

**Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families**  
**MINUTES—January 5, 2000**

**Members Present**

Kevin Castner, Albemarle County Schools  
Robert Cox, Charlottesville Department of Social Services  
Dr. Michael Dickens  
Meredith Gunter  
Richard Merriwether, Vice-Chair  
Dr. Susan McLeod, Thomas Jefferson Health District  
Linda Peacock, City of Charlottesville  
James Peterson, Chair, Region Ten Community Services Board  
Debby Pomerantz  
Kathy Ralston, Albemarle County Department of Social Services  
Martha Snell, University of Virginia  
Cathy Train, United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area  
Roxanne White, County of Albemarle

**Others Present**

Saphira Baker, CCF  
Rory Carpenter, CCF/Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee  
Dave Chapman, Commonwealth Attorney, City of Charlottesville  
Jonathan Earl, Albemarle County Police Department  
Terri Evans, CCF  
Jack Gallagher, Community Attention  
Durward Potter, CCF/Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee  
Grant Prillaman, Consultant, Stillmeadow-Benchmark Associates, Inc.  
Jerry Tracy, Consultant, Stillmeadow-Benchmark Associates, Inc.

**I. Welcome/Chair Remarks**

James Peterson welcomed members in attendance and called the meeting to order at 4:45 PM.

**II. Specifications of Items to be added and adoption of agenda**

The agenda for the evening was adopted in its current form.

**III. Comments from the public**

James Peterson welcomed members of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee and thanked them for their attendance.

**IV. Minutes from December 1, 1999**

**K. RALSTON MOVED TO ADOPT THE MINUTES AS A RECORD OF THE DECEMBER 1, 1999 MEETING, SECONDED BY R. MERRIWETHER. THE MINUTES WERE RATIFIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**V. Bylaws Revision**

**M. GUNTER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MEMBERSHIP REVISIONS TO THE COMMISSION'S BYLAWS. R. MERRIWETHER SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE REVISED BYLAWS WERE RATIFIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**VI. Commission Work Plan**

S. Baker referred to the abbreviated version of the work plan, and noted that it summarizes the upcoming projects. She commented that the work plan grew out of the Commission's September 29 extended meeting, which sought to clarify CCF's vision and goals for its second year. Two steps remain in this process: understanding and adopting the work plan, and addressing the question of the Commission's scope to be focused exclusively on children's issues or broad human services issues.

S. Baker noted that the Commission's advisory role in relation to City and County planning for children and family services emerged as a priority at the extended meeting, and the tools for achieving this were outlined in the work plan's strategies. The work plan is organized into six strategic areas (information sharing, priority issues, citizen participation, policy and funding recommendations, management of state and local CSA and VJCCCA funds) and projects in each area. Some of these projects are already in place, others are new. S. Baker pointed out that items highlighted in red are areas where additional assistance is needed. S. Baker requested that the Commission use the work plan to determine planning priorities, address issues of capacity and identify resources for staffing, and analyze areas that receive too little or too much emphasis.

In the area of information sharing, S. Baker noted assistance is needed in institutionalizing *Stepping Stones* to ensure that it will become a sustainable source of information on community health. S. Baker has submitted a budget request to the City for a part-time planner to assist with this on an on-going basis. S. Baker also mentioned that assistance would be needed should we decide to create Children and Family Budget. The Agency Budget Review Team provides a local budget analysis, but research from many agencies will be needed for an in-depth Children and Family Budget. K. Ralston asked about a timeline for the completion of the CCF website and the publication of the Guide to Youth Services directory. S. Baker replied that the website is up and running, but that the City's Information Services department has been busy ensuring Y2K compliance in City systems and have unable to update the webpage or install a counter. The directory is scheduled for a September re-print.

Current CCF priority issues surround early childhood development and addressing the needs of children needing extensive services. One strategy for highlighting priority

issues is to integrate these issues into funding recommendations. CCF will provide transition and support for the implementation of the Growing Healthy Families Partnership's early childhood development effort. Benchmarks of success will also be established for the Partnership and local agencies to determine and measure effective outcomes. The Children Needing Extensive Services work group is conducting research on the cases of children requiring the most expensive levels of service. K. Ralston reported that research in this area should be completed in June or July.

Increasing citizen participation is also an area of staff focus. Currently, S. Baker is working to add questions related to children and families to a satisfaction survey being developed to inform the City's Comprehensive Plan. Other ways of increasing citizen involvement are being explored, including the possibility of working with Region Ten's Youth Council to gain youth input into planning efforts. Further assistance is needed in organizing forums and developing methods for increasing citizen involvement.

In the area of policy and funding recommendations, CCF is working with the United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area to revise the current City/County funding application to include outcome measurements and reflect community priorities. The Agency Budget Review Team will provide funding guidance to both localities for a second year, and CCF's legislative issues have been included into both City and County legislative packets. Further assistance is needed to sustain the required agency training and impact analysis that is part of outcome measurement development.

CCF fund management is where the bulk of the CSA Coordinator and Juvenile Justice Coordinator's time is spent, in addition to extensive CCF management and supervisory responsibilities. Currently, the CSA Coordinator, CSA Committee, JJAC Coordinator, and the VJCCCA Oversight Committee monitor and manage state and local funding in these areas. In the area of juvenile justice, CCF also seeks to serve as a catalyst for improved services. This is accomplished by developing a strategic plan with services and guidelines for court-involved youth, and implementing an information-sharing system for agencies serving these youths.

R. Cox stated that he thought the work plan was good, however, he expressed concern about staff resources and capacity. He felt some of the items highlighted in red are low-priority, and that it is important to address staff capacity when identifying issues. S. McLeod stated that the work plan focuses mainly on CCF staff, and that agency staff capacity must also be explored, especially in the creation of the Children and Family Budget. R. Cox agreed that the Children and Family Budget is probably the most difficult issue to address.

J. Peterson stated that Commission members need to prioritize the strategies outlined in the work plan. S. McLeod commented that management of state and local CSA and VJCCCA funds should be the top priority since this is a state-mandated role. She also suggested that CCF staff might consider allotting less time to the Budget Review Process. M. Dickens commented that *Stepping Stones* should remain a priority, since budget planning and outcome measurements cannot be developed without the data contained in

this report. K. Ralston added that the *Guide to Youth Services* and the website should be lower priorities, and that perhaps staff time could be re-directed towards completion of *Stepping Stones*. M. Snell commented that the website could be helpful in collecting data for the report. L. Peacock asked whether the publication of the youth services directory was required for Office on Youth Funding. C. Train added that if it is not, perhaps another agency could be responsible for publishing it. S. Baker replied that she was unsure whether the directory's publication was a condition of Office on Youth Funding, and will look into this issue further. R Carpenter indicated that the publication of the directory is a required by the Office on Youth.

R. White indicated that it would be possible to obtain an intern to work on the *Stepping Stones* data next year, and that the process would run more smoothly if agencies are also responsible for data collection. The intern could be charged with collating the data rather than collecting it. L. Peacock furthered the suggestion of collecting the data via the website.

J. Peterson commended S. Baker for the summary and instructed members to come up with suggestions or additional resources at the next meeting.

**M. GUNTER MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONCEPT OF THE WORK PLAN, SECONDED BY R. COX. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **VII. Committee/Work Group Actions**

### **A. Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee**

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) presentation began with Rory Carpenter, Juvenile Justice Coordinator, introducing himself and the other members of the JJAC present.

Mr. Carpenter presented the Commission with a brief mission statement and history of the JJAC. He described the JJAC as being similar the Commission in its attempt to act as a centralized communicator between the various groups within the City and County involved with Juvenile Justice, including both the services and the served. He recounted that the JJAC began in late summer, 1998, with the assistance of grant money, and the first monthly meeting took place in October 1998. The vast majority of agencies that serve the juvenile community are represented in the JJAC. Concerns address issues for users and provides of services at both the macro and system level as well as the micro and program level. Mr. Carpenter commended the Committee as a whole for its work and participation

Dave Chapman then presented, expanding on specific aspects of the JJAC to the Commission. He noted that the JJAC exists only through the Commission, which provides staff, access to funds, and facilitates the individuals who participate. The JJAC is dependent upon the good will and intentions of its participants, and

the Committee has come to develop its own processes and move towards common agendas. This is especially noteworthy since the Committee seeks to unify instead of exist as a separate entity within the justice system. Mr. Chapman noted that the original group has acquired additional representatives from child advocacy groups and from the public and private bar. Because of the JJAC, Accountability Based Sanctions (ABS) will be provided as part of an inclusive system imposing uniform sanctions. This kind of widespread agreement is of great value within the criminal justice system.

Mr. Chapman identified three major areas of concern to the JJAC. First, the implementation of a Risk Assessment Tool as mandated by State legislation. The JJAC is assisting in providing training for the use of the tool, which is currently utilized at the post-adjudication/pre-sentencing phase. Some members of the JJAC have expressed concern about the limitations of the existing tool; currently the tool is designed to determine the likelihood of re-offense. The Committee is currently discussing the possibility of expanding the tool's use as a data collection instrument.

The second major concern of the JJAC is information sharing. All members of the JJAC recognize the need to share information from the different agencies in an appropriate manner through a unified release. The third major concern is the new juvenile detention center, scheduled for operation in about two years. This facility presents an opportunity for increasing communication between the center and the schools, communication that currently does not exist.

Jerry Tracy and Grant Prillaman then presented the findings from the First Annual Report and the Research Report of the JJAC, which includes the work of the Committee and the Consultants. They commended the Committee on the accomplishments of the last year as reflected in the reports.

The Consultants identified five major concerns and three key goals of the Committee that were to be implemented, not just planned for. The three key goals are the development of operation and program plans universal to the juvenile justice community, the development of an evaluation model to assess the operations and programs, and the creation of a common agenda with input from all aspects of the juvenile justice community.

The Consultants next discussed the five major concerns of the JJAC. The first concern is the need for information sharing among agencies. Each agency collects its own information which is not shared with other agencies having contact with the same client. This lack of information sharing often results in duplication in assessments and service planning. Because case managers may not have access to certain information, they may not have a complete picture when making decisions about their client's cases. The Consultants identified three roles the JJAC can play in the process of achieving unified information sharing. First, the JJAC can take the lead in identifying the existing "firewalls" between

agencies. Second, the Committee can determine which “firewalls” are code based and which are based on agency practice. Third, the Committee can develop a common release for all appropriate information, including substance abuse and family health. Common release can happen after all pertinent agencies formalize an agreement that is both appropriate to common goals and falls within State exception models.

The second major concern is the need for a more comprehensive Risk Assessment Tool. The State has mandated the Department of Juvenile Justice Instrument, which assesses the risk of future re-offense. The Tool is limited but it can be modified to better serve the larger juvenile justice community. The JJAC must determine which aspects of the Tool can and cannot be changed. The Tool can also be used as the foundation for a data matrix that can be used to develop an individual’s profile. The use of such matrices has been identified as an essential component in the ultimate success of a juvenile who is in the system: the better the information that is gathered initially, the better the outcome after the application of appropriate services and sanctions. Such an assessment tool should be multifaceted and include issues like substance abuse, family, and educational history. The gathered information must then be appropriately addressed and the needs of the offender adjusted to local realities. In addition to a profile matrix, which assesses needs, a service matrix should be developed so that needs can be matched to appropriate services. If done properly, matching needs to services will work toward achieving the best possible outcome for each offender. Questions surrounding which assessment tools to use and at what time remain unresolved.

The third major concern identified by the JJAC is outcome and process evaluation, including examining programmatic and systemic outcomes. The program must work with the system, and after implementation, the program's effectiveness must be assessed. Locally, 55% of juvenile cases are status offenses, custody cases, and other non-criminal concerns. Further, many recorded re-offenses are probation violations created by probation officers to circumvent the overloaded docket system. Consequently, existing statistics are skewed. Currently there are existing systemic and programmatic juvenile justice assessment models within the Commonwealth which evaluate outcomes after services are provided in attempt to better determine success. The JJAC must evaluate the existing models and decide which is most adaptable to City and County concerns.

The JJAC identified the collecting and evaluation of data as its fourth major concern. Local data needs to be collected and compared to State and national data. Because of the inconsistency of current data, it is necessary for the JJAC to decide upon a set of base data to maintain uniformity. The JJAC will then want to create a retrospective baseline from which to work. Questions remain regarding the relationship between information systems and data collection and determining what information is most valuable.

As part of the fourth major concern, the JJAC needs to identify research agendas as its fifth major concern. Research agendas must be a deliberate process that grows out of important questions as they arise. The creation of agendas common to all agencies is ultimately good for all participating.

The Consultants then opened the floor to questions and comments from the Commission members. M. Gunter stated that she thought the report was good and that it was comprehensive. However, she thought the report would have benefited from an executive summary at the beginning. In addition, the sheet of acronyms that Mr. Carpenter handed out at the beginning of the meeting was helpful, but limited, since it did not explain how the agencies were related; she thought a summary of each agency would be helpful. M. Gunter stated that she was surprised to find out that the JJAC only recently came into existence to address issues that should have been addressed much earlier. She asked if some of the programs could be implemented sooner as part of a parallel process, rather than awaiting the development of a strategic plan.

Mr. Chapman responded, stating that citizen feedback was helpful to the JJAC and that citizen participation helped insure the accountability of the agencies in the system. M. Gunter noted that the reports did not appear to have information gathered from interviews with children who were in the system, and that this would be helpful as well.

The Commission began a discussion on the value of the role of judges to the operation of the JJAC. Concerns included how helpful information from a service and sanction matrix might be and whether it would constitute prescribed sentencing or facilitate informed decision-making. Also, some judges expressed both their desire to be involved as well as the potential for involvement to influence their perspective, objectivity and impartiality.

Mr. Chapman reiterated the need to assess the potential for re-offense but also the need for more comprehensive information about an offender's emotional health with the idea of ultimately serving the overall health of the community. L. Peacock stated the need to open central information sharing to agencies outside the juvenile justice community that work with juveniles to better address issues like teen pregnancy and other non-justice related concerns. K. Ralston noted that the uniform release of information already exists in Virginia and has been approved by the Attorney General. However, it exists only in policy and not in current practice. The Commission identified the need to address this issue.

**B. Agency Budget Review Team—interim report**

R. White reported that the Agency Budget Team review process is underway with funding decisions to be made by January 26, 2000. This year, agency board members as well as agency staff have been invited to participate in the interview process. Twenty-one agencies have applied for funding in FY01, up from 16 in FY00. Almost all are asking for increases in the overall allocation. It will be very

difficult to get the final budget information to Commission members before completion because of the limited time frame. Final recommendations are due to City Council and the Board of Supervisors March 3, 2000.

**C. Public Involvement Work Group**

Given that only five minutes remained, it was decided to postpone the report from this work group until the February meeting.

**D. CSA Committee**

R. Cox reported that to date, the City has spent \$1.8 million in CSA dollars and the County has spent about \$2 million. Last year each locality spent \$3.1 million dollars. The City and the County are submitting supplemental requests to the state for CSA cost increases. The state is implementing Medicaid funding for eligible CSA clients, effective January 1, 2000. The Elk Hill CSA payment problem remains unresolved until additional research is completed, and R. Cox stated that he would have an update at the February meeting.

The Case Authorization Review Team (CART) has approved several new cases. A question regarding the FAPT process by M. Snell made it clear that additional CSA orientation was necessary so Commission members could better understand the complexities of the Comprehensive Services Act and their oversight responsibilities.

The search for a new Private Provider representative for the Commission is underway, with an advertisement in the newspapers within the next two weeks, according to the City's Clerk of Council.

**J. PETERSON ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 6:30 PM.**