

CT Low Wage Employer Advisory Board

January 26, 2016
LOB 1-C at 2:00 p.m.

Corrected Minutes

Members Attending: Art Perry, Susan Coleman, Jamie Mills, Stanley McMillen, James Bhandary-Alexander, Merrill Gay, Helene Figueroa, Eddie Stephens, Deborah Schwartz

Members Absent: Michael Seid

Other Attendees: Dennis Murphy, Heidi Lane, Louise Simmons – UCONN, Senator Gomes

Introductions and Co-Chairs Selected:

Dennis Murphy, Acting Labor Commissioner opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and highlighting the focus of this new board. After board members introduced themselves Mr. Murphy opened the floor to nominations for two co-chairs. Jamie Mills and James Bhandary-Alexander were nominated and elected co-chairs. All board members present were sworn in.

Outline of Board:

Ms. Lane gave a brief outline of the rule of the board, which will be purely an advisory board to the Department of Labor, Department of Social Services, Department of Developmental Services and the Office of Early Childhood. The board will monitor and study the effect of low wages on residents. The board can form working groups for specific tasks. A report of the board will be due December 2016. A quorum is a majority of the appointed members.

There are two vacant positions on the board in addition to the 11 currently appointed.

Meeting Overview:

The co-chairs spoke briefly and opened the meeting to accept the agenda (accepted), and suggestions for meeting frequency beyond the required quarterly meetings, and for potential focus work groups the board may want to create.

A suggestion was made and accepted to meet once monthly (second Tuesdays at 3:00) due to the time frame and amount of work to be completed and reported in December.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made and seconded to create two work groups: one to study wage issues and the second group to address public assistance issues. This motion passed unanimously. The public assistance workgroup will need to look into the issue that Helene Figueroa raised (reimbursement for family caregivers). Members are to email Mr. Perry and the co-chairs to indicate on which workgroup they would like to sit.

It was suggested the board can invite people to make presentations at a monthly meeting relating to the board's focus and areas for which more information is required.

Stanley McMillen arrived after the initial swearing in and so was sworn in by Mr. Bhandary-Alexander.

The necessity for administrative support, where to inquire, and if DOL would be able to provide it was discussed. For the time being DOL will provide support for the meetings. Suggestions were requested for the Care for Kids Program Plan that will be submitted to the federal government March 6. It will have a sizeable impact on providers (care by relatives) of approximately 600 to 2,000 children, their caregivers and families receiving the subsidy.

Some things to look at might be the problematic areas and aspects of the contract which have been in effect for years but not yet put into place and activated. Parents and other caregivers have the choice of the type of care, and for caregivers – if they want to be licensed or not.

What can be done within the next four weeks? The board can connect with the Office of Childcare since the comment period is over. Members were asked to which work group should gather information on this for the board, and to email co-chairs with a sense of urgency the names of those they suggest.

The question of whether the needed technology to allow people at other locations to participate and give testimony is available to avoid having the board travel to Bridgeport or having people travel to Hartford. Ms. Lane will see what is available and will report back to the board.

It was requested that Louise Simmons, Associate Professor at UCONN give a brief description of materials in the binders that being provided to the board. Ms. Simmons noted that they contain reports and executive summaries on poverty which is also available online, and she mentioned the sections included in the binder.

After a brief discussion the question of whether DOL can create and provide a web page for this board for posting meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, and other materials and presentations was asked.

The board briefly discussed and agreed to meet the second Tuesday of each month at 3:00 p.m. at the LOB or other location. It was decided the next meeting will be **Tuesday, February 9th at the LOB in Room 1-B at 3:00 p.m.**

The meeting began at 2:05 p.m. and adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

Notes were taken by L. Ryan (DOL).