

MEETING SUMMARY

DATE: Friday, April 17, 2009

TIME BEGAN: 8:05am

TIME ENDED: 9:30am

FACILITATEDBY: Andre Paquette

SUMMARY BY: Judy Buswell

PRESENT: Andre Paquette, Deb Rosato, Rasim Gusinac, Gil Schohan, Lori Belanger, Rich Moed, Deb Shackett

STAFF: Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell

- 1. Update on Report to Commissioners & Planning for the Future** The County Commissioners have stated that funding from the County for the Council will end as of December 31, 2009. While the expectation has been that the Council will find alternative funding sources, it is not clear exactly how we should proceed. For example, would there be any concerns about filing now for a 501(c) 3 status? While the Council is still a County department for the remaining eight months in 2009, would the Council be free to promote itself in order to secure future funding? Clarification on these and other details has been requested through a memo to the Commissioners. Andre stated that his goal as Council Chair is that the Council and the Commissioners be able to communicate in an open, honest, and frequent manner.

Any potential relationship with the State is uncertain in the short term because the State is now at the beginning of deciding how to re-configure DHHS for the future. Their goal is to remove the “silo mentality” where problems and challenges such as mental health, substance abuse, child abuse etc are addressed separately. As part of this, they are interested in moving service provision from the state to localities, but at this point the mechanism for doing that has not been developed.

Alan met with the Commissioners this past week for his annual performance review. This meeting provided Alan an opportunity to compare his job description and the Council Proclamation and By-Laws with what is actually happening, recognizing that turnover in the Commissioners means that all those involved may not realize why the Council was originally created via a Proclamation in 2001.

Prior to releasing any public communication piece, Alan is now submitting these items to Deb Shackett for the Commissioners’ approval.

Other points raised in the discussion that followed include:

- The original role of the Council, as established via a Proclamation, to plan and facilitate is still valid. It is important to remember that the eight years of facilitation and planning efforts by the Council is a major reason why RJ and YSB are now searching for ways they can collaborate and work better together.
- The Council would like to move forward with its mission independent of the County, but we will need the rest of this year to prepare for this major transition. We will need to work carefully with the Commissioners to make this happen.
- We will need to look at other overhead needs, such as office space, employee benefits, etc.
- There is a process and a cost to forming a 501 (c) 3 entity. We may need to pursue pro-bono legal assistance.
- It is clear that the Council cannot move directly to a state-supported entity, explained earlier in this summary. However, the Council should be developing now in a manner that will accommodate expected changes by the State in the funding and delivery of services.
- We should identify a date, perhaps October 1, 2009, that if other funds and strategies to sustain the Council have not emerged, a logical and careful “winding down” of Council

- activities could occur. After this point, we would examine current Council connections and projects and plan how they can continue without Council leadership and participation.
- Maintaining the momentum of the Systems Integration Initiative, now moving along very well, is also a priority. There are many volunteers, agencies, and participants involved. Most of them are very aware of the status of the Council and some have expressed concerns that as Council staff have provided the necessary leadership to maintain SII, if the Council ends at the end of the year, the work they do on SII from now on could be wasted. SII participants are looking for some assurance that this will not happen. Providing for the continuance of SII should be a priority for the Council.
 - Alan and Andre attended a presentation on the Wrap-Around Milwaukee Program, a model the State is currently exploring. While their program is far more complex than what the state could assume, there are components in this model that interest the State.
 - Council staff is exploring current funding potential from foundation, corporate, and government sources. Some form of planning/bridge/transition funding may be needed.
 - Even though the intended outcomes from the SII effort are not apparent at this point, it should be possible to begin implementing some pieces that approximate a local focus – “the low-hanging fruit” – before the State is ready to implement their plans.
 - The Commissioners appointed Alan as a County delegate to the NH Association of Counties” Executive Committee.

Juvenile Justice Services In late March, as part of a request to the Council in December 2008, the Commissioners were given a Status Report on progress made in strengthening and funding juvenile justice services in Belknap County. The Commissioners are reading this report and will offer their comments later. Youth Services Bureau (YSB) and the County Juvenile Restorative Justice Program (RJ) have agreed to work together to improve communication, collaboration, and efficiencies in their programs. They have begun with a centralized approach for referrals. Referrals will go directly to one number – at the RJ office – and together with YSB, they will match the juvenile with the program most appropriate to the juvenile’s needs. Historically, the Youth Assistance Program (YAP) has received strong financial support from the Belknap County communities they serve (Tilton and Sanbornton); however, as this funding is now threatened, YAP is encouraged to participate in these collaborative discussions with YSB and RJ. As well, the Commissioners are now looking at other possible strategies to continue with Restorative Justice.

YSB and RJ are pursuing training in the use of the GAIN Quick screening, as another component of centralized intake. GAIN-Q will identify possible substance abuse, mental health, and other needs in these youth. Those indicated juveniles will be referred for assessment through a lengthier process and appropriate services will be offered to their families, hopefully avoiding very expensive court-ordered services at a later date.

Lori Belanger said that some schools are already doing the GAIN-Q and suggests efforts be made to access this information when needed. She also suggests that schools should be made aware of these changes in the referral process.

2. **Helping Kids To Hope** Copies of this latest Issue Brief of the Council are available for Council members.

NEXT MEETING
DATE: Friday, May 15, 2009 8-10am
PLACE: Cooperative Extension Conference Room, County Complex