

NYPWA All Commissioners' Meeting Summary

Thursday, November 3, 2022

Presiding: Eileen Tiberio, NYPWA President

Influencing State Policies

Eileen Tiberio guided us in identifying issues to convey to the state agencies as a follow-up to the commissioners convening. Overall, the discussions in Lake George were viewed as a positive opportunity for networking and in depth conversations. The time listening to prepared presentations was less informative. Also, local commissioners prefer to have details on new proposals in advance instead of being asked to support dramatic policy shifts on the spot. Commissioners take complex policy matters seriously and have meaningful input to offer.

Sheila Harrigan sent letters to OCFS, OTDA, OMH, OPWDD and the Department of Civil Service to reflect commissioners' input from today's meeting. Here is a brief summary of points addressed. The letters, forwarded to all local commissioners, share more details.

OTDA

- A stable workforce is essential for eligible New Yorkers to receive the public benefits they need. Keep all options for civil service changes on the table.
- Requested OTDA-LDSS workgroup on SNAP to streamline processes
- Streamline Administration including plan requirements, IES, waivers, invited to visit districts
- Sanctions Policy & Refusal to Treatment– need details in order to offer meaningful input
- Funding is needed to provide access to housing for very low income people

OCFS

- Urgency of cross-systems issues, support for new services and funding
- Streamlining plan requirements – focus on bare essentials and avoid constant updates
- Caseworkers and supervisors must be available in order to achieve child safety and permanency, as well as to offer adult protective services. Keep all options on the table.

OMH & OPWDD

Urgency of the complex needs of children and adults with mental health needs or with developmental disabilities who are not able to access services including placements when necessary.

Civil Service

Keep all the options on the table. It will take multiple strategies to make a difference. These include competitive Training & Experience exams for eligibility workers and caseworkers, decentralizing the

social welfare examiner series, the potential use of non-competitive positions, and other suggestions that were identified and that are currently being reviewed or pursued. Local districts want to stay engaged in the conversation.

Public Assistance, Housing and Safety Net

NYPWA Testimony on Public Assistance, was submitted at the request of the Assembly Social Services Committee and also sent to Governor's office & DOB, Senate Social Services Committee, and forwarded to all local commissioners on 11/4/22. It addresses inadequacies of family assistance and Safety Net Assistance allowances and need to restore state share for Safety Net Assistance.

Commissioner Engagement

Ideas were shared and it was noted that in-person attendance at commissioner meetings and conferences is the best source of engagement. We add networking options the night before and following in person meetings to share experiences and strategies. Additional mentoring/orientation time for new commissioners was offered in the past and can return. In addition, customized new commissioner training is available for every new commissioner in their own DSS office. The NYPWA Nominations Process and positions on the Board of Directors were explained.

Exerting Influence

Discussed opportunities to increase contact with Governor's office and DOB on select issues with a representative group of commissioners from counties of various sizes and locations. We have some past successes to build upon in addition to our annual executive budget meetings in October. The topic of cross systems kids and the need for new mental health services was discussed as worth pursuing.

Public Image

Commissioners offered to share county initiatives in the months ahead that are focused on workforce recruitment and other issues. We discussed the benefits of reaching out to thought leaders rather than focus on media. Explored the role of counties, the state, and NYPWA in improving public image.

Winter Conference and Future Meetings

Mike McMahon invited commissioners to identify staff for moderator roles as a leadership opportunity. He will be facilitating the Pivotal Conversations session for commissioners at the conference and asked people to send him topics of interest. The preliminary brochure was sent to all commissioners in late October.

The next NYPWA meeting will be at Longfellow's Hotel (& on Webex) on December 8th. The hotel has been sold and will be converted to a luxury resort. A new meeting site will be selected for 2023.