

MINUTES

Lane County Commission for Children and Families
Serbu Youth Campus – 2727 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Eugene, Oregon

February 25, 2009
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Judith Hampton, Chair; Chuck Boyer, Elizabeth Clewett, Rich Cook, Sharri da Silva, Abigael Fender, Kitty Piercy, Karen Hamilton, Liane Lucas, Kevin Maloney, Gail Parr, Ryan Stroup, Joachim Schulz, John Radich, Phil Walker, Commission members; Serafina Clarke, Christine Rogers, Nancy Bischofs, Alicia Hays, DCF staff; Anne Johnstone-Diaz, Lane County Family Resource Centers; Chad Westphal, Looking Glass Youth & Family Services, Bruce Abel, former Commission member and Program Manager, LaneCare; D.J. Depew, Devon Gibson, youth.

ABSENT: Debi Farr, Shirley Swank, Marty Beyer, Commission members

I. WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, PUBLIC COMMENT

- **WELCOME**

Ms. Hampton convened the meeting at 5:35 p.m. and asked those present to introduce themselves.

- **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Hampton announced that items IV. (Community Provider Meeting Results) and V. (Legislative Committee Update) on the agenda would be reversed.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

II. CONSENT CALENDAR

a) Approve January 28, 2009 Minutes

Ms. Piercy, seconded by Mr. Radich, moved to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2009 meeting of the Lane County Commission for Children and Families (LCCCF). The motion passed unanimously.

III. TRANSITION AGE YOUTH COMMUNITY FOCUS AREA UPDATE

Mr. Westphal introduced himself as CEO of Looking Glass Youth & Family Services and chair of the Transition Age Youth Committee. Mr. Abel introduced himself as a member of the Committee. Mr. Westphal announced that Mr. Depew and Mr. Gibson would join them soon.

Mr. Westphal thanked the LCCCF for the opportunity to share with them. He explained that the term “transition age youth” was one that was familiar to members of the LCCCF, and was a hot topic at federal, state and county levels. He defined the term as youth who were between the ages of 16 and 24. He said all needs of the group fell under one of three categories: service availability, service accessibility and youth engagement.

The Committee was working hard to identify available services and had been somewhat successful, Mr. Westphal continued. He said they were also working to identify accessibility of those services, and had “hit some bumps along the way.” He related that the Committee included youth engagement, which was not easy but had been very effective. He explained that it was more difficult to have youth engagement outside of the planning process, and to maintain youth engagement in services, due to the difficult nature of life between the ages of 16 and 24. He attributed this to the fact that the pre-frontal cortex, the part of the brain that controls the ability to make decisions, does not fully mature until a person reaches the age of 25.

Mr. Westphal explained that youth were turning 18, were adults on paper, and were then expected to make adult decisions while simultaneously being separated from services for a variety of reasons. He added that a high percentage of the youth had traumatic pasts. He averred that if the youth services community did not intervene in the moment, there would be costly societal impacts.

Mr. Westphal said the development of the Transition Age Youth Committee, which LCCCF previously prioritized, had arisen from those concerns. He noted that Mr. Abel, Al Levine, Program Manager for Lane County Mental Health were also part of the process and other organizations that had been helpful included Oregon Family Support Network (OFSN), Catholic Community Services, WomensSpace, Department of Health and Human Services, Looking Glass Youth & Family Services, the Trauma Healing project, St. Vincent DePaul and the Department of Children and Families. He stressed that the number one support had come from the youth, who he commended for being engaged, consistent and productive. He stated that the goals had to be narrowed down, due to the breadth, and the committee arrived at the following achievable goal areas: life skills, additional and alternative services and high risk youth. He said subcommittees had been formed to focus on each goal. Mr. Westphal mentioned that Ms. Clarke had provided some committee materials to the Commission, and referred briefly to these materials.

Mr. Westphal explained that the Life Skills subcommittee had the most success in identifying available resources. He related that since many resources were available, the subcommittee had focused on resource accessibility and youth engagement. He said the subcommittee’s goal areas were: linkages and connectivity between service providers and using youth to help devise a marketing plan for the target population.

Ms. Hampton directed commission members to their packet, where they could find an outline of Mr. Westphal’s presentation, called ***Transition Age Youth Presentation Outline***. She said the marketing plan was being constructed to make existing services that were attractive to youth even more attractive to them.

Mr. Westphal referred to the Additional and Alternative Services subcommittee. He referred the group to the *Think Tank Results*, noting that peer support was the number one item that youth stated would help them become more engaged. He listed the other items the think tank exercise had provided, adding that everything the Additional and Alternative Services Subcommittee focused on had come from the think tank. He noted that Laura Rariden of OFSN chaired the subcommittee. He thanked the Commission for supporting the youth peer support specialist position.

Mr. Abel stated that he managed LaneCare, the Oregon mental health organization in Lane County. He explained that it brought mental health dollars and services to youth and adults in Lane County. He said the mental health system was interested in transition age youth because data indicated that 10-12% of 12-year-olds were accessing mental health services. He said this correlated with the percentage of adults age 25 and older who were accessing mental health services. He related that when youth were in transition they did not access mental health treatment. He explained that in consulting with youth about this they determined that the mental health system did not match who they were or what they wanted. He related that LaneCare staff had concluded that the mental health service system needed to be redesigned.

Mr. Abel stated that in its capacity as an insurance provider LaneCare was required to find services for people who needed them. He said 19-year-olds were not eligible for services available to youth 18 and younger, but the services available to 19-year-olds did not match existing adult services. He stated that youth at this age had to learn how to access Social Security Insurance, jobs, the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), housing, and more. He commented that many did not have good life outcomes. He stated that youths' needs were not related to only mental health, they also needed help in accessing a number of services and life and job skills. He related that the committee had invited Susan Sowards to compile the three subcommittees' thoughts into a community plan to provide structure for develop funding supports, coordination, and partnerships to help implementation. He noted that the Transition Age Youth Committee had provided this presentation to the LCCCF because it serves as a convener of community supports for worthwhile projects.

Mr. Depew and Mr. Gibson arrived at the meeting and Mr. Westphal introduced them. He applauded their worked as youth representatives from the community.

Mr. Depew explained that the youth involved in the think tank session had tried to identify alternative services. He related that they had been assisted by a small number of professionals. He said the youth had organized and held a state-wide youth conference. The think tank and the conference revealed that the number one alternative youth were interested in was peer support in cooperation with or instead of conventional counseling.

Mr. Westphal felt that positive results were coming out of the committee's process. He related that the committee realized the community's capacity to collaborate. He explained that the continuum of services in Lane County was above average in quality and was known at the state level for its youth services. He said the youth-driven committee was indicative of a successful outcome. He averred that the committee would not wait for money "to fall from the sky" and members were proactive about getting work done and finding funding. He noted that the overall committee would eventually absorb the three subcommittees into an advisory team to support the professionals working closely with youth as they started to serve this population.

Mr. Westphal underscored that funding was a barrier and would continue to be one. He stated that additional partners would be needed to support this work. He averred that the committee was working through the challenges presented by the youth/adult system transitions. He closed by thanking Laura Rariden of OFSN, Eric Van Houten of Looking Glass and Rose Wilde of the Department of Human Services, all of whom had been "fantastic" in chairing the Life Skills subcommittee, Rebecca McAlexander for her service as chair of the High End Youth subcommittee, and Ms. Clarke who represented all three subcommittees and had been a "wonderful support."

Ms. Piercy expressed appreciation for the work of the committee and the presentation. She invited Mr.

Depew and Mr. Gibson to testify during the Public Forum part of City Council meetings. She averred that it was important that the City Council heard from youth, especially when dealing with youth issues downtown. She said hearing from youth could make a difference in City Council's decision making. She added that since council meetings were broadcasted on television members of the community would also hear what the youth had to say.

In response to a question from Ms. da Silva, Mr. Gibson explained that activities involved in peer support included the things that the youth wanted to do and what they were most comfortable with. Mr. Depew added that a peer support specialist was a person who could assist the young people in accessing available supports such as food stamp and health care applications. He explained that this was why one of the attributes the committee looked for in a peer support specialist was experience in navigating available services.

In response to a question from Ms. Hampton regarding the demographics of the youth accessing services, Mr. Depew clarified that the youth were between 16-24 years old, and lived between Thurston Street in Springfield and Bethel Street in Eugene. He reported that there was a statewide group that met as well that included youth from The Dalles and from Oakridge and both the youth and parents participated in the conferences.

Mr. Maloney asked about access points for youth and asked if they should be contacted through school or sports programs. Mr. Depew answered that the group did not access the youth through schools because of the stigma involved; the youth usually found out about the group through social networks online, including MySpace. He explained that each participating member of the group was a social network, and was added as friends of the group.

Mr. Abel related that he had met with the group the previous night. He noted that they were open to having adults visit them. He had been amazed by their decision-making process. He underscored that the committee should be mindful that what youth were not interested was important: facility-based services, medication, and working with professionals. He said they were interested in learning skills related to independent living, and were interested in learning these skills from peers. He stated that the committee's proposal would recognize the places and types of care that youths needed, including alternatives to traditional mental health and intensive wrap-around support team care for the 5 to 30 youth that could need exceptional supports over an extended period of time.

Ms. Piercy suggested that the committee contact the city Library, Parks, and Recreation Department as the department was interested in finding out how best to serve youth in the community.

Ms. Hays reminded the group that the three focus areas for the Comprehensive Plan for Children Youth and Family for Lane County included one on transitional youth issues.

Ms. Clarke thanked the committee and the youth for all of their hard work and achievements.

IV. LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mr. Walker reported on the trip to Salem taken by the members of the Legislative Committee, along with Ms. Hays and Ms. Clarke.

Ms. Hays had attended the meeting of the Joint Ways and Means committee. She stressed the importance

of maintaining a presence at the capitol. She felt that the Commission system had demonstrated a great presence at the Capitol during the Stand for Children event.

Mr. Walker explained that he had met with State Senator Bill Morrisette and State Representatives Chris Edwards and Phil Barnhart, who had been candid about the state's budget problems. He explained that he was doing all he could to keep schools from closing early this year because people were already experiencing a lot of hardship and early school closure would lead to more hardship. He related that studies showed that more abuse occurred inside families with financial stress, and abuse could lead to poor student outcomes.

Mr. Walker explained that Ms. Clarke attended a beer tax stakeholders meeting. She handed out a fact sheet from the meeting that addressed facts about the bill as well as concerns discussed by opponents of the bill, House Bill (HB) 2461.

Mr. Schulz described the six legislature appointments he attended and thanked Ms. Clarke for her preparation for and coordination of the appointments. He related that State Senator Floyd Prozanski requested an impact statement outlining how much budget cuts would affect specific agencies and their programs. He had inferred from the request that the LCCCF and other Commissions were being heard. He said Rep. Barnhart indicated that the state of the budget was very bad; Rep. Barnhart wanted to raise \$1 billion with a new tax on the rich, which he predicted would pass. He underscored that all public agencies in the state would get budget cuts. He believed, however, that the Legislature had been informed about what Commissions on Children and Families did and how they were connected to their respective communities.

Mr. Boyer had been impressed by the number of people who testified and at the length and breadth of their testimony.

Mr. Walker referred to the *Lane County Commission on Children and Families Small Investment, Big Return* document included in meeting packets, which had been provided to legislators during the visit to the capitol.

Ms. Hays observed that no strong leadership had come forward in the budget crisis discussions.

Ms. Piercy remarked that given the economic condition of the country, no one knew yet where we were heading. She felt that the stimulus package was a "bright item on the horizon." She predicted that the stimulus monies would come to counties and cities with less strings attached than usual. She averred that the \$700 billion package only included \$3 billion of actual money; the rest were tax cuts. She said all jurisdictions had lists of projects but it was important to look beyond individual needs to find opportunities that could "lift all boats."

Ms. Hamilton asked if there had been any talk of changing the governor's mind about not accessing the Rainy Day Fund during the remaining four months of this biennium. Mr. Schulz responded that he had heard that some stimulus money could be used now, and could be used retroactively as far back as October 2008.

Ms. Hays explained that some of the policies had changed, particularly around schools, because the Legislature was trying to reduce the number of days schools were in session. She said some legislators wanted to use the money and some did not. She referred to the subheading in the legislative document,

Boldly Create New Funding Options, which included small methods of raising money such as passing the license plate initiative called “Keep Kids Safe.” She stated that funds from this initiative would help pay for LCCCF child abuse prevention programs.

Ms. Clarke passed around a sheet with form letters citizens could send to their representatives encouraging them to keep the initiative moving through the legislative process.

V. COMMUNITY PROVIDER MEETING RESULTS and

VI. STATE BUDGET UPDATE

Ms. Hays combined agenda items V. and VI. She explained that there was still a shortfall for the 07-09 biennium, slated to end in June, 2009. She reported that the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) asked all county commissions to convene their community partners to determine how a five percent budget cut would affect the services they provide. The LCCCF and its partners decided that an across-the-board cut would be best as it would maintain all services. She said after this data was shared with the OCCF, the LCCCF and other county commissions were asked how a 10, 15 and 20 percent cut would affect their services during the 09-11 biennium. She related that the *Impacts of Budget Cuts for Lane County* document, included in meeting packets, outlined the results of the conversations the LCCCF had with their partners and laid out how each level of budget cut would affect each of LCCCF’s services and programs. She said the Legislature wanted a suggestion other than an across-the-board cut, which many commissions had recommended.

Ms. da Silva expressed her belief that all of the services under LCCCF were very respectful of their interconnectedness. She underscored that a cut to one service would affect all other services.

Ms. Hays stated that the Legislature also proposed a \$1 million cut to Healthy Start for the rest of the 07-09 biennium and asked how commissions would handle it. She related that LCCCF had spoken to its partners and had determined how to make cuts to the program in the last four months of the biennium.

Mr. Cook expressed his belief that the previously-used local control system allowed more voices to be heard at the budget decision-making table. Ms. Hays responded that the Executive Committee recommended using flexible funding around three specific focus areas and this would allow more community voices to be heard, as referenced in the *Local Commissions on Children and Families Funding Streams* document.

Ms. Hays stated that the LCCCF had to put together a budget for next year. She explained that a five percent cut would seriously affect the Commission’s ability to function and a seven percent cut would mean the loss of a staff person.

Ms. Da Silva stated that the talks were very difficult, especially when cuts as high as 20 percent were being proposed. She speculated about the point at which an agency would become unable to function due to budget cuts.

Ms. Hays noted that Lane County was currently negotiating with its largest union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). She said of the LCCCF staff members, she was the only non-represented employee, and if there was a strike she would be the only person reporting to work. She added that a plan for this was in place.

VII. CCF DISCRETIONARY FUNDS BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ms. Hays directed the group's attention to the *Issue Brief* included in meeting packets, regarding whether the LCCCF should direct staff to allocate 2009-11 biennial discretionary funds as recommended by the CCF Executive Committee. She reviewed the background information and the budget sheet included in meeting packets, which outlined how discretionary funds were spent in 2007-2009. She then reviewed a budget sheet that showed the change in biennial fund spending from 1999-2001 until 2007-2009.

Ms. Hays explained that when the Executive Committee reviewed the budget sheets, they recommended that discretionary funds be allocated to the Family Resource Center (FRC) network and Community Focus Area Projects (CFAP). She explained that if cuts were higher than ten percent the Executive Committee recommended reducing funds to the FRC and CFAP, with cuts to FRCs made selectively and not across the board. She related that the Executive Committee also recommended that Family Support & Connection should not receive discretionary funds for 09-11. The proposal put forward by the Executive Committee consisted of recommendations for a possible scenario in which less funds would be available. She stated that if these cuts needed to be made, the Commission could ask further questions about specific cuts and how they would affect specific services.

Mr. Cook, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, moved to return the item to the Executive Committee for further information.

Mr. Cook explained that there were some data issues helpful for him to determine whether accepting the Executive Committee's recommendations was a wise move. He requested the budget of all Family Support & Connection programs and their other sources of funding, so that the Commission could see the impact such a recommendation would have.

Ms. Piercy requested an assessment tool. Ms. Hays responded that the Executive Committee did engage in three months of discussion related to their recommendations.

Ms. Piercy requested that the Commission be walked through that decision making process. She added that she had total confidence that the recommendations had been made in a thoughtful manner.

Ms. Hays asked Mr. Cook to clarify the exact data that he was requesting with Ms. Rogers.

Ms. Hampton announced that the next Executive Committee meeting would occur on Monday, March 3 at noon, for those who wished to attend.

The motion to return the item to the Executive Committee for further clarification passed unanimously, 15:0.

Mr. Schulz requested a graphic representation of what each budget scenario would look like for the next Commission meeting in order to show how each scenario would affect each program. Ms. Hays stated that staff would graph what a 5, 10, 15 and 20 percent reduction would look like for each program.

Ms. Hampton directed the group's attention to the *Proposed Meeting Schedule*.

Ms. Hays asked all to note the location change to Lane County Mental Health for the March 18 meeting. She also noted that the Quality Child Care center in Florence received \$100,000 from the county in video

lottery monies.

Ms. Piercy announced that, for the third year in a row, the county was awarded full funding (\$2.2 million) for the Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. She explained that this funding would help keep basic support services for homeless people going.

Ms. Hampton, noting no further business to be discussed, adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

(Recorded by Katie Dettman)