

**CHARLOTTESVILLE/ALBEMARLE  
COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**January 6, 1999—Amended Minutes**

Members present

Martha Carroll, Director, 16<sup>th</sup> District Juvenile & Domestic Court Services Unit  
Kevin Castner, Superintendent, Albemarle County Schools  
Michael Dickens, MD  
Meredith Gunter  
Susan McLeod, MD, Director, Thomas Jefferson Health District  
Richard Merriwether, Vice-Chair  
James Peterson, Chair and Director, Region Ten Community Services Board  
Deborah Pomerantz  
Katherine Ralston, Director, Albemarle County Department of Social Services  
Jeffrey Sobel  
Beatrice Esi Yarney  
Linda Peacock, Assistant City Manager  
Cathy Train, President, United Way – Thomas Jefferson Area  
Roxanne White, Assistant Albemarle County Executive  
Larry Miller

Others present

Saphira Baker, Director, Commission on Children and Families  
Rory Carpenter, Juvenile Justice Coordinator  
Debbie Stone, CSA Coordinator

**NEXT MEETING**

*Wednesday, February 3, 1999, 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
Tonsler Park Conference Room, 435 Cherry Avenue*

**I. Welcome/Chair Remarks:**

Mr. Peterson elaborated on some principles and arrangements intended to help make the absolute best use of the precious time available for Commission meetings, and also to recognize the Commission members' responsibilities and responsiveness inherent in their status as appointees to a public commission. He noted that every member of the Commission was appointed by the Charlottesville City Council and/or the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, and as such each member is a public appointed official with all the rights, responsibilities, duties and obligations of any public official. The decision made at the retreat to move the location of the regular Commission meetings out into all the various neighborhoods in Charlottesville and Albemarle signaled a real commitment to reach out to the community and to hear directly from the citizens. Media

coverage will also be sought, again to get the word out and maximize the effectiveness of the Commission's efforts.

In keeping with the public focus, Mr. Peterson is asking that only the Commission members and the director be seated at the table for Commission meetings, and that each have a name plate so that members of the public and media can correctly identify who the actual members of the Commission are. He will also start the meetings on time as a courtesy to all members and the public, and he will also try to bring the meetings to a close at the appointed hour out of respect to the members and recognizing that everyone has other commitments and need to be able to plan their schedules. The format of the agenda now includes a "Desired Action" so that members will be aware of the intended outcome of each agenda topic, and also a projected amount of time to spend on each item. Efforts will be made to limit the amount of paper distributed at the meetings so that all members will have the information in their hands ahead of time for preparation. Mr. Peterson also requested that members signal the chair to be recognized to speak so that everyone has an opportunity for orderly discourse.

Mr. Peterson concluded his opening remarks by observing that given the sheer breadth of the Commission's mission and the many responsibilities required of the Commission, the work will necessarily and appropriately be carried out largely through the committee and workgroup structure. One of the most difficult balances to achieve and maintain will be to fully utilize the in-depth scrutiny that committees will have given to the issues in their areas of endeavor, and not for the full Commission to then go over all the detail that the committees have dealt with in bringing forth their recommendations and motions. But the other side of this balance is that no Commission member should ever feel hesitant to seek clarification, expand upon, or even outright disagree with recommendations coming before the Commission. So, all members are encouraged to bring to bear their perspectives on all issues, but to be mindful not to rehash all the deliberations that have gone before.

**II. Specification of items to be added and adoption of agenda:**

Ms. Gunter requested that a discussion of press release distribution, meeting advertisement, and public information strategy be added to the Agenda. Ms. Ralston said she would distribute a written summary of her work group's priority issue discussion, as requested at an earlier meeting.

The agenda was accepted with those additions.

**III. Comments from public:**

There were no members of the public present.

**IV. Minutes from December 2, 1998:**  
**DR. DICKENS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES. MR. MERRIWETHER**  
**SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES WERE ACCEPTED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**V. Revised Bylaws:**

Mr. Peterson noted that Sections 1 and 2 will remain the same, but that in Article 3 on Membership, the term for the private provider was changed in order to put the private provider on the same footing as everyone else serving on the Commission. This change will require the approval of the Board of Supervisors and City Council, as the parent bodies of the Commission.

Dr. McLeod noted that the “3, 3, 3” structure doesn’t work because there are two youth members. Ms. Ralston said it could be changed to a “2, 2, 2” structure. Mr. Peterson suggested creating two additional officers, a Secretary and Member-at-Large, to serve with the Commission’s Chair and Vice-Chair as an Executive Committee.

Mr. Peterson sought to allay previously expressed concerns that the Executive Committee would function as a “mini-Board.” The role of the Executive Committee, he said, would be to serve primarily as a communications center, and the Executive Committee would have no authority to conduct business outside of meetings. This structure would allow the Commission to have four elected officers; the two additional officers could be nominated and elected at next month’s meeting.

Ms. Gunter questioned the necessity of having a “secretary,” and also suggested that the retiring Chair serve as a member of the Executive Committee. Dr. McLeod asked that if the “secretary” would not have the traditional responsibilities, why not have two members-at-large instead? Ms. White agreed with her. Mr. Miller commented that there should be a secretary since the Commission is an official public body.

Ms. Peacock disagreed, noting that the Commission’s authority is derived from the City Council and Board of Supervisors, and as such, the Chair’s signature is enough for any official purpose. She also agreed with the suggestion to call the two additional officers “members-at-large.” Ms. Ralston stated that she was not in favor of having a “secretary” either, but she said it was interesting to note the Chair’s establishment of this “routine” structure, since it was her understanding that the Commission had wanted to avoid a traditional organizational hierarchy and create something different. Mr. Sobel requested that the Commission decide on its structure and move on to carrying out its work.

Mr. Peterson also suggested that officers serve one-year terms with the possibility of re-election. He noted that he had added a representative of the Health Department to the CSA (Comprehensive Services Act) Committee, and expressed his concern that delegating responsibility for the administration of the CSA down to a committee level was not in the spirit of the state’s original intentions. Dr. McLeod disagreed. She advised against having the Health Department serve as a regular member of the CSA Committee, but said that she or another Health Department representative could be called

upon to address any issue at any time if their expertise were needed. Dr. McLeod said that the Commission, in its role as the CPMT, still meets the letter of the law. After hearing from Dr. McLeod, Mr. Peterson agreed to strike the Health Department as a representative on the CSA Committee.

In Section 3, Mr. Peterson said the word “team” was left on the second line by error. He said that “committee” and “work group” should be the only nomenclature used. He also noted that special meetings of the Commission should require written or e-mail notice at least one week in advance.

Ms. White asked whether the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee is a standing committee. Ms. Baker replied that it is a task-specific group, specifically funded by a grant, and therefore not a standing committee. Ms. Carroll said that the status of the committee might be considered again in the future.

Dr. McLeod raised the question of how membership on committees is “balanced.” She said the implication is that members serving on committees can come from outside the Commission. Ms. Peacock suggested leaving the language as it is for the committee members. There may be *ad hoc* work groups without any Commission members at some future time.

**ON A MOTION BY DR. DICKENS, SECONDED BY MR. MILLER, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADOPT THE BYLAWS AS DISTRIBUTED WITH REVISIONS AS FOLLOWS: TO SUBSTITUTE A SECOND MEMBER-AT-LARGE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE SECRETARY POSITION; TO DELETE THE HEALTH DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE LIST OF C.S.A. COMMITTEE MEMBERS; AND TO SUBSTITUTE THE WORDS“WORK GROUP” FOR “TEAM.”**

Ms. Train asked how the Commission would be notified of meetings. Ms. Baker added that she has a system in place for alerting the three newspapers of Commission meetings. Mr. Peterson asked whether it was the pleasure of the group to adopt a regular meeting day, but it was decided not to include a regular meeting day in the by-laws. Mr. Peterson said that notification in writing or by electronic mail at least one week in advance of Commission meetings, however, will be added to the by-laws.

## **VI. CCF Affiliation Policy:**

Mr. Peterson called on Ms. Baker to describe her recommended approach for organizational affiliation. Ms. Baker cited groups external to the Commission, such as the Clark School task force and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention group, that may want the Commission’s support for their efforts. The draft that Ms. Baker had sent to CCF members recommends that the Commission invite “local committees, councils, consortium and other planning and coordinating bodies to affiliate with CCF and become part of a CCF network.”

Ms. Baker suggested that a group could present a proposal for action several weeks before the Commission meeting. The group's representative would be present to answer questions during the Commission meeting, and then the Commission would vote on the group's proposal for action.

Dr. Dickens suggested that the Commission require a statement of how the group plans to measure its outcomes or assess the effectiveness of its proposed activity. Dr. McLeod suggested that the Commission would need to know the group's "Scope of Issues" in addition to the purpose of the group.

Ms. Train thought that the Commission should not require groups to submit regular Minutes or an annual report, as suggested in Ms. Baker's draft recommendation, if the Commission was not going to use those materials. Ms. Baker replied that the written materials would be useful as a way of communicating and keeping Commission staff apprised of the various groups' activities.

Dr. Dickens said an affiliation timeline was needed, and Mr. Peterson suggested that groups affiliate on an annual basis.

Ms. Peacock questioned whether affiliation with other groups would compete with some of the Commission's own goals and affect funding decisions. Which groups would be endorsed, she asked, and which would not? Mr. Peterson agreed that there was a difficult balance to be achieved. Dr. McLeod suggested adopting Ms. Baker's policy as is and changing it as future situations might require.

Ms. Train commented that the issue "begs some reflection." Ms. Pomerantz agreed, saying there was a need for more assessment before inviting groups to affiliate with the Commission. Ms. Peacock suggested using a disclaimer to indicate that affiliation does not constitute a funding recommendation by the Commission. For example, she does not want the Commission to unintentionally be supporting the funding requests of the Teen Pregnancy Strategic Plan. There is also a danger in endorsing specific issues.

Mr. Miller asked how the United Way makes its endorsements, but Ms. Train replied that the United Way no longer does them. Mr. Peterson thinks that encouraging groups, such as the Teen Pregnancy initiative, to come together is critical without taking away any of the individual groups' autonomy. Ms. White emphasized that "affiliation" and "endorsement" are different, and that affiliation means simply recognizing the work another group is doing. Ms. Baker suggested deleting the word "endorsement" and requiring requests only for specific action. Dr. McLeod thought that affiliation should be required before any group could come to the Commission with specific requests. Ms. Ralston suggested that the Commission consider endorsing only very specific requests.

Dr. Dickens suggested calling the groups "reporting organizations." Ms. Baker countered that "reporting" may not be exactly accurate since we are not necessarily judging these other groups, but are just "keeping them in our circle." Mr. Sobel noted that the general framework of the Organization Affiliation policy draft is inclusive but

that the proposal needs some fine-tuning in making the groups accountable. He suggested "cooperating organizations".

Dr. McLeod suggested that Ms. Baker revise the draft for further discussion before the next meeting. Ms. Gunter added that the Commission could support credible proposals but should not get further involved than that, and that the policy should be reviewed 3-6 months from now.

**MR. SOBEL MADE A MOTION TO TABLE FURTHER DISCUSSION AND ASK MS. BAKER TO PRESENT ANOTHER DRAFT. MS. RALSTON SECONDED, AND NOTED THAT MS. BAKER HAD DONE A NICE JOB ON THE FIRST DRAFT OF A DIFFICULT ISSUE.**

## **VII. Committee Reports:**

Ms. Ralston distributed the CSA Committee's monthly summary and Charlottesville and Albemarle CSA financial reports. She said that the CSA Committee had met together with the Case Authorization and Review Team (CART) to address the issue of escalating numbers of children being served and escalating costs. Ms. Ralston noted that there has been a "disconnect" between how the service-funding decisions are made and how they are authorized. The Family Assessment and Planning Teams (FAPTs) understand the needs of the families but are not always aware of budget constraints. Ms. Stone will be presenting summaries of financial issues at each of the weekly FAPT meetings. There will also be an effort to maximize other funding sources before using CSA dollars, and A sub-group will be exploring whether we can lower any of the costs among vendors currently being used for services. The Case Authorization and Review Team will be reviewing the monthly spending thresholds for authorization within each agency, and whether more cases should be authorized at the FAPT or CART level.

Dr. Dickens asked whether there is an increasing number of children being served, or whether the severity of the problems has increased. Ms. Ralston replied "both."

Ms. Ralston distributed the monthly summary financial reports for Charlottesville and Albemarle. She said that Albemarle had submitted its request to the state for supplemental funds for a total of about \$1.7 million (local match of \$780,277). Charlottesville's expenses have not been quite as high as Albemarle's, but the population of Albemarle is growing while Charlottesville's is not.

Ms. Ralston also presented a written summary from her work group on "Children In Need of Services" that defined a CCF priority issue for 1999.

Ms. Gunter pointed out two corrections to the list of CCF committees: (1) Martha Carroll had been listed as a non-CCF member, and (2) Bryson Grover should be corrected on the Public Involvement Committee. Ms. Gunter also emphasized the need to begin a stream of press releases about the Commission's activities, starting with the election of officers and adoption of the priority issues. To attract public participation, Ms. Gunter suggested

using churches, public bulletin boards, neighborhood associations, etc. in addition to listing the meetings in the newspapers. Mr. Peterson said the United Way's Information and Referral service would have some of the contact information. Ms. Baker asked the Public Involvement Committee to get together before the next CCF meeting. Commission staff will be orienting the committees on setting up time-lines and action plans. The next Commission meeting will be held at Tonsler Park on Cherry Avenue, on Wednesday, February 3, 1999.

**MR. MILLER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. MERRIWETHER, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:43 PM.**