

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**COMMITTEE:** Council

**DATE:** Friday, December 12, 2003

**TIME BEGAN:** 8am **TIME ENDED:** 10:05am **FACILITATED BY:** Alida Millham **SUMMARY BY:** Judy Buswell

**PRESENT:** Leo Sanfacon, Andre Paquette, Dick Wallace, Alida Millham, Mary Alice Warner, Peter Michaud, Sue Smith, Kevin Washburn, Bob Rovella, Katy Kanally-DeCarteret, Jim Carroll, Nancy Porosky **EXCUSED:** Jim Pilliod, Scott AndersEn, Gil Schohan, Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell **GUESTS:** Peter Antell and Celina Hurley (NH Children's Alliance)

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1. **Approval of Minutes** Motion made by Andre Paquette to approve the minutes of November 14<sup>th</sup> Council meeting as written; second by Sue Smith. Motion carried.
2. **NH Children's Advocacy Network Presentation:** Peter Antell and Celina Hurley were introduced and asked to explain the functions and responsibilities of NH CAN, the research and advocacy arm of the NH Children's Alliance. Celina and Peter distributed information sheets to Council members present.

NH CAN has four major purpose areas: (1) Identify needs of kids based on available data so that NH CAN can determine what policies it can impact. (2) Develop solutions to address identified needs (3) Work with committees to develop yearly agenda with these needs prioritized (4) Raise awareness of children's needs in NH. The Children's Alliance is funded through foundations, corporate contributions, and membership donations.

Some of the current dynamics affecting children in NH include:

- Realistic interpretation of the "federal poverty level" (current level only allows the very barest of essentials)
- Increase in incidence of pediatric asthma and lead poisoning
- Anticipated population changes in NH; a 20% increase is expected in Conway
- NH has the highest immigrant rate in the nation
- Tobacco use by pregnant women; linked to increase in developmental disabilities and lower academic achievement; high incidence of tobacco use by teenage moms

After school programs do make a difference for at-risk children. Paul Antell has website links on after school data. PLUS Time NH works with after school programs.

NH communities are divided into five clusters according to their wealth with many factors used to determine which cluster a community is assigned. Gilford is the only community in Belknap County in Cluster 1, or the wealthiest. Laconia is the only community in the bottom cluster; Alton is in cluster # 4 and the rest are in the middle cluster. The information sheets distributed by Paul and Celina show specific information for each of the County's eleven communities.

With its many members working together, The Children's Alliance provides a unified and strong voice on behalf of children. Alan talked about the Citizens Council and its goal to work with numerous other networks around the County and State to bring major change to the County's system of juvenile justice. In this context, The NH Work Opportunities Youth Council was mentioned as a possible network for Council activity. Judge Martin is a member of this Youth Council. Peter Michaud also has access to relevant information.

**ACTION NEEDED:**

- **Peter Michaud will provide information on the Youth Council to Council members and staff.**
3. **Executive Director's Report** Alan mentioned that Linda King with New Futures would like an opportunity to speak at a Council meeting. Council agreed to having Linda present at future meeting.

4. **Detention Alternatives** Alida began the discussion by reminding Council members the JJAC (Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee) has said that they would like assistance and support in developing alternatives to Detention. Juvenile Detention is a temporary placement for those juveniles who pose a danger to their community, a danger to themselves, or for those juveniles who may flee before court proceedings. However, many juveniles are placed in detention (YDSU in Concord) as a “wake-up call” without having any of the statutorily required needs. This is done because there are no other options for some of these juveniles. It is known that youths placed at YDSU are more likely to be placed at YDC (commitment for their minority). Simple assaults make up about 1/3 of juvenile crimes. In many of these cases, there is a need for a “cool-down bed”

Judge Lawrence (Goffstown District Court) is taking a closer look at this practice and is encouraging the use of a Risk Assessment Tool, a questionnaire given the youth to quantify the risk of the youth. These results are used to assign only appropriate juveniles to Detention. Judge Lawrence’s project is currently funded by the Annie E Casey Foundation and is now in the roll-out phase to other Counties in NH. Belknap County has been asked to participate and as part of this invitation, Alan recently attended a national Detention Alternatives Conference to hear more about what other states are doing around this issue.

However, there are some problems to joining in this project. As there are no detention alternatives in Belknap County at this time, many law enforcement and JPPO personnel do not think that using this tool is a productive next step. They feel we should have the alternatives in place first. Judge Lawrence says that judges can override this Questionnaire and place the youth at YDSU when other alternatives are not available. Many police officers that use this tool are able to find other resources for juveniles who are not appropriate for detention.

There is a great need in Belknap County to collect reliable data. Unless we have good data, we are unable to track any cost savings or changes in outcomes. The Questionnaire will provide valuable information and data on Belknap County juveniles.

Alan pointed out that we must not place undue emphasis on the Questionnaire. There is a bigger picture that we must keep in mind. Our work here in Belknap County is not an isolated effort. We have formed relationships and partnerships with many state networks. We should be able to work closely with these networks in determining how Belknap County can participate in this Detention Alternatives Initiative. Before a final decision is made whether or not Belknap County will participate, Alan suggests a “high-level summit meeting” with key individuals, such as Joe Diament (NH DJJS), Nancy Rollins (NH DCYF) and Judge Kelly (NH District Courts). This summit would develop parameters for this project and identify any potential resources and support that might be provided by these key individuals and networks.

Jim Carroll noted that statistics show that the poor and minorities are arrested, detained, and committed more often than they should be.

Dick Wallace suggests that the largest effort of the Citizens Council should be around prevention and working with kids and families before they arrive at this point where they need detention. Other comments dealt with the relationship between Detention Alternatives and Balanced and Restorative Justice, the philosophy espoused by the Council. Will this initiative encourage more victim and citizen participation? Could this project be the “cart before the horse”? Mary Alice Warner said that the CoRe project in the Inter-Lakes School District is a wonderful example of involving kids early on before they get into trouble. Sue Smith said that this is an opportunity for us to be working in two areas concurrently. We cannot turn our backs on these “deep-end kids”.

**ACTION NEEDED:**

**Following an extensive discussion, it was decided that:**

- **The Council Chair will appoint an ad-hoc committee to continue this discussion in a “summit format”**
- **Jim Carroll and Peter Michaud will meet with Alan and Alida to clarify the issues, the pros and cons to this initiative, appropriate data questions etc in order to get a better sense of what is needed in detention in this County.**

- **Andre Paquette will continue his research into the causes and reasons for simple assault comprising 1/3 of juvenile offenses.**
- **The Executive and Planning Committees will study the 2004 Council Plan and continue the discussion around developing a Prevention Committee sponsored by the Council.**

#### **4. Committee Reports**

- **Annual Meeting** Katy distributed two sign-up sheets: (1) to help with the large mailing on December 17 re Annual Meeting (2) Help with decorating on day of event: January 13<sup>th</sup>
- **Council Pins** Small pins with Council logo in maroon and black were given to each Council member to wear. These pins will be given as tokens of appreciation to others such as Laura Nissen, speaker at the January 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting
- **Council officers** As there was not time today for candidates for Council officers to share their goals for 2004, Alan asked them to email their ideas and positions to Council members.

#### **ACTION NEEDED:**

- **Candidates for Council office during 2004 will email their thoughts and ideas to other Council members in preparation for the voting to take place in early January.**

### **NEXT MEETING**

**WHEN: Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup> 8-10am**

**WHERE: River level Conference Room, Busiel Mill in Laconia**