

**DRAFT Minutes of Vermont Child Poverty Council  
Meeting of Full Council**

**Meeting Date:** November 12, 2015, 10:45 – 11:15, in the Ethan Allen Room

**Members in Attendance**

Representative Jill Krowinski, Chair  
Senator Claire Ayer  
Senator Ann Cummings  
Representative Johannah Donovan  
Representative Diane Lanpher  
Paul Dragon (designee for Hal Cohen)  
Michelle Faye (designee for Carlin Finn)  
Amy Fowler, Agency of Education  
Breena Holmes, Vermont Department of Health  
Karen Lafayette, Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council  
Annie Noonan, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Labor  
Sandy Paritz (designee for Jean Murray)

**Members Absent**

Senator John Campbell  
Harry Chen, Dept. of Health  
Hal Cohen, Agency of Human Services  
Carlen Finn, Voices for Vermont's Children  
Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association  
Jean Murray, Vermont Legal Aid

**Other Participants**

Faye Conte, Hunger Free Vermont  
Elizabeth Hewitt, VTDigger  
Peter Hirschfeld, Vermont Public Radio  
Erhard Mahnke, Coordinator, Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition  
Katie McLinn, Legislative Council  
Gilan Merwanji, Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence  
Hans Moen, University of Vermont Medical Center  
Dawn Moskowitz, Voices for Vermont's Children  
Auburn Watersong, Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

**Topics Discussed**

- Suzi Wizowaty – Children of incarcerated parents. Significantly larger segment of human behavior is now considered criminal. Corrections experience adds to difficulty when returning to the community (e.g., finding a job, housing, possibly children removed from family). Now, more attempts to keep children in household with more support.

- Suzi Wizowaty – Extra costs for those with a family member in prison, including communications, clothing and food, visits. Burden is on people who are already low income.
- Suzi Wizowaty – Need bill related to the impact of incarceration on minor children. Need bills related to technical violations that are too stringent.
- Suzi Wizowaty – Incarcerated population is decreasing. A group of current inmates lack approved housing, but otherwise could be released, leaving space to return out of state inmates to Vermont. Likewise for those lacking mental health services before able to return to the community.
- Follow up – Erhard Mahnke – possible integration of support for transitional housing as former inmates return to the community.
- Follow up – Community Housing Plan Report  
<http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Act-43-Sec-4-Community-Housing-Plan-Report.pdf>
- Auburn Watersong – Services of Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence includes shelters, housing assistance
- Gilan Merwanji – Homelessness in Vermont is rising, half are families with children, use of shelters rising. Victims of abuse may return to abuser due to lack of housing. Insufficient funding for section 8 housing or emergency housing for victims. Insufficient shelter space for victims. Victims may not be safe in a shelter, need hotel/motel vouchers.
- Auburn Watersong – Children in disrupted homes during high school years may be couch surfing to continue in same school as their parents move
- General discussion – Increase tracking for children of incarcerated parents, identify these children.
- Follow up with testimony on Project Brooklyn. Impact of housing on health is worthy of Council effort, advocate for connecting Medicaid and housing. Blend housing and social service funding. How to solve Medicaid gap, its effect on families, use for housing. Prioritize scarce resources for greater impact.
- Further work possible on Homeless Bill of Rights.

### **Motions**

No motions were made during the meeting.

*Minutes prepared by Marjorie Zunder, Legislative Counsel*