

Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

MEETING SUMMARY

DATE: Friday, June 20, 2008 **TIME BEGAN:** 8:05am

TIME ENDED: 9:30am

FACILITATED BY: Sarah Fox & Emily Clement

SUMMARY BY: Judy Buswell

PRESENT: Nancy Porosky, Rich Moed, Rasim Gusinac, Micheline Roy, Sarah Fox, Jim Pilliod, Sandy McLaughlin, Emily Clement, Gil Schohan **GUESTS:** Ruth O'Hara, Deb Rosato **STAFF:** Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell

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1. **Welcome & Introductions** - *Sarah Fox, Council Chair* Welcome to guests Ruth O'Hara, who has submitted a Council member application, and Deb Rosato, LRCS Early Childhood Learning Program.
 2. **Additions/Amendments to the Agenda** As Sarah needs to leave early, the Executive Committee Report will be given earlier on the Agenda.
 3. **Council Applicants** Council members received summaries of the applications from two Belknap County residents, Ruth O'Hara from Laconia and Pam Kuczowski from New Hampton. It was agreed that both would be excellent additions to the Council.

Motion to accept Ruth O'Hara and Pam Kuczowski as members of the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families was made by Rich Moed with second by Jim Pilliod. Motion carried

Six other potential candidates are in various stages of exploring Council membership.

4. **Executive Committee** - *Sarah Fox & Emily Clement*
 - ***By-Law Revisions*** The Executive Committee will be taking a deeper look at Council By-Laws for potential changes regarding meeting attendance requirements for Council members.
ACTION: The Executive Committee will review Council By-Laws for possible revisions of attendance requirements and will present a proposal for suggested changes at a future Council meeting.
 - ***Website Updates*** The Executive Committee has approved a proposal to begin some updating of current website, including color changes to coordinate with other Council collateral materials and re-configuration of Home Page for easier access to materials.
5. **Discussion of Symposium – Next Steps – Rich Moed** The Symposium held on June 5th was based on an Issue Brief prepared and distributed by the Citizens Council earlier in 2008. Titled “*Perspectives on Child Maltreatment, CHINS, and Juvenile Delinquency in Belknap County*”, this report cites placement and other costs of caring for Belknap County youth who are maltreated, delinquent, or under CHINS petitions. The Symposium goal was to begin a comprehensive discussion about how Belknap County children and youth with these issues are managed with intent to build a coordinated and integrated process between the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare systems.

Approximately 45 people, representing a number of state, county, and local agencies and organizations who serve children and families attended. John Tuell, from the Child Welfare League of America, a national agency that coordinates similar coordination initiatives across the country, facilitated the discussion. The break-out discussion groups, led by Council members and Associates:

Andre Paquette, Betty Anson, and Rich, indicated “a lot of good commitment” from the attendees to help realign the systems.

The Symposium Planning Team (Andre, Rich, and Betty) have met several times and have begun to shape a possible organizational structure for this initiative and anticipated next steps. They recommended that two groups be organized: (1) An “advisory” team with state and county level representatives and (2) An “executive” group with appropriate designees from related organizations and agencies in Belknap County who will actually do the work of systemic change.

The Planning Team stresses that this process will “be challenging”, and should be a Council initiative, managed and controlled by the Council for at least several years. Once the project is successfully running, the Council would then serve in an audit-type role. This project will certainly “be the core” of Council activity over the next several years. All Council members need to be involved in some manner: as members of JJAC, as participants on the leadership teams and related sub-committees, and in the critically important role of community ambassadors helping to gather needed support from numerous community networks. JJAC will probably need to be expanded from its current juvenile justice focus to include providers from all involved agencies and organizations.

Rich, who has agreed to chair the initiative’s Advisory Group, said he is “very positive that this can happen”, especially now that huge cuts in the state budget will require collaboration and creative solutions. CWLA is an excellent resource and the Council should continue to stay connected with this national organization.

Rich outlined six important next steps:

1. Distribute and Council’s Issue Brief on Child Maltreatment around Belknap County and the state
2. Organize and meet with the two recommended Advisory and Executive Teams.
3. The Council should reorganize in a manner that best fits this initiative. Suggested is an expanded focus for JJAC.
4. Identify and secure funds to keep John Tuell in an advisory role for this initiative
5. Develop and implement a Communications Plan for this project. Identify strategies to communicate goals to the participants as well as the broader community
6. Build stronger relationships with advocacy groups, such as NAMI, Children’s Alliance, NH Children’s Trust Fund, and the Disabilities Rights Center. Children and family advocates will have a key role in this initiative.

Council members will be asked to “know your communities and help communities know you and the Citizens Council”. Council members should feel comfortable talking about this project with their neighbors and municipal leaders. Council members will be asked to help organize “listening sessions” where targeted networks of people can share their concerns and ideas.

The motion, passed earlier by the Council (March 21, 2008), to pursue this type of system of care initiative will allow the Council to continue its efforts on this project. At some point, Alan will need to outline needed operational changes to the Council so that Council staff can dedicate a major portion of their time on this effort. Some current Council projects and efforts may require some sort of prioritizing.

ACTION: The Executive Committee will discuss and propose a plan for shaping Council priorities and re-aligning Council resources so that this systems integration effort can be a primary focus for Council staff.

4. Executive Director's Report – Alan Robichaud

- **Laconia Library** The Laconia Library has been experiencing an increase of negative behaviors of youth, now becoming a problem for the Library and its patrons. Diane Lynch, the Youth Librarian, has asked the Council for support and ideas on how to address this growing concern. This discussion has been deferred to JJAC where it can be discussed in context of the wealth of expertise and resources of its members. Ms. Lynch will be a guest presenter at an upcoming JJAC meeting. According to Alan, this issue is an example of why the Council still needs to remain responsive to emerging community issues, even when and if systems integration becomes the major focus for the Council.
- **Public Forums, Juvenile Justice** As part of addressing the number of municipal budget cuts earlier this year for court diversion programs, Alan and others have made presentations on juvenile justice funding to several organizations and entities, including the Laconia City Council, Gilford Selectmen, Gilmanton School administrators, Alton Police Chief, and the Laconia Kiwanis Club. Other presentations around the county are being organized. Dan French at the Laconia DJJS Office has provided some “good cost data” on individual cases for these reports. Most people do not understand that all funding streams for juvenile justice services ultimately come from taxpayers. Even though the municipal contributions to court diversion is viewed as a “big bite out of the town budgets”, citizens don’t understand that interventions such as court diversion can actually save much more money that is required to care for juveniles in the “deep end of the system”. Being able to “access good data”, such as provided by Dan French, is very important in this community education process. Other questions emerged in these discussions, including asking why parents are not expected to pay more for these services.

ACTION: The powerpoint presentation on juvenile justice costs will be shared at the next Council meeting.

- **Community Prevention Coalition** The Belknap/Carroll prevention coalition is now conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups to learn more from targeted constituents about under-age drinking. Micheline Roy is one of the volunteers assisting with this process.
- **Community Needs Assessment** Non-profit health organizations in the state are required to carry out a community benefits project every five years. As in 2003, the group of health organizations in Belknap County and the Lakes Region are conducting a second Community Needs Assessment Survey of county and Lakes Region residents. This survey has been posted on a number of websites, including the Council’s, anticipating many will choose to complete this survey electronically. All responses must be completed by July 7th. Focus Groups will be held through the fall and a Final Report will be issued at the end of the year. In the past, the Council’s grant-writing efforts have benefitted from information collected through this survey.
- **Vacation** Alan will be on vacation during the weeks of June 22 and August 3rd.

5. Work Group Reports

- **BARJ** - This group did not meet this last month
- **Prevention Work Group** – Micheline Roy (1) The group will miss Natalie Allen who is retiring from her position with NH DHHS. She has provided excellent information and resources and will be missed. (2) Karen Welford, Director of Family Support at Lakes Region Community Services, was the guest presenter at the June meeting. She shared information about the Community Services Council early learning initiatives, including Giggles and Grins Family Resource Center, the Step Ahead Program, the Belknap County Early Learning Council, and the Community Partners for Children initiative. (3)

Prevention Work Group members were encouraged to complete the Community Needs Assessment survey, referenced earlier in the Executive Director Report. (4) The “Student Aspiration” focus groups will begin again in August.

- **Retreat Committee** - No report

6. **Other Business**

- **Council Minutes** Because several Council members had to leave early, approving minutes for the April 18th and May 16th Council meetings was deferred to the next Council meeting. It was suggested that Approval of Minutes be moved to the front of the Agenda to assure a quorum.
- **Next Council Meeting** It was decided to cancel the July 18th meeting of the Council, as Alan and several other Council members will be away at that time. However, Council workgroups and committees will continue to meet throughout the summer.

<u>NEXT COUNCIL MEETING</u>	
WHEN:	Friday, August 15, 2008, 8-10am (July meeting cancelled)
WHERE:	Busiel Mill River Level Conference Room

CATEGORY	TOPIC & SPONSOR	STATUS
Community Forums	Laconia Public Library	We have been asked to assist in addressing youth issues occurring at the Laconia Public Library.
	Public Forums- Juvenile Justice	Completed thus far – Laconia City Council, Gilford Selectmen, Gilmanton School Administrators, Alton Police Chief, Laconia Kiwanis Club. Still working on Meredith, Alton and others. Micheline and Laurie have been most helpful in setting up contacts. Obtaining good cost data from Dan French at DJJS Laconia District Office.
Initiatives	Legislative Initiative	HB1370 Passed the Legislature. Has become law. Becomes effective 60 days after passage. Thanks to Representatives Alida Millham, Jim Pilliod, Judy Reeve, Beth Arsenault and Senator Sgambati for sponsoring the bill. And to Andre Paquette and Kevin Smith (DJJS) for testifying in support.
	Policy Summit	Symposium was conducted on June 5th with approx. 50 people present. Acquired \$1,000 from DJJS to help defray cost. Summary and next steps to be reported by committee.
	Report Card	Early development of 2208 Report Card. Targeting Mid-September release.
	TANF OJT Pilot	Eleven participants graduated the Business Administration Training program at Lakes Region Community College on May 5, 2008. Following up on results of Business luncheon to determine outcomes.
Coalitions	Community Prevention Coalition (CPC)	Next phase: Strategic Planning.
	Safe Schools Coalition (WRSD & CoRe)	Twenty-three youth from five communities participated in discussion group. Summary of forums are available on request.
	Family Support Resources	Initiating discussions with Lakes Region Community Services and Youth Services Bureau on family supports and services for purposes of closer collaboration.
	Community Needs Assessment	Linked to Council's website. Please refer and complete.
Council Business	Council Recruitment and Community Outreach	Received two new applications for council review. 6 others or at some stage of activity. Anticipate one member's resignation.
	County Delegation and Commission Candidates	Need to be aware of upcoming elections, know who candidates are and which communities they represent

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