

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Video Conference Sites

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

Members Present

Andrea Schleifer, Vice-Chairman	Representative Michael McAuliffe
Representative William Davis	Brian N. Rubin
Dr. Sharon Jenkins-Collins	Inez Torres Davis

Members Absent

Anthony E. Rothert, Chairman	Senator Don Harmon
Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey	Senator Ira Silverstein

Executive Staff Present

Dr. Mary L. Milano	Executive Director
Veronique Baker	Director, Legal Advocacy Service
Bobbie Fox	Director, Human Resources
Kenya Jenkins-Wright	General Counsel
Gloria Lasley	Director of Finance and Fiscal Operations
Barry Lowy	Director, Office of State Guardian
Gia Orr	Director, Community Rights, Relationships & Resources
Teresa Parks	Director, Human Rights Authority
Constance Umbles-Sailers	Confidential Assistant to the Director
Michelle L. Braker	Private Secretary to the Director, Springfield
Florence P. Martin	Private Secretary to the Director, Chicago

Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Schleifer at 1:20 pm. A quorum was present.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Mary L. Milano

Director Milano began by sharing the current Annual Report. Gia Orr was primarily responsible for compiling information for this year and with each year the Agency has been trying to advance the presentation, format and usability of information. Currently in the works is the creation of an on-line version that will have more engaging and interactive features. Vice-Chairman Schleifer suggested that if anyone has an updated bio that it should be submitted for use in both the print and on-line version.

Director Milano formally introduced and welcomed Barry Lowy as the new Director of the Office of State Guardian. Mr. Lowy comes to the Agency after an 18 year tenure with Equip for Equality (EFE). He has been travelling throughout the state visiting the regional offices and getting to know members of his management staff.

Director Milano then stated that, in the interest of time, she'd like to change the order of the agenda and defer to the Program and Functional Directors. If necessary she would comment during their reports. Vice-Chair Schleifer acknowledged the request and asked to begin with Program reports.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Office of State Guardian (OSG) – Director, Barry Lowy

Director Lowy presented to the Commissioners some of the things he has identified and some of the initiatives that are being embraced by the Agency. He reminded them that as recorded in the last minutes there was mention of a feasibility study. He feels strongly, along with others, that the Agency needs to upgrade its data base system and digitize its records. There have been discussions on how to obtain such a system, either via DoIT, purchasing or developing our own etc. It has been determined that we are capable of doing the digitizing in-house with the resources that we have. We would start by putting the information on our intranet and then hiring temporary workers to do the scanning of the records to keeping staff free to perform their day to day work. We are looking to use dedicated scanners-namely our old printer/copier/scanners-and purchasing newer copiers for the offices, allowing staff access to those for uninterrupted work flow. The Agency is working with DoIT to develop the tech tree and Kendra Moses in the Peoria Regional Office has agreed to be the pilot office. Definitions will be written for the folder subsections, so once records are digitized there will be consistency. In our current CompuTrust system there are so many different ways that data can be categorized it is a struggle to put together a consistent report. Hopefully by digitizing the records into portable document files (pdf) they will be easily transferrable to whatever case management system the Agency decides upon.

Director Lowy and staff member Michelle Braker participated in Rapid Results training. The project is to take a look at the Agency's transfer procedure. It currently takes a Guardianship Representative (GR) approximately 2 hours to go through a form to capture information in order to transfer a file from one region to another. The goal is to streamline the process to 33% savings. We're hoping to develop 2 forms: 1 for GR's that perform guardianship of the person and another for Estate workers. Once the

form is completed and the records are digitized, we hope the process for transferring a case will be alerting a manager that the case is ready to be reviewed for transfer, the manager reviews the file and it will require one click, a drag and a drop and it will be transferred to the new region. This new process will also save the Agency a great amount in postage. The digitizing will be a lengthy project. Union rules state that temporary worker contracts cannot exceed 6 months in any one office within a year, so the process will have to move from office to office. We're hoping to have the project completed in 2 years, but it could conceivably take 3.

Director Lowy mentioned that one of the things philosophically that was made clear to him when hired as Director of OSG, is the Agency would like to have the presumption be that individuals have the opportunity for community placement first. Everyone may not be appropriate for community placement immediately, but should have the option in event their condition improves. Director Milano had discussions with EFE regarding LIGAS and how to proceed. Managing Attorney Laura Sakas developed a list of OSG wards at the different placements that are still eligible for consent under LIGAS. Director Lowy used the list in a meeting with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) and they are willing to work with OSG so we can provide a universal consent for all of our wards who are identified in a particular placement. The West Suburban area of the state is greatly underserved with possible community placements. There's a large provider, where many of our wards reside, that is reluctant to enter into a downsizing agreement with the Division of DD or to otherwise explore the possibilities of shifting its resources into community services. It has been explained to OSG staff that if we were to consent to this for all of our wards, it is nothing more than consent to an evaluation; the outside eyes of the State would determine if persons could be served in a community setting. The Division of DD doesn't have the capacity to go and immediately place and assess everyone. Director Lowy will be meeting with the Division of DD on March 2, 2017 to develop an orderly process for identifying our wards so they are given the opportunity for a screening. As a result it is hoped that all of the wards that are not on the list for assessment will have their place held for their right to be assessed and possibly moved into the community. When the Division of DD obtains the resource to assess individuals, then it will have to develop the capacity: for example, if in the Northwest area of the state we've identified 50 wards that want to be in community placement, which would give OSG the leverage to go back to DD and say they need to put pressure on their providers to come up with some incentives for downsizing agreements.

Lastly Director Lowy discussed identifying wards eligible for possible restoration of rights. He is looking at legal and other resources. While visiting the Rockford office he explored the process with the attorney. He would like to bring consistency to the process in all of the regions. In the Rockford region the process is fairly simplistic, while in Chicago it is more time consuming. A number of wards have been identified and he would like to see more wards identified; the rights of the wards should not be under unnecessary guardianship and it would lessen the load for caseworkers.

Human Rights Authority (HRA) – Director, Teresa Parks

Director Parks told the Commissioners that the HRA is still operating with a vacancy in the Champaign Region which has gone unfilled since December of 2015. The Agency continues to wait for the completion of the hiring process by Central Management Systems (CMS). She continues to cover the region along with HRA coordinator Cathy Wolf who is a retiree. The Agency received permission at

the beginning of this calendar year to renew her 75-day appointment. Gene Seaman in the Peoria office has also been assisting with some of the cases. HRA continues to search and recruit members for the regional panels throughout the state; some regions are in more need than others. They welcome recommendations and are invited to contact her for further information.

She brought everyone up to date on a discussion from the last meeting regarding public awareness activities. 2 staff members – Gene Seaman in Peoria and Kim Conway in the Egyptian offices – participated in Rapid Results training, out of which they've developed some public awareness goals. Public awareness is crucial to the program, letting the public know about the work and availability of the HRA as a resource. We've identified a goal of increasing community outreach by 15% this fiscal year, with each region completing at least 6 community outreach activities. We have also recruited an intern, Sarah Goodman, from Bradley University who is assisting with public awareness materials.

The HRA has a training effort underway with regard to the Open Meetings Act. Because the Authority holds meetings throughout the state that are subject to the Act, law requires that all staff must go through an annual training process which we do on-line through the Attorney General's website. HRA members must complete the training at least one time during their time in office; most of them get it done within the first 90-days of their appointment.

She also provided follow-up on the HRA's ongoing cases with the Veterans Administration's (VA) hospitals in the Chicagoland area - both Jesse Brown and the Hines facilities - over the use of forced medicine and criminal citations for Veterans who have behavioral health needs. The Authority has been working with the VA to establish a memorandum of understanding, to facilitate both the presence of the Legal Advocacy Service (LAS) and the HRA in those facilities. We crafted a draft memorandum that we sent to the VA, they had some changes and sent it back to us. We have reviewed it again for additional changes and we hope to meet with them in the near future to finalize it.

Director Parks then presented a proposal regarding boundary changes for 5 different regions, involving 6 counties. It would help even out the caseloads; some regions have seen a decline in cases, some have experienced declines and some have remained steady. Some are related to demographic changes within the service population; for example, there was once a lot of cases out of Singer Mental Health Center in Rockford but that facility is closed so that region has fewer cases as a result. There is one region, the East Central region, which is very large geographically. It encompasses 20 counties and we'd like to lighten the load and shift some of those counties to Springfield. She and General Counsel Jenkins-Wright have reviewed the Guardianship and Advocacy Act and agree that this action requires the Commissioner's approval because they are responsible for overseeing service boundaries. The proposal has been presented to the HRA staff, to all effected HRA panels and all are in agreement with the changes. We propose that the changes take effect with any new cases.

Commissioner Rubin motioned to approve changes in the HRA regional map for new cases. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Torres Davis and opened for discussion.

Representative Davis said as he read the rationale, it speaks of geographic balance, which is basically how it looks on a map. He asked if that also applies to population balance. He pointed out that Springfield is a community of 100K people; so if more counties are moved into that geography how many more people does that add and are they currently balanced population wise? Director Parks

stated that 2 of the counties that are being moved – Macon and Christian – rarely have any cases, but one of the counties – Logan – has a steady stream of cases. When it is looked at geographically and when you look at the East Central region, it encompasses Kankakee which is a very dense population with a significant number of cases. She says that it would balance out in terms of service population even though Springfield has a large population, when you take into account Kankakee, Champaign and some of the other communities it does balance out. Historically there have been more cases for the East Central region than in Springfield.

Representative Davis then asked that since the proposal is for cases moving forward; could it be assumed that it won't create any challenges for the personnel who are handling the cases? Director Parks answered saying that is the reason for the proposal, to hold that cases that they have. For example there is a case in Logan County which is being covered by the East Central region. The region has been communicating with the provider and the panelists from that region went to the site visit, so we'd like them to finish out the case so it isn't confusing for the service provider. But for new cases it starts out that the Authority sends a case opening letter and that clarifies who the contact person will be and hopefully that will take care of any confusion. He then asked what would happen in the event of a reoccurrence of a situation that will then have a new staff person assigned versus a familiar staff person from the past. Director Parks state that the HRA has a very small staff; all reports are posted on line so if there's a reoccurrence a new staff person may be assigned, but the new staff person will have access to the records, reports and case information from the previous region.

Commissioners voted in favor of the changes to the HRA regional map for new cases and the motion was approved.

Legal Advocacy Service (LAS) – Director, Veronique Baker

Director Baker reported there's still a vacancy in the Peoria LAS as a result of the retirement of Cynthia Tracy at the end of December 2015. There are applications for the position, but the interview process has not started. The same holds true for the Champaign region; LAS hasn't had an attorney there in about 20 years so it would be reestablishing LAS's presence in that region. Matters that would normally be addressed in Champaign have been handled by the attorneys in Springfield, so once LAS is reestablished there it would just be a matter of redistributing caseloads to localize the areas where the clients are located. She hopes to have interviews scheduled within the next month.

She then gave an update on the work LAS is doing as a sub grantee of the Sampson Grant. The grant is \$4 million to be distributed \$1 million per year for 4 years. The program began in January of this year and we provide the legal representation to individuals who would be subject to involuntary commitment on an outpatient basis as opposed to inpatient *or* an agreed outpatient order. The goal is to do 100 orders in a year. So far there haven't been any outpatient treatment orders, but there are approximately 10 people that have been referred to the program, there are custodians who are willing to serve in that position and we have wrap around community services set up for them. We are waiting for the hospital to actually file the petition so negotiations can begin and orders drafted. We are hopeful that this will be a different way of looking at how to deal with persons with mental illness as opposed to committing them, medicating them, triaging the situation and then sending them out the door. Hopefully this time when they are discharged with a good community discharge plan that entails

outpatient therapy, follow-up therapy, housing if necessary and medications: things that people are lacking when they're discharged. The goal is to reduce the rate of recidivism when it comes to being in and out of mental health facilities.

The Alton office is now filing mental health proceedings for Bond County so LAS attorney Barbara Goben is now handling 3 different counties. It is challenging but she says that Bond is getting organized so hopefully things will work. The office also has a volunteer paralegal, the first time in 8 ½ years. Counsel Goben says she the young lady is very bright and useful and has made taking on the additional county more manageable because there's someone to help with paperwork and logistics.

Director Baker interviewed 13 law students for possible summer intern positions at the Midwest Public Interest Lawyers Conference. It is held at Northwestern and law students from throughout the Midwest attend. There are some very bright and motivated law students that are impressive in all of the things they've accomplished. They find the fact that interning with our Agency would give them the opportunity to gain litigation skills and also do appellate work, which is a combination that most places cannot offer. Hopefully there will be 1 or 2 in the Chicago area and 1 in the Alton area. No one was interested in going to the Egyptian area and since LAS doesn't have an attorney in the Peoria area she didn't commit anyone there.

This year she has been approached by Valparaiso University; they have a first year writing professor that has asked not only our Agency but several not for profits to come up with a legal issue for his writing class. The issue that we are asking them to research is the constitutionality of video hearings in mental health cases. It's not an issue that we expect to yield any groundbreaking research from on the part of the students, but it may steer us in a direction in order to make some of our legal arguments. That law became effective January 1st in Illinois; however, the only hospital that has utilized videoconference hearings is Cermak hospital. A few others have expressed interest: there was a testing at Jessie Brown VA, but so far there have been no other hearings outside of Cermak.

There are 2 important appeals that are being finalized: both are going to the Illinois Supreme Court. One is Benny M and the other is Linda B. We have received the final extension to give our reply brief. Benny M is an issue where the respondent in the case was kept shackled throughout the entire hearing, although the request was made to remove the shackles. There was no justification for the shackles. We won at the appellate level and then the State appealed to the Supreme Court. Linda B is a case where we were contesting that she was actually on a mental health ward. She was kept there, she was being treated as a medical patient, and they were late in filing their mental health petition because she had been there for quite some time. Again we won at the appellate level and the State appealed to the Supreme Court. There are 2 attorneys working on these cases. It would probably be another year before we actually receive a decision. Vice-Chair Schleifer asked what districts they were in; Director Baker answered that Benny M is in the 2nd district and Linda B in the 1st district. Commissioner Jenkins-Collins asked if the opiate addictions that are so prevalent in society have impacted some of the clients being released. Director Baker answered that an opiate addiction isn't necessarily a mental health issue. It may play a factor in some of the cases that we have, but so far it hasn't been an overriding problem. It is an issue more so in the southern part of the state than we see, but hasn't been an issue in our mental health cases.

Representative Davis asked a question regarding discharge orders that were mentioned earlier in the report regarding the Sampson Grant. He wanted to know if that is just suggestions on what should happen or if it is directed. The reason for his question is in the south suburbs they talk about the lack of services for mental health. So if there's a discharge order what does it really say? Director Baker stated it is an outpatient treatment order that has court oversight. It's a court order; a judge has reviewed it, the patient, doctor, counsel and agent who will be responsible for assisting the respondent in taking advantage of all their outpatient orders has signed off on it. If the person neglects to fulfill the needs of the order, the agent could bring the respondent back to court. The person could be subject to involuntary inpatient treatment, so that's where the enforcement mechanism takes place. Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4) and the Human Development Resource Institute (HDRS) are the acting agents that will be responsible for all the community outpatient wraparound services. Anything that deals with how the person is going to function within the community: where they're going to live, meeting their therapy sessions, getting their medications, job training or completion of school or registered for benefits, those are the outpatient wrap around services that are sorely missing. It is her understanding that one of those groups is responsible for all the people north of Roosevelt Road and the other will be responsible of those who are south of Roosevelt Road. At this time the program is Cook County only and involves Read Mental Health Center, Madden and Cermak. The hope is if this program is successful, it can be expanded to the private hospitals and outside of Cook County along with the expansion of community services that are needed in order to make the discharge plans successful.

Representative Davis was concerned that if an area is lacking in services, does that mean that if an individual is unable to go where there are services they will be out of compliance? Director Baker answered, no. It means that C4 and HDRS are the providers of services that are needed. There shouldn't be any instance where an individual isn't able to meet their services; the wraparound services, C4 and HDRS, will *provide* the services needed in the discharge order. The initial idea was to have monthly status dates and if something was needed quicker than the monthly date that could be accommodated as well. However, we didn't want to make it too burdensome. If an individual is abiding by the order, we didn't want to interrupt the program by having them come to court. There will be a case management worker who will serve as the person obligated to report the person's progress to the court. In addition, we have a contract attorney who we were able to hire specifically for this purpose who will also be in contact with his client to make sure there is compliance or if there is not compliance why not. Both will be reporting to the court monthly.

MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Gia Orr

We are working with Department Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) on a youth apprenticeship project. We have released our grant opportunity for Agencies that can help provide youth apprenticeship opportunities. The chosen areas are Peoria/Bloomington, Mount Vernon/Marian and western and southern Cook County. Our submission of numbers is based on persons in the age range that we have in our ward caseload, who could potentially have a higher level of living in a community living setting if they had greater workforce training and opportunities. We are exploring apprenticeship opportunities in the areas of manufacturing, health care and transportation. We have identified approximately 184 wards in south Cook County, 113 in west Cook County, 4 in Bloomington, 31 in Peoria, 15 in Marian and 13 in Mount

Vernon counties. This does not mean that all of those identified will participate in the pilot project. Directors Orr and Lowy will meet with GRs and talk about cognitive ability levels, an individual's ability to participate in workforce development training outside of their typical day programs and treatment settings to be sure there aren't other mitigating circumstances that would hinder them from being successful in the program. Our Agency is one of 17 agencies that have submitted numbers and she expects to spend a considerable time in meetings advocating for a percentage of persons with disabilities to be included in the program.

With regard to One Net training, we've received the results of the survey circulated among employees. There was an overwhelming positive response to the creation of it and the fact that the platform to be utilized won't cost a lot of money because we'll be sharing the Department of Human Services (DHS) platform. However; there was a grave concern about the content we were utilizing which was DHS' content that was already uploaded. When GRs and Directors read through the content and took the tests, they shared that a lot of the content was incorrect. This was not to criticize DHS and the way they train their employees to do whatever their subset of the job, but it isn't the way that our Agency would train. Our responsibility is the advocacy for the person once they've gotten into a facility. Because of the size of our agency and the fact that our employees are extremely busy with their large caseloads, we cannot go to them and ask for them to develop content. There's a possibility of some of our retirees who have lots of institutional knowledge developing content, but we'd need to find a way for them to entice them to return on a consulting basis. One concern about having someone external developing content is exactly what the employees stated: it needs to be someone who can fine tune all the nuances of the content to what our agency does. There has been some discussion about how Commissioners can be helpful in this area, plus as an executive team we must find a way to make this move forward quickly, as many people are on board and see this as a positive project.

The Agency did complete their initiative of creating a new logo and letterhead. We worked extensively with CMS and received their approval. We are actually ahead of their schedule, because they want agencies to begin to depart from using the state seal as their primary logo.

Ms. Orr also had a meeting with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Draft 3 of the State's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan has been put on ISBE's website. This is relevant to GAC because we are always looking for state plans and policies regarding educating students with special needs. She along with Teresa Parks and Veronique Baker have read the plan and she has made mention that the plan is very light on what they are going to do to increase better opportunities for students with special needs in the state plan. We feel there's a missed opportunity; there is money earmarked from the Federal Government more toward resources for students with special needs. Unfortunately, the monies that were earmarked for ESSA have now started to go under the Severe Congressional Review Act, under the new administration in DC. They are pillaging portions of ESSA, one reason being to come up with the \$20 billion that was promised on the campaign trail to be used as pilot money for vouchers.

A second issue is the availability of Family engagement centers which once existed throughout the State. They worked in conjunction with regional education offices have since fallen by the wayside, there are a few left, but they aren't staffed well; and family engagement resources centers weren't adequately funded by the state, they have also fallen by the wayside. There's a missed opportunity to use monies that have been earmarked for the state for resources to go back to stand alone structures

where Director Milano, Teresa Parks, Veronique Baker and she have been trying to entice ISBE with the fact that our agency could help them through our neutral HRA and LAS services. We couldn't have a person physically in the center, but we could be a resource. A family should have a place where they're comfortable to go to ask questions, whether it is about the school or services that a school/school district is providing and not only students with special needs but a place where someone knowledgeable is there to help them. Draft 3 includes how the State defines family engagement and how they want to put together large resource books for use in the schools. What we pointed out at one of the meetings is that puts the responsibility back on staff that are already taxed in the school and so resources slip through the cracks. We're trying to encourage them to overhaul draft 3 and focus more on family engagement and what that means to students with special needs, and how GAC by way of the HRA and LAS can be a resource. Members of the HRA and LAS staff went to Indiana in November and participated in Wrightslaw training, so we are making efforts to be prepared for when someone finally realizes that we can help, we're a sister agency and it will not bear any costs, we'll be ready.

Motion was made by Commissioner Rubin to approve the minutes from the December 6, 2016 Commission meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion was approved.

FISCAL REPORT

Gloria Lasley

For FY17 the Agency is on track to be well within our budget. The General Revenue funding (GRF) is not officially legislatively appropriated, but we are working on the budget that we have approved by the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) which is exclusively for payroll based on the court ordered payroll. Everything else is coming out of the Guardianship and Advocacy (GAC) fund.

The payroll budget guesstimate is very loose because we must budget for people who are retiring, which there many who are eligible, but have not made any notification that they are going to do so. However, even with the pace hiring and retirements, we are well within the GRF guesstimate of \$9 million and should come out short of that. The same holds true for the GAC fund; we will come out under budget that was fully appropriated funds and we expect to come in a bit under budget because of the pace of the case management procurements.

We have submitted our budget request for FY18 for \$9 million for General Revenue and \$2.4 million for the GAC fund, which went up by \$100K to cover the LAS grant funding; we must pay out the monies up front, but will be reimbursed and those monies will go back into to the GAC fund.

Representative Davis asked for clarification of a notation on the fiscal report that states "GAC fund requests \$1.3 million to cover IT initiatives". He wanted to know how that was reflected and if it meant that the request from the fund went up. CFO Lasley answered that there was funding allotted in previous years, in anticipation of retirements, the Agency hoped to hire and get ahead of the retirements. So that figure isn't included to the same extent in FY18 as it was in prior years. Also a lot of the case management funds were included in prior years, but not spent because in FY16 we were asked to not post the RFP, and we didn't have the budget to spend anyway, so that money was rolled over into FY17 and in FY17 we're behind on those initiatives because we were asked to wait to go in the enterprise direction that DoIT had laid forward; however, that is taking so long we're looking to procure third party software. The \$1.3 million figure is really just a big "bucket". It is an estimated

expenditure for the 3 programs and some DoIT costs. It is budgeted for a list of IT initiatives, but we're working on whether they will be attained through DoIT or a third party. It also includes some of the cost of the DoIT employees. Currently we pay them as salaried employees from the GRF and when we pay our employees from GRF, we don't pay the health insurance or retirement pick-up out of our appropriation—it gets paid somewhere by the government out of GR but not out of our appropriated dollars. But now we've had to put it back in for the DoIT employees because when we pay them out of non-GRF we are responsible to pay them. DoIT is getting chargebacks for the Agency's 2 IT employees; they are also going to make us a consolidated agency, meaning they will charge us for supporting our PC's and network so instead of call our staff, we will call a help desk.

Commissioner Davis also expressed his concern regarding the DoIT chargebacks for the employees. He was wondering if the mount of the chargebacks was going to be proportional to the overall budget or if we, as a small Agency, being charged the same as a much larger agency such as DHS. CFO Lasley said her understanding on how to calculate the chargebacks, per the instructions received from GOMB, is to take the salaries that we actually pay the employees and add in the health care and retirement pick-up that was previously paid from another appropriation.

Director Milano expressed that one of the concerns she and other Directors have, is the variety of categories of expense that are being/will be paid to DoIT and in each case they are going up. First there are employee chargebacks, then there's the pick-up of the benefits which comes out of funds that would otherwise be devoted programmatic expenditures; there's also the cost plus—the “plus” being whatever DoIT decides – and any service or piece of equipment. So we have full-time employees serving our Agency but we also need to pay for service of our PC's, software, network, etc., as well as the cost of delay in implementation. For example, the OSG case management system update, being moved out to 2018 possibly. We investigated the cost of software for 2 of the programs which is fairly minimal—could be less than \$100K—yet you see it going from \$620K to \$1.3 million to supposedly include the 3 programs. Do we have a choice about any of these things? No. We can ask, but effectively they can say no, you'll have to do this, can't do that, can't save money, can't get it into operation faster and we'll get to you when we get around DoIT. It is an increasing concern that costs can only go up. It also appears it will require additional staff to make everything work, and our IT staff is overburdened, not so much by the reduction in staff, but in terms of the additional bureaucracy, reporting, duplication of reporting and channels of approvals. There are pressures on the GAC fund, which was initially designed to enable the Agency to penetrate further into the community and to fund some of the initiatives that have been talked about, but can't and won't get done because of belt tightening. Any budget increase we may receive will go to things that we may not want and could possibly purchase cheaper and faster someplace else.

LEGAL REPORT

Kenya Jenkins-Wright

Counsel Jenkins-Wright reminded the Commissioners to be on the lookout in the mail for their Statement of Economic Interest, as well as for the e-mail regarding the Supplemental Statement of Economic Interest.

LEGISLATION REPORT – Dr. Mary L. Milano

The Agency had established a legislative agenda, but it was decided that only one proposal would move forward this session.

Bill 2665, also known as the Training Bill, is a proposal to design a modest, low cost approach to make training available to private guardians, who otherwise might not know what it means to become a Guardian, or believe that when they become a Guardian, the ward ceases to exist as a person that has protections under the mental health code, etc. Currently, supervision provided by the Court is minimal in terms of ongoing Guardianship, especially those who do not have an estate large enough to award fiduciary or corporate assistance. We conceptualized that we could address cases where some type of abuse or neglect occur, not through maliciousness, but through lack of basic information. We believe that we can build on some of the education/training that are used in-house and create various portals through which people can train. The training can be made available for free or very low cost through the public library or your own computer, perhaps 4-6 hours in length, self-paced, self-graded and very widely disseminated. It would not be a pre-condition of appointment; the order appointing would specify that the training must be taken in the first year and reported back to the court with the first annual report or within a certain timeframe if an annual report isn't required. We intend for the training to apply to Person guardianships only. We are thinking about proposing a carve-out for Cook and possibly some of the collar counties. As an interim measure, we would also combine the training with the ability to become appointed as guardian in counties where a Public Guardian does not exist as an interim measure.

Commissioners agreed that education/training on Guardianship is necessary and felt it must be a requirement to be most effective. It should be kept as low cost as possible, be user friendly, self-paced but not long in length. A section of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) should be included as part of the process to address some of the standard questions, assist in defining terms, etc.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner McAuliffe. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rubin.

Motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.