



Final Minutes of April 8, 2010

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jennifer Carroll, Chairperson; Jack Frost; Tom Kalal; Sheila Mulvey; Peter O'Meara; John Pelegano, Secretary; Patrick Vingo.

Absent: Donna Bouteiller, Carlos Colon, Jim Heffernan, Gregory Kelley, Patti Silva.

DDS STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Kathryn du Pree, Deputy Commissioner; Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison.

Jennifer Carroll opened the Council meeting for April 8, 2010. The meeting was convened at the Lower Fairfield Center (LFC). Ms. Carroll expressed her thanks for the dinner provided by the Parents and Friends of LFC. Cindy Stramandinoli, President of Parents and Friends, welcomed the Council members and shared the parents' positive perspective on the services offered at LFC. The Parents and Friends group raises funds to help enhance the environment and supports offered. The parents group wants to provide whatever support is needed to keep the facility opened.

Kevin McCullough, Assistant Regional Director for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) West Region, gave an overview of the ICF MR services offered and the Respite Center, which serves 150 individuals. Supervisory staffs were introduced.

Jennifer Carroll reconvened the meeting at 7:30 PM after a tour of the LFC facility and dinner.

The minutes from March were reviewed and revisions recommended. Patrick Vingo motioned to accept with changes, which was seconded by John Pelegano and passed unanimously.

OMBUDSPERSON'S REPORT:

Ed Mambruno did not attend this month's meeting but his report was shared. Jennifer Carroll and Tom Kalal wondered if there has been a significant increase in constituent calls since the budget cuts. Deputy Commissioner Du Pree reported that the number of issues has remained fairly constant. Family concerns are being addressed by the regional Helpline. The department is surveying families who have used the Helplines later this spring and will share the survey's results with the Council.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: ROD O'CONNOR

There is no agreed upon deficit mitigation plan to date. The Appropriations Committee has made its FY 11 budget recommendations, which does not propose any further reductions for DDS. Rod O'Connor discussed the DDS agency bill, which is being supported by Representative Ritter. It may need support by Council members.

HB 5380 DDS's sexual assault bill was not passed by the Judiciary Committee but DDS is trying to gain support for the concept to be added as an amendment to another bill.

SB 355 regarding capital improvements is supported by both DDS and the Department of Social Services. It will significantly benefit private providers who need to undertake renovations and repairs of CLAs for health and safety reasons. SB 410 regarding requiring state agency employees to have no moving violation if they transport consumers has significant fiscal implications for human service agencies.

Birth to Three regulations were passed, which means that HB 5448 needs to be passed because statutory definitions of “parents” are used in the regulations and these are being changed in the agency’s bill to reflect federal IDEA definitions.

There was Council discussion about supporting the bill and members supported Jennifer Carroll’s offer to join Rod O’Connor to meet with Senator Harris to stress the importance of passing HB 5448 when it comes to the Senate.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT:

Peter O’Meara thanked the staff for the tour and for the quality of services offered to the residents. He then thanked the Parents and Friends for their involvement and generosity. As the conversion process comes to completion, vacant positions at LFC and other public residences will be filled, which will improve program integrity and consistency. A new bond authorization was approved for Martin House for significant renovation. Commissioner O’Meara thanked the Governor, the Office of Policy and Management and the legislature for their ongoing support for DDS services as the proposed budget sustains services and funds school graduates and age outs. The challenge will be for the waiting list and VSP in FY 11. There is concern about the projected increasing deficit for FY 12.

The new LFC Residential Manager, Joanne Ciardello, begins on April 9th.

The attendance based reimbursement system for day services has been implemented effective February 1, 2010. DDS is addressing provider hardships. Attendance is increasing. The Rate Study Advisory Committee met this week and is continuing to research and analyze the reimbursement methodology.

OLD BUSINESS:

DNRs: Kathryn du Pree reviewed the summary of information regarding John Pelegano’s questions from the March meeting.

Recognition Event: Jennifer Carroll recommended the planning for this event be postponed to a future meeting, which was motioned by Dr. Pelegano, seconded by Jack Frost and approved.

Mr. Frost motioned to adjourn, seconded by Dr. Pelegano and approved.