

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**COMMITTEE:** Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

**DATE:** Friday, September 12, 2003

**TIME BEGAN:** 8:12am **TIME ENDED:** 10:15am **FACILITATED BY:** Alida Millham **SUMMARY BY:** Judy Buswell

**MEETING SITE:** Gilmanton Community Church (Gilmanton Ironworks)

**PRESENT:** Kim Campbell, Leo Sanfacon, Gil Schohan, Dick Wallace, Mary Alice Warner, Nancy Porosky, Alida Millham, Sue Smith, Katy Kannaly-DeCarteret, Andre Paquette, Jim Pilliod **STAFF:** Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell **EXCUSED:** Scott AndersEn, Jim Carroll, Kevin Washburn, Rob Robella, Peter Michaud, Mark Condodemetrazy, Linda Brewer **GUESTS:** Jack Collins, Regional Director – FamilyStrength; Judge Willard Martin; Jane Benson, Gilmanton School Board; Nate Abbott, Gilmanton Selectman; Phil O’Brien, Gilmanton Police Department; Kevin Christiansen, Gilmanton Selectman & owner of the Gilmanton Ironworks General Store

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1. **Introductions etc:** Council member Nancy Porosky, introduced guests from her community of Gilmanton, host to this Council meeting. Alida Millham, provided a “Virtual Tour” of Gilmanton, a powerpoint presentation of the photos in and around Gilmanton that she took earlier this month. Alida would like to continue these “virtual tours” of other communities in the County, because “Council members should know all towns in the County as well as their own.” Gilmanton was organized in 1727. This community of 65 square miles has a population of 2,800, including the summer residents. Gilmanton Elementary School has 379 K-8 students, with 162 students, Grades 9-12, educated at Gilford High School. Gilmanton is considered a “bedroom community” and has two centers: the Corners and the Ironworks. Photos in the Virtual Tour included The Brick House, Smith Meeting House, Loon Pond, Frisky Hill, Crystal Lake, Price Farm, the Ironworks General Store, and the site for the future Gilmanton Library.

For the benefit of visitors, Alida explained that the origins of the Citizens Council grew out the Belknap Juvenile Justice Initiative and their concerns about the efficiency of the juvenile justice “system” in Belknap County. The Council, with members from every community in the County, is promoting the philosophy of “Community Justice”, a three-pronged approach: first, using Restorative Justice concepts that involve the victim; second, prioritizing prevention strategies, and third, utilizing the best practices of community development.

2. **Guest Comments and other related Non-Agenda comments:**

**A. Restorative Justice** The Belknap County Juvenile Restorative Justice is now 2-years old; however, visitors noted the confusion that exists in Gilmanton around this program. “People don’t know it is here in our community.” Additional discussion included an explanation of the Restorative Justice process, noting the emphasis is on the victim and the community as well as the offender.

**B. Judge Martin** As a Juvenile Judge at the Laconia District Court, Judge Martin shared two items of interest and concern.

- **Community Juvenile Court** A recent juvenile initiative now underway at the Laconia District Court will move as many juvenile proceedings into the home communities of the juvenile offenders so that communities can more easily “be involved” with their own cases. The “community courtroom” program will begin with juveniles from Meredith and Center Harbor who will have their cases handled at the Meredith Community Courtroom located in the Meredith Police Department facility. Local volunteers will be trained to facilitate and assist with some aspects of these community court proceedings.
- **Abuse and Neglect Cases** Judge Martin noted the impending crisis regarding abuse and neglect cases in the DCYF section of the Laconia District Office of NH DHHS. There has been a “huge staff turnover”, including the recent resignation of the longtime Laconia DCYF Coordinator. While the DJJS section “seems to be working quite well now”, there are numerous problems with the DCYF section, including a poor public perception and respect for DCYF workers. The Judge explained that national case management standards set by the Child Welfare League of America sets the caseload limit at 10 families per caseworker. Currently in Laconia, each caseworker has at least 20 cases. “The end result is that even

though the intent of each DCYF worker is honorable, this increased workload means that the children will be ignored.” Judge Martin acknowledged, “a huge factor is the State’s funding crisis and the resulting shrinking of available resources.”

Judge Martin would like the Council to sponsor a “task force” that will study the Abuse and Neglect side of the equation, much like “we did for juvenile justice”. He suggests a broad representation is necessary, including CASA volunteers, GALs, and local experts such as Atty’s Phil and Janice McLaughlin. Alida asked that Council members indicate their interest. Council members who would like to join an Abuse and Neglect Task Force include Mary Alice Warner, Gil Schohan, Katy Kannaly-DeCarteret, Nancy Porosky, Jim Pilliod, and Sue Smith.

**ACTION NEEDED: Alida and Council staff will explore the best practices for organizing this Task Force and any potential for logical connections to similar initiatives already underway, such as NH CAN and Prevent Child Abuse NH.**

*C. Memo of Understanding* Council member and Representative Jim Pilliod said that a Memorandum of Understanding was “secretly signed” by the Governor to transfer a number of DHHS duties to the Department of Safety. Included are public health responsibilities and some lab functions. Jim feels the motive is really so that the Executive Branch can “take control of additional funds and authority.”

**ACTION NEEDED: Alida will further investigate this issue and will report back through the Executive Committee.**

### 3. **Public Awareness Committee Reports**

- ***Bingler Visit*** Nationally known architect and community planner, Stephen Bingler of Concordia LLC, will be in the Lakes Region on October 16 and 17. The Bingler visit is designed as a follow-up to the Community Forums held throughout the County in November 2002 where Community Centers were identified as a top community priority. Bingler, who has significant expertise in designing community facilities, will share his knowledge and ideas in a presentation to teams from each community in the County. Alan Robichaud distributed information about Bingler’s visit and asked each Council member to identify and invite teams from his/his community to this event. “State resources” e.g. Cooperative Extension, Rural Development Council, etc have also been invited. Alan noted that becoming directly involved in the decisions communities make around community centers is “not part of our mission”, but that providing resource information to inform an issue that impacts families “is something we can do”. Alan observed that this Bingler visit is really “an exit strategy” on this issue for the Council.  
**ACTION NEEDED: Designated Council members will develop a team from his/her community that will attend Bingler presentation on October 16<sup>th</sup> and will return the form, with names and contact information of Team members, to Alan by October 3<sup>rd</sup>.**
- ***Laconia Multi-Cultural Day*** This event occurs Saturday, September 13 and the Council will have a table display. Several Council members have volunteered to host the display.
- ***Annual Meeting*** Katy Kannaly-DeCarteret, Annual Meeting chair, updated Council on meeting plans. Laura Nissen, National Director of the “Reclaiming Futures” project, is keynote speaker for meeting that will be held at the Expo Center on Monday, January 13, 2004. Gil Schohan and Sue Smith are organizing the food for the 200 people expected to attend. Discussion is currently underway with UpStream, also interested in co-hosting this event. Alan sees this as a “real opportunity for connecting with providers and communities”. Details still need to be arranged.

A remaining question is whether admission should be charged. Following discussion, it was decided that more information is needed, including developing a budget that includes all expenses and revenue sources, clarifying arrangements with UpStream, and developing a schedule that specifies when the “meeting” portion will occur.

**ACTION NEEDED:**

- **The PR Committee will continue with planning for Annual Meeting.**
- **Alan will develop a budget for Annual Meeting.**

4. **D.A.D.A.P.R Structure** the NH Division for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery (DADAPR) is interested in directing Federal block grant funds into the Counties where it will be used. DADAPR has asked the Citizens Council to work with them to develop a county-based infrastructure that will accommodate this goal of money flow as well as provide input from members of the Recovery Community. Alan reminded Council members that substance abuse and addictions has been identified as a major priority for the Council. He then explained that several members of the Addictions Task Force developed a preliminary design concept, which was distributed to Council members for their input. This design reflects the significant community development at the grassroots level expected by DADAPR. Key to the success of this model is a staff position, paid for by DADAPR but considered a County employee and reporting to Alan. This person will specialize in community development and will be responsible for developing community networks. While this approach represents additional responsibility for the Council, Alan explained that the potential for fragmentation surely exists if another entity handles these responsibilities that so closely match Council goals and activities.

As grant making would be a responsibility of this county-based DADAPR structure, there was considerable concern expressed by Council members on the grants management task illustrated in the draft flow chart. It is not appropriate that the same people who plan and work with community representatives should also be voting on which ones of them should receive block grant funds. Other options include asking County Commissioners to identify another county-based process that could manage grants.

Riley Regan met with the Planning Committee earlier to explain DADAPR expectations and goals. As the success for this proposal depends on the presence of this extra staff position, Council members indicated that there must be an MOU that outlines a number of specifics, particularly important in the current economic environment. There was also some concern around the extra responsibilities this addition will place on Council staff.

**ACTION: Alan and Alida will talk with the County Commissioners regarding other options for managing grants in this proposed DADAPR change.**

5. **Council Plan** Copies of the Draft Plan for the Council and a time line outlining the necessary steps prior to the presentation of this Plan to the County Delegation were distributed to Council members for their review. Council members were asked to provide feedback on Plan to Council staff by September 19<sup>th</sup>. Several members of the Planning Committee are doing a more detailed review of this Plan. The Plan will be finalized and ready for final Council approval at the October meeting of the Council.

**ACTION: Council members will review the draft Plan and will give their input to Council staff by Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup>.**

6. **Council Chair:** Alida is working on developing a series of six articles on family-related issues that *The Citizen* will incorporate into their daily newspaper. This will become a Council “Column”. Alida asked for additional Council members to also write articles for this “Column”. Andre volunteered to contribute an article.

7. **Next Meeting:** The next Council meeting is scheduled for October 10<sup>th</sup> and will be held in Center Harbor.

**ACTION: Mary Alice Warner will make arrangements to host the Council meeting in Center Harbor.**

**NEXT MEETING:**

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

**WHERE: Center Harbor (specific location TBA)**