Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission

**Open Minutes**

**August 5, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by the Vice-Chairperson E. DeRosa at 9:32 a.m.

E. DeRosa announced that in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, the specifics as to time and place of this meeting were sent to the Office of the Secretary of State and the Department of Personnel for filing and posted on the official bulletin boards provided by those offices for notice of public meetings. Also, notices were prepared for two newspapers to inform the public of this meeting.

Due to the state of emergency declared by Executive Order 103 (March 9, 2020) associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with P.L.2020, c.11. (allowing public bodies to conduct meetings, and provide notice, by electronic means during periods of emergency), this meeting was conducted through a combination of teleconference (for the open session) and video/teleconference (for the closed session). The open session teleconference phone number and access code were referenced in the prepared notices and published on the public website of the State Office of the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund.

E. DeRosa conducted a roll call of members as follows:

**Present:**

Ellen DeRosa, Vice-Chairperson

Anthony Valenzuela

Carl Underland

Jeffery Carrick

Dawn Mergen

Phyllis Shanley Hansell

Peri Nearon (Alternate for Steve Shultz)

Howard Weinberg

**Absent:**

Janice Prontnicki, Chairperson

Ralph Condo

**Guest:**

Jeanette Barnard, DAG

**Staff:**

Christian Heiss, Executive Director

Amy Taklif, Analyst

Janet Valentin-Forté, Secretary to the Commission

Kristin Groenhoff, Analyst

**Agenda Approval:**

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to approve the proposed meeting agenda for today’s meeting. D. Mergen seconded the motion. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Nominations Committee:**

H. Weinberg made a motion nominating J. Prontnicki to serve as Chairperson of the Commission for Fiscal Year 2021, and E. DeRosa to serve as Vice-Chairperson. A. Valenzuela seconded the motion. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Personnel & Finance Committee:**

A. Valenzuela presented a memo on the Commission’s FY 2021 budget, noting that the expected $2.5 million reduction in FY 2021 revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic was offset by a $2.9 million reduction in FY 2020 expenditures. He also recommended the State Office request additional information regarding charges by the Department of Labor, and to proceed with system upgrades to support remote processing of applications.

A. Valenzuela made a motion to approve the $10.2 million budget presented. E. DeRosa seconded the motion. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Service Eligibility & Medical Advisory Committee:**

C. Heiss presented an overview of the memo on funeral expenses from the Service Eligibility & Medical Advisory Committee.

E. DeRosa made a motion to accept the recommendations of the committee to: (1) amend State Office policy to more clearly delineate funeral expenses considered eligible and ineligible for reimbursement; (2) establish a reasonable rate for eligible expenses that conforms to the “minimal expense” as determined by the New Jersey State Funeral Directors Association Biennial Survey; and (3) consider revising the Fund’s governing regulations at NJAC 10:155-1.14(a)(15) to more tightly regulate funeral expenses. H. Weinberg seconded the motion. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Approval of Minutes of May 6, 2020 Meeting:**

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to approve the closed session minutes of May 6, 2020 which was seconded by E. DeRosa. All Commission members voted in favor, with the exception of P. Nearon who abstained.

E. DeRosa made a motion to approve the amended open session minutes of May 6, 2020 which was seconded by P. Shanley Hansell. All Commission members voted in favor, with the exception of P. Nearon who abstained.

**Approval of Minutes of June 10, 2020 Meeting:**

C. Heiss noted a format change to the Open and Closed session minutes which included streamlining the minutes to include only the details presented in the discussion of the meeting (primarily Application ID number and recommended award), allowing for a more accurate representation of what was discussed in the meeting.

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to approve the open session minutes of June 10, 2020 in the new format, which was seconded by E. DeRosa. All Commission members voted in favor, with the exception of P. Nearon who abstained.

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to approve the closed session minutes of June 10, 2020 in the new format, which was seconded by E. DeRosa. All Commission members voted in favor, with the exception of P. Nearon who abstained.

**Executive Director’s Report:**

C. Heiss noted that the Commission was scheduled to review 59 applications, for potential payments totaling $619,933.64. The State Office estimated a balance of $4.27 million in the Fund, enough to cover the payments under consideration.

**Review of Applications:**

**Closed Session:**

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to go into closed session to review application abstracts, which was seconded by A. Valenzuela. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Appeals:**

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to uphold the Commission’s ineligibility determination for the following appeals:

218212019

221062019

221342019

221352019

221692019

222572020

H. Weinberg seconded the motion. All Commission members voted in favor.

**Eligibles:**

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to approve the eligible applications as presented , with the exception of applications 222412020, 222932020, and 223142020.

E. DeRosa seconded the motion; all Commission members voted in favor.

E. DeRosa made a motion to approve application 222932020 with the adjustment of funeral expenses in accordance with the Commission’s policy on reasonable rates for funeral expenses voted on earlier in the meeting. A. Valenzuela seconded the motion; all Commission members voted in favor.

**Reconsiderations:**

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to approve the reconsidered applications as presented . E. DeRosa seconded the motion; all Commission members voted in favor.

**Ineligibles:**

P. Shanley Hansell made a motion to approve all ineligible recommendations as presented . E. DeRosa seconded the motion; all Commission members voted in favor.

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn meeting made by P. Shanley Hansell and seconded by E. DeRosa. All Commission members voted in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.