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|  | State of Louisiana**Office of the Governor****council on the Status of grandparents raising grandchildren** |  |
| **John Bel Edwards**Governor | **Dr. James Gilmore**Executive DirectorChildren’s Cabinet |

**Council on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

**October 17, 2016**

**East Baton Rouge Library**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

James Gilmore

Jolan Jolivettte

Latrese LeCour

Toni Buxton

Marlene Nelson

Dot Thibodeaux

Juanita Washington

Leslie Hill

Carmen Weisher

Dana Hunter

Bambi Polotzola

Donna Bowie

Jean Guidry

**Greetings and Introductions**

Chair Juanita Bates-Washington called the meeting to order at 9:07.

**Review and Approval of Minutes July 2016**

Motion to accept Dr James Gilmore Toni Buxton motion to accept July 2016 minutes

**Boards and Commission New Members**

Dr. Gilmore opened up the meeting by asking if any members or attendees had questions about member list presented in the package.

Dr. Gilmore expressed that the Governor’s Office is asking for assistance with filling the vacant seats on the Council. He also shared with members that the goal moving forward is to have the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren members to complete online or the actual application to be reappointed. He explained current members regardless who been on council must perform and complete application every four years cannot be grandfathered. Donnie Bowie requested her number be updated on the list to her office number (225) 287-7985. Toni Buxton made reference to the 5 new designees the Governor had approved who are not on the official list. Juanita Washington will follow-up with Boards and Commission to validate the new approved appointments James Vidacovich, Marlene Nelson, Martha Kegel, Leslie Grover, Dylan Waguspack and Nicole Sweazy need to follow up and make sure they fill application with Ellen Palmintier, Director of Boards and Commission. Also, Kathy Coleman not on list she is one of the new 5 new grandparent’s designees for new Legislation. Toni Buxton requested update list and replace the Children funds Designee Judy L. Harrison with Dana Hunter. Merietta H. “Rita” Hathorn should be removed she relocated to Bogalusa after the flood. Council will request email from Rita Hathorne to be removed and withdrawn. Katheleen Richey should replace John E. Wyble who is no longer in office. According to Toni Buxton Winona B. Lejeune stated she no longer wanted to be on the Grandparents Council. Judge William DuPont never attended meeting and not on of Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Dr. James Gilmore will reach out to Family Court Judges for a recommended designee.

**2016 Annual Legislative Report**

Juanita Washington refers to email requesting annual report she and Dr. Gilmore received and asked Letrece LeCour explain normal processing procedures of Legislative Annual Report. Letrese stated the report consists of review of accomplishments, overview of last year actives and how GRG plans to move forward. Juanita Washington asks who is responsible for preparation of report. Toni Buxton stated the Children Cabinet designee in charge of council is responsible for submitting report to Legislature. She stated we start by submitting who the members are and letting them know was we able to meet quorum, when we had our meetings, did we attend the GRG conferences, activities and rather or not we develop any information flyers. The report is really brief no more than three pages. For example when GRGC presented before Legislation to move GRGC to Children’s cabinet so if we have any other plans that what’s goes in the annual report. Dr Gilmore stated Juanita and I will drafted annual report and give each one the members a phone call and get information to add to report. Dr. Gilmore stated he will have draft of the report before Christmas.

Dr. Gilmore asked if any GRGC had any Legislative ideas to be part of Governor’s package or opposes something or supports something that may not be in the Governor package. Dot stated more support for Grandparents. Dr. Gilmore asks anything specific. Dot Thibodeaux stated she wish it was easier to get to some of the programs and have less red tape. Toni Buxton expanded on that stating streamline government departments program for more expedited process when it’s Grandparents Raising Grandchildren application i.e. Medicaid from LDH or food stamps from DCFS some almost standard procedure they can expedite process. Basically, by the GRG raising children they are saving government dollars. Dot stated like the small assets that count against such as small social security payments counts against them for qualification of some of the programs. Dr Gilmore stated he will speak with members of his congressional delegations and bring to their attention. Donna Bowie stated that according to her departments at OJJ she have been trying to bring more awareness. Toni Buxton stated that it’s also difficult without having proper documentation or court order for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Toni Buxton also stated some Legal issue so bad grandparents would ask them to put grandchildren in foster care to try and get some type of support. Toni explains the goal to legal custody takes a long process to reunite children first with family before it even get to the opportunity to give kids to grandparents. Carmen Weisner stated the other thing that complicates the issue is the dilemma with the public defenders across the state and they start off every fiscal year in a deficit posture. So they use tell them go legal aids for assistance but that’s long process. Dot said they have few generous lawyers that are starting to do legal workshops every three months they volunteer and take questions. Dr Gilmore asks if any legislation in the past have come up to improve this issue Dot stated not at all. Dr. Gilmore stated he would try to research and include in new Legislation to address the issue. Dr Gilmore also ended his statement we will list some of them issues as our goals for 2017.

Juanita stated she received few phone calls from grandparents who are calling about what they can do legally to see their grandchildren when the moms take grandchildren from them. Dot stated GRG works with SU Law School and usually transfer them to Virginia Listache 225-771-3333. Dr Gilmore stated he would like to set up meeting with Mrs. Virginia. Carmen Weisner asks if we had other relationship with LSU and SUNO and Dot stated that they have attempted to get council on aging to assist with that relationship. Dot stated they get from 5 to 12 calls per weeks and they respond no matter what time but don’t offer any Legal advice just refer them to the attorneys Mrs Virginia recommend. Dr. Gilmore stated one of our goals will be to put together a senior resource directory that would be good idea to distribute to various organizations for GRG. He asks the GRGC to capture the call log to keep on record to advocate for support for the GRG. Recommend the GRGC send the roster monthly.

**Non Profit Affiliation Budget Discussion**

Dr. Gilmore would like to know based on the website Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Information Center non-profit. Regarding the nonprofit would like to know more about the structure of the nonprofit and rather or not the Governor’s Office participate in that or need to provide any support. Dot stated that the meeting is at Family Roads 4th Thursdays of the month to bring in expert to talk to grandparents and everything is confidential and would be glad to know of any other resources. Also, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Information Center of Louisiana also on Facebook.

**Other Business**

Schedule 2017 Dr Gilmore would like to continue meeting at Goodwood Library and will make sure the CCAB meeting is at same location and date.

Kathy Coleman would like us to make sure when reserving meeting be specific the state it’s the GRG not GRG Information Center. 20th

Kathy Coleman announced Annual Conference April 21st 2017 8am -3PM Holiday Inn on airline Highway with over 300 attendees the Theme is “Surviving One Day at a Time” and they try to offer educating things to grandparents at no cost and would appreciate support. Such as magnets/door prizes to put in bags. Dr. Gilmore stated we will provide maybe some magnets and definitely will be supportive.

Juanita Washington ending meeting with she is new at the position of Chair and would defiantly appreciate support from the GRGC. Please call her or email if need anything.

**Meeting Adjourned**