

Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families
MINUTES—February 2, 2000

Members Present

Martha Carroll, 16th District Court Services Unit
Dr. Kevin Castner, Albemarle County Schools
Azzurra Cox
Robert Cox, Charlottesville Department of Social Services
Dr. Michael Dickens
Dr. Meredith Gunter
Richard Merriwether, Vice-Chair
Dr. Susan McLeod, Thomas Jefferson Health District
Larry Miller
Linda Peacock, City of Charlottesville
James Peterson, Chair, Region Ten Community Services Board
Kathy Ralston, Albemarle County Department of Social Services
Dr. William Symons, Charlottesville City Schools
Cathy Train, United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area
Roxanne White, County of Albemarle

Others Present

Saphira Baker, CCF
Patricia Burton, Institute for Family-Centered Services
Terri Evans, CCF
Debbie Stone, CCF

I. Welcome/Chair Remarks

Mr. Peterson welcomed the Commission, staff, and members of the public and called the meeting to order at 5:10 P.M.

II. Update

S. Baker updated the Commission on recent work group and staff activities. The Information Sharing Grant submitted to the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) in December had been approved, and a memo of agreement is being drafted. DCJS was impressed with the concept of the initial proposal, which centered on the development of uniform release forms and research on issues of confidentiality, and would like to see a local inventory and pool research statewide. A one-page thought sheet is being assembled, and S. Baker will present a formal memo of agreement to the Commission for their acceptance and approval of the monies.

The new Teen Pregnancy/STD Prevention work group is still finalizing its structure, and should be functioning as a CCF committee in a few months. S. McLeod asked if any

members of the original Strategic Planning Work Group are continuing their involvement in this effort and if any CCF members were on the committee. L. Peacock commented that A. Cox and D. Pomerantz had volunteered to serve on the work group. S. Baker noted that all the writers of the Strategic Plan would like to remain active; she reported that the group had been meeting at noon, but that the Executive Committee had requested that they meet later in order for A. Cox to attend.

One of the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Work Group was the establishment of a coordinator, and K. Ralston asked where this individual would be housed and whether S. Baker would serve as staff for the new work group. S. Baker replied that the coordinator would work out of Martha Jefferson Hospital. The coordinator would be considered an employee of the hospital and serve as staff for the work group, however S. Baker will attend meetings. S. McLeod expressed concern about having the position separate from other prevention activities taking place in the community and among CCF work groups. S. Baker noted that although the coordinator will be an employee of MJH, the scope of the coordinator's work is not set in stone and it should be possible for CCF members to have ongoing input into the plan's implementation.

S. Baker announced that the Growing Healthy Families Partnership is looking for individuals to serve on the Advisory Board, and asked Commission members to contact K. Ralston or her with suggestions if they hadn't already.

S. Baker concluded her update by thanking the CCF members who served on the Agency Budget Review Team for their participation.

III. Specification of Items to be added and adoption of agenda

There were no items to be added, and the agenda for the evening was accepted.

IV. Comments from public

J. Peterson welcomed Patricia Burton from the Institute for Family-Centered Services. Ms. Burton commented that she was glad to attend after missing a few CCF meetings.

V. Minutes from January 5, 2000

RICHARD MERRIWETHER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS A RECORD OF THE JANUARY 5, 2000 MEETING, SECONDED BY S. MCLEOD. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. Election to Fill Vacancy: Executive Committee Member-at-Large

Jeff Sobel's resignation left a vacancy for the Executive Committee Member-at-Large. The Committee nominated Meredith Gunter to fill the vacancy. J. Peterson opened the floor for additional nominations.

K. RALSTON MOVED TO CLOSE THE FLOOR FOR OTHER NOMINATIONS, SECONDED BY R. MERRIWETHER. THE MOTION TO APPOINT MEREDITH GUNTER AS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER-AT-LARGE WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

VII. Commission Work Plan

The Commission adopted the work plan in principal at the January 5 meeting, and was asked to follow-up with suggestions for priorities and additional resources.

L. Peacock asked whether there had been any resolution regarding whether the publication of the *Guide to Youth Services* was a Department of Juvenile Justice Office on Youth requirement. S. Baker reported that, at this time, the Office on Youth only requires an inventory of services every six years, and that an annual printing of the directory is not necessary. S. Baker reported that Springhollow Publishing had shown interest in using the data contained in the *Guide to Youth Services* to produce a directory for commercial sale. The benefit of this collaboration would be wider distribution of the directory; however, members of the Public Involvement Work Group were concerned that this type of directory might have a prohibitive price, and were unclear whether the proposed directory—including advertising and businesses related to children and families—would be as useful for agencies and parents as the CCF/UW *Guide*. R. White commented that this collaboration could be beneficial if it relieved CCF of marketing and distribution responsibilities for the directory. S. Baker noted that Debby Pomerantz is conducting a survey among agencies to get a better idea of how the directory is used, and this will help determine what direction to take.

R. Cox proposed that CCF prioritize the items on the workplan into three groups: mandated responsibilities (CSA, Juvenile Justice), high-priority projects (Stepping Stones), and projects that need more assistance (Children and Families Budget, Outcome Funding). Projects that are not of high importance could be postponed until priority activities are completed.

M. Dickens commented that Stepping Stones should remain a priority. He stated that other issues, such as addressing the problems presented by children in need of extensive services and promoting citizen involvement, are less pressing. K. Ralston pointed out that research on children needing extensive services is already in the works, and Stepping Stones will not capture data relevant to this population. Examining the issues surrounding these children is necessary because the expense associated with their treatment drives CSA. The six-month study of the most expensive cases is nearing completion and the outcomes of this research will be presented to CCF in May.

S. Baker pointed out that Stepping Stones provides demographic data, outcome funding provides data on funding trends, but there is no vehicle for collecting data on citizen feedback. M. Dickens responded that the data provided in Stepping Stones can be used

to direct community discussion, and it would be premature to gather anecdotal data until these indicators are complete.

M. Gunter stated that by virtue of its mission, CCF has the responsibility to address certain issues, especially those related to its role regarding the Comprehensive Services Act. The Public Involvement Work has new recommendations for encouraging citizen involvement, and M. Gunter suggested tabling the work plan until next time and moving on to the group's presentation to discuss these proposal.

VIII. Committee/Work Group Actions

A. Public Involvement Work Group

M. Gunter reported that the work group had narrowed the goal of increasing citizen involvement to focus on gaining youth and resident input into the planning process. To spearhead this, S. Baker has been working with Linda Peacock to incorporate questions related to children and family services into the citizen satisfaction survey for the City's Comprehensive Plan. The questions will focus on residents' perception of needs as well as satisfaction with City of Charlottesville services. It is hoped that the County might also be interested in surveying selected neighborhoods using similar questions.

The work group suggests that CCF hold focus groups with local groups that meet regularly (PTO, Church Groups, Civic Groups) to solicit citizen opinions on community needs and satisfaction, using the survey questions from the Comprehensive Plan as a jumping-off point. Resident opinions would be documented, and this information will allow CCF to identify service gaps and overlaps. M. Dickens pointed that people who use the most services are not involved in PTO or civic organizations, and suggested sampling people as they are receiving services. K. Ralston suggested that focus groups should also consider community assets as well as services that are needed. L. Miller suggested meeting with community groups that have an understanding of youth-related issues.

M. Gunter also outlined plans for citizen involvement that focused on gaining youth input into the planning process. Initially the work group hoped to involve the existing Youth Council based out of Region Ten, however, the Council's facilitator reported that participants were overwhelmed with their community service projects and did not want to take on another project at this time. The group suggests working with student government and Upward Bound/Project Discovery to obtain a youth perspective on local resources. S. McLeod suggested incorporating youth input into the focus groups by asking them to present questions to community groups with the possibility of receiving academic credit for their work.

R. Cox commented that these efforts could be dovetailed with the release and publication of Stepping Stones and the data related to children needing extensive services. R. White stated that CCF wants to bring the community together around youth and family issues, and that it is important to get the message out about the impact of *not* providing services. It is important to show citizens why their involvement is important, and motivate them to action.

B. CSA Overview/Update

Debbie Stone, the CCF CSA Coordinator, presented a recap of what CSA is and how it is locally implemented. The Comprehensive Services Act was established in 1993 to increase collaboration among agencies and provide high quality, cost-effective services for at-risk youth.

Locally, CCF administers CSA, and charges the CSA Committee with the responsibility of developing local procedures to provide services to children and families, manage and monitor monthly expenditures, implement state requirements, and oversee the Family Assessment and Planning Team process. The CSA Committee monitors the cases approved by the CART (Case Authorization and Review Team) subcommittee, which authorizes expenditures for most expensive services. CART also oversees the Family Planning and Assessment Teams (FAPT) that meet weekly to develop and review service plans for children.

Ultimately, CCF is responsible for the expenditure of over \$7 million dollars in state and local funds for the two localities. CSA is funded through state funds and a local cash match that is based on per capita income for each locality. In Charlottesville, the match is 31 percent; in Albemarle County, the match is 45 percent. CSA has two streams to determine funding priority: mandates and non-mandates. "Mandated" cases included children who in foster care or are in danger of being placed in foster care; children placed by the schools in residential special education programs; and children who require additional services to remain in the public school setting. "Non-mandated" cases are children who would be eligible for juvenile justice or mental health funds before receiving CSA funding. State and local governments are not required to provide matching dollars for children in this category, and therefore, Charlottesville and Albemarle County protect a certain amount of CSA funds for non-mandate cases to ensure that these children get the services they need.

Although a large amount of responsibility is delegated to the CSA Committee, CCF board members should have an understanding of CSA-related issues to make informed policy and funding recommendations. D. Stone reported that the total number of CSA cases in Charlottesville and Albemarle is rising. Several factors influence this rise: increases in the overall population, increases in substance abuse among parents, and an increase in the number of children exposed to drugs and alcohol before birth. Furthermore juvenile court judges are less tolerant of parental abuse and who are removing children from the home sooner than a

decade ago, and Social Service departments report an increase in the severity and complexity of needs among a small number of children previously served in foster care. Schools are reporting increases in the number of children in foster care requiring residential placements and in those needing day treatment and autism services.

R. White asked if CSA funds are available to parents who exhaust private insurance, and whether funding ended after a child reached the age of 18. D. Stone explained that most private insurance would not cover residential treatment. CSMIP (Children's Security Medical Insurance Plan) and Medicaid will cover a little, but CSA is the last funding stream available for these families. It is also possible to receive CSA-funded services until the age of 22 if the child is enrolled in a special education program. K. Ralston commented that while Medicaid will pay for some services previously covered by CSA, there is a lot of red tape involved and localities have received little direction from the Department of Medical Assistance Services.

R. White also asked for clarification on the difference between the CSA Committee and CART. D. Stone explained that CART authorizes the funding for the most expensive cases, meets with case managers monthly, and implements CSA regulations. The CSA Committee monitors policy and procedures and oversees CART.

L. Peacock emphasized the importance of balancing the information concerning the expense of CSA cases with some of the positive things going on in the community when presenting this to the public. K. Ralston pointed out that in examining early childhood education programs such as Bright Stars, the common denominator that determines educational success is whether there is a history of abuse or domestic violence in the home. The information presented concerning CSA underscores the importance of prevention efforts in the community.

R. Cox mentioned that Charlottesville and Albemarle increases in CSA cases are higher than the State average, but that the cost per case hovers around the State average. He also mentioned that there is a bill currently in the General Assembly that will expand the "mandated" population to include children involved in the Juvenile Court system for reasons of mental illness or mental retardation. He also noted that he had a list of CSA-related bills in the General Assembly available for anyone who was interested.

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:45 PM.