

**PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR INDIVIDUALS  
WITH MENTAL ILLNESS (PAIMI)  
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING  
Final Minutes  
November 16, 2006**

- Members Present:** Irene Rebholz, Chris Harrison, Lisa Ritchie, Byron Stith, CW Tillman, Ward Marsteller
- Members Absent:** Lisa DuVal, Scott DuVal
- Guests Present:** Michael J. Carrasco, Steve Hornstein, Elizabeth Priaulx (VOPA Board Member), Joanna Solkoff (NDRN), Bill Yolton
- Staff Present:** Sherry Confer, Eileen Levandoski, Clyde Mathews, Colleen Miller, Mark Stevens, Dana Traynham
- Welcome/Introductions:** Irene Rebholz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Council members, staff, and guests introduced themselves to one another. Chairperson Rebholz called for extending the Public Comments by 15 minutes. There were no objections from Council.
- Public Comments:** Bill Yolton introduced himself as a long-time advocate of mental health issues, and in particular, the human rights system. He questioned accountability measures of a provider when there may be pressure for directors to look at the interest of the agency over the consumer. Mr. Yolton recommended that VOPA have a stronger human rights policy agenda.
- Steve Hornstein introduced himself a NOVA Mental Health institute resident for two years and an individual found not guilty by reason of insanity. Mr. Hornstein noted that he did not have much regard for VOPA and that he was treated rudely on the phone. He spoke of instances where callers allege they were told they were delusional. Mr. Hornstein shared several concerns about the mental health services in many settings. Mr. Hornstein noted that with the guidance of a new director, NVMHI was addressing reducing the use of seclusion and restraint.
- Board of Directors Report:** Elizabeth Priaulx, in presenting the Board of Directors report, noted that there is good representation by Council members on the various Board committees. At its last meeting, the Board was presented with a fiscal review of VOPA. She noted that the Board's discussions revolved around presenting matters in more user friendly ways so as to promote better understanding among Board members. She added that the Internal Policy Committee was a strong committee. The Executive

Committee, she said, is looking at VOPA's bylaws, especially how grievances were addressed. She noted that there is now a "Priority Setting" Committee that Ms. Priaulx herself chairs and noted that the committee is re-labeling its work as "Goals and Focus Areas" rather than using language containing the word "priority." She spoke of trying to impress on people that there is a public input process but not a lot of funds. She noted that there is the need for two-year goal setting terms now because the process is very resource intensive for both staff and funding. She remarked that the Committee asked a lot of questions of staff to develop these objectives that were tied to available resources. Ms. Priaulx said that the Board approved the name change to "Public Awareness and Goals Committee" so as to put a priority on public awareness to the existence of VOPA. VOPA Executive Director Colleen Miller added information about constitute feedback regarding use the term "priority." Ms. Priaulx introduced Joanna Solkoff as new NDRN staff.

**Council Training:**

Dana Traynham, Staff Attorney, presented "Alternatives to Guardianship," outlining the rights limitations of guardianships and the various types of alternatives to guardianship. This included alternatives where capacity is presumed and where capacity may be questionable. She also presented information regarding limited guardianships. Ms. Traynham also distributed a publication entitled "Five Wishes." During and after her presentation there were questions posed by Council members.

**Approval of August 2006 Meeting Minutes:**

After review of the August 2006 minutes, Council member CW Tillman moved to adopt the minutes as presented. Chris Harrison seconded the motion and the motion carried by unanimous vote. Mr. Harrison questioned whether or not this November meeting needed to include election of officers in its agenda. It was decided at the August meeting that a Secretary was not needed. Mr. Harrison moved to amend the minutes to reflect addressing Council officers. Ms. Rebholz agreed to add election of officers to the agenda.

**Executive Director's Update:**

VOPA Executive Director Colleen Miller called attention to an item in Council packet entitled "Goals, Focus Areas and Objectives," highlighting on certain focus areas and a particular problem at ESH and psychiatric treatment of youths. She noted VOPA's involvement with the Supreme Court Mental Health Law Reform Commission. Ms. Miller noted that VOPA is on all the task forces that the commission has put together. She further indicated that VOPA is trying to support consumers and is distressed that mental health accommodations are difficult to ask for in this setting. She noted that no procedures existed on how to make a request for accommodations.

Ms. Miller noted that the agency is six weeks into new FY07 objectives. She highlighted particular objectives to include peer-on-peer assaults. She stated that VOPA will be looking for situations where systemic resolution can be accomplished. There is a large volume of these incidents so VOPA is leaning towards state adult facilities and the most serious of the CIRs.

Ms. Miller drew the Council's attention to VOPA's work on behalf of persons with mental illness in jails. Ms. Miller said VOPA must proceed with some caution and is currently monitoring 10 cases, looking for systematic problems with psychiatric issues, not individual situations. Clyde Mathews, VOPA Managing Attorney, asked for feedback from Council on best practices. Contact information of a possible resource was forwarded to Ms. Miller.

Ms. Miller reported that VOPA used a different approach to monitoring the polls this past election. She also noted that the volunteer monitors' reports were not all in yet. She shared her own experiences at the polls on Election Day. She discussed VOPA's absentee balloting/voting work on behalf of people with mental illness.

**Litigation Report:**

Ms. Miller referred to the litigation report that was included in the Council packet. She specifically called attention to the Bellmore case and mentioned hope for progress on appeal and its too restrictive conditions of release.

She also noted a state mental health facility having issues with human rights. Staff there got training thanks to VOPA, she said. She noted also that the Standardville case was very complicated and VOPA was still involved in it.

**Lunch:**

Working Lunch

**Governing Board  
Committee Reports.  
Council Feedback for  
Board/Staff:**

Ward Marstiller reported on the Finance Committee. Ms. Rebholz reported on the Public Policy Committee. There was some discussion about the role of this Committee. Ms. Rebholz asked for volunteers to serve on the Internal Policy Committee because Mr. Harrison noted that he had to represent the VOPA Board now and not the PAIMI Council. Mr. Tillman volunteered to serve.

**Work Session:**

VOPA Policy Director Ms. Confer directed a work session for the Council's Annual Report on VOPA's work over the past year.

She first discussed outreach objectives, touching on services to the underserved population as the first exercise. On Page 22, various outreach activities were presented. It was the consensus of the Council

that these goals were met. Ms. Miller suggested extending volunteer limits on Council service. Discussion ensued regarding more cultural diversity and adolescent representation on these panels.

Because this is done every quarter with Council, some Council members felt they had little to add to previous discussions. Other Council members noted new comments. It was also noted that since the Goals and Focus Areas had not changed over the past two years, that many Council comments from last year were still relevant. Ms. Confer offered to do the annual report for the Council's final review/comments. All agreed that was fine.

**Other Business:**

There was no other business.

**Membership:**

Ms. Rebholz opened the floor for nominations for officers. Discussion ensued regarding the need for a Secretary. Mr. Tillman noted that the bylaws require a Secretary. He suggested that until the bylaws were revised that the Council should follow the current ones. He then volunteered to serve as Secretary. At the previous meeting, Mr. Tillman nominated Ms. Rebholz for Chair and Lisa Ritchie was nominated as Vice Chair. The vote was unanimous to nominate these three members. The nominees were unanimously elected by the Council.

Wednesdays were discussed as an option for future council meetings and it was decided by Council that February 15 would be the next meeting. The meeting location is Richmond.

**Travel Voucher  
Reminder:**

Council members were reminded to submit their travel vouchers to Eileen Levandoski.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:50 p.m.