



M. JODI RELI
GOVERNOR



Minutes ~ April 12, 2007

Members In Attendance:

Karen Hlavac – Vice Chair, Patti Silva – Secretary, David Hadden, Lou Richards, Jennifer Carroll, Ed Walen, Chavis Chappell, Kevin Morey, Dorothy Mobilia, Michael O’Toole, Peter H. O’Meara-Ex-Officio

DMR Staff:

Kathryn duPree – Deputy Commissioner
Christine Pollio – Legislative Liaison
Ed Mambruno – Ombudsperson
Cpt. Mike Woodson
Ivette DeJesus

Karen Hlavac - Vice Chair opened the meeting.

Citizen Input:

Kathy Whitfield, Mr. Whitley, and Patrick Johnson. Council introduced themselves to guests.

Mr. Whitley is interested in what is going on with the Undercliff property at Meriden. He has concerns about the property not being used to its full capability and that the state should have a better plan for the use.

Mr. Johnson thanked the Council for its continued support on the COLA issue. There is limited success for this year and zero success for next year. Mr. Johnson is asking for continued support as the request is still the 7 & 5%.

Minutes:

Minutes for March were approved unanimously with a change. Delete of quotations by Commissioners updates.

Ombudsperson Report – Ed Mambruno:

Mr. Mambruno has been working with the Business Office and the Legislative Liaison on the wheelchair lift issue. The vans currently purchased come with chest restraint straps. A fiscal note was provided to OLR. This task involved a lot of networking.

Mr. Mambruno has been receiving numerous calls from Private Providers on the DMR Medicaid waiver. They feel there are many restrictions on providing appropriate support. Mr. Mambruno has requested a response on this from the waiver unit and will be responding to the providers.

Mr. Mambruno informed the Council that there is a complaint form on the web and that this could be done anonymously if anyone has a concern they want to share.

Legislative Report - Christine Pollio:

- Ms. Pollio shared that there is substantial amount of added dollars in the appropriations budget that came out today.
- The name change moved up one level (need to start considering how we will be answering the phones, stationary changes, business cards)
- The Autism aging bill is getting a lot of support. The decision as to what model to follow still needs to be decided on. There is support from key legislators on Autism.
- The hearing aid bill is still alive. Ms. Silva to follow up with Appropriations Committee on this issue.
- The lift issue for vans is moving along. This is a big expense, from \$400-\$4500 per vehicle.
- The bill on Special Ed through age 21 discussed. The towns do not want to be responsible for Special Ed students after the age of 21, which mean DMR would be responsible earlier.
- There are several bills on state contracting processes.
- Birth to Three – In regards to bill/budget, no additional expansion in today’s budget beyond Governor’s recommended.

Commissioner’s Updates:

Governor’s Budget:	Appropriations Budget:
5 new Case Managers	15 additional
Restoration of Birth to Three	Sustained
COLA low wage pool	3% effective 7/1 – \$39 million
High School grads (135)	Sustained

- A letter will be going out to families who have high school grads alerting them to lack of funding.
- The Autism pilot was initiated two years ago. Pilot to end January 2009. There is a recommendation to create an agency similar to the one for the blind (BESB). The new budget shows 18 people for this agency in 2008 to fund staff but not client services. We should provide input in establishing this agency and a better option might be to create a Division within DMR.
- The budget looks good but we need to work on the high school grad issue.
- Mr. O’Toole shared his concern that emphasize on Autism will take away from issues at hand all these years will be given less attention due to the Autism pilot and the name change. Mr. O’Toole expressed he feels that there is a hidden agenda behind the name change. Mr. O’Toole questioned Commissioner O’Meara, Is there some sense of comfort you can give us?
- Commissioner O’Meara expressed that in the testimony regarding the name change the concern about its mission was clarified. The clinical standard statutory definition of MR will remain the same. He also stated that we all share the concern that we can’t open the door to all and not be able to afford to serve them.
- Ms. Carroll brought up the grads issue and asked for support from the Council to provide a support letter. The letter should go to Appropriations, OPM, Governor’s Leadership and Leadership from each of the Caucuses. Motion passed to do support letter, Chair Brown will compose.
- Brown Family follow up discussed at this point. A letter has been sent to all Public and Private providers to raise awareness and sensitivity to people expressing stress

and concern. Commissioner expressed thankfulness to the two providers who provided services and the DMR staff.

- Commissioner O'Meara went to visit Janice's program staff and expressed condolence, will do the same with RMS in the next week or so.
- The Town of Enfield put together a community support group due to there being a number of suicides and a couple of murders within a short period of time.
- Mr. O'Toole brought up a scenario question: What would happen if someone called saying that they were at their wits end, etc. what would be done. Commissioner explained that we screen calls, call back, we redirect into system and get back in touch with the person through the case manager, regional staff and so on for supports. Commissioner explained how he, Ivette, and Pat Berdnick get these types of calls. Kathryn shared how a week after the Brown Family tragedy, the NR had a counseling center available as a resource.
- Mr. O'Meara shared how DMHAS said not to take on the entire responsibility but to use community supports.
- Mr. Chavis shared a story. He feels that self-advocates can be of great support to these types of situation.
- There still continues to be case management issues. The budget support looks good. Deputy Commissioner duPree and staff are working diligently on action plan, also had Ms. Robin Cooper from NASDDDS and Tony Records-WL Consultant to give input in terms of supporting case managers.

Old Business:

Mr. O'Toole shared the idea that minutes are sent to previous members of the Council because they can at times provide some good input and/or ideas.

Ms. Silva questioned, is the Council minutes on the web. The answer was no, but, DMR will provide them on the web.

New Business:

A binder book was given to each Council member regarding the Meriden Campus. Commissioner shared that there was a meeting on this issue again today, not sure but may see an article in tomorrow's paper. There was a presentation of cost estimates to relocate (17 million), and to relocate to different areas on site (13 million). There will another Meriden Campus meeting in 2 to 4 weeks.

It was shared that the only way of City of Meriden getting the Meriden property is through a conveyance bill and it will require full acceptance from House or Senate.

Motion for Council to support the dependence of Commissioner O'Meara to keep the Council up to date on this issue.

****The next meeting will be held on May 10th.****

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned: 8:15 p.m.