

ILLINOIS GUARDIANSHIP AND ADVOCACY COMMISSION
James R. Thompson Center
100 West Randolph Street Suite 9-035 Chicago Illinois
Video Conference
COMMISSION MINUTES
June 22, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT

Saul Morse (Springfield)
Susan Mc Mahon (via telephone)
Seymour Bryson (via telephone)
Jeanne Dolphus Cotton (via telephone)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Ira Silverstein
Glenn Jackson (proxy)
Kenley Wade (proxy)
Senator Don Harmon (proxy)
Senator Todd Seiben (proxy)

POSITIONS VACANT

Joann Perkins
Betty Bollmeir

EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT

Chicago

John H. Wank, General Counsel, Deputy Director for Programs and Acting Director
Helen Godlewski Brownfield, Director of the Office of State Guardian
Laura Zorich, Private Secretary to the Director
Gina Rossi, Confidential Assistant to the Director

Springfield

Jerry Turnbull, Director of Financial Operations
Carol R. Tipsord, Director of Fiscal Operations
Teresa Parks, Director of Human Rights Authority
Ann Fulkerson, Manager, Office of Information Technology

VIA CONFERENCE CALL

Jeff Plesko, Director of the Legal Advocacy Service

MINUTES

The June 22, 2005 meeting of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission (IGAC) convened at 1:00 pm at the James R. Thompson Center Commissioners and Executive staff from

Springfield were joined via video conferencing from the Stratton Building Room 500 1/2, Springfield, Illinois **Commissioner Saul Morse**, presided.

ACTION ITEMS

It was decided that due to time constraints it would be best to move right to action items and any business which must be voted on should be moved to the beginning of the meeting. **Commissioner Morse** directed everyone's attention to the Minutes of the April 6th Commission Meeting. He asked if anyone has any additions or changes and hearing none, **Commissioner Bryson** moved to approve the minutes, the motion was seconded by **Commissioner Mc Mahon**. The next action item was the approval of HRA appointments and re-appointments. Commissioners have the materials before them. **Director Parks** noted that all HRA all appointments and re-appointments come recommended by the regional authorities. **Commissioner Mc Mahon** moved to approve the both the new appointments and reappointments The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Bryson** and the motion carried. **Director Parks** stated that there were no more action items on her agenda. **Commissioner Morse** asked if there were any other action items at this time before we move to the evaluation of the Acting Director. **Director Wank** said that no, there were not any more action items. **Commissioner Morse** mentioned that he and other commissioners were sent a list of goals and objectives of the Acting Director, stamped confidential, he felt that the best place to address these concerns would be in executive session. The motion to go into closed session was made by **Commissioner Mc Mahon**, the motion was seconded by **Commissioner Cotton**; and the motion carried. **Commissioner Morse** asked if the commissioners felt that **Director Wank** stay on the call. It was agreed that he should. The meeting went into executive session and asked all staff aside from **Director Wank** to please leave the room. **Director Wank** also wanted to clarify that there were no callers on the line who are not commissioners. **Wank** also asked if any staff should remain as note takers. **Commissioner Morse** said no. The Audio recording was left on, should anyone desire the recording IGAC can make it available. The meeting continued then, in executive session.

CLOSED SESSION

Upon returning from closed session **Commissioner Morse** reported that the meeting is now back in regular open session. For the record, **Commissioner Morse** wanted to indicate that the commission met to discuss the evaluation of Acting Director, **John Wank** and the work he has done over the past several years. The commissioners reviewed a set of goals and objectives for the period beginning June 2005. The commission, at its April meeting opted to act as a committee of the whole, that delegated, the officers of the commission, Dr. Bryson, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Morse as a subcommittee on personnel, met by conference call with **Director Wank**, They discussed goals and objectives, and they discussed the issue of the Acting Director as opposed to permanently appointed director. Also discussed was the direction commissioners are getting from the Office of the Governor on the commissions activities and on the Directors Position. **Director Wank** was asked by commissioners to update the goals and objectives and to include his comments on what he has done to meet the prior goals, thoughts were exchanged via email, the culmination of that work product was included the packet for the commission. In executive session, they discussed this work product and it was the consensus of the committee, with no objections, that **Director Wank** has done an excellent job and he has met their

objectives and that the goals and objectives that he has prepared for the coming year are in accord with the desires of the commission. They discussed the fact that there have been no compensation adjustments for any other merit employees in this agency for three years and in good conscience as well as the lack of money, they could not consider treating one individual differently than others have been treated. So there was no action on any kind of salary adjustment. They did discuss the fact that every organization at some point needs permanent leadership. They are currently very comfortable with the leadership they have now, **Commissioners Morse** is not of the mind that it is appropriate to make a change right now unless and until the fiscal situation changes or they get direction for the Governors Office of the contrary, so no changes will be made. At some point in time however, Commissioners will have to re-evaluate having a permanent Director for the commission. **Commissioner Morse** asked if any of the other commissioners should like to add anything to his synopsis, or make a motion to approve the action they are thinking of taking. **Commissioner Mc Mahon** made a motion to approve that action. It was seconded by **Commissioner Cotton**. The motion carried and **Commissioner Mc Mahon** stated she would like to further complement **Director Wank** and his management staff, she commends the way that they have managed in a very creative manner to ensure that the business of the commission continues to be done in spite of the decrease in staff and the financial crunch that they have been experiencing. The atmosphere within the commission remains from her experience, very positive and dedicated to ensuring that all of the individuals that we are charged with serving are very well and respectfully taken care of and she thinks that speaks very highly of all of the management. **Commissioner Morse** agreed. Since the action items were completed, **Commissioner Morse** asked to hear the Acting Director's comments and reports.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Director Wank said he had some brief comments. He also wanted to repeat something he had discussed with a couple of the commissioners. The thought was it might be helpful both to the commissioners and to **Director Wank** to devise a better way to communicate with one another- in between the commission meetings. Two different commissioners have made suggestions, therefore beginning in August, **Director Wank** will send an email out to each of the commissioners, and he intends to do it on a monthly basis. This will keep the commissioners better apprised of commission business. The commission packet this month warrants some discussion as well. **Director Wank** stated that IGAC offers apologies, we realize there have been some snafus in the mailing of commission packets. The packets go out a minimum of 7 days before the commission, but we will be getting things in the mail a minimum of ten calendar days before the meeting. We are considering as well, other options in mailing and if the cost is feasible we may get items to commissioners through different means. One item in the commission packet was a rather large volume entitled "Wards of the State, a National Study of Public Guardianship". In the last 25 years there have only been two academic studies of Public Guardianship. This is the second one, the first one was done 25 years ago and was done by a professor from Seattle named Windsor Schmidt. **Director Wank** wanted to include this in the packet, he feels it's a good way for the commissioners to understand what we do as Public Guardians and give a solid basis to compare what we do with other Public Guardians that were reviewed in this study. As it says in the study, a number of our staff was interviewed, we put the Professors behind this study in touch with our staff members, stake holders, and wards of the state. Their approach was broad and careful, and **Director Wank** thinks the results speak for

themselves. The only other item worth mentioning, is that **Director Wank** has been invited to the University of Kentucky to join a panel presentation discussing this particular report. The panel will convene one week from today in Louisville, Kentucky all expenses are paid by University of Kentucky. **Director Wank** will be out of the office for a few days but the taxpayers will not pay any of this trip. **Commissioner Mc Mahon** congratulated **Director Wank**. The last thing **Director Wank** needs to talk about is the ongoing item of Budget and personnel. **Director Wank** is happy to let everyone know that the General Assembly did pass the budget we had hoped for. The Governor's introduced budget included enough funding for IGAC to be able to have at least five but perhaps six new positions, for the fiscal year commencing July 2005. We hope to get the new hires on board as soon as possible, naturally we would like to have them in the fold by July 7th. We know however that will not happen, the process which we are required to follow is rather lengthy. Many of the new hires hopefully will be with us August 1st or August 15th. We plan to pursue the hiring as aggressively as possible. The positions in question, are two State Guardian Case Workers, two Attorneys, one for OSG and one for LAS. We would hire one Clerical person who would work in our Anna office, but also cover the clerical duties for the Alton office. The last addition would be a placement for **Jeff Plesko**. **Director Plesko** functions under a contract which is renewed twice a year, we hope to either renew his contract yet again, or get a full time replacement., **Director Wank** asked if the commissioners had any questions about budget or personnel. **Director Wank** also wanted to report that he testified in front of the Senate Government Services Committee, concerning their review of the 2003 State Ethics Act. **Director Wank's** testimony was submitted in writing as the hearing ran long. Oral testimony was solicited from each of the Executive Inspectors' General, they intended to get testimony from agency Ethics Officers, but the hearing ran too long. **Director Wank** submitted his testimony in writing and he felt the hearing was a positive effort. Senator Garret who was chairing the committee, said she's certain that modifications to the statue would follow and **Director Wank** will keep everyone apprised of any meaningful changes.

PROGRAM REPORTS

HUMAN RIGHTS AUTHORITY

Teresa Parks gave the report for the Human Rights Authority. First Director Parks wanted to report that HRA continues with their volunteer recruitment efforts, and they currently have 73 positions filled of the 81, leaving 8 HRA vacancies. **Director Parks** asked that if the commissioners know anyone who might be interested in serving on the HRA please let her know. Second, she wanted to mention that HRA will be having a training meeting for HRA staff in July. The agenda includes a presentation about Community Mental Health Services, presented by an HRA member from the Egyptian Region, this member is also the Executive Director of a Community Mental Health Center, so she will provide an update. HRA's Attorney who is also an LAS attorney, Cynthia Tracey, will be speaking reviewing subpoenas which is a topic that is becoming increasingly familiar, unfortunately. They will also be reviewing other program issues as well. HRA staff training continues, as well as HRA involvement in the Office of State Guardian training. Many of the HRA staff continue to participate in community outreach presentations. Susan White gave a presentation about HRA for the Epilepsy Foundation, Jon

Burnet based in Rockford, along with Gina Rossi, gave a presentation at an ARC conference in Chicago on volunteer opportunities with IGAC. Later this month, Geraldine Boatman, the south suburban HRA coordinator, along with HRA volunteer Judith Rawls, will be giving a presentation about the HRA to a parent organization, "Helping Hands Rehabilitation" which is located in Countryside. Finally **Director Parks** wanted to touch briefly on HRA's program statistics which were included in the commission packet. These are partial statistics for the Fiscal Year July 1st through April 2005. The statistics seem to indicate, that HRA is ahead of last years pace and will be handling more cases then they did last year. The trends seem to be comparable to last year, mental health providers continue to be the most frequent provider investigated, state operated facilities and hospital psych units are second on the list. HRA has had increases in cases among special education providers. The most frequent types of complaints investigated have been programming issues, and treatment issues. Most complaints come directly from the person with the disability or family member. The HRA volunteers continue to be hard at work and through April of this year they contributed about 5 thousand hours of service to the HRA and the commission. **Director Parks** concluded her report and asked for questions.

LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICE

Director Plesko submitted statistics and asked **Director Wank** to give the report for LAS. LAS statistics were enclosed the packet, and other than those, **Director Wank** said he has little to report. This month has been a somewhat quiet period. There does appear to be a slight increase in the workload and there does seem to be a slight increase in work for the Chicago region. Other than this there is nothing to report. **Director Wank** asked for questions.

OFFICE OF STATE GUARDIAN

Director Godlewski gave the report for the Office of State Guardian, at this point in time OSG currently has approximately 5300 wards state wide, average caseloads are reported at 126, based on head count. However, over the past few months a number of staff have been out on medical leave or family leave. As a result, some regional caseloads are actually at about 167 wards per OSG worker. West Suburban Regional Office has caseloads that are particularly high. Fortunately, our regional staff has been very willing to assume the additional casework responsibilities and **Director Godlewski** would like to commend the regional staff for their willingness and flexibility. On a positive note OSG was able to recruit two Graduate School Interns. They will be starting in September of 2005 and we should have them throughout the entire school year, they will be working on clinical and administrative assignments. Finally, **Director Godlewski** wanted to report that all of our offices are preparing for our up coming bi-annual audit. The regions will be verifying our visit compliance and compliance with policy and procedure. The commission has an entrance conference with the auditor Generals Office in mid-July and just as a reminder, for our past two audit cycles we have had no material findings She asked for questions and hearing none, concluded her report.

CLOSING

Commissioner Morse asked for any other questions or any other concerns that anyone would like to raise at this time. Hearing none, **Commissioner Morse** asked to settle our next commission meeting date, he wondered if the members should be individually pooled or if we

should set one today. Present Commissioners preferred to set a date today. After some discussion the tentative date was set for September 21st at 1:00 pm. Laura Zorich will check the date and distribute necessary information for the meeting. **Commissioner Mc Mahon** made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and the motion s seconded by **Commissioner Bryson**. The motion carried. The meting was adjourned at 1:50 pm.