

**CHARLOTTESVILLE/ALBEMARLE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
MINUTES
AUGUST 1, 2001**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Martha Carroll, 16th District Court Service Unit
Dr. Kevin Castner, Albemarle County Schools
Robert Cox, Charlottesville Dept. of Social Services
Mark Kindler, Albemarle Citizen Representative
Dr. Susan McLeod, Thomas Jefferson Health District
Larry Miller, Albemarle Citizen Representative
Linda Peacock, City of Charlottesville
Jim Peterson, Member-at-Large, Region Ten
Community Services Board
Debby Pomerantz, Charlottesville Citizen
Representative
Kathy Ralston, Member-at-Large, Albemarle Dept.
of Social Services
Sterling Robinson, Albemarle Citizen Representative
Marti Snell, University of Virginia
Ruth Stone, Vice Chair, Private Provider
Representative
Dr. William Symons, Jr., Charlottesville City Schools
Cathy Train, United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area
Roxanne White, Albemarle County

HANDOUTS (prior to meeting)

Agenda for August 1, 2001 Meeting
June 6, 2001 CCF Meeting Minutes
Needs Assessment Work Group Work Plan
Report to the CCF from the Needs Assessment Work
Group
Comprehensive Services Act Committee June 2001
Report
CART June 2001 Cases
Comprehensive Services Act Committee July 2001
Report
CART July 2001 Cases
Director's Update for August 1, 2001 CCF Meeting

HANDOUTS (during meeting)

Middle School Roundtable June 27, 2001- Overview
and Follow-up Plans
Juvenile Records and Information Sharing Training
Flyer
Stepping Stones 2001

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Aurora Nichols, Charlottesville Youth Representative
Dr. Michael Dickens, Charlottesville Citizen Representative
Richard Merriwether, Chair, Charlottesville Citizen Representative

CCF STAFF PRESENT

Saphira Baker, Director
Lisa Climer, Comprehensive Services Act Coordinator
Gretchen Ellis, Planner/Analyst
Linda Balnave, Project Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT

Carla Sykes, Observer from the League of Women Voters of Charlottesville/Albemarle
Lisa Trivits, University of Virginia
Melvin Wilson, University of Virginia

I. WELCOME

Ruth Stone called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed the Commissioners and all others in attendance, including Carla Sykes, the observer from the League of Women Voters, and Lisa Climer, the Comprehensive Services Act Coordinator. Lisa Climer introduced herself to the Commissioners. She has been a social worker for seven years and most recently worked for the Charlottesville Department of Social Services. Aurora Nichols, although not present at this meeting, will be the new youth member representing Charlottesville. Robert Cox was recognized for his contributions to the Commission with an engraved

leather notepad holder on his retirement from the Executive Committee. Kathy Ralston will be taking his place on the Executive Committee.

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

The agenda for the meeting was adopted with no changes or additions.

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

III. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

IV. MINUTES FROM JUNE 6, 2001

Jim Peterson noted that Jonathon Earl's last name was misspelled in the minutes. Robert Cox moved to adopt the minutes. Kathy Ralston seconded the motion.

- ◆ **THE COMMISSION ADOPTED THE MINUTES OF JUNE 6, 2001 WITH THE ABOVE STATED CHANGE.**

V. UPDATES FROM WORK GROUPS

A. NEEDS ASSESSMENT WORK GROUP—GRETCHEN ELLIS AND MELVIN WILSON

R. Stone welcomed Gretchen Ellis, Melvin Wilson and Lisa Trivits. G. Ellis introduced the *Report to the CCF from the Needs Assessment Work Group*. The report was developed over the course of nine work group meetings held since April. S. Baker reported that M. Wilson, L. Trivits, M. Kindler and others were brought in as experts to help develop a needs assessment proposal. M. Wilson explained that the work group was charged with looking at family functioning, assessing where the community is in its understanding, and determining how community residents access social services and other resources. The group worked on trying to absorb and understand previous surveys done in the last decade and a half, filling in gaps and moving forward to develop a survey approach that would assess and evaluate level of need, utilization and family functioning on an ongoing basis every few years. He went on to outline the objectives that should be accomplished by the needs assessment, described on page two of the report. G. Ellis, commenting on the review of the findings of prior needs assessments and reports, added that 65 responses were obtained from the survey conducted at the Youth Summit in July. M. Wilson explained that the work group identified specific needs that have been or are in the process of being addressed through community efforts (found on page two of the report). A methodology for doing the needs assessment, involving a survey, focus groups and intensive interviews, was devised to collect the best possible information (listed under #3 on page three of the report).

G. Ellis presented the two recommendations of the work group (recorded on page four of the report). First, the work group recommends conducting a multi-faceted, phased needs assessment. Second, the work group recommends that the Commission establishes a mechanism, such as an implementation work group, using the results of the needs assessment to: establish priority issues for intervention, develop a strategic plan, request that funding priorities be set by City Council and

the Board of Supervisors, leverage additional diverse funding sources, and conduct a similar needs assessment every three to five years.

K. Ralston asked if the needs assessment would try to capture information by neighborhoods or geographic regions. M. Wilson responded that the work group discussed acquiring information by region as well as trying to insure representation of low-income residents in the city and a substantial number of ethnic minority residents. K. Ralston wondered if the United Way could be included when asking City Council and the Board of Supervisors to consider funding priorities. S. McLeod commented that the recommendation was only a suggestion of what the Commission might do and that it seemed a broader discussion at the moment. G. Ellis stated that the work group wanted a vital meaningful study that would not gather dust at the first opportunity.

R. Cox asked about other current or planned needs assessments that might duplicate the work of the proposed project. G. Ellis related that in process and in specific areas the needs assessment was not duplicating the work of others. A Mental Health study is focusing on mental illness. Piedmont Housing Services is looking at the quality of the housing stock. The Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA) asked the work group to include questions about family care giving in the survey. The Monticello Area Community Action Agency (MACAA) is doing a study of low-income residents and service providers that is more narrowly defined. M. Wilson added that a series of surveys was suggested to capture the steady pace of change occurring nationally and locally, including changes resulting from welfare reform and the Standards of Learning tests. A single survey would not recognize the ways all the agencies implement interventions to bring about change. The MACAA survey uses systematic focus groups of low-income participants in all their service regions to develop profiles and maps of community needs.

K. Castner remarked that Charlottesville, an area of ten square miles, has 4,000 children and Albemarle, an area of 750 miles, has 13,000 children. Albemarle with a larger population quantitatively has a harder to reach low-income population, which needs to be considered. A community problem needs to be solved not just a City problem. M. Wilson explained that the work group suggested studying the County proportionally and discussed specifically the pockets of poverty in the County. G. Ellis indicated that as part of the Request for Proposals it would be specified that the survey designers must look at urban and rural low-income areas. It was possible to purchase a list of telephone numbers of families with low-income children to assure that these areas were covered. M. Kindler noted that the needs assessment process would use the information obtained to decide what to look at next and that as information emerged it would provide more direction with regard to the pockets of poverty in the County.

C. Train questioned the use of the phrase "if possible, linguistic minorities." G. Ellis agreed that language could be a difficult hurdle to overcome in a telephone survey. C. Train wondered how to factor in cultural differences regarding the desire to access resources and the willingness to respond. M. Wilson replied that the work group wanted to anticipate dialogue with service providers. When looking at family functioning, the work group sought to take into account families that were varied in culture. For example, in African American families social support might be found in extended families whereas in Mexican American families, where marriage rates are higher, a different kind of resource might be needed. C. Train pointed out that a different message could be extrapolated from the assumption that there is a lack of information when there may be, in fact, no interest due to the culture. G. Ellis noted that the work group would specifically look at public trust.

J. Peterson suggested that the survey might provide easy answers. For example, that something is needed for young people to do. However, Charlottesville already has a high level of programming. He stated that after two and a half years it is good to get to the heart of a needs assessment process. M. Wilson reported that in observations of Fridays after Five, which takes place next to a low-income African American community, participants are primarily from the greater community. However, at the same time in the neighboring Recreation Center midnight basketball draws largely low-income African American participants. Two kinds of free activity are offered. It looks like

community segregation and it would be nice to understand what it is about the activities that attracts different participants. Trying to understand the point of view of the participants in terms of cultural differences might provide some clarity.

G. Ellis explained that the survey questions were experiential. L. Peacock asked if the questionnaires asked, "Why?" G. Ellis noted that they do and subtleties would be distilled from individual interviews. S. McLeod observed that work should be focused on doing something practical with the information. The Health Department would be interested in adding some health questions to the survey.

S. Baker related that when the work group looked back over the history of prior needs assessments it consistently saw problems that were not addressed and tried to focus the questionnaire more intensely in those areas. G. Ellis explained that work group members could not identify focused local intervention efforts for the identified needs described on page three of the report. L. Peacock proposed that many of these areas are being addressed, including accessibility of community resources. It may be necessary to gather more specific information to see to what degree the efforts are sufficient. S. Baker indicated that the work group was looking for a really visible community wide endeavor and the listing reflects work group members' knowledge of these, and thus might miss efforts outside of their areas of expertise.

L. Peacock suggested that the time frame might be reduced by not doing a Request for Proposals and contacting the Center for Government Research directly instead. S. Baker noted that the group had not known this, but was interested in putting the RFP out more widely, particularly to research groups that had focused previously on child and family issues. R. White observed that when the Thomas Jefferson Planning District did a survey they used community volunteers to offset costs. G. Ellis responded that community volunteers would help with the follow up interviews. S. McLeod inquired if the cost and funds for the Request for Proposals had been identified. S. Baker indicated that the use of carry over dollars had been discussed and IVE funds were also under consideration as a source. M. Snell asked if the proposal had gone through the University of Virginia Institutional Review Board. M. Wilson said that it hadn't but he was aware of the requirements.

R. Stone asked for a motion to approve the Needs Assessment Work Group recommendations to the Commission. K. Ralston moved to approve recommendations 1 and 2 on page four of the report with out the bullets as submitted by the committee. Martha Carroll seconded the motion.

◆ **THE COMMISSION APPROVED THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION.**

B. DATA MANAGEMENT WORK GROUP, 2001 RELEASE OF *STEPPING STONES*—LINDA PEACOCK

L. Peacock presented the 2nd annual edition of *Stepping Stones* to the Commission. She thanked Gretchen Ellis and the Commission staff. The charge given the Data Management Work Group was to gather data from over fifty sources. Over time it was hoped that trends would become apparent and it could be seen whether recommendations had an impact. Notable in the current report was the information that teen births (p. 23 4.20) dropped in the City from 79 per 1,000 females to 53 per 1,000 females. In the County the drop was not as dramatic from 33 per 1000 females to 24 per 1000 females. Juvenile arrests for violent crimes (p. 25 4.25) reflect a drop in the City from 11.6 arrests to 3.46 arrests. County trends remained the same even though the population increased. The possession of drugs and alcohol in public school (p.27 5.27) dropped in the City but went up slightly in the County.

R. Stone inquired about school reports of physical violence (p. 27 5.26). G. Ellis stated that the Commission agreed not to draw conclusions until at least five years of data were available. W.

Symons suggested that physical violence might need to be defined, as there are ten different categories of descriptions. G. Ellis noted that “any physical contact” was the definition used. The state redefined physical violence in 1997 so data from 1997 was eliminated since the rates went up dramatically. W. Symons observed that it might depend on which individual makes the report since some people tend to include verbal altercations and some do not. It can be seen when comparing family violence to school violence that students who experience an improper model at home may not be able to determine the appropriate level of behavior. G. Ellis concurred, noting that more specific data about court involved youth and young people in residential facilities show a strong correlation with domestic violence and parental substance abuse. Also, troubled youth tend not to be involved in sports and fine arts activities. W. Symons noted that the data raises tough questions about how to make preventative interventions.

L. Peacock stated that the Data Management Work Group would make a presentation with press coverage to City Council and the Board of Supervisors. A letter might be sent to respond or refine issues. The publication will become official after it is presented to the Commission, City Council and the Board of Supervisors. C. Train asked about the meaning of the diamonds and squares in the graphs on pages 33 and 34. G. Ellis explained that diamonds represent Albemarle and squares represent Charlottesville. Albemarle does not collect data on students living with both parents (graph 7.34). S. Baker pointed out that the two-color version of the publication was one-third the price of a full color version and that this option was exercised in order to have copies to distribute more widely. Only 250 copies have been printed and they will be placed in the reference department of the library and the schools. One free copy will be distributed per agency. *Stepping Stones* will also be available on the Commission website.

S. McLeod inquired whether new Census data was used for the 2000 data or whether the data was based on projections. G. Ellis replied that in most instances 1999 projections were utilized. The Number of Families graph (p. 34 7.35) is the only place 2000 Census data was used. She announced that the Data Management Work Group would like to do a series of public presentations to churches and Parent Teacher organizations and they would be asking the Commissioners to assist them. W. Symons suggested identifying service providers, intervention services, principals and social agencies and contacting them so that they are aware of what the data indicates before the publication is given to the public. R. Stone thanked the Work Group members for their presentation.

C. COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES ACT COMMITTEE—ROBERT COX

R. Cox introduced the Comprehensive Services Act monthly reports. The reports reflect discussions held regarding where the committee stands financially and what is spent on services. A comprehensive report will be presented to the Commission once the year is closed out in a few more months. Payments are made through August. The City and County are within their budgets for the year. The Comprehensive Services Act program has had relatively small increases and has succeeded in obtaining payments from other funding sources. The provision of outcomes from the service providers continues. Good information has been obtained on evaluation and use. What to do with the knowledge obtained is a practical matter. The Children Needing Extensive Services Work Group continues to meet and is developing plans to effectively address the needs of this population. In response to a question from R. White, R. Cox noted that outcome measures are done on all children in residential treatment. According to J. Peterson, the outcome performances support a huge initiative and the objectives are reviewed each quarter. R. White asked what percentage of all children in residential treatment have outcome measures done. J. Peterson replied that they are done for anyone receiving treatment through the Community Services Board. R. Cox noted that those numbers do not correspond directly with the CSA program.

VI. SCHEDULING A RETREAT

R. Stone proposed that the Commission set a date for the annual retreat. The consensus, by a show of hands, was that Wednesday, October 10th would be the best date. S. Baker announced that the retreat

would start at 4 p.m. and end at 9 p.m. She will need to speak with the facilitator before she can commit to shortening the meeting. In response to a question from C. Train regarding canceling the meeting the week before, S. Baker replied that there were a number of items the Commission may need to address at that meeting, and she would consult with the Executive Committee to make this decision.

VII. UPDATE—SAPHIRA BAKER

S. Baker distributed the *Overview and Follow-up Plans* from the Middle School Roundtable held June 27 from Deborah Abbott and Laurie McDade. It was a useful session with a mixture of people representing the schools and providers attending. Closer interaction is needed between school personnel and social service providers in order to serve children better.

A flyer on a *Juvenile Records and Information Training Session* to be held in Charlottesville on September 12th was circulated. The confidentiality laws that apply to young people in the juvenile justice system will be discussed. Commissioners were asked to release as many people from their staff as they could to attend this event. If anyone wants to see the guide that will be used, they should call Rory Carpenter or S. Baker, as the guide is difficult to send out by mail.

A Legislative Agenda is now expected from the Commission. The Annual Report is shaping up well with work groups thinking through all their priorities. The process helps the work groups focus and allows them to feel they are having an impact.

It is a time of transition. The Commission is losing staff and welcoming staff. Lisa Climer is joining the staff, and Terrilynn Platt is leaving. K. Ralston thanked the Commission staff that remains for working hard, being responsive and helpful in the last two months. S. Baker noted that Gretchen Ellis especially deserved thanks for her efforts. In addition, Linda Balnave is providing temporary help for a few months.

VIII. MEMBERS' COMMENTS

J. Peterson reported on the Youth Summit. There was a large article in the local newspaper and fair coverage from the other media. The radio stations popular with youth were saturated with announcements. Responses to the summit were very favorable. He thinks that summer may not be the best time of year to hold the summit. There will be a third annual youth summit. He hopes to schedule it at the end of the fall a year from now. Responding to a question from R. White, J. Peterson described the softball extravaganza on the second day of the summit. A summary of the recommendations was presented to all of the candidates for the state legislature. The candidates were asked to schedule individual meetings. A list of the recommendations can be obtained from Region Ten. S. Baker commented that the Commission has notes from the summit that could be given back to the young people so they can formulate their recommendations. S. McLeod asked about the groups represented at the summit. J. Peterson replied that attendees were primarily African American youth from Charlottesville. G. Ellis noted that her impression was that approximately 75% of the participants were girls.

K. Ralston asked S. McLeod about dental costs. S. McLeod responded that her organization was working on dental costs as part of the budget process, but would prepare a discussion item for the CCF before then.

R. Stone asked for a motion to adjourn.

◆ THE COMMISSION APPROVED THE MOTION TO ADJOURN.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.