higher visibility in the geographical areas that they cover. Among the reasons that the Agency thought the team concept would be a good idea are:
  - Response times for new appointments would be quicker. GRs have very high caseloads but when they get new cases there's a window of time to be able to respond to them. We need response times to be quicker than the current
  - Emergencies would be responded to within 48 hours. If a GR has a caseload of 250 people and receives 3 emergencies in 1 week, it could take away time from quarterly visits, time needed to record case notes, etc. With the team concept, all of the members of the team would know what is going on so if one GR is pulled in one direction another member of the team could be able to step in on their behalf. They may not be able to complete the task to the end, but they'd be able to get a temporary solution in place the assigned GR is available.



- Lastly, GRs go through a very tedious process to give as well as obtain the many, many signatures needed to develop case files. There's a need to get paperwork signed in a more timely fashion. With the team concept, if a GR is out in the field and close to facilities that need your signature on care plans, etc., they're already in the field.

These are the top 3 needs that the Agency was looking to solve with the feasibility studies.

2 core groups participated in the study: one group out of the West Suburban office and another from the North Suburban office. Among the positive outcomes were participants felt they had better response times to everything and the service providers said there was more visibility in their areas which they wanted. A positive for the Agency was there were no requests for overtime. There was one request for overtime, but it was to close out inactive cases. Not having to ask for additional overtime because individuals are already in the field and able to do tasks in a more timely manner is a win-win for the Agency.

Among the drawbacks were some electronic challenges, some of which was just getting accustomed to using the new equipment they were given—iPhone, printers, scanners, etc. as well as connecting and coordinating when at a service provider's office. Another challenge was presented in that some offices GRs have mandatory consent coverage where they must physically be in the office and are responsible for managing phone consents for that day. When individuals were removed from the office to work on the pilot, they weren't there to do their consent coverage and that work fell on those who left behind and this was a complaint from those not participating in the pilot. We would also have to find a system for gathering each GR's mail. If a GR is out in the field, but a service provider has sent something that requires attention via snail mail they have to find a way to get that mail. It is hoped that this issue can be resolved by scanning items to their e-mail.

One of the areas that will need to be explored is how to restructure the actual brick and mortar office locations should we decide to fully utilize the team concept. Those who are left behind in the office will have to be especially efficient in performing activities a person would typically physically be in the office to do will need to be handled. We've considering having an operations site—i.e. Springfield could be an operations hub, all phone calls could come through there, mail could go there as a centralized location and distributed, etc., which will take a lot of planning. It may also require some additional headcount to create some support staff.

Finally the following are measurable, *positive* outcomes from October 2016. Susan Creighton, Guardianship Managing Administrator for the Southern Region did a study on the following 7 categories from cases in the Peoria, North Suburban, Metro East, Egyptian and East Central Regions:

Wards involved with hospice, **30**

Wards that moved to a least restrictive environment, **6**

Wards that have a reduction in psychotropic medications, **25**

Wards that have SST involvement/SODC deflections, **24**

Wards whose care plans are attended , **179**

Wards who have unnecessary medical procedures deflected , **1**

Wards that have family involvements/successor guardianships to family members, **13**

## **Human Rights Authority (HRA) – Teresa Parks**

Director Parks gave a brief summary of the Authority's program statistics from the current fiscal year, July 1 through October 31 that was included in the Commissioner's information packets.

The majority of the complaints received by the Authority come directly from the person with the disability. Many concern mental health related services—which can be State operated mental health facilities to community mental health facilities. Most rights issues that were investigated during this time concerned treatment planning issues, issues associated with admissions, discharges or transfers from facilities, restriction of rights and confidentiality violations.

The Authority's work is carried out by 10 staff members and there are 9 regional panels of 9 appointed volunteers each. There is a staff vacancy in the Champaign Region which encompasses 20 counties so that is a sizable area that is without coverage. Director Parks has been covering this region with a lot of help from the staff, notably Geraldine Boatman who has been helping out with cases in the Kankakee area, Gene Seaman has been helping with some cases in McClain and Champaign Counties and student intern, Colton Bell, who has been helping with research and report writing. Cathy Wolf, who retired from the position last December, came back under a 75-day contract and has been a great help. Her contract is almost up and we hope to get it renewed in the coming year and hope to fill the vacancy soon as well.

We continue to seek volunteers to serve on panels across the State. There are 3 regions that are experiencing significant vacancies: the North Suburban Region, which is based in northern Cook, McHenry, Lake, Kane and DuPage Counties as well as the Rockford and Springfield regions. The amount of time involved in serving on a panel averages about 4 hours a month and the Authority reimburses travel expenses. The Authority is particularly interested in hearing from consumers of disability services, family members or guardians of persons with disabilities and private citizens—people who aren't employed by a disability service provider but they have had some experience, perhaps a retired professional.

The HRA is also working on several other initiatives. Public awareness is a big issue for the Authority; there are currently 2 staff members—Kim Conway and Gene Seaman—who recently participated in a results oriented workshop. The project they chose to work on was increasing public awareness. The HRA relies very heavily on people contacting us to report rights issues, so outreach to the public is very important. Ms. Conway and Mr. Seaman surveyed staff with the hopes of developing a public awareness plan that we can use to address this need.

The Authority has also been working on some potential legislative proposals with Legislative Liaison Constance Umbles-Sailers in trying to address more systemic issues that we encounter in HRA cases. Proposals related to the use of cameras in Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILAs) and State operated facilities similar to legislation that was passed in the past session regarding nursing homes. We would also like to see some initiatives on posting Guardianship and Advocacy contact information in facilities. Currently the mental health code requires that providers get this information to individuals, but there's no requirement that it be posted and readily available in facilities. We would also like to see some examination of sanctions for nursing homes and are looking at a proposal that Director Milano initiated on private guardianship training, but we also have several HRA related cases

that can feed into it. Lastly, another legislative proposal from some of our HRA cases involves rights and education issues involved with sexual expression by persons with disabilities.

As a follow-up to one issue that was discussed at the last Commission meeting having to do with Veterans Administration (VA) cases, we've had several cases involving issues with medications and mental health treatment issues. We met with the VA and they were in agreement with considering the development of a memorandum of understanding. We did develop a draft we have sent it to the VA and they are in the process of reviewing it and we hope to hear from them and finalize it in the near future.

The Authority is also developing relationships and working with colleges. Director Parks and Gene Seaman have been working with Bradley University to develop an ongoing connection for the purpose of getting student interns. They met with Bradley's Pre-Law program and an intern will be starting in spring and 2 will start in the summer. Mr. Seaman and Director Parks will also be presenting for an upcoming session at their Pre-Law program. The professor for that program is a retired judge and was very excited to learn about the HRA and how law affects so many professions. She wants to emphasize to her students that even though they may not become an attorney, law can be an important part of their professions.

Director Parks wanted to acknowledge student intern Colton Bell whose internship will be finished at the end of December. The internship was for 2 years through a graduate counseling program at the University of IL Springfield and has been an asset to the Commission.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner McAuliffe. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Berry-Bailey.

Motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.