

MEETING SUMMARY

COMMITTEE: Council Meeting

DATE: Friday, July 11, 2003 **TIME BEGAN:** 8:11am **TIME ENDED:** 10:14am **FACILITATED BY:** Alida Millham

SUMMARY BY: Judy Buswell **MEETING SITE:** The Gilman Library, Alton, NH

PRESENT: Alida Millham, Peter Michaud, Bob Rovella, Scott AndersEn, Mary Alice Warner, Kevin Washburn, Katy Kannaly-DeCarteret, Gil Schohan, Leo Sanfacon, Jim Pilliod, Andre Paquette, Sue Smith, Dick Wallace **STAFF:** Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell **EXCUSED:** Nancy Porosky, Jim Carroll, Linda Brewer (LOA) **ABSENT:** Mark Condodemetraky, Kim Campbell **GUESTS:** Russ Holden, Principal Alton-Barnstead Highschool; Audra Cantor (CYA Youth Activities); Cydney Johnson , Alton Budget Committee; Pastor Hett, Alton Christian Conference Center; Russ Bailey, Town Administrator

1. **Approval Minutes (June 13, 2003)** Motion to accept as written made by Jim Pilliod; second by Andre Paquette. Motion carried.
2. **Additions/Amendments to the Agenda** No Additions or amendments
3. **Introduction of Guests** Dick Wallace introduced members of Alton community who were present. Dick was commended for inviting members of the Alton public, for arranging a very pleasant meeting space, and for supplying the refreshments.
4. **Committee Reports**
Planning Committee The Planning Committee has recommended that the Council discuss further an Organizational and Operating Structure, which will occur at this meeting following Committee reports.

Executive Committee This report will be covered in the discussion on Council structure that follows.

Legislative and Advocacy Mary Alice Warner, Chair, noted that the State Budget has not yet been resolved. The Legislature failed to override the Governor's veto so that the State is currently operating on a Continuing Resolution. While Rep Jim Pilliod acknowledged that the State is in a tough situation, our deficit is still much smaller than other States.

Alan noted that there has been an RSA change that expands the disclosure of certain information to victims of juvenile crime; this change will loosen up some of the confidentiality restrictions imposed on the system as it pertains to victims of juvenile crime.

ACTION: Alan will email new RSA to Council members once it is available.

Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee Andre Paquette, Chair, noted the irony of the threat to the funding of two of the most successful programs in the County's juvenile justice system: Drug Court and the Juvenile Accountability Locator Team (JOLT). While at this point, it appears that the Drug Court Program will be funded through the State budget, the JOLT program, funded from a Federal OJJDP block grant to the States, is in jeopardy. The Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) Program has been reorganized on the Federal level, resulting in a big reduction of funds to the States and some changes to their funding priorities. Now called the JABG (Juvenile Accountability Block Grant), it is not yet clear how the NH Division of Juvenile Justice Services will disperse their allocation. Alan and Judy will be meeting with Jay Apicelli (JPPO Supervisor), Sheriff Dan Collis, and Chief Tom Oetinger to discuss strategies for continued funding.

Alan noted that the issue of Tilton and Sanbornton youths, who are served through the Franklin District Court and therefore not receiving the same level of services as provided by Laconia District Court, has been brought

to his attention. He is acting in a facilitator role in a discussion of these issues with the applicable school, law enforcement, and JPPO personnel in early August. Judge Kelly will also attend this meeting.

The request for \$250,000 from the State budget to fund a feasibility study for facility improvements to the Laconia District Court is no longer viable. This means that a wait of up to 6 more years before these critical repairs and improvements can be made will be necessary.

Scott AndersEn said that the CORE (Community Response) Group in the Interlakes Area received continued funding from one grant source and they are waiting to hear about outcomes regarding their application for another Federal grant. Scott was asked to explain his approach to his community regarding the findings from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted at Interlakes High School several years ago. He said they chose to be assertive in promoting the message that the high use of substances and alcohol is a community, not just a school problem. A number of community educational sessions were held and CORE, an after-school program, grew out of their efforts. It is unfortunate that many schools attempt to cover up these survey results because they do not want to handle potential community outrage that gets misdirected at the schools. Efforts must be made that the listener “not kill the messenger” and that citizens view this issue as one for schools and community to resolve together.

Addictions Task Force This Task Force of a variety of providers, law enforcement, healthcare, educational, and consumers has met together three times. They are approaching substance abuse on a systemic basis. Riley Regan, Director of NH DADAPR, is very interested in organizing Counties to receive block grant funds from the State in a manner that allows the communities to be involved in identifying and resolving issues. A preliminary draft of an organizational structure has been shared with Alan and Judy and more information will be offered at the next Addictions Task Force meeting on July 21. The Task Force is also planning an observance of National Recovery Month in September and will promote two key messages via a number of strategies: (1) Substance Abuse is the #1 public health problem in Belknap County and the USA, and (2) Substance Abuse and Addictions is a chronic but treatable disease.

Parent Accountability Group A number of providers, professionals, and others recently met to discuss possible strategies that might help parents to better monitor and manage their children so that parental responsibility does not fall back to public institutions and schools at taxpayer expense. Alan noted that close to \$300,000 was spent last year on 79 youths in Belknap County just in “tracking services”, which are professionals paid to assure that juveniles comply with their court orders. Those present at this meeting were asked to identify issues and possible next steps. As “Parent Accountability” emerged as one of the top 6 priorities from the Community Forums held last fall, it therefore is an issue that the Council would like to address. Barbara Hunter of the UNH Cooperative Extension was mentioned as a possible resource for Parenting Education.

Council members asked if it is possible to summarize what is currently happening in schools around Parenting training, early intervention, family life, and character education. Scott AndersEn suggested that the topic could be introduced at the Lakes Region School Administrators’ Association and that individual Council members could interview appropriate school personnel. It was noted that the Alton community is planning joint parent and youth activities, which presents an opportunity for some parenting education. The overall Council goal would be around complementing, not duplicating, current school or community parenting education activities.

Public Awareness & Education Committee Katy Kannally-DeCarteret updated Council on the Committee’s progress in planning the Council’s Annual Meeting. Laura Nissen, the National Project Director of the national Robert Wood Johnson “Reclaiming Futures” project, has agreed to be the keynote speaker. The tentative date is Tuesday, January 13, 2004 and the suggested location is the Expo Center in Lakeport. Additional members are needed to assist Katy, Chair of the Council Annual Meeting Planning Committee.

Gil Schohan reminded Council members that the application process for the annual Annette P. Schmitt award, given to an outstanding “behind the scenes” volunteer on behalf of children and families, also needs to begin soon. Gil is chairing this effort.

ACTION: Council members interested in participating on the Annual Meeting and the Schmitt Award Committees should contact Katy (Annual Meeting) or Gil (Schmitt) asap. Council members who can suggest others from their communities who might be interested in joining these committees should also contact Katy or Gil.

Other public relations opportunities for the Council include:

- Multi-Cultural Awareness Day – Saturday, September 13, 10-4pm in Laconia. The Council will host a Council-related information table. The PA & E Committee will arrange to purchase a custom-made banner for the Council to use at this day and other Council-related activities.
- Communications Plan – A formal plan to raise public awareness about issues facing children and families and the Council’s role in addressing these issues is needed. Suggested strategies in addition to the banner include logo development, Council pins, fact sheets, and a monthly “page” or “column” in the Citizen. The suggestion of exploring the use of road signs that advertise non-profits in exchange for cleaning roadside areas was made by one of the Alton guests. Leo Sanfacon would like selected Council members to meet with John Vorel, a Public Relations professional, sometime during the week of July 14th for direction in developing this plan.

ACTION: Leo will schedule this meeting with John Vorel and identified Council members.

5. **Council Operating Structure and Plan Development** Paraphrasing from the author, Elizabeth Schorr, Alida began this discussion by saying that as a Council we know what the problems are and now we must act! The Council conducted a free-flowing discussion for the next 60 minutes. Discussion points are summarized below.

We need to do this work without creating a large bureaucracy but rather by building an environment that invites citizen involvement. We need to be “in relationship” with others to solve problems. The tendency to “over-professionalize” services by using acronyms and language increases the gap between consumers, providers, and citizens. Our job is to avoid “structures” that separate families, but to build something and then get out of the way, so the job can get accomplished.

Our job is not to set up services but to facilitate and convene community action. If the Council is set up in a typical hierarchical structure with committees, the work may get done, but it will be very slow and perhaps by the wrong people. The Council has identified six priority areas through their conversations with the communities in Belknap County and now a plan to address each of these six themes areas is needed.

The Asset-Based Community Development model uses strengths, rather than weaknesses, to build on individual and community assets. This approach acknowledges that everyone has gifts (i.e. of the hand (can do something), of the heart (is passionate about something), and of the mind (knows something), and these assets should be incorporated into a Council Plan.

Two County communities, Tilton and Sanbornton, use the Franklin District Court to resolve judicial issues, yet the approaches used by the Franklin and Laconia District Courts are quite different, thus creating a lack of parity for youth in accessing services. The Council has a role in helping to address this problem.

Our plan should legitimize Council members in their roles as “community liaisons”. This should be done in a manner that makes the best use of the gifts of each Council member so that Council members will remain satisfied and motivated. Council members should identify his/her own “gifts” and then how these gifts can serve children and families in their communities. Our Plan should match the passion of the Council members with the needs in the communities.

The Council’s role remains one of facilitation, communication, and technical assistance.

The Council has several specific responsibilities: They must submit a plan to the Commissioners and then get back to the communities with information from the Forums held late in 2002.

The connection of the Council to the juvenile justice system remains significant. The themes emerging in the study of the County's quasi-juvenile justice system should be interwoven in a Plan. They are such as (1) the lack of parent accountability which must be considered a community issue (2) the need to collect and interpret data in an integrated fashion (3) the need to respond to the overwhelming presence of substance abuse and addictions in juveniles and to realize that addictions and misuse is really a symptom of a problem which must be addressed (4) the concern about the connection between a reading skills at the 3rd grade level and the tendency to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

Kevin Washburn stated that he is not really concerned about the "model" that the Council uses as he has his own goals and priorities for his community that he wants to address. He will continue working on these issues with, or without the presence of a "Plan".

Dick Wallace said that the Council should include the "voice of youth" on the Council. He suggests that the Council move forward and let the process follow.

Scott Andersen said that we should understand that the answers to community problems lie within the community itself. We need to involve the people who have "issues", as they will also have the answers.

Cydney (Alton guest) feels that Alton has lost its sense of community and that the task is to re-create this sense of community.

Many parents do not know how to be parents. The Council must find a way to involve parents so that any strategies around parenting education becomes their idea, not the Council's. We must not appear critical.

Any Council activity should occur in its natural form, or certainly at its simplest level, in a manner that does not destroy the capacity of a community to solve its own problems. The Council needs to find methods to motivate new and different people to volunteer and participate at the community level.

Scott Andersen said that in order to really solve the "structure" dilemma, the Council must set aside a longer period of time for this discussion than provided by monthly Council meetings. Perhaps a "mini-retreat" such as was held last summer is needed. Kevin suggests that the Council not bite off too much of the pie, or "we will surely be overwhelmed".

Ideas offered by Alton visitors included:

- Family to Family mentoring programs could address parenting skills
- College students majoring in psychology or education might act as mentors to youth; The Council could coordinate such activities
- School Resource Officers have proven very beneficial
- The Council should help to create an "urgency regarding the loss of community"

ACTION: This ongoing discussion and identification of the next steps will be turned back to the Executive Committee. Alida and Alan will schedule the next meeting of the Executive Committee to continue this discussion.

NEXT MEETING

WHEN: Friday, August 9th 8-10am

WHERE: New Hampton Town Office

(Directions will be forwarded later)