

## MINUTES

Lane County Commission for Children and Families  
Florence Events Center—715 Quince Street  
Florence, Oregon

May 28, 2008  
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chuck Boyer-Vice Chair, Marty Beyer, Elizabeth Clewett, Karen Hamilton, Teresa Kintigh, John Radich, Joachim Schulz, CCF members; Alicia Hays, Robin Schaefer, Christine Rogers, Nancy Bischofs, DCF staff; Bill Fleenor, Lane County Commissioner.

ABSENT: Judith Hampton-Chairperson; Sharri Da Silva, Debi Farr, Ryan Stroup, Andy Whitmore, Debra Depew, Abigael Fender, Rob Jerome, Angel Jones, Kitty Piercy, Kevin Maloney, Peter Sorenson, Faye Stewart.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

#### I. WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, PUBLIC COMMENT

- WELCOME

Mr. Boyer convened the meeting and welcomed those present. Commission members, staff and visitors introduced themselves.

- ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Rogers announced all Commission on Children and Families (CCF) members were invited to attend the next CCF Executive Committee meeting on June 2, 2008 at Noon. She also announced that CCF members were invited by Karen Roth, to participate in a photo opportunity, sponsored by Food for Lane County (FFLC), in support of the kick-off of the Federal Summer Food Program. Ms. Roth asked for CCF members attend an event at the FFLC, on Bailey Hill Road, to put together meals and be available to the press at 10:00 a.m. on June 25, 2008.

Elizabeth Clewett arrived at 5:40 p.m.

At the April CCF meeting, Mr. Radich discussed the *Children of Incarcerated Parents* project. Ms. Rogers invited Commissioners to the June 26, 2008 *Children's Bill of Rights Number 8—I Have the Right to a Lifelong Relationship with My Parent* telephone training on June 26, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. in the Department of Children and Families conference room.

Ms. Kintigh reported she was honored to present to the BCC a Children's Mental Health Awareness Month proclamation today. It provided a nice opportunity to illustrate the work the Commission had done in collaboration with community partners over the past year. The Board of County Commissioners proclaimed their commitment to support continued work in this area.

Ms. Hays added that CCF had partnered with Health and Human Services Mental Health Advisory Committee in developing the proclamation. Responding to a question from Mr. Boyer, Ms. Hays concurred that a Child Abuse Awareness proclamation was issued in April.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **II. CONSENT CALENDAR**

Consent Calendar items were deferred to the June meeting.

## **III. WEST LANE COUNTY HEALTHY START**

Mr. Boyer introduced Kathleen Margerum from West Lane County Healthy Start.

Ms. Margerum thanked the Commissioners for making the trip to West Lane County for the meeting, and for their hard work on the CCF. She currently works ten hours per week, and has a caseload of four families. She is supervised by Helen Walton through the Relief Nursery and Nancy Spencer at EC Cares. She reported that there are 14 pregnant teenagers in West Lane County, and there is a need to find a way to touch-base with that group.

Ms. Hays said, having Ms. Walton serve as Ms. Margerum's supervisor, was a creative solution in an environment of shrinking budgets, because Healthy Start requires a specific structure of supervision. The program is unique in West Lane County, funding for only ten hours of Ms. Margerum's time, while the number of teens becoming parents are rising.

Ms. Margerum added, the local community is looking at the issue, and is brainstorming solutions. She stated she is the President of the Florence Area Coordinating Council, a group of service providers who meet monthly to share information and provide network opportunities. The council is currently sponsoring efforts to address child care needs in West Lane County, which will be reported on later in the meeting.

WIC services in West Lane County are available once a month, which is in issue for parents being able to access that service. Through collaborations, Ms. Margerum has made available some key locations in the community, so parents can receive formula on a walk-in basis. Working class families, that don't always qualify for food stamps or WIC, are struggling. A baby typically could require one and one-half cans of formula a week, which cost \$27 a can. The Florence Kiwanis Club and the Soroptimists, as well as individuals donors have made generous contributions to the local food bank for formula.

Responding to a question from Mr. Boyer, Ms. Margerum said the significant need in the community is adequate child care and birthing classes for teen parents.

Ms. Margerum introduced several guests and their children who are Healthy Start clients. Several clients explained how Healthy Start and Ms. Margerum had helped them in the West Lane County.

Ms. Hays introduced staff person Nancy Bischofs, who stated, most of the current referrals were coming from Public Health nurses, who saw clients in the community.

#### **IV. MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS LIAISON PRESENTATION**

Mr. Boyer introduced Jeff Geiger, McKinney-Vento liaison with Lane ESD for the rural school districts in Lane County. He offered a PowerPoint presentation entitled *McKinney-Vento at a Glance*. He introduced Karen Marchini, the McKinney-Vento liaison with Siuslaw School District. Mr. Geiger and Ms. Marchini responded to questions from Commissioners. Mr. Geiger distributed a handout which provided contacts and other information for McKinney-Vento liaisons for every school district.

Ms. Marchini reviewed the program and the services provided in the Siuslaw School District. Ninety-five students were identified as homeless last year, while 85 students had been identified for the current school year.

Mr. Geiger and Ms. Marchini responded to questions from Commissioners.

**Question:** What percentage of the total population of the school district are you serving?

**Answer:** Total enrollment in the district was 1,300 students, and there were 85 students who were homeless.

**Q:** What happens to youth who do not have a place to live? What referrals can be made for them?

**A:** The students in West Lane County encountered have always had a place to live, when either they or their families have found a temporary place to stay. Of the 85 students previously mentioned, four were in shelter or transitional housing, and 76 were doubling up and living with another family. Two families were living in a motel and three students were camping. Students often went in to the Eugene/Springfield area with their families to stay at a shelter, because there were not as many shelters in the rural areas. Sometimes students camped or stayed in cars. Families typically switched school districts where more community services were available. Because Siuslaw was a small community, school staff also provided temporary housing for students.

**Q:** Is there an increase in youth homelessness in Lane County or had the tracking just improved?

**A:** Each district needed is viewed separately. There were different levels of McKinney-Vento involvement in the districts. Although some of the increase may be attributable to better tracking, there has been a gradual increase on a statewide basis.

**A:** McKinney-Vento is now applicable to Head Start programs, which would make the numbers appear to be larger.

**Q:** Why is Creswell and Cottage Grove not included in the numbers for rural Lane County?

**A:** Creswell was included, but not Cottage Grove because, Eugene and Springfield had funded positions for their liaisons, and were therefore not included in the districts Mr. Geiger served.

**Q:** Is there dedicated staff time provided for funded positions?

**A:** No, the work generally is added to the job description, and is done in the normal course of the work week. In the Siuslaw district, there is enough work for an additional position. In larger districts, the McKinney-Vento positions are full time positions.

**Q:** Does the Florence community understand the extent of homeless youth?

**A:** The school district posts bulletins throughout the community, and all staff receives information during in-service training. Homeless students in Florence are often not visible, since they find temporary arrangements, and are not necessarily on the streets. This was one of the things that made it difficult to justify a day shelter in the community.

Lane County Commissioner Bill Fleenor arrived at 6:40 p.m. He thanked the CCF members and the community for hosting this evening's meeting. He added that Commissioners Peter Sorensen and Faye Stewart sent their regrets for not being able to attend the evening's event. Mr. Fleenor acknowledged the important work of the Commission, and encouraged them to continue.

#### **IV. WEST LANE COUNTY CHILD CARE: REPORT FROM QUALITY CHILD CARE FLORENCE**

Mr. Boyer introduced Sally Wantz, President of Quality Child Care Florence (QCCF). She distributed a handout entitled, *Quality Child Care of Florence, A child's home away from home*. She shared observations of Florence, which included parents of young children needing reliable and affordable day care, which is very limited, if not non-existent. She provided an overview of the recent history of the community's concern for the need for quality & affordable child care. She reported Quality Child Care Florence meetings were open to the public, and were held at 8:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at the Department of Human Services (DHS) on Highway 101, and everyone was invited to be a part of the organization. She introduced board members Bob Teter, Executive Director, Boys' and Girls' Club of Florence; Becki Gotay, Manager, Safeway of Florence; Kim Kenta, Oregon Pacific Bank; Bobbi Spencer, EC Cares.

Mr. Teter said the number of enrolled students in the Siuslaw School District is down, because people who have school age children were leaving the community, due to lack of adequate child care.

Ms. Gotay asserted that employee turnover is incredible due to lack of adequate child care first, and then adequate housing second. Last summer two female employees left their employment

instantly because they could not find child care. That places an incredible challenge on the employer to maintain services for the community.

Ms. Kenta was born and raised in Florence, and has good community connections. She spoke about the challenges of finding reliable child care after the birth of her child.

Ms. Spencer is an employee of EC Cares, which provided services for special education children in the Florence area. She explained the services offered in the Florence area for over 87 children between the ages of birth to school age. The program receives several calls a week from people looking for child care. Child care in the Florence area for children with severe disabilities is not available.

Ms. Wantz said QCCF's goal is to create a facility that offers affordable, quality child care for local residents. QCCF has budget and fundraising committees that are organizing.

Ms. Kenta emphasized QCCF intends to work with existing child care providers, to ensure not to take business away, but to increase the number of available slots.

Ms. Wantz responded to questions from Commissioners:

**Q:** Does Lane Community College (LCC) offer child care provider training locally?

**A:** LCC recently offers child care classes in Florence. Unfortunately, attrition is quite high. There are not classes offered locally at the present time, which leads to certification for child care providers. Tele-courses and on-line courses are available. LCC and DHS have representatives on QCCF.

**Q:** How can CCF help QCCF?

**A:** A long term sustainable plan is being developed for which CCF may be able to provide technical assistance resources, as well as training, networking and funding through Lane County.

**Q:** Is there a way to go to local employers for seed money, along with grant money to support the QCCF program to help solve a problem that was impacting employees and the businesses?

**A:** That is a great possibility. A proposal is needed to be developed to go to employers.

Mr. Fleenor thanked Ms. Wantz for breathing life into the program and the volunteers of the QCCF. He mentioned there was an abandoned fire station north of LCC. He suggested research into video lottery money, as there may be some available for economic development purposes and job creation.

Vena Williams from Lane Family Connections applauded the efforts, and was pleased to know there was that much energy and effort in the Florence area. Of the 180 who called Lane Family Connections in the last year, 31 were for child care centers. Rarely is staff able to suggest an available opening.

Ms. Wantz thanked Ms. Williams for the assistance she has provided to QCCF.

## V. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT FOLLOW UP

Ms. Hays reported on the Youth Empowerment Summit that occurred on May 9, 2008, and offered a video on the summit. She said the purpose of the summit was a youth led event designed to stimulate awareness by giving voice to youth, as they speak about issues of oppression, and create a positive community solution. It provided youth and adult decision makers a great opportunity for networking and community building.

## VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **Legislative Update**—Ms. Hays reported staff met with the following State Legislators about the comprehensive plan, the policy option package and other: Representative Chris Edwards, Representative Phil Barnhart, Representative Bruce Hanna, and Representative Terry Beyer. She asked Commissioners to consider going to Salem during the next legislative session. Lane County has recently hired Alex Cuyler to lead the Intergovernmental Relations work unit.
- **June Meeting**—The next meeting is scheduled for June 25, 2008 at the Serbu Youth Campus, 2727 Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard.
- **County Budget Meeting**—Ms. Hays distributed a handout of the Lane County budget and explained the various funding reductions. Mr. Fleenor reported the General Fund lost \$21 million in federal Secure Rural Schools funding.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

(Recorded by Linda Henry)

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