

MEETING SUMMARY

COMMITTEE: Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

DATE: Friday, November 14, 2003

TIME BEGAN: 8:00 am **TIME ENDED:** 10:04am **FACILITATED BY:** Alida Millham **SUMMARY BY:** Judy Buswell

PRESENT: Jim Pilliod, Dick Wallace, Andre Paquette, Mary Alice Warner, Leo Sanfacon, Alida Millham, Jim Carroll, Gil Schohan, Sue Smith, Scott AndersEn, Kevin Washburn, Katy Kanally-DeCarteret **STAFF:** Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell
EXCUSED: Mark Condodemetraky, Nancy Porosky, Peter Michaud **GUESTS:** Judge Willard Martin

1. **Minutes (October 10, 2003)** On a motion made by Gil Schohan and seconded by Sue Smith, the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **Introduction of Guests and Formal Amendments to Agenda** There were no guests other than Judge Willard Martin who needs no introduction! Alida suggests re-ordering the Agenda to accommodate several members who need to leave early. No objections
3. **Data Committee** Andre Paquette, Chair of JJAC, updated Council members on the progress of the Data Committee. As Chair of this project, Andre has been consulting outside sources and conducting 1-1 structured interviews as part of compiling data on various components of the Juvenile Justice system. To date he has met with Laconia Police Chief, Tom Oetinger; Laconia City Prosecutor, Jim Sawyer; LPD Admin Ass't, Robin Moyer; Tracy Balch, Laconia District Court; Diane Lane, Admin Laconia District Court; Jay Apicelli, Laconia DO JPPO Supervisor; Deb Guyer, Dir of LHS Student Services; Holly DeWald, Director Youth Services Bureau; Sue Batstone, former Ad Ass't Youth Services Bureau; Carol Schonfeld, Dir of Human Services, Belknap County; and Brian Loanes, Director Belknap County Juvenile Restorative Justice Program. He has visited a number of websites including Kids Count, US Census, NH Dept of Education, NH Office of State Planning, Economic and Labor Market Bureau, Employment Security; NH District Court. He, Alan, Judy Buswell, and John Cook met with two representatives from the NH Center for Public Policy Studies. Using these materials and other information, he compiled and distributed his first "data-related" report, "*Caseload Data for the Court Diversion Program of the Youth Services Bureau 2000-2002*", for review and discussion by Council members. He expects that the next report will cover the County's Juvenile Restorative Justice Program.

Andre is using his research to search for trends, problem areas, and ideas for potential solutions to current problems. For instance, he has determined that 26% of the County's youth are enrolled in the Laconia School District. He is trying to determine if approximately 26% of the youth offenders in Belknap County also reside in Laconia.

Andre noted that there have been no provisions for integrating the various data sets within the juvenile justice system. At this time each agency and organization collects the data that is relevant to the specific work of that agency i.e. Law Enforcement collects data that describes the offense, Courts collect data around the Petition and Dockets; Agencies collect data around case management; and the County's Human Services Department collects information relevant to finances and client payments.

After spending a few minutes reading over the YSB report, Council members asked several questions. Jim Pilliod would like to see evidence that Best Practices are used. This type of data gathering would be 2nd or 3rd level information; right now Andre's goal is to build a community of trust by collecting only raw data without becoming judgmental at the outset.

Kevin Washburn noted the large number of Simple Assault cases and asked if any of these were DV-related? This information would be very useful, but at this time this type of data breakdown is not available.

Members discussed the intended differences between Diversion and Restorative Justice. While it needs to be understood that the principles of “Restorative Justice” should be, and are being applied in settings beyond the County’s Restorative Justice Program, the intent of the RJ Program when launched in July 2001, was to provide an escalation in sanctions for repeat juvenile offenders. Therefore, while first time offenders’ cases are diverted before the Court is involved, the RJ program does include Court involvement up to the Arraignment.

Jim Carroll, former City Prosecutor and one of the key designers of this RJ Program indicated that the youth would be a 2nd time offender and proceed through the Adjudication Phase. *(Later that day, after reviewing the original grant proposal, Jim indicated that the original idea was to prepare a recommendation for RJ for appropriate youth for the Judge to review during a pre-arraignment conference. The youth would appear before the Judge at Arraignment. A Waiver of a Speedy Trial would be submitted, and in order to preserve the integrity of the Adjudication Process, the juvenile would plead “Not True”. This would allow the process to pick up again at the Adjudication phase if the youth did not successfully complete the RJ Program.)*

Andre said that while currently there are some difficulties in appropriately assigning youth, those responsible for both the Diversion and Restorative Justice Programs will be discussing the referral process with a goal of resolving these difficulties. Alan noted that Court Diversion is the very important first step on the continuum of sanctions and all efforts must be made to keep these programs operating and intact.

A goal is to develop valid and reliable short and long-term recidivism rates for all facets of the County’s system of juvenile justice.

4. **Chair’s Report** Alida introduced the following topics for discussion:

- ***Juvenile Detention*** Members of JJAC, one of the Council’s Professional Advisory Committees, determined earlier this fall that there are 3 areas of priority for them: Developing County-based options for detention as part of continuum of services; Developing a data system that can be shared and useful to all facets of the juvenile justice system; and building community awareness of the interconnectedness of issues and challenges in the juvenile system. Work is continuing in sub-groups in each of these 3 areas. A small group met this past week with Judge Paul Lawrence, an ardent proponent of community-based sanctions rather than detention and commitment where appropriate. He also developed a screening tool to be given the juvenile to help determine appropriate level of sanctions. Gerry Evans, the Director of a pilot project funded by the Annie E Casey Foundation and now operating in Hillsboro County, also attended. Judge Lawrence said that up to 50% of youths are misplaced in “Detention”, a placement that has been used by Judges as a “wake-up call” for kids. These kids would do much better in community-based, less restrictive settings. Judge Lawrence has invited Belknap County to join Hillsboro, Grafton, Strafford, and Carroll Counties in the continued roll-out of this pilot project.

Alida said she received enough information from this one meeting to write an “Information Piece” for Council members and to make several recommendations regarding detention for approval by the Council. Building any type of bricks and mortar facility north of Concord, as was originally planned, will not happen with the fiscal crisis currently facing the State.

Motion to join the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Incentive project led by Judge Lawrence was made by Andre Paquette. Second provided by Kevin Washburn. Additional discussion points made include:

- This JDAI Program encompasses all aspects of Restorative Justice and Community Justice and therefore is a very good fit for Belknap County.
- Gerry Evans will set up training schedules with law enforcement, judges, JPPOs etc. on the use of the Screening Tool.

- A Judicial override of placement decisions is always possible.
- Definition of terms is needed: *Detention* is short term and occurs at the YDSU facility in Concord; *Commitment* is for the remainder of a youth's minority and occurs at the YDC facility in Manchester.
- The anticipated process includes discussing our plans with Judge Ed Kelly, Administrator of the NH District Court System and with members of the JJAC.
- We will also pursue the Youth Attendant Program (YAP), several County-based, 24-hour staff-secure beds for youths either needing protective placements or some sort of escalated sanctions. YAP is currently funded via funds through NH DJJS.
- Kathy Minaert, NH DJJS, will attend the next JJAC meeting on November 21st where this discussion will occur.

ACTION TAKEN:

- **Motion to join the JDAI Program developed by Judge Lawrence passed by unanimous vote of the Council. Alida will introduce plan to JJAC. Alan and Alida will discuss plans with Judge Kelly.**
- ***Child Abuse Crisis Issue*** Following a request by Judge Martin to provide some assistance and collaborative leadership around current child abuse and neglect issues in Belknap County, Alida and Alan scheduled an information-sharing meeting with identified professionals in the Lakes Region. This meeting, held earlier this week on November 12th, was well attended and generated good discussion around the causes and handling of child abuse cases. Participants also discussed the opportunity for Belknap County to request funds through the NH DOJ to establish a Child Advocacy Center in Belknap County. A Child Advocacy Center is a child-friendly setting where trained professionals can conduct forensically sound interviews of children. Members of a multi-disciplinary team, who are also involved in these cases, watch and listen behind a one-way glass. The County Attorney's office is taking the lead in this Child Advocacy Center project; the Council will participate as a task force member. A summary of this November 12th meeting was distributed to Council members. Council members interested in participating on this task force include Katy Kanally-DeCarteret and Jim Pilliod. Katy will serve as the Council liaison. Leo suggests that summary of this Child Abuse meeting should be sent to JJAC members.

ACTION TAKEN:

- **Motion to participate in Child Advocacy Center Project with Katy Kanally-DeCarteret acting as Council liaison made by Andre Paquette; second by Sue Smith. Motion carried.**
- **A summary of Child Abuse Meeting on Nov 12 will be sent to JJAC members.**
- ***Template & Guideposts for Addressing Council Issues*** Council members received a copy of these two documents at the October Council meeting. They are tools to guide Council's involvement in issues and projects.

ACTION TAKEN:

- **Motion to accept the Template document as a decision-making tool made by Sue Smith; second by Jim Pilliod. Motion carried.**
- **Motion to accept the Guideposts documents as a guide for Council involvement in projects and activities made by Gil Schohan; second by Andre Paquette. Motion carried**
- ***Council membership*** Six new members are needed for 2004. Preference should be given to applicants from Meredith and Barnstead as these communities do not have a representative. Some formal advertising and press releases will be done but word-of-mouth strategies are still the most successful recruitment strategies.

Gil Schohan made a motion to repeat process used to elect Council Chair and Vice Chair this next year; second by Kevin Washburn. Motion carried.

ACTION TAKEN:

- **Council staff will ensure that nominations are made for Council officers for 2004.**

- ***Leave of Absences for Council members*** Council members decided that it would not continue to grant Leave of Absences to council members. Instead, Council members anticipating prolonged absences from Council meetings and responsibilities will be encouraged to resign with the understanding that they can re-apply when they are able to fully participate. Kim Campbell from Barnstead has submitted her resignation.

5. **Executive Director Report**

- ***Budget Hearing*** A Budget Hearing is scheduled for December 15 at 7pm at the Superior Courthouse. This is a public hearing and there will not be a formal Council presentation. Council members are invited to attend.
- ***Newport Visit*** At the request of John Bunker (New Futures), Alan has met with community leaders in Newport who are interested in the development and activities of the Council.

6. **Public Awareness Committee**

- ***Annual Meeting*** Katy and Kevin provided updates on the Council's Annual Meeting on January 13, 2004. This will be a joint meeting with UpStream. UpStream and the Council will hold their business meetings before the dinner and program. Awards will be made by both UpStream and the Council at the end of the dinner period and before the speaker, Laura Nissen. The Council awards include the Community Partner, Community Associate, and the Annette Schmitt UnSung Hero Award. Following a brief discussion, the schedule for the evening was shortened to end by 8:30pm instead of 9pm. Lakes Region Community Services Council has granted us permission to use their large photos of children and families as part of our decoration theme. The Center for Civic Engagement and Reclaiming Futures are also sponsoring the Laura Nissen presentation.
- ***Deschutes Graphics*** Alan is working with the Deschutes Council for permission to use their graphics with our information.
- ***Lapel Pins*** 200 lapel pins with the Council logo have been ordered. These are for Council members and can also be given to special guests like Ms. Nissen. Total cost will be \$511.

7. **Planning Committee** Discussion of the Council Plan for 2004, on the Agenda for this Council meeting, will be deferred until the December meeting. It will be placed at the top of the Agenda.

NEXT MEETING

WHEN: Friday, December 12th 8-10 am

WHERE: River Level Meeting Room, Busiel Mill, Laconia