

Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

MEETING SUMMARY

COMMITTEE: Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

DATE: Friday, April 11, 2003

TIME BEGAN: 8:00am **TIME ENDED:** 10am **FACILITATED BY:** Alida Millham **SUMMARY BY:** Judy Buswell

PRESENT: Dick Wallace, Kevin Washburn, Jim Pilliod, Alida Millham, Sue Smith, Leo Sanfacon, Peter Michaud, Gil Schohan, Andre Paquette, Nancy Porosky, Mary Alice Warner, Mark Condodemetraky, Kim Campbell, Katy Kanally - DeCarteret, Rob Rovella **STAFF:** Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell **EXCUSED:** Scott AndersEn, Linda Brewer, Beth Bascom, Jim Carroll **ABSENT:** Evelyn Auger

1. **Approve Minutes of March 14, 2003: Motion to accept as written made by Andre Paquette; second by Gil Schohan. Motion carried.**

2. **Chair's Report: Addictions Task Force** Alida asked for comments regarding request from Riley Regan, Director of NH DADAPR, for Council to sponsor an "Addictions Task Force" in Belknap County. This group will be composed of a wide cross section of County agencies, organizations, and local governmental units that intersect in any way with juvenile and adult substance abuse issues, as well as current and prior consumers of substance abuse services. Jacqui Abikoff, Director of Horizons Counseling, will chair this Task Force and Council staff will provide administrative support. The goal is to provide local control and input regarding the management and distribution of state funds earmarked for substance abuse intervention, treatment, and prevention in Belknap County.

Concerns were raised at the last Executive Committee meeting as to how this group would relate to, or impact the Professional Providers Advisory Council (PPAC), New Futures, and the existing workload of the Council staff. New Futures is not a funding source but is rather a resource for technical assistance, so there is no conflict. The strong connection between substance abuse and a number of other problems experienced by families, including DV and crime, provide compelling reasons for the Council to be involved with this Addictions Task Force. As well, 80% of juvenile offenders have AOD issues. From a public health point of view, "everything is attached to every other thing". The practice of "stove piping" and segmenting issues, as we have done in the past, is not an effective strategy for resolving any of these problems. Forum participants cited substance abuse as a major issue for communities. Regarding any overlap with PPAC, this Addictions Task Force would be very similar in construct and process as JJAC, a committee that is working very well. **Andre Paquette made a motion to designate the Addiction Task Force as part of a consortium of Professional Providers who will provide professional input for the Council and that staff time be committed to its support. A second was provided by PeterMichaud; motion carried.**

Resignations/Leave of Absence A letter of resignation was received from John Irwin who finds his business and family responsibilities are requiring more of his time than expected. Beth Bascom has said she must also resign; however she has not yet submitted a letter. Linda Brewer, whose employment situation has changed, would prefer a leave of absence rather than to resign. **Mary Alice offered a motion to accept with regret the resignation of John Irwin; second provided by Mark. Motion carried.** Beth's resignation cannot be formally accepted without her written letter. More information is needed regarding expected length of Linda's requested LOA. If it is 6 months or less, her request for an LOA will be honored.

ACTION NEEDED: Alida Millham will get more information from Linda Brewer regarding the anticipated length of leave she needs.

3. **Nancy McLaren and the “Loving Well” Program** Jim Pilliod would like the Council to meet and hear more about her “Loving Well” program, a literature-based approach to understanding relationships. Taught by English teachers, this researched program is a character education curriculum for teens, and is currently in use at Bishop Brady High School. It would not be appropriate for the Council to “push this on schools”, but it might be appropriate to offer her as a professional development opportunity for educators. Following a lengthy discussion, it appeared that a number of Council members are interested in learning more about Ms McLaren and her program, but that the first contact should be only with the Council. Additional input should be gathered from Scott Andersen. **Motion made by Mary Alice Warner that Jim Pilliod will invite Nancy McLaren to make a presentation in June or July to the Council; second provided by Kevin Washburn. Motion carried.**

ACTION NEEDED:

- **Jim Pilliod will work out details of presentation by Nancy McLaren with Alida and Alan.**

4. **Director’s Report Courthouse Action Committee** Activity is on hold now waiting final budget approval. The original \$165,000 was restored, and actually exceeded to \$250,000, to House budget. Further advocacy may be needed with Senate when they hear budget. Leo Sanfacon feels that a full-blown engineering and architectural study is needed to determine if this building really can meet the needs of the Laconia District Court; the earlier report was only a preliminary overview. Perhaps Laconia Main Street could take on this project and host a design charrette to explore potential uses of this historic facility. Alan indicated that the \$50,000 is actually to conduct further engineering and architectural studies before any reconstruction tasks place. Some of this appropriation can be used for emergency repairs.

Sanborn Park Project A neighborhood meeting is planned for Thursday, April 24th to discuss with the residents how this area behind Fratello’s can be made safer for children and families. The Council is facilitating this meeting. The Laconia Police Department is very interested in assisting, as is Councilor Bob Luther. Brian Loanes is interested in park beautification as part of the community service activities in the Restorative Justice Program. Other residents in the area, including Judy Reeve, John Irwin, and others will be asked to participate. Local resident, Michelle Griffin, is taking an important leadership role.

Mediation Grant A Title V grant of \$39,159 was awarded by NH Juvenile Justice Services to the Citizens Council. The Council is sub-contracting with Youth Services Bureau to begin a Family Mediation Program. Alan has developed a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines expectations between the two partners in this project (YSB and the Council) that will be signed by Youth Services Bureau and shared with the Commissioners. Judy Buswell is working with Holly DeWald on the second year application, due April 25th. **Gil Schohan made a motion that the Council accept this grant; second by Mary Alice Warner. Motion carried.**

Community Center Consultation The need for community centers came out of every Forum held last fall; however, it is not the role of the Council to help each community build these facilities. Rather, the Council can bring in consultants who have specific expertise in community building. Along these lines, a grant for \$5,000 was recently submitted to the NH Charitable Foundation to host a series of workshops with Steven Binger, a gentleman from Louisiana who has done similar consulting work in Littleton. Other funding partners will be needed to supplement this amount, if this grant is funded. If the grant is awarded, the workshop would be held this coming fall and promotion will be targeted to the appropriate contacts in each community.

5. Committee Action Items

Executive Committee The Executive Committee recommends a change to the Council By-laws, as outlined at the March Council meeting. Delete Article VIII, Section 1A that says one function of the Executive Committee is to prepare agendas for the Council meetings. Alan and Alida will now assume this responsibility. This action is to allow the Executive Committee to move in another direction of problem solving and idea generation. **Andre Paquette moved to delete the portion of Section 1A in Article VIII referencing agenda development for Council meetings as a responsibility of the Executive Committee; second provided by Sue Smith. Motion carried.**

Legislative and Advocacy Mary Alice and Alan reported on current budget activity in Concord. SB 153 Fund, designating surplus revenues from liquor sales to the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention & Treatment, is now in danger of being "zeroed out" as part of Budget A proposed by the House Finance Committee. Instead these designated funds will be assigned elsewhere as part of budget realignment. However, a faction of the House Finance Committee has also proposed an alternative Budget B that restores a portion of these funds as well as other programs. The repeal of the Governor's Commission would mean the loss of about \$5 million in both 2004 and 2005 for NH. Budget B also restores some funds that could ultimately be used in Belknap County through the Belknap County Addiction Task Force. The question is: Should the Council take a formal position in support of Budget B and send a letter to this effect to the Finance Committee? Katy Kannally-DeCarteret indicates that she is able to connect with Fran Wendleboe about the concerns the Council has regarding Budget A. **Mary Alice Warner offered a motion that with the Commissioners' knowledge, the Council will formally support Budget B; Rob Rovella provided a second. Motion carried.**

ACTION NEEDED:

- **Alan will draft a letter in support of Budget B on Council stationery to be signed by Alida. Letter will be delivered to the House Finance Committee**

Public Relations A sub-committee, chaired by Katy Kannally-DeCarteret, has been formed to handle the Annual Meeting. The PR Committee has also decided that they are not yet ready to carry-out the Citizen "Family Page" project.

Planning A subcommittee met on March 18 to distill outcomes from the Forums. They decided to work with the "Challenges" information and to place them in categories: Communication, Parent Accountability, Juvenile Justice, Positive Youth Activity, Substance Abuse, and Mentoring as priority areas for direct Council effort. The categories: Community Centers, Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation were additional key issues but Council involvement will be more one of support and resource development. John Cook, a volunteer with expertise in program evaluation, will develop visual representation of Forum outcomes via charts and graphs. The expectation is that the data from the Forums will become the nucleus of a Council Plan and Priorities for Action.

The question now is how do we proceed from here; what are the next steps? Do Council members agree with these priorities? Some Council activity is already underway, through the active JJAC network that meets monthly. An ad-hoc group is meeting with Maria Gagnon (Reclaiming Futures) to assess Mentoring activity in Belknap County. The Addictions Task Force would begin to address the communities' concerns around substance abuse. Andre Paquette noted that the data and outcomes from the Forums should be seen as "perceptions" rather than factual data. Is there a strategy to determine if there is actual data that supports these perceptions?

Alan would like to see individual Council members be very active in their own communities in creating "next step activity" for the Council. Alan also offered several guidelines that should be a

part of decision-making by the Council. All selected activities should: (1) Empower the community (2) Utilize research-based strategies (3) Emphasize “Protective factors” and positions of strength rather than of deficit (4) Involve youth and citizens. Alida feels that one more “level of sifting this information” is needed to validate data before pursuing the development of a formal Council plan.

Gil, Chair of the Planning Committee, asks that all interested Council members join the Planning Committee to assist in this effort of moving from Forum outcomes into a Council Plan that will direct Council activity for the next 2 years.

Finance and Grants This committee did not meet this past month. There is no report.

JJAC Andre Paquette, Committee Chair, deferred, as he will be making a major presentation on JJAC at the May Council meeting.

Restorative Justice Leo Sanfacon, Advisory Committee Chair, has met recently with Brian Loanes. The Restorative Justice Committee is still defining the program’s relationship with, and timelines for reports from JusticeWorks.

6. **Old Business** There were no items of Old Business.
7. **New/Other Business** The schedule and venues for future Council meetings were discussed. Upcoming Council meetings will be held: MAY in Belmont; JUNE in Gilford; JULY in Alton; AUGUST in New Hampton; and SEPTEMBER in Gilmanton. The Executive Committee will review meeting attendance of Council members at a later date. The Executive committee will also discuss replacing John Irwin; but Council members were urged to suggest potential candidates.
8. **Meeting Evaluation:** Simple phrase summaries included: informative, good networking, one word can’t describe, productive, well-run, effective in meeting goals, terrific, helpful, worthwhile, efficient.

NEXT MEETING:

WHEN: Friday, May 9th 8-10am

WHERE: Corner Meetinghouse, Belmont