

Social Services Meeting Agenda



Committee Chairs: Christopher Johnson

800 Michaelan Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
www.westchesterlegislators.com

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

4:00 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

Joint with the Committee on Appointments

MINUTES APPROVAL

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Guest: Commissioner Leonard Townes - Department of Social Services

1. [2021-209](#) **APPT-Commissioner of Dept. of Social Services-Townes**

A RESOLUTION to confirm the appointment, effective February 25, 2021, of Leonard Townes as the Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Social Services.

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: COMMITTEES ON APPOINTMENTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

George Latimer
County Executive

Office of the County Executive

March 15, 2021

Westchester County Board of Legislators
800 Michaelian Office Building
White Plains, New York 10601

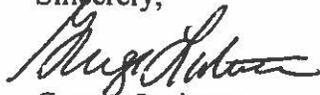
Dear Members of the Board of Legislators:

In accordance with Section 110.21 of the Laws of Westchester County, transmitted herewith for your approval is a resolution to confirm the appointment, effective February 25, 2021, of Leonard Townes as the Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Social Services.

I have made a thorough review of Mr. Townes' credentials and experience and have determined that his appointment as Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Social Services is in the best interests of the Department of Social Services and the County, generally. In addition, the Commissioner of the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance has approved the appointment of Mr. Townes as he meets the qualifications to serve as Commissioner.

Therefore, I most respectfully recommend and urge your Honorable Board to adopt the attached resolution for the appointment of Leonard Townes as Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Social Services for a five (5) year term of office to commence on February 25, 2021 and to expire on February 25, 2025.

Sincerely,



George Latimer
County Executive

GL/nn
Enclosure

George Latimer
County Executive

March 12, 2021

Mr. Leonard Townes
782 Tuckahoe Road 2F
Yonkers, NY 10701

Dear Mr. Townes:

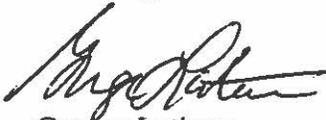
It is my pleasure to appoint you as Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Social Services for a five (5) year term in accordance with Section 116 of the New York State Social Services Law. Please be advised that while your appointment authorizes you to immediately assume the duties and responsibilities of said office, your appointment is subject to approval of your qualifications to serve as Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Social Services by the Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance as well as confirmation by the Westchester County Board of Legislators. Once approved by the Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and confirmed by the Westchester County Board of Legislators, your term of office, commenced on February 25, 2021, will expire on February 25, 2025.

As you know, the Department of Social Services is responsible for the management and control of the division of family and child social services of the County of Westchester.

Pending your confirmation by the Board of Legislators, and in accordance with New York State law, you must take and file an oath of office in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk. Please be advised that your failure to take and file such an oath within thirty days of the date of this reappointment letter, or within thirty days after the commencement of your term (whichever is later), will result in the office of Commissioner of Social Services being deemed vacant. If you have any questions with regard to these legal requirements, please contact the County Attorney.

I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,



George Latimer
County Executive

GL/SDK/nn

Office of the County Executive

Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

Email: CE@westchestergov.com
Telephone: (914)995-2900

westchestergov.com

Leonard G. Townes
Yonkers, New York 10710
914-364-2839
LTT1@WESTCHESTER.GOV.COM

8/2/20

As a lifelong Westchester County resident and a current Deputy Commissioner in the Department, I am uniquely positioned to hit the ground running and provide a seamless transition as the department's next Commissioner. I'm confident that my extensive experience, positive attitude and dedication to the needs of staff and those we serve make me the perfect fit for the position.

As a natural self-starter and dedicated team player, I've been able to inspire and bring out the best in others. I bring to the table over 30 years of experience working in multiple divisions in the department with a proven track record of success.

Key achievements and include:

- Participant in the DSS management fellows training program
- Successfully lead both the Mount Vernon and Yonkers district offices as Director of Temporary assistance
- Lead the Child Care Subsidy and finance teams through a NYS state audit preventing a \$36 million-dollar fiscal sanction against the county
- Took over leadership of the SNAP division to lead the team through a clean-up of overdue applications brought on by the coronavirus pandemic
- Reorganized the management structure of the Temporary assistance division

With my proven ability to organize and maximize staff performance combined with my in-depth experience and creative leadership style, I am prepared to excel in providing outstanding service to the department and community. I believe my skills and high level of motivation will serve me well in the position of commissioner. I look forward to discussing the position and my qualifications in further detail.

Best regards,
Leonard G. Townes

OBJECTIVE

As a career employee of Westchester county, my objective is to utilize the experience I've gained throughout my employment with the department along with my educational background in Public Administration to plan and implement efficient services and initiatives to meet the needs of the public.

EXPERIENCE

WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Deputy Commissioner

March 2018-Present

Providing guidance and oversight to directors and managers in charge of the Temporary Assistance, Office of work activities, Office of program integrity, Career center, Medicaid and Child Care subsidy divisions.

Director of Temporary Assistance

January 2008-March 2018

Served as Director of the Temporary assistance programs at the Mount Vernon (2008-2009) and Yonkers (2010-2018) district offices.

Manager I

November 2002-January 2008

Managed the Temporary assistance, SNAP and Medicaid divisions in the Mount Vernon district office.

Public Administration Intern

January 2002-November 2002

Selected to participate in the Management Fellows program and assigned as a direct report to the 1st Deputy Commissioner. I assisted in the development of different projects, programs, policies and provided analysis of field operations and did troubleshooting.

EDUCATION

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- MPA
PACE University, White Plains, N.Y.
 - Bachelor of Science-Business Administration
North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro, N.C.

ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

- Created a landlord line to expedite response to landlord calls regarding DSS tenants
- Co-created a broker's forum to assist homeless customers obtain housing
- Developed work procedures to enhance meeting personal needs of our customers through upfront case work and centralization of TA service cases in the Yonkers district office
- Connected the OWA and TA divisions to the career center to satisfy WIOA requirements
- Sponsored a holiday clothing give away to customers in the Yonkers area by obtaining staff and church clothing donations
- Developed in house acknowledgement initiatives to recognize staff
- Created an office workplace committee in the Yonkers district office (WIC) made up of CW and TA staff to enhance the working relationship between the two divisions

GOALS

- Establish department wide evaluation of staff for improved staff development and succession planning
- Invigorate the culture of the department
- Continue building a positive working relationship with the employee Union
- Continue creating an environment where staff feel valued
- Enhance the relationships with community partners
- Prioritize the use of technology and educate staff on how to maximize its benefits
- Analyze the operation to create efficiency and eliminate duplication of work
- Seeking to ensure education and opportunity to those we serve in order to provide hope for a better future
- Provide the leadership needed to get the department through the transition period brought on by the recent departure of 93 staff members
- Utilize my understanding of the community we serve to meet its needs more effectively



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

MICHAEL P. HEIN
Commissioner

BARBARA C. GUINN
Executive Deputy Commissioner

March 11, 2021

Ms. Joan McDonald
Director of Operations
Office of the County Executive
Westchester County
Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, NY 10601

Dear Ms. McDonald:

Thank you for providing the resume of Leonard Townes, whom you wish to appoint to Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Social Services.

This is to confirm Mr. Townes meets the minimum qualifications for Commissioner pursuant to Section 679.4 of Title 18 of New York Codes, Rules and Regulations.

As Mr. Townes is the selected candidate for the Commissionership, please provide me with the County Legislature's Resolution so I may formally approve his appointment.

In addition, as Mr. Townes' appointment to Deputy Commissioner had not been submitted to this Agency for approval pursuant to Section 679.8(b) of Title 18 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations, we reached out to the county Department of Human Resources for information and received a copy of the letter appointing him as Deputy Commissioner, effective March 9, 2020. A review of Mr. Townes' resume confirms, at the time of his appointment, he met the minimum qualifications for Deputy Commissioner as established for Westchester County pursuant to Section 680.1 of the Social Services Regulations. Therefore, I formally approve Mr. Townes' appointment to Deputy Commissioner retroactive to March 9, 2020.

If we can be of any further assistance, please contact Colleen Brooks, of my staff, at (518) 474-9630.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Hein
Commissioner

cc: Sheila Poole
George Latimer

RESOLUTION - 2021

TO THE COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
OF THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK

WHEREAS, the County Executive having on the 25th day of February, 2021, appointed Leonard Townes as the Commissioner of Social Services to serve a five (5) year term to commence on February 25, 2021 and expire on February 25, 2025 in accordance with the terms and provisions of the Westchester County Charter, as amended, and subject to the confirmation of this Board; it is

RESOLVED, that said appointment be and is hereby confirmed.

Dated: March , 2021
White Plains, New York