

**ILLINOIS GUARDIANSHIP AND ADVOCACY COMMISSION**

**STATE OF ILLINOIS BUILDING**

**160 North LaSalle Street**

**Conference Room N-502**

**Fifth Floor**

**Chicago, Illinois 60601-3155**

**(312) 793-5900**

**COMMISSION MINUTES**

**December 12, 2002**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Joanne G. Perkins, Chairperson  
Kenley R. Wade, Vice Chairperson  
Susan B. McMahan, Secretary  
Seymour Bryson, Ph.D.  
Glenn Jackson  
Susan B. Tatnall

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Todd Sieben, Treasurer  
Susan Alvarez  
Betty A. Bollmeier  
Representative Mary Flowers  
Saul J. Morse

**STAFF PRESENT**

Nancy DeMarco, Director  
John H. Wank, General Counsel and Deputy Director for Programs  
Teresa Parks, Director of the Human Rights Authority  
Jeff Plesko, Director of the Legal Advocacy Service  
Helen Godlewski, Director of the Office of State Guardian  
Kate Steigerwald, Director of Legislative Affairs and Public Information  
Carol R. Tipsord, Director of Fiscal Operations  
Jerry R. Turnbull, Director of Financial Operations  
Jeff Derrick, Internal Auditor  
Jan Pinkerton, Office Administrator  
Laura Zorich, Private Secretary

## MINUTES

The December 12, 2002 meeting of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission (IGAC) convened at 11:00 a.m. at the State of Illinois Building, 160 North LaSalle Street, Conference Room N-502, Chicago. **Commissioner Joanne G. Perkins**, Chairperson, presided. The Chairperson was holding the proxy of **Commissioner Susan B. Tatnall**.

### OPENING REMARKS

**Commissioner Perkins** commented that today was a bittersweet meeting for all. Speaking on behalf of the Commissioners and staff, **Commissioner Perkins** expressed appreciation to Director DeMarco, who is taking advantage of the Early Retirement Incentive program and retiring on December 31.

### DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director DeMarco expressed her appreciation to the Commissioners and staff for their support during her tenure. She spoke of her privilege to work with people of their caliber and thanked them for all they do to make the lives of persons with disabilities better.

## MINUTES

A motion was made by **Commissioner Kenley R. Wade**, seconded and carried, to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2002 Commission Meeting.

### APPOINTMENT

The following individual was presented for appointment to a Regional Authority by Teresa Parks. **Commissioner Seymour Bryson** made a motion in favor of the appointment; the motion was seconded and carried: *Kathleen Gustafson*, a Citizen from Rockford, to the Northwest Regional Authority.

### RESIGNATION

The Commission expressed thanks to *Jeanne Angres* from the North Suburban Regional Authority, who resigned.

### HRA CASE TRANSFER

A motion was made by **Commissioner Glenn Jackson**, seconded and carried, to approve the transfer of HRA Case #03-100-9013 from the North Suburban Human Rights Authority to the South Suburban Human Rights Authority, due to a potential conflict of interest.

### **HRA ENFORCEMENT REFERRAL**

Teresa Parks reported on the HRA Enforcement Referral, noting that the school had not responded to the HRA's Report of Findings substantiating an allegation that Pekin Community High School failed to develop a behavioral plan for a student receiving special education services until just prior to the Commission Meeting. Ms. Parks is satisfied with the response and recommended that the case be referred back to the authority to see if they are comfortable with the response also. Discussion followed and the Commissioners voted to accept the letter in writing, agreeing not to do the enforcement at this time, but requested the Peoria Human Rights Authority review the situation and monitor it closely. Ms. Parks reported that another complaint has already been received regarding the same facility.

Since the letter from Pekin Community High School referred to a committee working to revise the student/parent handbook to include information regarding special education services, **Commissioner Jackson** requested a status of changes at the March Commission Meeting. **Commissioner Jackson** was also concerned that an administrator of Pekin Community High School is not responding in the letter, but rather a staff member.

A motion was made by **Commissioner Wade**, seconded and carried, to approve the plan discussed.

### **RETIREEES**

Director DeMarco announced that Jan Pinkerton, Office Administrator in the Springfield General Office, is retiring December 31 and that Laura Zorich, Private Secretary in the Chicago General Office, will be taking over as liaison to the Commissioners. The Director announced the following additional staff taking advantage of the Early Incentive Retirement plan: Rhonda Williams, Aletha Turner, Bill Coffin, Bruce Berry, Jerry Brown, Eva Jehle and Pat Long. Nelson Mapel retired the end of October and Perry Patterson retired the end of November. Ms. DeMarco explained that the Bureau of the Budget allowed the Commission to refill some vacancies from within and, that in most cases, staff will have multiple tasks. The authorized headcount is 134.5; effective January 2003, there will be 120 staff on board.

**Chairperson Perkins** encouraged staff to do what it takes to get the job done and to support each other.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

John H. Wank commented on Rhonda Williams' retirement and explained she would be the next President of the National Guardianship Association (NGA). As a member of IGAC staff, her involvement in NGA has enabled personnel in this agency to produce high-quality work. She will be missed by staff but will continue her work with the NGA. A letter of congratulations will be sent to Ms. Williams by **Chairperson Perkins**.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS AUTHORITY (HRA)**

On behalf of the HRA, Teresa Parks spoke of their appreciation for Director DeMarco's participation in the HRA meetings and her interaction with the volunteers. The Director attended many meetings, demonstrating a genuine support to the HRA members.

Ms. Parks reported that two HRA staff joined the Division of the Office of State Guardian and one staff member retired so the coordinators are working diligently to cover the areas.

Volunteer numbers are increasing in the Regional Authorities, in part to the recommendations by Commissioners. Ms. Parks again expressed the need for additional members.

The HRA Coordinators will have a meeting on Monday, December 16, 2002, in Springfield.

### **LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICE (LAS)**

Jeff Plesko reflected on his past with the Commission and commented that Director DeMarco had done more in her brief tenure to see that IGAC was recognized. Mr. Plesko expressed his gratefulness for her support of LAS.

Mr. Plesko distributed a revised Appellate Update, which replaced a draft copy the Commissioners received in the packet for this meeting.

### **OFFICE OF STATE GUARDIAN (OSG)**

Helen Godlewski thanked Director DeMarco for all her support, especially NGA and IGA (Illinois Guardianship Association). She has made our jobs more fun – and we will miss her!

Following are internal staff promotions of vacated managerial positions:

**Susan Hagrelius** – a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and regional administrator at West Suburban, was promoted to Guardianship Managing Administrator and will be responsible for overseeing the North Suburban, Peoria, Egyptian and Metro East regions. She will be based at North Suburban and will also fulfill regional administrative duties there.

**Joe Stafford** – was promoted to Guardianship Regional Administrator in the Egyptian Region. Joe has been with the Commission for nearly two decades. Due to staff attrition in that region, he will still carry a full estate caseload, in addition to assuming managerial responsibilities.

**Mike Sierra** – was promoted to Guardianship Regional Administrator in the Peoria Region. Mike has also been with the program for almost two decades. He too will manage a small caseload.

**Mona Bass** – transferred from the Human Rights Authority. She is now the Guardianship Regional Administrator for the East Central Region.

**Jennifer Alvarez** – transferred from the Human Rights Authority and has been named Guardianship Regional Administrator for the West Suburban Region.

Ms. Godlewski reported that as a result of the early retirement program and staff attrition, the average caseload size will increase slightly to approximately 135 wards per caseworker. Last year, the caseloads averaged about 122 cases per worker. The regional boundary of the OSG Egyptian region has been changed; both the East Central and Metro East offices will be picking up counties adjacent to their regions.

The Commission was able to send more than forty staff to the NGA Conference this year, held in St. Louis. The conference was attended by more than 250 professional guardians and practitioners from across the United States and Canada. NGA President-Elect Rhonda Williams and immediate Past-President, John Wank actively participated in the conference and conference planning. Ms. Godlewski also reported that several OSG staff made presentations at the conference.

**Chairperson Perkins** commented how much she enjoyed The IGAC News – it does such a good job of recognizing staff.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by **Commissioner Wade**, seconded and carried, that the Commission go into Executive Session, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act for discussion of the Illinois IGAC Acting Director's position and qualifications for that position. The Commission then returned to regular session.

It was the intention of the Commissioners to fill the Director's vacancy as soon as possible, in order to implement a smooth transition. **Chairperson Perkins** announced that the Commission would like to say that the position of Acting Director has been offered to John H. Wank and he has graciously accepted. Mr. Wank will serve as the Commission's Acting Director until such time as a Director is named, to ensure continuing the mission of the Commission. Additionally, the Commissioners requested Director DeMarco to continue to work on as needed basis in the upcoming year to assist in the transition. **Chairperson Perkins** is confident that John will lead the Commission in the right direction.

Director DeMarco and Jan Pinkerton were presented retiring gifts of appreciation by the Commissioners.

### **CLOSING**

A motion was made by **Commissioner Wade**, seconded and carried, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.