



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES**

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 9, 2006

Hall of Administration, Conference Room 739
500 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

COMMISSIONERS

Chairman
FRANK G. DE BALOGH, Ph.D.

Vice Chairman
CORINNE J. SÁNCHEZ, Esq.

JAMES N. ADLER
VIBIANA M. ANDRADE
JOE BROWN
EGERTON FORSTER
JEROLD A. GODDARD
CHARLES M. HOUSE
HELEN C. NAJAR
CAROL A. OJEDA KIMBROUGH
GABRIEL A. SANDOVAL
LEONARD SCHNEIDERMAN, Ph.D.
ULIS WILLIAMS

COMMISSION STAFF

JUDY MARTELL
Executive Director

CARMEN MARTINEZ
Commission Secretary

Please note that meeting minutes are intended as a summary of the meeting not a "Verbatim" transcription.

Roll Call/Commissioners Present

Frank G. De Balogh, Ph.D.
Corinne J. Sánchez, Esq.
James N. Adler
Vibiana Andrade
Joe Brown
Egerton Forster
Jerold A. Goddard

Charles M. House
Helen C. Najjar
Carol A. Ojeda Kimbrough
Gabriel A. Sandoval
Leonard Schneiderman, Ph.D.
Ulis Williams

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/ESTABLISH QUORUM

The February 9, 2006, Commission for Public Social Services meeting was called to order by Chairman De Balogh at 10:05 a.m. A quorum was established. (See above.)

II. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Guests and Staff Present

DPSS:

Bryce Yokomizo, Director
Margaret Quinn, Chief
Larry Oghenekohwo

Other Organizations:

Manuel Moreno, CAO/SIB
Matthew Rifat, Attorney at Law

Commission Staff

Sandra Burton Greenstein, CORE Consultant
Judy Martell and Carmen Martinez, Commission staff

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 12, 2006

Action item

The January 12, 2006 minutes were moved by Commissioner Brown and, seconded by Commissioner Goddard

MOTION PASSED

MOTION #1

III. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Yokomizo announced that he is postponing his retirement for one year.

TANF Reauthorization – Increased Work Participation Requirements

Mr. Yokomizo described the increased work participation requirements:

- The look-back year for the caseload reduction credit will change from 1995 to 2005.
- States will be required to meet the federal work participation requirements of 50% for all families; 90% for two-parent families.

Mr. Yokomizo explained that DPSS will continue to work with the California Welfare Directors Association and other stakeholders over the next several months to:

- Influence federal regulations that will be released by July 1, 2006
- Pursue federal clean-up legislation to soften the new requirements
- Pursue possible statutory changes to CalWORKs and statewide best practices to increase work participation and maintain the core elements of the CalWORKs program
- Continue to implement the County Sanction Action Plan

Commissioner Schneiderman asked if cases without aided parents are counted in the work participation requirements. Mr. Yokomizo indicated that those cases are not counted.

Commissioner Sánchez asked for a description of what is needed to meet the work participant requirements. Ms. Quinn responded to the question by stating that DPSS must engage more individuals in federally recognized activities and that not all GAIN activities are considered engagement by Federal requirements. She indicated that DPS is looking both internally and programmatically for ways to bridge gap activities and lessen wait times. The Welfare Reform Network is being called back together for informational sharing and to obtain ideas on what can help the Department meet the new goals.

Child Care Fraud

Mr. Yokomizo stated explained that the types of fraud have changed over time. In the past, most welfare fraud was the result of unreported employment and resources. The Department can now detect these with computer matches. Mr. Yokomizo added that the Central Fraud Reporting and We Tip lines have been successful in identifying possible fraud.

Mr. Yokomizo explained that now the Department is seeing a new type of fraud. This fraud occurs when individuals fraudulently claim employment so they can also fraudulently claim child care costs. This type of fraud is on the rise and is harder to detect and detection is very labor intensive.

Commissioner House asked if the County is successful in prosecuting child care fraud cases. Mr. Yokomizo responded that the District Attorney reports a 90% conviction rate and that this represents prosecuting the largest cases.

Commission Brown asked about what happens to the children when the parent is convicted of welfare fraud. Mr. Yokomizo stated that judges have to make decisions on how the family is best served, by putting the parent in jail or by some form of restitution allowing the parent to remain with the children.

Commission Ojeda Kimbrough asked if there was something in the system that encourages child care fraud. Mr. Yokomizo responded that one of the most difficult challenges is to balance assisting those who are genuinely in need with the responsibility of protecting the integrity of the programs administered.

Commission Schneiderman asked about the percentage of fraud cases, the cost of fraud detection and which type of fraud is largest (provider or participant). Mr. Yokomizo stated that the amount of detected fraud is under 2%. The dollar amount has come down recently because the Department has put more resources on fraud prevention. He added that provider fraud does not represent the largest amount of fraud.

Commission Forster asked about how fraud situations involving both the participant and the provider are detected. Mr. Yokomizo indicated that most of these types of fraud are detected when something goes wrong between the two parties and one of the parties makes a fraud report on the other.

Commissioner Forster asked if spot checks to child care sites are made. Mr. Yokomizo responded that there are 12 full time investigators that do nothing but investigate child care fraud and that these investigators do spot checks. Mr. Yokomizo added that Child Care is split into three phases and that the State Department of Social Services only pays for one phase. The other two phases are paid for by the California Department of Education.

Chairman De Balogh stated that the Commission always appreciates Mr. Yokomizo's informative and interesting briefings. The Chairman added that Welfare Fraud will be a future agenda item. Commission Schneiderman suggested that the fraud budget and contract compliance be included in that discussion.

Follow-Up Required:
Future agenda item - PENDING

V. OLD BUSINESS
None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Update on the “Action Plan to Reduce CalWORKs Welfare to Work Sanctions” Margaret Quinn

Ms. Quinn explained that reducing sanctions is a departmental priority and is a performance goal not only for her but also for Bryce Yokomizo, Phil Ansell, her managers and the line managers involved in GAIN. The goal is to reduce sanctions by 20% between October 2005 and September 2006. Ms. Quinn explained that Attachments A & B illustrate progress that has been made.

Ms. Quinn stated that the Department started with nearly 23,000 sanctions and is now down to less than 20,713. The reduction will be cumulative over time, as the strategies to reduce sanctions are implemented.

Ms. Quinn noted that the plan consists of 43 strategies to reduce sanctions which can be categorized as follows: increasing outreach to participants, providing more information on GAIN services and sanctions, automation changes, increasing access to child care and transportation and focusing staff on the importance of encouraging active participation. These strategies are to be implemented in three phases over the period of about a year.

Ms. Quinn stated that at this point, 10 of the 43 strategies have been implemented. Thus far, participants are being deregistered later, resulting in fewer people recycling through the front door who may end up being sanctioned again. She indicated that it's too early to see whether any of the other front-end changes have impacted show rates; however, the phone call intervention in Job Club looks hopeful.

Ms. Quinn indicated that she would be focusing on the strategy to conduct home visits to prevent sanctions. In this project, line outreaches to participants entering noncompliance, sends a letter to reengage them, makes a phone call, and then makes a home visit if needed.

Ms. Quinn stated that the project is very promising. In November and December 2005, line staff contacted over 2,000 participants who were in noncompliance. Of these, nearly 1900 (or approximately 92%) of the participants resolved their noncompliance and/or agreed to participate in the program – yet only 179 required home calls. Ms. Quinn added that follow up to make sure that the participants who agreed to participate actually do participate is standard protocol and is taking place. About 10% of the resolved cases were reviewed and that two-thirds were already participating. Based on the first two months' experience, this strategy appears promising and is even being considered for implementation Statewide as a way to increase Welfare to Work participation.

Ms. Quinn noted that the Department is aware that transportation and child care are barriers and that the efforts to issue bus passes for Orientation and Appraisal (OAP) and make one-day/short-term child care more accessible will have an impact on a large number of participants. Ms. Quinn stated that the Department is planning on an incentive for completing OAP, such as a drawing for a basket/gift certificate. The study indicated there are multiple reasons folks go into noncompliance so the action plan is comprehensive, implementing a variety of strategies to have the greatest impact.

Commissioner Schneiderman stated that the CAO has completed the first part of their sanction study and that the Department's response to the study was to eagerly receive it and convene groups to look at the issues and address them aggressively.

Mr. Yokomizo added that the Commission has been a driving force in the Department's work on reducing sanctions and that he appreciates the value of the Commission.

Ms. Quinn indicated that a progress report is going to the Board later this month, and a copy of the report will be made available. Thereafter, quarterly reports will be going to them until all of our strategies are implemented. Also, the external workgroup will be reconvening in mid-March to review our progress thus far.

Follow-Up Required:

The letter to the Board of Supervisors, "Action Plan to Reduce CalWORKs Welfare to Work Sanctions," dated; February 21, 2006 is included in the March meeting packets. COMPLETED

B. List of Welfare Studies Underway, Manual Moreno, CAO/SIB

Dr. Moreno added that his section has been conducting studies since the implementation of CalWORKs in 1998. The objective is to provide information to the Department and the Commission to enhance services to participants.

Mr. Moreno provided an explanation of the studies underway which is found in Attachment C. The six studies underway are:

1. An Evaluation of the GAIN Home Visit Outreach Pilot Program – Expected Release, March 2006
2. GAIN Pathways Study – Expected Release, April 2006
3. The Changing Composition of the CalWORKs Caseload, 1998-2005– Expected Release, May 2006
4. A Study of Sanctions Among CalWORKs Participants in the County of Los Angeles, Part II: Barriers and Impacts – Expected Release, June 2006
5. An Evaluation of the Cal-Learn Program – Expected Release, June 2006
6. Specialized Supportive Services Cohort study – Expected Release, December 2006

Mr. Moreno indicated that the expected release date is the date the CAO/SIB sends a final report to DPSS. After DPSS has reviewed the report it is forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Schneiderman stated that the studies conducted by Mr. Moreno and his staff have had a tremendous impact on the work of the Commission and DPSS and suggested that a memo be sent to the CAO commending the work of the SIB.

Chairman De Balogh recommended that a letter be sent to the Board of Supervisors with a copy to the CAO commending the SIB staff on their significant work.

Action item

The recommendation to send a memo the Board of Supervisors commending CAO/SIB staff for their work was moved by Commissioner Schneiderman and, seconded by Commissioner Najjar

MOTION PASSED

MOTION # 2

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS

Chairman De Balogh explained this agenda item focuses on the internal workings of the Commission in terms of it's organization, operation, management, and staffing.

The Chairman expressed the Commission's thanks for the display of solidarity with regard to the attendance at the funeral of our beloved Commissioner Marcine Shaw. He commended: Commissioners Sánchez, Williams, Schneiderman, Ojeda Kimbrough, Forster, Najjar, and De Balogh; Commission Staff, Judy Martell and Carmen Martinez and the former Director, Lorenza Sánchez for their attendance. He also commended the Director of DPSS, Bryce Yokomizo for attending the funeral for Commissioner Shaw.

A. Resolution of Thanks to Commissioner Freitag

Chairman De Balogh stated that, by coincidence, the Board of Supervisors honored Commissioner Freitag on the same day as Commissioner Shaw's funeral. The Chairman introduced a resolution of the thanks to Commissioner Freitag for his distinguished service for 17 years which included Chairmanship of this Commission.

Action item

The resolution of thanks to Commissioner Freitag was moved by Commissioner Goddard and, seconded by Commissioner Schneiderman

MOTION PASSED

MOTION #3

Chairman De Balogh indicated that in addition to the resolution of thanks a congratulatory letter will be sent to Dr. Freitag along with a plaque in recognition of his service.

Commissioner Goddard recommended that past Commissioners are invited to the yearly Holiday Gala.

B. Commission Work Plan 2006-2008

Chairman De Balogh stated that most input from Commissioners has been included in the work plan except for the area of the planned activities of the Ad Hoc Committee on At Risk Youth which will be added.

Chairman De Balogh suggested that since the Commission does not have the analytical staff to conduct studies, the mission statement should be adjusted to state that the Commission makes recommendations based on studies that others conduct. Commissioner Schneiderman recommended adding that the Commission encourages such studies.

Chairman De Balogh also indicated that the Commission is not in the position to conduct annual public hearings based on the experience with the public hearing held last year and recommended that hearings be held as needed.

Chairman De Balogh indicated that the Commission has four committees in operation. Three are permanent: the Awards Committee, CORE and the Committee on Communication with the Board of Supervisors. The Ad Hoc Committee on At Risk Youth is a temporary committee.

Chairman De Balogh asked that any additional input be sent to the Director via email and that unless there are any significant changes he requested a motion to accept the work plan.

<p>Action item</p> <p>A motion to accept the work plan was moved by Commissioner Williams and, seconded by Commissioner House</p> <p>MOTION PASSED MOTION #4</p>

Chairman De Balogh added that the work plan will be finalized and sent to all the Commissioners.

Follow-Up Required:

Send a copy of the Work Plan to all Commissioners - PENDING

VIII. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

At Risk Youth Committee Planning – Commissioner Brown

Commissioner Brown announced that the Committee will be moving forward with a meeting next month to:

- Identify youth that are at risk
- Determine what services are available
- Work with the community to determine what services are available

Commissioner Brown indicated that all Commissioners will be notified of the date and time of the meeting.

Commissioner Goddard suggested involving local law enforcement representatives.

Commissioner Sánchez asked for a status report on the Sunshine Fund which is

used for things like the flowers sent for Commissioner Shaw's funeral. Chairman De Balogh indicated that there are some issues with the fund around meeting County and IRS approval and asked for an update from the Executive Director.

Judy Martell announced that the fund currently has \$270. She added that County Counsel opposed setting up a bank account because of the tax ramifications and recommended keeping the money in a locked box. Chairman De Balogh indicated that the solution for handling the funds will on the agenda for the next meeting.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned 12:04 (M/S/C Goddard/House)