**Agency Collaboration Meeting**

**June 15, 2016**

**Present:**

Ana Karchmer, Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Annette Peele, Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Margaret Van Gelder, Department of Developmental Services

Ulyena McPherson, Mass Commission for the Blind

Sarah Stuart, Department of Transitional Assistance

Amy Kershaw, Department of Transitional Assistance

Michelle Botus, Department of Mental Health

Abby Taylor, Attorney General’s Office

Ron Benham, Department of Public Health

Robert Turillo, Department of Youth Services

Lauren Fontaine, Bristol County Sheriff’s Office

Heather Rossi, Masshealth

Susan Tucke, Department of Children and Families

Jose Monteiro, Department of Children and Families

Karen Larsen, Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Liz Legault, East Bridgewater Schools Superintendent

John Lepper, Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Skip Stuck, Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Kerry Bickford, Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Margo Chevers, Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Dan Lewis, Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Ilene Mitchell, Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Colleen Pritoni, Program Coordinator, Commission

**Agenda:**

1. Historical Overview of the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren including sub-committee achievements and future goals
2. Agency Information sharing
3. Meeting summary
4. Historical Overview of the Commission: John Lepper

* John presented brief history of the Commission since it’s inception in 2008, reviewed actions taken by the Commission including the 2009 Listening Tour which resulted in the creation of four sub-committees: Information and Referral, Support Group, Legal, and Finance.
* John presented in future goals of the Commission such as an “Information Exchange Tour” in collaboration with the Attorney General’s Office for fall 2016, legislative advocacy, and more.

1. Agency Information Sharing: Skip Stuck
2. **Summary and Recommendations:**

- Needs of Grandparents from the Professionals Point of View:

* Assistance with DCF navigation
* Grandparents are concerned about their grandchildren in DCF custody
* Visitation rights
* Special health care needs
* Respite care
* Child care
* Economic challenges
* Transportation difficulties
* Need greater coordination between groups (police, school, advocates etc.) especially, when it comes to drug addiction issues
* Elder Affairs would like more access to resources to be able to direct grandparents more effectively
* Not enough resources in general
* Social isolation, loss, grief issues
* Volunteer services
* Should include the support groups in the aging and disability consortium
* Need to better understand the needs of grandparents raising grandchildren
* Each agency has different programs and eligibility criteria. We need to try and better understand what is out there, who is eligible, and spread that information to grandparents in an effort to assist them.

\*Agencies not at the table but interested in meeting in the future include EEC and WIC