

**Minutes
Virginia State Board of Social Services
Poverty Committee Meeting**

**Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development in Roanoke
108 First Street
Roanoke, VA**

**April 16, 2008
9:00 AM**

Attendees

Trudy Brisendine
Peppy Linden
Maggi Luca
Commissioner Conyers

Welcome

Trudy Brisendine, Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. She announced that Jim Schuyler would not be present today due to a scheduling conflict; however, copies of his written comments were sent to Board members prior to the meeting.

Members were encouraged to visit www.vacap.org to view the redesigned website which includes a number of resources of value to the State Board and its Poverty Committee. New links include Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, a website developed by a consortium of foundations to promote poverty issues in the Presidential campaign, and the National Center for Children in Poverty which includes data specific to Virginia. Also, the latest statistics from the National Low Income Housing Coalition's "Out of Reach" Report features data specific to Virginia.

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ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Linden) and seconded (Ms. Luca) moved to approve the December 2007 minutes as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

Podcast and EITC Update

A copy of the suggested SBSS Podcast Calendar (April-October 2008) was provided to members.

April-May:

Transportation and the working class—gas prices—how are they affecting the working poor? Details included interviews with a gas station owner; pawn shop or payday lender; individual impacted by high prices; interview with bus riders; and services that may help.

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Lack of public transportation in rural areas—getting to work, the grocery store, doctor offices—in rural communities where public transportation is scarce or unavailable. Details included interview with people in these situations, and services that may help.

Members were concerned over the use of interviews with payday lenders, citing it may encourage clients to use these services.

It was reported that Public Affairs has not met all of the goals outlined originally, but they can still work from these ideas, making adjustments on priority per the State Board of Social Services.

Committee Goals

The committee discussed whether they should take on additional goals to raise public awareness.

EITC

Ms. Linden felt the group should continue EITC awareness. CAP sites are reporting a fifty percent increase in EITC. Further statistics will be available mid summer.

Ms. Linden mentioned that home rentals have increased in her area due to recent foreclosures. It now appears there are fewer affordable homes available.

Foster Care

Children aging out of foster care could be a future podcast—could compliment DSS programs.

PreK Initiative

Could the Board play a role in raising awareness of the specific needs of pre-school children in low-income families? This could broaden support for one of DSS's newest initiatives.

Food Stamp

Commissioner Conyers advised that over 539,000 Virginian's receive food stamps, at a cost of more than \$50 million dollars each year. He advised the average is approximately \$21 per week per person. He suggested that State Board members, and local directors across the state "live in the shoes of a food stamp recipient" for a week. If everyone commits to doing this at the same time across the state, it could generate publicity and awareness.

Commissioner Conyers stated this effort should be well-planned and well-researched. He will work with Public Affairs Director Marianne McGhee on this effort. A draft plan will be available for Committee review at the June meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Rengnerth

