



Terri Cantrell
State Ombudsman

STATE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 15, 2024
10:00 am – 12:00 pm EST

STATE COUNCIL MEMBERS			
Vacant, Northwest (1)	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Wanda Harrison, South Central (17)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marshall Kapp, Panhandle (2) CHAIR	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jane Horowitz, Pinellas (6)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sharon Lauter, North Central (3)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Patrick Cannan, Palm Beach (11)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vacant, Withlacoochee (4)	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Valerie Collins, Treasure Coast (16)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Terry Lonczak, North Central (7)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rita Duncan, Southwest (10)	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
Vacant, Brevard (18)	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Paul Wilson, Broward	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Michael Swain, First Coast South (15)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vacant, North Dade	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vacant, First Coast (5)	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Charles Garavaglia, South Dade (14)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vacant, East Central (9)	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Mary Darling, At-Large Member	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jan White, West Central (8)	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kevin Cronin, At-Large Member	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

OTHER OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVES	
Terri Cantrell	State Ombudsman
Renee Harkins	Legal Advocate, Central Office
Alice Terry	Government Operations Consultant II / Central
Audra Peoples	Staff Director / Public Relations Coordinator
Angela Andrews	State Council Liaison / Legal Assistant/Central
Deborah Gerrell	Panhandle District Ombudsman Manager
Ingrid Aldana	South Central, Assistant
Samantha Kotz	South Central District Ombudsman Manager
Diana Medina	Southwest District Ombudsman Manager
Lisa Dale	First Coast South District Ombudsman Manager
Alicia Salinas	South Dade District Ombudsman Manager
Sheila Mitchell	Palm Beach District Ombudsman Manager
Tracie Rayfield	First Coast, Transitions Advocate
GUESTS	
WFSU-TV, The Florida Channel	

OCTOBER 15, 2024

OPEN SESSION

Called to order at 10:02 AM

Quorum Established: Yes No

Last Quarter's Minutes Approved: Yes No

OPENING REMARKS – Chair Marshall Kapp

Chair Kapp welcomed all attendees and thanked all participants.

CENTRAL OFFICE UPDATE – Terri Cantrell – State Ombudsman

Last week's Hurricane (Milton) closed multiple offices, but we managed to make it through.

Facilities took damage from the last two hurricanes. There was a comprehensive list from AHCA that has been distributed. Volunteers have been dispatched to visit high-need areas.

Old Business

- Terri Cantrell states that the new Legislative Affairs Director has started recently and is on the road with Secretary Branham traveling to hard hit areas. Terri will meet with the new director about the LTCOP and would like for him to attend the next State Council meeting.
- LTCOP's Transition to a more staff-oriented model from the current volunteer-oriented model is going to take time.
- There is to be no photography at the facilities until further notice.
- Staff is reviewing the topic of volunteers contacting or meeting with Legislators.
- Voting rights for residents. Jane Horowitz states that many of the residents do not have an I.D. and in order to get one it has to be done in person. Gloria Freyre states that the Broward County Supervisor of Elections can come to their facilities, but there has been an issue getting in touch with them. Paul Wilson states that some facilities will not do it but knew of another facility that took a proactive approach and took the residents to the voting venue.
- Animal Policy – Emotional Support vs. Service Animals. Renee Harkins states that there was something that went out previously on this and has nothing new to add. A resident has a right to have a certified Service animal with the resident in the facility assuming proper documentation of the resident's need for that Service animal, but

each facility may set its own policy regarding the presence of Emotional Support animals.

- State Council Representative vacancies and the need to fill these vacancies. Marshall Kapp states that the At-Large position must be filled through appointment by the State Ombudsman based on recommendations by State Council members.
- Michael Swain asks about additional State Council Training. Diandra Taylor mentions that the employee previously in her position had some materials, but she does not have access to them and welcomes suggestions. Charles Garavaglia does not see the need for formal training and that one sheet would be enough. Marshall asks that, if anyone has anything in the way of training materials, to please send it to Diandra.
- On the topic of RTZ, Terri Cantrell states that LTCOP is still working on enhancements.
- iPads are currently being sent out to staff at the District Offices for this purpose.
- Terri welcomes the new Transfer and Discharge Advocate, Tracie Rayfield. Nursing homes are required to let LTCOP know when they are transferring or discharging a resident. This is a cumbersome process. Because of this, Terri decided to designate a point person for the sole purpose of these transfers and discharges to make sure these are done properly. Tracie will work very closely with the field offices. We are also working on obtaining a transfer and discharge database in which the nursing homes can fill in the paperwork electronically. Nursing homes are our focus, but ALFs are also under our watchful eye.

New Business

Interaction of volunteers with AHCA staff

Terri Cantrell states that we are supposed to be notified when an AHCA staff member is doing an exit interview. The communication goes through the District Office Manager first before a volunteer can communicate with AHCA personnel.

Permanent and continually updated library of resource materials

This pertains not only to orientation materials, but other materials that could be utilized for learning more. One suggestion is to have some instructions on particular topics and instructions through case studies. Having important topics available online can be very helpful and useful for everyone. Diandra mentions there is a resource page, and she is open to ideas. Marshall tells everyone to make sure that all the volunteers are aware of the resource page. Diandra will look into the National Resource Center who is developing resources and see if it will include State specific information as well.

Data Sources

Kevin wants to ensure that the posting of District Council meeting minutes is kept current.

Adequacy of Volunteers

Marshall asks if there are enough volunteers or if there are shortage areas and questions how the duties are divided between staff and volunteers. Terri Cantrell states that there are some councils that still need more volunteers, and the vast majority are always looking for more volunteers. One district manager says that the new system, RTZ, is very helpful because a report can be run to see which facilities need to be visited. When a volunteer is unable to visit a facility, staff will visit.

Virtual attendance for District Council meetings

Sometimes the physical meeting location is too far of a drive for some volunteers. One volunteer has asked if it would be possible to attend virtually and was told this was not an option. Terri encourages virtual attendance if attending in person causes hardship.

Enhancing staff communication with volunteers

The weekly newsletter has been very helpful. Valerie suggests speaking with the newer volunteers about awards that they can aim toward. Terri encourages the Regional and District managers to communicate to their councils about such awards. Marshall states that communications is very important between the managers and volunteers.

WORKGROUP UPDATES

Advocacy/Legislative – Kevin Cronin

The Advocacy workgroup recently discussed what is happening on District levels regarding voting and what the state reps could tell us. Half of them noted that in their Districts there was an established onsite voting plan in place by the county Supervisor of Elections and were well received. There was mention of some language barriers and lack of voter I.D.s being an issue.

The issue of video monitoring inside facilities was brought up since there are multilevel interests by different parties with different perspectives, when it comes to recording in any facility.

Legislative issues were a topic of discussion. We have a little bit more time until the Legislative process begins again in February of 2025.

The Workgroup is proposing that ALFs have the same responsibilities as nursing homes to report discharges and evictions, and if the LTCOP should be looking at that as they do for nursing homes. It was determined that at this time, getting the nursing home eviction process better established was the priority. It was also suggested that the local council try to gather more data and to try to identify those ALFs with high eviction rates.

Training & Education – Diandra Taylor

The group will be having a meeting soon and will work on planning the guest speakers and topics for our next annual conference. There are a few potential dates being considered in April or May. The survey data from the last conference will be available at the next workgroup meeting.

Recruitment, Retention, Recognition – Audra Peoples

The Newsletter is now being sent out every week. There is a new URL for the Department of Elder Affairs and the LTCOP has asked for a two-year redirect. We are currently trying to update all of our promotional materials. We just finished our volunteer recruitment campaign and did one op-ed. We are trying to wrap this up before the holidays and will not do any further social media campaigns during that time. Also, we are still in need of a chairperson for this Workgroup.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

CLOSING COMMENTS – Marshall Kapp

Thank you all for coming. Welcome to Tracie, and a fond farewell to Renee.

The next State Council meeting is January 21, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Workgroups meet shortly before that. Feel free to contact Jane or myself with any questions or concerns.

ADJOURNMENT

11:45 a.m.