

DISABLED PERSONS PROTECTION COMMISSION

Commissioners' Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2019

Commissioners Present: Honorable James Brett, Kacy Maitland, Mary Beth McMahon

Staff Present: Nancy Alterio, John Brown, Sabrina Cazeau-Class, Nate Chester, Andrea Chiro, Janelle Clarkson, Ada Diaz, Jennifer Edwards-Hawkins, Genine Farrell, Jean Frejuste, Sarah Garrity, Alina Gomes, Coleen Jorden, Cynthia Lemon, Dean Lucier, Seana Miller, Xiomara Moreta, Ann Murray, Iva Nascimento, Stephanie Pacheco, Patrick Ralph, Jaime Suvak

Minutes Recorded By: Jennifer Edwards-Hawkins

Handouts – The following materials were distributed to the Commissioners:

- Commissioners' Agenda of March 12, 2019
- Bois of DPPC New Hires
- Commissioners' Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2018
- Budget Narrative February 2019
- Budget Report February 2019
- DPPC FY2020 ANF/H1 Budget Request 12.16.2018
- DPPC FY2020 Joint Committee on Ways and Means Budget Exercise 01.30.2019
- Senator Barrett Ask and Organizational Chart with Proposed Additions 03.07.2019
- Joint Ways and Means FY 2020 Budget Hearing Schedule
- DPPC Bill Summary H.117 and S.53 March 2019
- Summary and Impact of Proposed Legislation on DPPC

The Honorable Chairperson Brett called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Honorable Chairperson Brett welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced himself along with Commissioner Maitland and Commissioner McMahon. DPPC new and veteran staff introduced themselves to the Commissioners. Members of the Leadership Team provided brief updates of their respective units.

2. Organizational Updates

- DPPC Expansion – John Brown, Director of Administration and Finance: DPPC received an increase of \$1 million in its FY2019 appropriation. This additional funding allowed for a much needed increase in staff as well as supported some restructuring and IT improvements. DPPC increased staffing by 13 FTEs comprised of investigation, hotline, oversight and IT staff. To house the additional staff, DPPC worked with DCAM to increase office space by adding two additional workspaces to support the legal and hotline units through June 30, 2024.
- IT Infrastructure Analysis and Growth – Jean Frejuste, Director of IT: The Director of IT is working to enhance and redesign DPPC's IT Infrastructure including the network, database, speed, disaster preparedness and security. The projected cost of

the upgrade to DPPC's IT infrastructure will exceed \$200,000. This does not include the cost of the database rebuild. The database rebuild project is being funded through an ALC award.

- Investigation Unit Development and Improvements – Sabrina Cazeau-Class, Director of Investigations: Due to the budget increase, DPPC has been able to increase the number of investigators from four (4) to thirteen (13). The Legal Unit has provided trainings on regulations, policies and procedures. New procedures have been added within the investigations unit related to case file activity and documentation. Investigation managers can now track and access all information about a case via an activity log. All investigators require knowledge, experience or exposure to various topics including domestic violence, sexual abuse, protective services, etc. A four-day basic investigations training and certification program was conducted by LRA, Texas and the Reid training will also be provided to all investigators. The Texas training provided specific techniques on interviewing victims, abusers and witnesses. It was followed by a test and certification. All DPPC investigators and investigators from other agencies were invited to participate in the training. A three-day Train the Trainer certification program is also being offered by LRA which will enable participants to teach the basic investigations training. DPPC is building an in-house training curriculum and will provide to all staff of DPPC and APS staff of DDS, DMH and MRC. The plan is to design the curriculum and pilot the training in the Spring of 2020.
- SARU Developments – Jaime Suvak, SARU Manager: DPPC's Sexual Assault Response Unit (SARU) will be completing its second year in June 2019. Year one involved figuring out how to do this work within APS, developing a Peer Leader program, and establishing procedures. SARU started working with victims with I/DD initially and have expanded to include individuals with mental health and physical challenges. Navigation has expanded from one to three and soon four regions to allow for statewide navigation services. SARU is actively hearing from outside agencies whereby receiving positive feedback for the work being done. The SARU team continues to provide increased access to trauma services for victims with disabilities. On March 27, 2019, SARU is partnering with DMH to conduct training – 135 are registered to attend and a waitlist has been generated. Three DMH liaisons have been identified to work hand-in-hand with the Navigators. The Peer Support Leader program has developed and/or is developing a newsletter, a Healing Group, self-care Bingo, peer support network and a national convening. In addition, one of the Peer Support Leaders was asked to be the keynote speaker at the MDDC/Arc Legislative event held at the State House.

3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of September 25, 2018

MOTION: To accept the minutes of September 25, 2018 as received motioned by Commissioner McMahon and seconded by Commissioner Maitland

VOTE: Unanimous to accept the minutes of September 25, 2018 as received

4. Administration and Finance

- FY2019 Monthly Budget Summary Report: DPPC has spent 54% of its appropriation through February. Cost savings attributed to the delay in hiring are being used to update DPPC's antiquated IT infrastructure.

- FY2020 House I Recommendation, WMs Budget Exercise and Senator Barrett's Ask:
 - DPPC reached out to ANF asking them to support, at a minimum, maintenance funding for the agency. A letter explaining DPPC's needs was submitted to ANF on or about December 16, 2018 and a copy of the letter was provided to the Commissioners. The Governor released his budget on January 23, 2019 and recommended maintenance funding for the DPPC in the amount of \$4,634,207.
 - The Commissioners received a copy of DPPC FY2020 Joint Committee on Ways and Means Budget Exercise Narrative dated January 28, 2019 seeking, at a minimum, maintenance funding.
 - Senator Barrett reached out in support of advocating for additional funding beyond maintenance for the DPPC. Senator Barrett is seeking an additional \$523,000 in funding for the agency to address some of the ongoing gaps and organizational needs. The additional funding would support a Director of Oversight, an Intake Coordinator, a Protective Services Navigator and three additional Investigators. The Commissioners received a copy of the drafted Organizational Chart with the proposed additions, and a budget to support the added positions of which was provided to Senator Barrett.
 - MOVA's two year funding for SARU ends on June 30, 2019 and has been extended for two additional years – FY2020-2021 – with an increase in funding. The increase in funding support four navigators.
 - Cost savings attributed to the delay in hiring and backfilling the Deputy Executive Director are being used to address DPPC's antiquated IT Infrastructure and dilapidated staff cubicles. Once the one-time work has been completed, backfilling the Deputy position will be revisited. As the current Receptionist was promoted into another position within the agency, DPPC will be hiring a new receptionist to replace her.
- Ways and Means Budget Hearing: The Commissioners received a copy of the FY20 Joint Ways and Means Hearing Schedule for review. DPPC Executive Director is scheduled to provide oral testimony on Friday, March 15th.

5. Legislation

The Commissioners received a copy of DPPC Bill Summary H.117 and S.53 which highlights changes in DPPC's enabling Statute. DPPC's drafted bill looks as though a great deal is being changed in the Statute however a lot of the changes are duplicative such as 38 changes pertain to replacing "disabled person" to "person with a disability" and another 24 changes reflect removing antiquated references to EOHHS and/or clarify current referral agencies. In total, 35 Senators and 73 Representatives signed onto the bill. The bill is currently in the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities awaiting a hearing date. The Commissioners discussed organizing an event at the State House with Representative Garballey and Senator Keenan to promote the passage of DPPC's bill.

A 2019-2020 Summary of Legislation with potential impact to DPPC was submitted and reviewed with the Commissioners. Senate Bill 78 adds firefighters and EMTs to list of mandated reporters which is consistent with DPPC's bill. The Abuse Registry, filed by

Senator Moore and Representative Campbell, is also with the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities and is waiting a hearing date. The Committee for Public Counsel Services, the public defender agency for Massachusetts, has expressed some concerns with the Abuse Registry Bill. Disability Law Center is currently working to redraft the bill to address their concerns and will get amendments to DPPC for review once completed. The current bill has an implementation date of January 2020. As this is unrealistic, DPPC will seek to push this date out in addition to seeking funding to implement the registry. There are many factors to consider – who will have access to the registry, how will information be shared, what information will be shared, notification process, password protections, private not public access, etc. DPPC contracted recently with retired Deputy Executive DeRiggi to look at other abuse registries from across the country – specifically their statutes, regulations and policies and procedures in preparation of implementation.

6. National

- **NAPSA Conference:** This year's National Adult Protective Service Association (NAPSA) Conference will be held August 19-21, 2019 in Denver, Colorado. DPPC has been asked to help find workshops to establish a disability track at the conference. Members of the Building Partnerships Initiative (BPI) along with DPPC staff have submitted proposals to present on topics such as Capacity/Consent, Worker Safety in the Field, Peer Support Leadership, Awareness and Action, Peer Support, Investigating and Prosecuting Crimes against Persons with Disabilities and Responding to Sexual Assault Victims with IDD.
- **Sexual Assault National Convening:** DPPC is partnering with NAPSA, California, and BPI to facilitate a national convening, at the upcoming NAPSA conference, with self-advocates and stakeholders including disability services, advocacy groups, social services, adult protective services, as well as, state and federal agencies to develop a national vision and plan to address sexual abuses against persons with disabilities.

7. New Initiatives

- **On-Boarding – APS Staff Orientation:** DPPC plans to develop its own on-boarding curriculum. To start the process, DPPC staff attended the Texas basic investigations training and Seana Miller, Investigations Manager and Jennefer Raymond, Outreach and Training Specialist attended the EOEa basic investigations training. Other curricula will be analyzed as DPPC builds its own stand-alone training.
- **Office Renovation, Move and Records Retention:** DPPC Oversight Unit has moved into the space housed by SARU. The Investigations Unit, which has expanded to 13 staff is now in the space Oversight was utilizing. Once the buildout is complete, the Hotline and Legal Units will be moving into new spaces as well. It has been a long and tedious process however DPPC persevered thanks to Director Brown along with building management working diligently with DCAM to get it accomplished.
- **ACL Grant Award:** DPPC was awarded the Administration for Community Living (ACL) grant. The project has two major components.
 - **Database Rebuild –** Year one priority is to rebuild the DPPC database. Improvements include the ability to feed information into the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS), and will include case component.

Overall the rebuild will increase the efficiency of DPPC's operations agency-wide.

- R3 Technology – Funding for the development of assistive technology to improve the ability of persons with disabilities to recognize, report and/or respond to abuse was also supported through the grant. DPPC partnered with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), Mass Advocates Standing Strong (MASS) and DDS. Three self-advocates consultants were recently hired to work on the core committee. The project has been approved through WPI and DDS research committees. Questions have been finalized for focus groups participants. WPI will seek input from self-advocates, family members and DDS providers and staff. The purpose is to identify needs, what folks already know about technology and ideas to assist persons with disabilities to recognize, report and/or respond to abuses.
- 8. Advisory Council – Meet and Greet: DPPC Advisory Council would like to meet with DPPC Commissioners at the next meeting scheduled for June 11, 2019. Mary Ann Brennen, Chair of DPPC Advisory Council, formally served as DDS Chief of Staff under Gerry Morrissey.
- 9. New Business

No new business was discussed.
- 10. Meeting Schedule
 - Tuesday, June 11, 2019, 4:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday, September 10, 2019, 4:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday, December 10, 2019, 4:30 p.m.
- 11. Adjournment
 - MOTION: Commissioner Maitland motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m., Commissioner McMahon seconded
 - VOTE: Unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.