



STATE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 24, 2023
The Florida Hotel, Orlando
1500 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, FL 32809

STATE COUNCIL MEMBERS			
Marie Brand, Withlacoochee, Chair	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bill Hulsey, West Central	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Raymond "Sully" Sullivan, Northwest	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Donna Holden, South Central	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marshall Kapp, Panhandle, Vice Chair	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michael Alexander, Southwest	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sharon Lauter, North Central	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paul Wilson, Broward	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tim O'Keefe, East Central	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Louis L.I. Grossman, North Dade	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
Donna Nagel, Brevard	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maria Cristina Clark, S Dade & FL Keys	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Diane Mongelli, First Coast South	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Margaret Riccardi, Palm Beach	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Linda Howard, First Coast	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Valerie Nubi-Collins, Treasure Coast	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vacant, Mid & South Pinellas	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Mary Darling, At-Large Member	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jane Horowitz, Pasco & North Pinellas	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

OTHER OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVES	
Terri Cantrell	State Ombudsman
Diandra Taylor	West Region Ombudsman Manager
Jo Ann Quiles	East Region Ombudsman Manager
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
Lynn Penley	West Central District Ombudsman Manager
Samantha Kotz	South Central District Ombudsman Manager
Judy Carlson	West Coast District Ombudsman Manager
Alicia Salinas	South Dade District Ombudsman Manager
Tracie Rayfield	First Coast District Ombudsman Manager
Gloria Freyre	Broward District Ombudsman Manager
Sheila Mitchell	Palm Beach District Ombudsman Manager
Lisa Dale	First Coast South District Ombudsman Manager
Damaris Ortiz	West Central
Debbie Sitowski	West Coast
Edilia Diaz	South Dade
GUESTS	
Terry Lonczak, volunteer from district seven	



1. Meeting called to order – Chair, Marie Brand
 - a. Chair Brand called meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

2. Welcome – State Council Chair, Marie Brand
 - a. Pledge of Allegiance
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Approval of Minutes Yes No
 - d. Quorum Established Yes No

3. State Chair’s Opening Remarks
 - a. Reading of *“Which Body Are You?”*
 - b. Chair Brand thanks all the State Representatives and the State Ombudsman.

4. Program Update – State Ombudsman, Terri Cantrell
 - a. Ms. Cantrell thanks all the State Council Members for being patient while the program is undergoing a reconfiguration.
 - b. When looking at other States, there are processes that many States are doing that Florida is not. Regarding Florida’s continued growth, there is a question of whether the program is serving the State of Florida in the best way it can.
 - c. The consultants are still working on drafts.
 - i. The consultants have worked with other ombudsman programs in other States.
 - ii. The IT consultants began one month ago.
 - iii. The consultants are continuing to work on the Program’s Policies and Procedures Manual to choose what can be changed and what needs be changed.
 - d. A pause has been placed on filling some staffing roles, including the training position. The legal advocate position has been filled. It is imperative to recruit staff that are a right fit for the program.
 - e. Relationship building between the ombudsmen and staff is very important.
 - f. Ms. Cantrell thanks the ombudsmen for allowing the program some time to dig deep. She understands this has been a pensive year but is enthusiastic that things are happening.



- g. Ms. Cantrell answers questions about the process for determining which recommendations will be accepted, rejected, or put on hold, and the timeframe on hearing from the consultants. Ms. Cantrell is hoping to hear something within the next two weeks, and as far as recommendations go, it is up to the Secretary and Central Office to determine what should be done for the benefit of the structure of the program. This information will be provided first to the staff first and then to the volunteers.
- h. There is an effort being made to create new staff positions and make some positions permanent, as well as increase salaries.
- i. There have been multiple requests for cell phones. Even though this has been explored, due to the enormous expense, this is not possible. However, VOIP technology is being looked at.

5. Council Member Questions/Discussion

Q: (Marie Brand) Are 18 hours required by the federal government or state government? Can they be reduced. Many of my council members feel this is a lot of hours for a volunteer.

A: (Terri Cantrell) The hours are set by the federal government and cannot be changed. There are plenty of learning opportunities to get the eighteen hours needed.

The council discussed State Council Rep terms.

Q: (Jane Horowitz) In light of the consultants' work and findings, what's the plan for the Council? What is the policy about training hours for people on leave (due to health or family issues)? Must they still complete the full 18 hours, or can there be an exception for them? What happens if they don't meet the requirements for the year and then want to return at a future date? Are there any other requirements for someone returning after several months away?

A: (Terri Cantrell) As mentioned before, we are in the middle of redoing our policies and procedures. We can adjust this to meet the needs of the program with the use



of certain clauses. I will check on what was previously discussed and circle back. I want to make things as easy as possible for our volunteers, so we do not lose them.

Q: (Marie Brand) Does LTCOP have a Relocation Specialist or a Relocation Team for when a nursing facility is closing here in Florida?

A: (JoAnn Quiles) We do not, but we can certainly set one up, and I think it is a great idea.

I think it is important for us to have that. We always receive word when there is a facility closure. We have that now, but it is very informal, because we do work with AHCA, APS and the case managers, but it is not very organized. I believe this is something that we can work on.

Q: (Donna Holden) Can the district managers be reimbursed for paper products, coffee, plastic ware for our meeting lunches.

A: (Terri Cantrell) These are not allowable expenses. Not all state agencies go by the same rules.

Q: (Donna Holden) Can Health fair money to rent a table come out of the budget rather than the district manager paying out of pocket? Most health fairs also require a door prize, which is also paid for by the district manager.

A: (Terri Cantrell) We cannot pay for door prizes, but we can participate in fairs. This is considered outreach. If there is a question about this, run it by Audra Peoples or Alice Terry.

Q: What is the procedure for inviting on a standard basis, Florida State Reps and senators, staff, or actual persons to all open meetings?

A: (Terri Cantrell) Renee Harkins will be working closely with our Legislative Affairs director and working on updating this procedure. There is a form that you can submit to make these requests. Tell your district manager. They can fill out the form and the district manager can get with Renee, and she will contact Tyler Jefferson.



Q: Until we have adequate number of ombudsmen to have every facility assigned to a regular designated ombudsman, can we work with AHCA monthly, based upon monthly inspections and complaints to assign an ombudsman to any facility that fails based on care, etc.?

A: (Terri Cantrell) We should be focusing on those facilities where you see more trouble and we are currently tweaking our MOU with AHCA.

(JoAnn Quiles) We should already know which facilities are most problematic and those should be visited more often. It is important to collaborate, but it is also important to stick to our mission which is to focus on the residents' needs and let AHCA do their job of regulating the facilities.

(Terri Cantrell) There is a two-way street between our program and AHCA. We need to reach out to the AHCA people, reconnect with them, and make sure they come to our future meetings. I encourage you to reach out because we can help them as well.

Q: (Bill Hulsey) If AHCA finds widespread harm, how would I, as an ombudsman, find out about that?

A: (JoAnn Quiles) The District Managers get an email when AHCA is in the building. They also get monthly pass/fail reports for what AHCA's findings are from their surveys. It is very short notice for a DOM to try and get in touch with the ombudsman volunteer to get out there for AHCA's exit meeting. However, it is important to remember that the ombudsman can only be a spectator and cannot provide any feedback during that exit meeting.

One thing that is important to remember is that assessment findings are systemic. If you are helping a specific resident and the case has been closed, consent is gone, and you no longer have the right to share their information with outside agencies.



Q: (Michael Alexander) Some of our ombudsmen are getting conflicting reports about the use and restriction of electric wheelchairs in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities. I have a question about that.

A: (Terri Cantrell) Renee has been working on that and can update us on this through email.

Q: (Paul Wilson) Is it my understanding that ombudsmen have jurisdiction in an Independent Living Facility if it is part of a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). What are our boundaries?

A: (JoAnn Quiles) They must be a CCRC for us to take a complaint and advocate on behalf of a resident in that facility, but we do not do assessments or visits. The ILFs are not licensed by AHCA. They are licensed by OIR (DFS).

6. Workgroup Updates

- a. Advocacy Workgroup – Report by Jane Horowitz
 - i. Reviewed minutes from last meeting.
 - ii. Suggested adding questions to the assessment forms to include internet access.
- b. Training & Education Workgroup – Report by JoAnn Quiles
 - i. Nothing to report due to absence of a training administrator.
- c. Recruitment, Retention and Recognition Workgroup – Report by Audra Peoples
 - i. Provided marketing update on what is being done to encourage volunteer participation through recruitment and general brand awareness.
 - ii. Concern about loss of volunteers and the possibility of doing exit interviews. Also encouraged reaching out to volunteers who have left or considering leaving the program.
- d. Legislation & Regulation – Report by Sharon Lauter
 - i. Thanked Terri for being in their meeting.
 - ii. Welcomed new member – Paul Wilson
 - iii. Discussed the bills that are waiting to be signed.



- iv. Discussed the need for possible legislation to allow ALFs to challenge the ALF initiated discharges at the time the 45-day notices are issued.
 - v. Discussed interfacing the LTCOP legal advocacy.

- 7. Chair, Marie Brand, encourages all volunteers to be in a workgroup and mentions that those that are interested, may join more than one. Each Workgroup should also have their own mission statement.

- 8. Public Comments
 - a. Terry Lonczak of district 7 thanked the state council for allowing her to sit in the state council meeting and is excited to see all the changes happening. Her thoughts on internet access are that it is very important more now than ever and mentioned that there could be government funding available to some facilities for installing wiring for internet access.

- 9. Discussion on Program Training – State Ombudsman, Terri Cantrell
 - a. Onboard training needs to be easier and less time consuming for new volunteers. Shadowing and example cases can be an effective tool for learning. Traditionally, there is a three-case requirement for becoming certified, however, this has been found to not be in the federal requirements. Terri Cantrell has been speaking with one of the consultants, who is putting together the new policies and procedures. This consultant is highly qualified and experienced and will work with the program on putting together the proper training procedures.

- 10. State Chair’s Closing Remarks

Chair Brand would like to thank Terri Cantrell and all the staff members that put the conference together.

- 11. Adjournment

3:26 PM