

**CHARLOTTESVILLE/ALBEMARLE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 4, 2004
ALBEMARLE COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 320**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Martha Carroll, 16th District Court Service Unit
Dr. Kevin Castner, Albemarle County Schools
Shirley Copeland, Albemarle Citizen Representative
Robert Cox, Charlottesville Dept. of Social Services
Madison Cummings, Albemarle Citizen Representative
Dr. Michael Dickens, Charlottesville Citizen Representative
Leslie Harris-Scott, Charlottesville Citizen Representative
Timothy Heaphy, Charlottesville Citizen Representative
Mark Kindler, Albemarle Citizen Representative
Dr. Susan McLeod, Thomas Jefferson Health District
Linda Peacock, City of Charlottesville
Jim Peterson, Region Ten Community Services Board
Kathy Ralston, Chair, Albemarle Department of Social Services
Sterling Robinson, Albemarle Citizen Representative
Noah Schwartz, Monticello Area Community Action Agency
Roxanne White, Albemarle County
Danielle Wilcox, Charlottesville Citizen Representative

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Ron Hutchinson, Charlottesville City Schools
Winx Lawrence, University of Virginia
Sade Ridley, Albemarle Youth Representative
Jessica Rafter, Charlottesville Youth Representative
Cathy Train, United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area

CCF STAFF PRESENT

Saphira Baker, Director
Gretchen Ellis, Planner
Linda Rahman, Program Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT

John Freeman, Albemarle County Department of Social Services
Kim Higgins, Charlottesville/Albemarle Domestic Violence Services
Susan Painter, Albemarle County Victim/Witness Program
Kimberly Flash, Shelter for Help in Emergency

HANDOUTS (prior to meeting)

Agenda for February 4, 2004 CCF meeting
January 7, 2004 CCF meeting minutes
Director's Report
Draft of Charlottesville/Albemarle Multidisciplinary Team Memorandum of Agreement
Revised Family Violence Work Group Work Plan
Draft of Children's Advocacy Center Needs Assessment Preliminary Report
Child Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee Final Report
CCF Executive Committee Status Report, 2-04
Charlottesville/Albemarle CFF "Staying Ahead of the Curve" on issues related to child and family well-being (draft 01-28-04)
CSA Monthly Meeting Report – December 17, 2003
December 10, 2003 CART Cases
Charlottesville CSA Summary Financial Report for December 2003 (un-reconciled)
Albemarle CSA Summary Financial Report for December 2003

HANDOUTS (during meeting)

Kids Watch – A Project of the Coalition for Violence-Free Families - brochures:
Understanding the Effects of Family Violence on Children (a guide for professionals working with children), *We all want the Best for Our Children*, and *Every family has trouble getting along now and then...*

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

K. Ralston, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05pm and welcomed Commissioners and members of the Family Violence Work Group: Gretchen Ellis, John Freeman, Kim Higgins, Susan Painter and Kimberly Flash.

II. SPECIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE ADDED AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda with no specification of items to be added was made by M. Cummings and seconded by B. Cox.

- ◆ **THE COMMISSION ADOPTED THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING WITH NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES.**

III. COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

No comments from the public were made.

IV. MINUTES FROM THE CCF MEETING FOR JANUARY 7, 2004

A motion to approve the minutes was made by R. White and seconded by D. Wilcox.

- ◆ **THE COMMISSION APPROVED THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 7, 2004 CCF MEETING WITH NO CHANGES OR ADDITIONS.**

V. FAMILY VIOLENCE WORK GROUP REPORT – G. ELLIS, J. FREEMAN, K. HIGGINS, S. PAINTER, K. FLASH

G. Ellis stated she was delighted to update the Commissioners on the Family Violence Work Group. It has been eight months since the Family Violence Work Group has updated the Commissioners. G. Ellis announced there are two items the Family Violence Work Group would like the Commissioners to consider for approval: 1) the Revised Family Violence Work Group Work Plan and 2) the draft of the Charlottesville/Albemarle Multidisciplinary Pilot project.

G. Ellis reported that The Family Violence Work Group had formed two sub-committees, the Domestic Violence subcommittee and the Child Abuse and Neglect subcommittee, which then divided into four different groups: KidsWatch, Multidisciplinary Team, (the Work Group Plan and Violence Prevention). G. Ellis then introduced John Freeman who would present the Final Report of the Child Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee to the Commissioners.

J. Freeman reported that the Family Violence Work Group was responsible for finding ways to increase community involvement in family violence and child protection. The committee met for one year and are now completed with their task. The Work Group consists primarily of representatives from service providers and organizations that have a role in responding to child abuse and neglect, through prevention activities, intervention, child protection and prosecution; or treatment and service provision to children and families. J. Freeman thanked G. Ellis for her leadership with the Family Violence Work Group.

J. Freeman stated there are three areas of intervention. A Multiple Response System in responding to child abuse and neglect complaints, a State DSS pilot of Structured Decision Making (SDM) in child

protective service cases and Children's Advocacy Centers. The city of Charlottesville, Albemarle County and Green County are looking into participating in the Structured Decision Making model. J. Freeman advised that chief among the recommendations of the subcommittee is the further development of the multidisciplinary team concept and the exploration of development of a child advocacy center for the Charlottesville/Albemarle community. The subcommittee also recommends:

- Increase support for educational/training efforts on reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect;
- Continue to support effective prevention and early intervention services;
- Support Children's Advocacy Center and Multi-disciplinary Team concepts that are directed at all child victims;
- Enlist schools in efforts to identify children at risk or in need of services and in coordination and service provision; consider Albemarle County school-based Family Support Program as best practice model for further development.

G. Ellis introduced Kim Flash with Shelter for Help in Emergency to report on domestic violence. K. Flash announced the Kids Watch program has been successful. A number of people have gathered around the table and increased communication between agencies. K. Flash reported that the Clark School has been receptive and has noticed a positive change in their children's behavior. K. Flash stated that the grant ended in September, but all members have agreed to continue with in-kind support. The subcommittee recognized the importance of neighborhood involvement and contacted the Virginia Organization Project. The Virginia Organization Project inspired members to commit four hours per month to build relationships with neighborhoods to have a strong base of community supporters. The subcommittee's goal is to expand and is looking for ways to build capacity. Brochures on Kids Watch were distributed for the commissioners to review.

G. Ellis introduced Kim Higgins, the Charlottesville/Albemarle Domestic Violence Coordinator to report on the Prevention Subcommittee. The subcommittee looked at what kinds of programs are in the community, how victims are screened, what kind of assessment tools are used and what would work best.

G. Ellis presented the teams recommendation to develop a Children's Advocacy Center – a one-stop investigative support unit. The Children's Advocacy Center would address victims of violence by non-caretakers as well as family. G. Ellis announced this is a large undertaking and a cost would be involved. There is a specific methodology and four step process to start. G. Ellis stated that at the moment, up to 13 agencies and organizations are involved in reporting, investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse/victimization. During an investigation, each child experiences two to four interviews which are conducted in spaces described as "non child friendly". G. Ellis further reported there are no typical experiences, but all are generally stressful to the child. G. Ellis stated the committee has gathered enough information to move to the next phase, a feasibility study. The work group on Family Violence is requesting the Commissioners' assistance in this, especially those involved with the medical community. It should take four to five months.

G. Ellis introduced Susan Painter to speak about the Multidisciplinary Team. S. Painter announced there are a lot of people and agencies involved in the current process of investigating child abuse. Each agency has their own team, which sometimes can function haphazardly, each having their own protocols. A Multidisciplinary Team would operate as a full team. (See Charlottesville/Albemarle Multidisciplinary Team Memorandum of Agreement.) S. Painter reported that she has spoken with the University of Virginia's Pediatric Care and Neurology Department who have agreed to work with the Multidisciplinary Team. The Family Violence workgroup is seeking the Commissioner's endorsement of the use of a comprehensive multidisciplinary team for children in Charlottesville and Albemarle who are victims of violence.

There was a discussion on who would be the point person for the Multidisciplinary Team, how the team would chart whether it is successful or not, how often the Multidisciplinary Team would meet, what cases would be selected, and how one would determine if accusations are real or not. G. Ellis reported that she would be the point person for the first six months on a pilot basis. The full Multidisciplinary Team would meet twice a month and the Work Group would need to decide on the proper measurements for success. The cases selected would be the cases that resulted in injury and the team would look at both injuries caused by non-caretaker and caretaker. G. Ellis further noted that, at this time, there are 8-10 very serious cases per month. K. Higgins stated a Children's Advocacy Center would have staff that had extensive training in sexual/child abuse and would be able to recognize if accusations were real or not and what other services were needed. G. Ellis stated the Children's Advocacy Center would be certified and child friendly.

The Commissioners also had questions regarding KidsWatch. R. White inquired about how the children were selected. K. Flash reported that the Work Group spoke with children from three to four classrooms at Clark Elementary School and with the school's principal. 12 children were identified as victims of family violence. Domestic Violence calls were also identified by GIS and police data.

The Work Group would report back to the Commissioners when the feasibility study is completed.

A motion to was made by S. Robinson to approve the Revised Family Violence Work Group Work Plan and the development of a comprehensive Multidisciplinary Team for children in Charlottesville and Albemarle County who are victims of violence. The motion was seconded by M. Cummings. All members present voted in favor.

- ◆ **THE COMMISSION APPROVED THE REVISED FAMILY VIOLENCE WORK GROUP WORK PLAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM FOR CHILDREN IN CHARLOTTESVILLE AND ALBEMARLE COUNTY WHO ARE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE.**

VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN – K. RALSTON

K. Ralston gave a brief background and updated Commissioners on the CCF Executive Committee Status Report, 2-04. K. Ralston reported that many of the projects assigned have been completed or are in the progress of being completed. K. Ralston stated that the 01-28-04 draft on CCF *“Staying Ahead of the Curve” on issues related to child and family well-being* is being brought before the Commissioners for their approval. The Commissioners discussed the document and made the following revisions: (revisions noted in red)

The CCF Executive Committee was charged with several tasks. These included:

1. Identify ways to obtain more frequent interaction/meetings with City Council, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and School Boards to share policy recommendations and exchange information on needs and resources. Establish a calendar for regular communication and meetings with policy makers.
2. Develop criteria for when Commissioners and staff should take action on time-sensitive issues;
3. Develop a means for addressing emerging policy and program issues.

In August 2003, the Executive Committee was asked by members to expand this task and:

4. Develop additional criteria for Commissioners to consider when voting to adopt or endorse public policy statements and positions.

PURPOSE

This document provides (I) general guidelines for increasing interaction and information exchange with policy makers and (II) draft criteria for CCF members and staff to take action on time sensitive issues and issue policy statements and (III) suggestions for addressing emerging Issues for local residents.

Issue I: Obtain more frequent interaction with policy makers to exchange information on needs and resources

Strategy: Adopt an ethic of considering whether new CCF data, reports, or recommendations merit Council/~~Executive Board or School Board's~~ attention. If we conceive of specific action or recommendations that we would like them to consider, then request a spot on their agendas in addition to CCF Annual Report presentation

Premise: To adopt an ethic means to be pro-active with information that the CCF collects and analyzes. CCF may at times provide only factual information and at other times may take a position on an item. All guidelines must relate to data.

Data, reports, or recommendations must be relevant, recent, reputable, derived from more than one source, **if possible**, and have comparative state and national data if available.

For those data, reports and recommendations that are forward that are not specifically voted on or approved by the CCF but rather by the Executive Committee or staff; factual information only is to be provided.

Data, reports, or recommendations approved by the full CCF may include a position of the CCF. CCF staff will review the agendas of the respective boards ahead of time in order to know if CCF should be a voice for any item on the agenda.

1. Presentations to the respective boards should include at a minimum, one staff and one CCF member.

ISSUE II: CRITERIA FOR TAKING ACTION ON TIME SENSITIVE ISSUES AND ISSUE POLICY STATEMENTS.

Strategy: Commissioners may take action if the **issue** meets all of the following criteria:

1. Is within CCF's eight priority areas pertaining to the well-being of children and their families: safe and supportive families, children (0-6) healthy and ready to learn; healthy, positively involved adolescents; effective coordinated system of services; treatment/intervention for troubled youth; educational and economic opportunities; safe and vital neighborhoods; and an engaged and informed community.
2. Represents a documented need among local children and their families (reliable published data supports action on the issue.)
3. Has cross-cutting implications affecting issues broad enough to affect **the well-being of children and families in the community. ~~more than one constituency or group.~~**
4. Is consistent with the four CCF roles of information source, advisor, coordinator, catalyst
5. Does not negatively affect staff's capacity to deliver promised deliverables or anticipated outcomes
6. Or is accompanied by additional in-kind (volunteer), staff or financial resources to address the issue

Process: Commissioners may take action if the following process is followed:

1. Commissioners approve action at a public meeting. No decisions can be made over email or telephone.

2. When time does not allow for discussion and approval at a Commission monthly meeting, the Executive Committee **can** approve action **at a public meeting**. No decisions can be made over email or telephone.
3. With both cases, consensus will be sought among members. If the Chair determines that a full consensus is not achievable, then he/she will call a vote. If there is significant divergence of opinion, members may consider refraining from a public statement.
4. The CCF office will be the point of contact for the action and any inquiries related to the action (press release, letter to editor, interviews) although any CCF member can speak to the issue if he or she chooses.

Issue III Addressing Emerging Issues

Strategy: Commissioners may seek to explore an issue that appears to be emerging for Charlottesville/Albemarle community, yet is not yet well documented through research or represented in current CCF work groups and activities. This may represent a hunch, perceived trend, or anticipated need.

To initiate action or exploration on an emerging issue:

1. CCF members, staff, and citizens or area professionals and public leaders may bring notice of emerging issues to CCF monthly meetings (as part of “members’ or public comments) and seek majority approval for further study.
2. A request for attention may also be generated by the City Manager or County Executive Offices in accordance with CCF’s charge as advisory to City Council and Albemarle County Board of Supervisors.
3. Further study will include exploratory focus groups to better understand and define the issue and report back to CCF members with preliminary findings.
4. Focus groups will be dependent on CCF member, volunteer, and staff capacity to organize meaningful studies and meetings, or the allocation of additional staff resources. With the current staffing structure, CCF staff and members can manage a maximum of 3 focus groups annually.

A motion to approve with revisions the draft “Staying Ahead of the Curve” on issues related to child and family well-being was made by M. Kindler and seconded by R. White. All Commissioners present voted in favor.

◆ **THE COMMISSION APPROVED THE DRAFT “STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE” ON ISSUES RELATED TO CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING WITH REVISIONS.**

VII. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

K. Ralston asked if there were any questions or comments on the Director’s Report. M. Cummings commented on the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee Roundtable held last Thursday and what a remarkable job was done. S. Baker reported that it was well attended – 55 people attended. S. Baker commented that two new ideas have come forth at the round table that they are very excited about. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee will look at the recommendations and come back upon those recommendations that can be accomplished quickly.

S. Baker reported that she made a presentation to the Donor’s Roundtable today on CCF research and the Outcome Measurement Work Group’s activities.

VIII. MEMBERS' COMMENTS

- R. White recommended putting the "Staying Ahead of the Curve" on issues related to child and family well-being on the CCF website.
- M. Cummings commended S. Baker on her presentation on CCF research results and their relationship to County educational goals to the County School Board on January 8, 2004.
- R. White commented on the CSA Cost Containment presentation to the Executive Board. Paul McWhinney, Saphira Baker and staff did an excellent job. R. White received great comments. S. Baker acknowledged B. Cox as the principal writer of the report.
- M. Dickens inquired about the cost for funding the Teen Pregnancy/STD Prevention Work Group coordinator. S. Baker said that available funding from Martha Jefferson Hospital and the State was approximately \$15,000.
- SMcLeod reported that there would be a Dental Forum will be held on Thursday, February 26th, from 5:00pm-7:00pm at the Health Department. The Health Department along with local dentists will discuss the needs and services currently in the community and collect any input on services that are lacking.

There being no further business to report, a motion to end the meeting was made by M. Cummings and seconded by M. Carroll.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION WILL BE
MARCH 3, 2004
THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
FROM 5:00PM-6:30PM**