



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

Connecticut Commission on Children
Minutes of Meeting

Tuesday, May 8, 2007
10:00 a.m. – Noon

Conference Room, 18-20 Trinity Street
Hartford, Connecticut

Voting members present: Judith A. Busch, James P. Cordier, Mary K. Fox, Dr. Alex Geertsma, Alison Hilding, Mary Grace Reed, Laura Lee Simon, Leslie Wolfgang, and John Yrchik.

Ex officio members (or designees) present: Department of Children and Families (Rudy Brooks), Department of Social Services (Sylvia Gafford-Alexander), Department of Correction (Mary Marcial), Department of Mental Retardation (Commissioner Peter O'Meara), and Department of Education (Commissioner Mark McQuillan).

Members absent: George Coleman, Representative Andrew M. Fleischmann, Office of Policy and Management (Anne Foley), Department of Public Health (Norma Gyle), Senator Mary Ann Handley, Representative Michael Lawlor, Attorney General (Susan Pearlman), and Josh Piteo.

Commission staff present: Elaine Zimmerman, Thomas Brooks, Patricia Estill, Kevin Flood, Dawn Homer-Bouthiette, Rachel Levy, and Edie Luciano.

Handouts: Agenda; minutes of March 13, 2007 meeting; Executive Committee proposal to amend the Bylaws and Procedures Manual (April 3, 2007); agenda of National Conference of State Legislatures Spring Forum, to be held April 19-21, 2007 in Washington, D.C.; save-the-date flyer for a May 15, 2007 Commission event, "Students' Thoughts on Safety, Conflicts, and Homeland Security"; booklet of selected artwork for the May 15th event; flyer for Web conference entitled, "School Readiness and Success: Improving Children's Social and Emotional Development," to be held on May 17, 2007; Commission publication "A Children's Stock Portfolio: One Smart Investment"; list of Commission members and contact information, updated April 2007.

Meeting Convened

Chair James Cordier called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and called on Executive Director Elaine Zimmerman to give her report.

Announcements

The governor signed legislation increasing the funding for pre-school programs, Ms. Zimmerman said.

The governor's proposed budget did not include \$1 million needed for the Children's Trust, but the legislature is looking to increase this line item.

Laura Lee Simon reported that legislation to fund media messages on prevention have received unanimous support in the House and Senate.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the March 13, 2007 were adopted unanimously, with Mary Grace Reed abstaining.

Adoption of Bylaw Amendments

The Executive Committee submitted a proposal to make four changes in the Commission bylaws. They concerned:

1. **Unexcused absences (Section II.C.2.)** The committee proposed changing the language to the following: "Unexcused absences from two consecutive, regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission by an appointed member who is not a state elected official will result in a letter being sent by the Chair to the absent Commission member, warning that he or she is in danger of violating the three-missed-meetings rule. Unexcused absences from three consecutive, regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission by such a member will result in a letter being sent by the Chair to the absent Commission member and his or her appointing authority requesting the resignation of the Commission member."
2. **Excused absences (Section II.C.2.)** The committee proposed adding the following language: "The Chair may excuse an appointed member's absence only for good cause as determined by the Chair and upon a documented request."
3. **Quorums (Section II.D.5.a.)** The committee proposed changing the language to: "A quorum is defined as a majority of appointed members of the Commission excluding vacancies."
4. **Electronic attendance (Section II.D.3.)** The committee proposed adding the following language: "Members may attend meetings by electronic device, such as a speakerphone, depending on the availability of such devices and other considerations."

The Commission voted unanimously to adopt all of the proposed changes.

Nomination of Officers

The Nominations Committee recommended the following slate of officers for 2007-2008:

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Chair: | James Cordier |
| Vice Chair: | George Coleman |
| Secretary: | Alison Hilding |
| Treasurer: | Josh Piteo |

The floor was opened to other nominations; none were offered. The Commission voted unanimously to close the nomination process and elect officers at the June 12 meeting.

Other Business

Board members discussed a recent *Hartford Courant* op-ed article by a Commission member and whether the article's identification of the writer as a Commission member might have given the impression that the views reflected those of the Commission. The writer, Leslie Wolfgang, did not agree with this impression. The discussion ended with Mary Grace Reed suggesting, and the Commission members agreeing, that the matter be addressed in the next update of the Commission's bylaws.

Mr. Cordier closed the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mary Grace Reed", is written in black ink. The signature is positioned to the left of a thin vertical red line.

Mary Grace Reed,
Secretary