

Governor's Council on Spinal and Head Injury
Council Meeting
February 17, 2010
1:00 pm

Governor's Council on Spinal and Head Injuries Conference Room
10640N. 28th Drive, Suite C-103
Phoenix, Arizona 85029

Meeting Notes

Participants: Robert D. Bohm, Mary Lu Bushnell, Javier Cardenas, Gary Frandino, Bryan Longie, Carolyn Mitchell, Pat Padilla, Sydney Rice, Steve Zacarri

Guests/Staff: Pat Harrington, Mattie Cummings, Mark Darmer, Paul Mortenson / Ann Tarpy, Barbara Ciesielski, Joan Kinney

Teleconference: Tim Flood, Katherine Levandowsky, Bryan Longie, Laura Nelson

Chairperson: Sharon Phillips

1. Welcome, Introductions and Acknowledgements

Acting Executive Director, Ann Tarpy, and Council Chairperson, Sharon Phillips, welcomed Council members and guests.

2. Council Chair Updates

Meeting with the Governor's Health and Human Resources Policy Advisor

Ms. Phillips and Dr. Cardenas met with Beth Lazar, the Governor's Health and Human Resources Policy Advisor. Discussions during the meeting covered the Council's role and responsibilities, the Council programs, the budget, and Council vacancies and reappointments. Ms. Lazar was given the matrix of people who want to be reappointed. All those who are up for reappointment for 2010 have agreed to stay with the Council.

Meeting with Mr. Harrington, Mr. Darmer and RSA

Ms. Phillips, Robert D. Bohm, Dr. Cardenas, and Ann Tarpy met with Pat Harrington, Mark Darmer, Kathy Levandowsky and Sandy Myers to discuss the Council's 2010 budget, state budget issues, and managing the projected shortfall in the Spinal and Head Injuries Trust Fund (SHIF).

3. Review of the December 2, 2009 Council Meeting Notes

The Notes, with attachments, had been sent to the Council members prior to the meeting for review. There were no recommendations for changes or additions.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Bohm moved to approve the December 2, 2009 meeting notes as written. Dr. Cardenas seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Review, discussion, and vote on revised budget for SFY 2010

Ms. Tarpy provided an overview of the relationship between the Council's budget and the SHIF in a power point presentation that had been sent to the Council members prior to the meeting.

The presentation also discussed the impact of the budget reductions and sweeps of the excess balance over the past three years. One of the critical factors has been the sweeps to the excess balance which have reduced the capacity of the fund to earn interest. In prior years, the SHIF has earned an estimated \$100,000/year in interest. In SFY '09, the SHIF earned \$1,400.

This year, the SHIF needs to accumulate \$3,090,600 to meet the expected obligations for the budget reductions in our appropriated amount and the sweeps of the excess balance. The projections for what the SHIF will accumulate between income and interest is less than that creating a shortfall. There are varying estimates for the shortfall. Some good news is that the income report for January showed a record monthly income of \$302,000. The average monthly income for the SHIF from July '09, to January '10, was \$213,910.

Pat Harrington and Mark Darmer were present to follow with a discussion regarding the shortfall.

Pat Harrington discussed the serious budget problems facing the state and the department. Regarding the projected shortfall in the SHIF, the legislature will be sweeping the SHIF for the expected amounts prior to the end of the year requiring RSA to come up with the monies now. The Council budget will be impacted again with a reduction to be part of covering the shortfall.

It is not clear, at this time, why or what caused the significant increase in monthly income in the SHIF in January 2010. Staff are researching the issue to determine if it was a one time increase or if the increase might continue. This information is important to make projections for the shortfall.

DERS Budget Manager, Mark Darmer, addressed the Council with comments and suggestions regarding the Council's proposed budget for 2010. Looking at current and past funding information, the SHFI revenue collections were not going to meet the Council's budget needs for 2010. Mr. Darmer noted that since the surprised increase in monthly income in January 2010, we would like the opportunity to wait to make further projections regarding the shortfall for another month or two to evaluate if the increase was one time or ongoing and to give staff time to do the research. Mr. Darmer stressed that the Department and the Council need to do a review and reduce any contracts associated with the program. He also stressed that the Finance Department needs the opportunity to investigate and ensure that the level of reduction issues that may need to be put into place is backed with firm information. He suggested that the Council look at deferring any vote on the proposed revised 2010 budget until the May meeting. By doing so, the Council and Department can be provided with more detailed information. Thereby, making better informed decisions about the reductions and shortfall.

After Council member discussion of understanding the Appropriation/Sweep/Excess fund, Mr. Darmer restated that based upon the anticipated revenue for the fund, it is definitely anticipated that we will be short for this year. Originally when we looked at the revenue, it was projected to come in at a little over 2.4 million dollars. That number was before the fund sweeps and appropriation reductions. That is why Mr. Darmer really wanted the opportunity to look at the January figure and see how the February figures will affect what can or cannot be done. At this

time the cash for the fund sweep has not been sent to the General Fund as our fund does not have sufficient cash balance to do so.

Steve Zaccari asked about the statement in our Statutes that, "monies from our Trust Fund do not go to the General Fund". Mr. Harrington and Mr. Darmer clarified that there is overriding language to the effect of, "Notwithstanding any other law", to allow the JLBC/Legislature their rights to the funds.

Since Mark Darmer suggested the Council consider deferring any vote on the revised 2010 budget to the May meeting. The Council did decide to delay the vote on the 2010 budget until May 19th meeting.

5. Discussion of factors impacting planning and preparation of 2011 budget

Ann Tarpay led the discussion with a heads up that the news for 2011 is not any better at the Council level than it is at the State level. Based on what the SHIF accumulated this year, we are projecting it will accumulate between 1 and 2.3 million. Depending on what the JLBC recommends for budget reductions and excess balance transfers, we may again experience a shortfall.

Internet information regarding the 2011 budget showed the fund reduction at \$1,057,100. Ms. Tarpay asked if Mark Darmer could help us understand those numbers. Mr. Darmer replied that the numbers begin with the Governor putting out her budget and then the Legislature needs to come up with their proposed budget with options for reductions. At this point, the \$1,057,100 figure it is merely an option for the Legislature to consider. Until such time as there is a better picture of what the thinking is, Mr. Darmer could not say whether or not there will be a continuation of this year's Appropriation reduction and transfers. Mr. Darmer advised that education is being provided to JLBC that they cannot continue to make fund sweeps when the funds are just not available.

Ms. Phillips asked if it was a good idea to meet with the staff person at JLBC regarding the lack of funds in the SHIF for additional excess balance transfers. Mr. Darmer felt the Council would be much better served by going to our Legislators. The DES/Financial Services Administrator (FSA) has already been working with JLBC.

Further planning for the 2011 budget needs to wait until we have firm information.

6. Council office updates

Update on Council staff

Ann Tarpay announced the good news that the Administrative Assistant II position had been filled. Ms. Aurora Gonzales will start later this month. The Business Manager position remains unfilled despite two recruitments. We will start another recruitment next month.

Update on Council move

As a result of the RSA office consolidations, the Council is moving the end of the month to Central Office at 1789 W. Jefferson.

Next Council meetings

The next Council meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2010; we are currently in the process of scheduling a location. The annual strategic planning meeting is scheduled for October 1, 2010 at the Disability Empowerment Center.

7. Council member updates

Ms. Phillips asked for member updates:

- Dr. Laura K. Nelson, Medical Director, DHS Behavioral Health reported no major updates since her December report. DHS is in the same situation as DES with budget reductions and there will certainly be additional reductions with some impact to the Behavioral Health system. She did report that Arizona now has a role and does participate in the Policy Academy for Returning Veterans.
- Brian Longie reported that he is fully retired and for about four weeks has been working with the IHS hospitals helping with misconceptions about having a disability. He will be presenting again this year at the annual American Indian Summit to be held on March 17, 2010.
- Dr. Rice reported on a child training program she has been working on that will be happening on March 10, 2010. It will combine presentations from the fields of Law Enforcement, Medical, CPS and people throughout the community who will be getting together to give their individual perspectives. Within a week of announcing the event, the course was filled.
- Ms. Tarp and Ms. Levandowsky discussed a recent meeting they had regarding the Council/RSA VR TBI Specialist Program to discuss the results of the 2007 Program Evaluation Report and review and update the Memorandum of Understanding. There had been a delay in completing the Evaluation report until March '09 due to resources and access to data. The report did reveal a possible discrepancy in the use of some of the dollars. RSA is conducting an audit and will be reporting out at a future meeting.

The Report provided very helpful information about what really works, what makes this program special and how it really does benefit these very challenging and high dollar cases. The TBI Specialists actually have a higher overall closure rate than RSA Case Workers. The discussion of what works included the observation of the importance of clients having a support system to be successful. All staff reported that the clients need to have the long-term supports of RSA services and their families to help them along. Without these supports they may not become employed as easily and unfortunately, in some cases may never become employed. Ms. Levandowsky commented that her staff was pleased about coming together to discuss the findings in the Report and how all can work differently, or better, at providing services for our clients.

- Ms. Levandowsky reported on the status of the Order of Selection and the progress being made at pulling people off the wait list. Ms. Levandowsky advised that to date, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program is currently working with approximately 1,290 people that have been pulled off the waiting list. It is unclear at this time how many more people VR will be able to serve this year. All hopes are that there will be no additional cuts to these programs.

8. Announcements

- The SCI Empowerment Course started the first week of February and had an estimated sixty (60) people the first night and has continued to have forty to sixty people for each session.
- Mattie Cummings of the Brain Injury Association (BIA) announced that March was Brain Injury Awareness Month. Since there has never been a big opportunity in the past for outreach, Sonya Smith the Outreach Coordinator for BIAAZ, decided this year was the year. March 19th will be the date for BIA to conduct their event at the Disability Empowerment Center (DEC). Mattie asked all to wear blue on March 15th.
- Paul Mortensen reported that the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation is considering the making the Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association's Peer Mentoring Program as the model for a program they are considering on a national level. Kudos to staff member Ashleigh who spent a tremendous amount of time and effort applying her skills in organizing the manual that has pushed the program forward.
- Dr. Bushnell reported that their Cognitive Enhancement Group for mild TBI has formalized their manual and distributed it to about fifty other VA's.
- Ann Tarcy reported presenting at a networking meeting with the Arizona Coalition of Military Families. She remarked there were people from Tucson, Prescott, Metro Phoenix area and Faith based community workers and it was good to see these groups coming together. The Coalition is trying to provide these opportunities for people to network.
- Carolyn Mitchell is doing long-term follow up on people with spinal cord injuries that were part of the original Spinal Injury Model system when it was here in Phoenix.
- Javier Cardenas, MD, reported the Annual Barrow/TBI Symposium meeting is the last weekend of March.
- The BIAAZ is having its Annual Ray's of Hope Survivor Conference on April 10, 2010, at the Black Canyon Conference center. Information can be found on the web at BIAAZ.org/Event/Spotlight.
- Sharon Phillips asked all members to please contact either herself or Ann Tarcy with names of individuals influential to the success of our budget, so that as many contacts as possible can be made.

9. Call to the public

Ms. Phillips called for a motion to adjourn. Javier Cardenas so moved; Mary Lu Bushnell seconded the motion. All signaled aye, no opposition. Meeting was adjourned.