

ILLINOIS GUARDIANSHIP AND ADVOCACY COMMISSION

**James R. Thompson Center
100 West Randolph Street, Room 9-035
Chicago Illinois**

And

**Mason Bldg, Room 104, Springfield, IL
SIU Carbondale, 105 Lawson Hall, Carbondale, IL
Video Conference**

COMMISSION MINUTES

December 12, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeanne Dolphus Cotton (via telephone)
Saul Morse (Springfield)
Seymour Bryson (Carbondale)
Senator Todd Seiben (via telephone)
Kenley Wade (via telephone)
Glenn Jackson (Springfield)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Ira Silverstein
Todd Sieben (submitted proxy)

MEMBER VACANCIES

Three positions

EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT

Chicago

Dr. Mary Milano, Executive Director
John H. Wank, General Counsel, Deputy Director for Programs
Bobbie Fox, Associate Director Human Resources
Helen Godlewski Brownfield, Director of the Office of State Guardian
Veronique Baker, Director, Legal Advocacy Service
Danielle Welliever, Private Secretary to the Director
Gina Rossi, Confidential Assistant to the Director

Springfield

Carol R. Tipsord, Director of Fiscal Operations
Teresa Parks, Director Human Rights Authority

MEETING CONVENED

The December 12, 2006 meeting of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission convened at 1:15 pm in the James R. Thompson Center, Room 9-035, and 104 Mason, Springfield Illinois, through videoconference and telephone. **Chairman, Saul Morse** presided. Chairman Morse asked if a quorum was present. Director John Wank responded affirmatively.

Because there had been almost a 15 minute late start to the meeting because of technical glitches, Chairman Morse suggested that the Commission move directly to the action items, as some members had to leave early.

ACTION ITEMS

Corrections to the Minutes of August Meeting

Minutes of the August 2006 meeting should be changed to reflect Kenly Wade's presence at the Springfield videoconference site instead of the Carbondale site. A motion to approve the minutes as corrected was made and seconded. Motion carried without discussion.

HRA Nominations, Reappointments and Expired Terms

A motion was made and seconded to approve the HRA list of nominations and reappointments. Chairman Morse reminded all commissioners that information about the nominees were included in their packets. After a quick review the list, the nominees were unanimously approved.

Other HRA Action Items - Removal of a Chicago HRA member

HRA Director Teresa Parks reviewed for Commissioners HRA member meeting requirements, the record of Eleanor Murkey's attendance, the history of attempted contact with Ms. Murkey and the Chicago HRA recommendation made in November to remove Ms. Murkey from its membership roster. Acting on the HRA recommendation Chair Morse called for the motion to remove Chicago HRA member Murkey. The motion was moved, seconded and passed unanimously.

Program Reports

With action items completed Chairman Morse formally greeted commissioners and staff and asked that the Commission begin now with the Director's report.

Director John Wank called Commissioners attention to information contained in the meeting packet regarding the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. Dates for Commission meetings must be posted a year in advance on GAC's website. John further explained that another part of the Act required a quorum of Commissioners to be physically present at official video conference sites in one of the two cities where GAC had offices, Springfield and Chicago. Commissioners would no longer be counted. After some discussion, a motion was made for Commission meetings to be held on the second Tuesday during the months of March, June, September and December in Springfield and in Chicago. The motion was seconded and unanimously adopted.

Commissioner Morse asked that the Commissioners receive an e-mail later that day with specific dates for 2007.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Mary Milano welcomed everyone and indicated that her comments would be brief so that there would be adequate time for program committee director's reports.

Staffing and Budget Issues

- Dr. Milano congratulated Veronique Baker, LAS Director, on her appointment to the Board of Directors of the National Guardianship Association. Milano reported that Diane Devereux, Human Resources Director, would be out of the office for 5 or 6 weeks due to a broken leg.
- GAC head count now stands at 113, well short of projected and authorized headcount of 118.
- In our upcoming meeting with OMB staff person, John Frigo, we will ask for release of 2% from '07 budget to fill critical front line positions.

We also want to talk about our prospective '08 budget. GOMB has asked us to submit, in draft form, two budgets. The first would cut another 2% from GAC's spending authorization, the second, slightly higher, would cover a modest salary increase for supervisors so they could maintain at least parity with those they supervise. The second, higher budget, would also allow the Commission to fund much needed front-line positions, filling in gaps in service across a wide swath of counties in state in several program areas. We request that members of the Commission, in particular legislators, make their voices known to the Office of Management and Budget.

- GAC has been able to operate without terminations or layoffs under the withholding of the 2% reserve. Director Milano thanked Carol Tipsord and Program managers for their diligence. In addition, fortuitous events such as staff retirements helped in meeting budget constraints.

GAC and its staff are also facing other budgetary stressors: the Illinois Supreme Court has increased continuing education requirements for attorneys and GAC union staff salaries will soon equal or surpass their supervisor's salaries.

- GAC is using creative approaches to its resource and personnel issues. We have included a submission of a proposal to the Governor's office which would allow us to do double duty with DHS to create an ombudsman program. The hope is that a portion of that position's time could be used to assist the Human Rights Authority.
- Volunteer involvement, spearheaded by Gina Rossi, is continuing. Volunteers fill in gaps in administrative areas as well as direct program areas. We accumulate over 4000 hours per year from adult volunteers and student interns. We would

like to increase the program, requiring some additional staff hours that we do not, at present, have funding for. We are also working with law firms in several parts of the state to increase pro bono services which might be available to our Legal Advocacy Service.

- Our ability to do even more with less is stretched to capacity at this juncture.

Legal and Program Report

Open Meetings Act

Director Wank repeated his concerns with the open meetings, the requirements of the Act and the importance of physical presence of at least 6 commissioners at Commission meetings. Wank suggested some relief to this requirement may come through legislation and the promulgation of rules, but that is yet to be seen.

(Saul Morse, taking a moment of personal privilege, expressed feelings of honor at being appointed to serve on commissions by three of the last four governors and his feeling of responsibility and duty to attend meetings.)

Because the GAC is consistently down three commissioners, putting it further behind the eight-ball in terms of filling the quorum, Dr. Milano, Director Wank and others have continued to press the Governor's office of Boards and Commissions to fill those three commission seats.

Discussion re: Boards and Commissions

Director Wank reported that the staff person in the Governor's office responsible for Boards and Commissions had resigned and the replacement had no background or immediate knowledge of the recommendations we have made.

Sister Francis Clair Radke, our first appointment recommendation, has taken on other responsibilities and is no longer willing to serve the Commission. GAC is still waiting to hear about Inez Torres Davis and Dean Parnell.

Wank said there was definitely a slog in terms of process.

NGA - National Guardianship Association

GAC is still in the planning process of a joint conference with the NGA, hopefully, here in Illinois, either in the spring or fall of 2008. Terry Hammond, NGA Executive Director, John Wank and Helen Godlewski are involved in the issue. Veronique Baker will soon be invited to join the planning team.

Fiscal Report

Chief Financial Officer, Carol Tipsord, reported that the Office of Management and Budget received, at their request, two versions of the GAC budget for FY '08. Request number one is the desired Budget, allowing 123 headcount, up 5 from the allotted headcount, and up from the 114 the GAC can afford during this current fiscal year, without release of the withheld 2%.

Spending for FY '06 was on target, lapsing \$339,000 in GRF. Our required reserves were \$173, 620. The GAC Fund lapsed \$133,000, which is a higher amount than normal.

Commissioner Morse asked if we lapsed money because the GAC didn't have approval to spend or because there was no use for the moneys. Director Tipsord replied, "We had requested that some of the vacant head count be filled but were not given permission, so we lapsed about \$200,000."

Human Rights Authority - Director Teresa Parks

No staffing changes to report. On volunteer side, with the actions taken today, there are 10 HRA member vacancies throughout the state. The HRA staff will continue its volunteer recruitment efforts to fill those positions.

HRA staff got together at end of November for staff training. Presentations included Office of State Guardian managing attorney Bill Scheidemantel with surrogate decision-making and its impact on individual rights; Cynthia Tracy gave an update on mental health code; a presentation by AG's office regarding open meetings act and sharing of HRA actions from across the state.

After a brief history of Chicago HRA and Commission actions on the Cook County Jail issue, Director Parks explained that the Chicago HRA is currently scheduling meetings with county jail staff and representatives of the mental health provider. In information gathering, the HRA is trying to determine which mandates they are accountable to and what its jurisdiction is. At this same time the HRA has received communication from the original complainant, expressing displeasure at the closure of case and that she make take further action.

Legal Advocacy Service - Director Veronique Baker

LAS attorneys continue to provide services to over 600 clients each month. There was a dramatic increase in appeals in the 4th district, now, hopefully, cooling off. To respond to the increase, we redistributed some of the workload so that the staff attorney in that district, Cynthia Tracy, wouldn't be unfairly burdened. There was some concern about increase in medication petitions in response to change in law in July. There was a slight increase, but nothing like what had been anticipated.

LAS attorneys are working at expanding other areas of advocacy. At the current time, some are looking to provide special education assistance to juveniles and see where we can go with that.

Office of State Guardian - Director Helen Godlewski

The Office of State Guardian continues to serve 5,200 wards, average caseload size now about 119. Since last meeting two staff persons have announced their separation. Laura Layton moved out of state and Kathy Kelly will be retiring at end of month. Both of these staff persons worked out of the Rantoul office. Their caseloads are being redistributed to remaining staff. The average caseloads in that region will hover at about 140 wards per worker.

GAC was able to hire Guardianship Rep., Diane Shingle, in the Egyptian region, leaving the total number of OSG position vacancies at five, one guardianship representative in Egyptian, two at East Central office in Rantoul, and a regional administrator position.

The recruitment and use of volunteers and student interns, particularly from the University of Chicago and Loyola, is continuing. The student interns are required to give us 400 to 700 hours per school year. They are assisting with clinical case management and volunteer guardianship.

Three students from Loyola are working to identify individuals who would be good candidates to move from an institutional setting to a community based setting. Although about 148 individuals have been identified, only about 20 have been moved. We still have about 570 wards living in state operated facilities.

OSG is undergoing an audit by the Illinois Office of Internal Audit. They are focusing on three sites, Peoria, Metro East and West Suburban. We expect preliminary audit findings by the end of the calendar year.

Closing and Adjournment

A brief question and answer period followed the last program report. Chairman Morse expressed his hope that recruitment of college interns and volunteers would extend to schools and areas south of I-80.

Chairman Morse asked for a motion and second to adjourn the meeting. It was so moved. The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.