

Council Meeting
3-12-04
Summary

Attending: Alida Millham, Sue Smith, Leo Sanfacon, Andre Paquette, Gil Schohan, Jim Carroll, Jim Pilliod, Bob Rovella, Nancy Porosky, Dick Wallace.

Guest: Judge Martin, Christine Corrigan, Steve Fountain, Sarah Fox

Staff: Alan Robichaud.

Introductions

Council members introduced themselves to guests. We welcomed three prospective Council members at today's meeting (Sarah Fox - Sanbornton, Christine Corrigan - New Hampton, and Steve Fountain - Meredith) and considering a couple of others who were unable to attend.

Having attended a farewell party for Kathy Sgambati, retiring Deputy Commissioner of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Alida mentioned a particularly poignant statement made by Kathy at her ceremony. It was: "The children are our future, and we are our children's future." This is a reminder that we hold our youth's future in our hands as adult of society and that we need to keep reminding ourselves of our responsibilities to tap into the skills, talents and vibrancies that each child holds.

Alida also announced that Joe Diament, Director of the Division of Juvenile Justice Services, will be leaving his post on April 2 to head up the New Futures' Adolescent Treatment Initiative. Nancy Rollins, Director of the Division of Children, Youth and Families will serve as the Acting Director of the newly constituted Division of Family Services which will consist of the merged functions formerly served by the Divisions of Juvenile Justice Services; Children, Youth and Families; and Child Protective Services.

1. Approval of Minutes of February 13, 2004 meeting.

Minutes were approved unanimously as written on a motion duly made and seconded (Andre/Sue).

2. Additions/Amendments to the next Agenda

None noted

3. JJAC/Data Committee

Andre Paquette presented an update on the work of the data group. He distributed summaries of composite reports compiled from the three available Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) of Belknap County School Districts (Laconia, Inter-Lakes and Winnisquam Regional).

Andre referenced the book entitled *Information Anxiety*, the difference between what one knows and what one thinks s/he ought to know, as indicative of the multitude of data that is being examined. He and John Cook have been spending several hours a week collecting and abbreviating data to present a picture of what is going on with Belknap County children, families and demographics. These data summaries are prepared and brought to Council members to inform their understanding of the forces at work in juvenile justice, substance abuse, poverty and many other categories of need. Andre noted recent reports of increases in obesity and incidences of gonorrhea and syphilis among New Hampshire youth and compared these findings to the YRBS outcomes of sexual behaviors noted in the school districts' results.

Council members were asked to consider the Average Daily Enrollments of their communities' schools against reported findings of age of onset in various categories of high risk behaviors, to calculate the numbers of youth reporting per school. The figures are staggering and while there are different thoughts on the validity of the reported data, there is research evidence that suggest the results remain reliable.

YRBS results for individual schools listed above may be obtained by calling Alan at the Council office (528-3185). The Council recognized Andre for the tremendous amount of work he has contributed to this important project. These data will be extremely helpful and necessary in targeting outcomes and evaluating progress as we move forward.

4. BARJJS Status Report

Leo Sanfacon reported on the progress of the Committee's visitations to local police departments regarding uses of existing programs and services, observations of what their departments need, and ways in which the Council may be able to assist. Council members discussed differences of perception among different community members and held a healthy dialogue about the roles of Council members in understanding their respective communities. The Committee will continue to conduct visitations to local police departments and School Resource Officers and will keep Council members apprised of their findings.

Judge Martin announced that Judge Kelly has just been appointed the New Administrative Judge for Family Court. This means that Family Court has become a statewide initiative and will be operating on a county-by-county jurisdictional basis. Sanbornton and Tilton will be included in the Belknap County Family Court arena and not have to go through Franklin District Court as has been the issue for District Court cases. This should improve services and consistency for children, youth and families as all matters pertaining to the same family will now be handled by the same court system.

Andre recommended that the Council establish a Work Group on Families and Parenting. It was also suggested that through a redefining of Work Group #3 (Promotion of Strength-Based Prevention Practices) perhaps this topic would be appropriately absorbed into the existing Work Group structure.

5. Executive Committee Requests

Alida called for a motion to accept the following applicants as Council members: Christine Corrigan (New Hampton), Ruth Castonguay (Laconia) and Sarah Fox (Sanbornton). County Commissioners will accept Council recommendations for Council membership and do not feel the need to interview candidates in the future. On a motion by Gil, seconded by Sue, the Council voted to accept these candidates as new members. A swearing in ceremony will be held at the County Commissioners' Office on Wednesday, April 21 at 5:30 PM. Welcome to Christine, Ruth and Sarah!

The Council will also consider applications from Peer Kraft Lund (Center Barnstead) and Steve Fountain (Meredith) in the near future. We thank these valuable community members for their consideration and look forward to working with them in the years to come.

Alida also mentioned that the Council's budget will be presented for approval at the County Convention meeting on Tuesday, March 16, 2004 at 7:00 PM. The public is invited to this meeting that will be conducted at the County Commissioners' Office.

6. Director's Report

Alan spoke to the issue of needing Council involvement and attention to the whole array of Community Justice principles. When we consider the amount of time and energy expended on the formal service delivery system (e.g. Balanced and Restorative Justice) and the number of variables that dictate how the system responds to funding, reorganization and political changes, we risk exhaustion of our limited resources chasing matters that we cannot control. In the meantime, the things that we can impact, prevention and community development, get less of our attention when they are equally, if not more important over the long haul. We must be working in each of the venues as we progress and not get mired down in the system while progress can and must be made in the community. There is an urgency to the work and focus of the work groups and we must be clear and deliberate about our mission and outcomes.

7. Other Business

Alan announced that we have been invited to make a presentation to the annual Attorney General's Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect scheduled for October, 2004. The Council agreed to have Alan submit and proposal and present the session at the conference.

NEXT MEETING

DATE: Friday, April 9, 2004 TIME: 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM

**PLACE: Corner Meeting House (next to Police Department)
Belmont, New Hampshire**

