

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



Get meeting agendas & minutes online at www.accesskent.com/kcfccc!

KCFCCC Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2002, 12:00p.m. – 1:30p.m.

Wedgwood Christian Youth and Family Services Chapel
3300 36th Street, S.E.

Members/alternates present: Ruth Buntin, Candace Cowling, Sandra Davis (for Tom Czerwinski), Lynne Ferrell, Karl Hascall, Debra Holmes Garrison, Bonnie Huntley, Ph.D., Marvin McKenzie, Patti Nussbaum, Cathy Raevsky (and Sandra Walls), Jack Roedema (for Judge Nanaruth Carpenter), Diana Sieger (and Wendy Jackson), Mary Alice Williams, Andrew Zylstra

Members absent (with no alternate present): Susan Broman, Beverly Drake, William Forsyth, Linda McDonald, Miles Murphy, Mike Weiler

Others present: Bethanie Archbold, Mary Swanson (staff); Richard Gritter, Kathy Humphrey-Vaughn, Jim Poelstra, Toni Turner, Kate Scheid, David Van Rooy

I. Welcome, Introductions, and Approval of Agenda

Richard Gritter opened the meeting at 12:15pm and asked the participants to introduce themselves. He congratulated the individuals recently appointed to the Council by the Board of Commissioners for terms to run January 2002 through December 2004. Karl Hascall, Debra Holmes-Garrison, and Diana Sieger were re-appointed in their current slots for another term. Marvin McKenzie was a new appointment to fill the private agency slot formerly filled by Mr. Gritter.

II. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Holmes-Garrison moved to approve the minutes of the previous Council meeting. Mr. Hascall supported. Motion carried.

III. Executive Committee/ Officer Nominations

Mr. Gritter presented the following slate of electors for Executive Committee and officers, presented as a recommendation by the Executive Committee for the Council's action:

<i>Public service providers (2):</i>	John Cole Jack Roedema
<i>Private funding organizations (2):</i>	Debra Holmes-Garrison Diana Sieger **Chair Nominee**
<i>Private agencies (1):</i>	Patti Nussbaum
<i>Consumers/advocates (2):</i>	Ruth Buntin Linda McDonald
<i>Business:</i>	Karl Hascall **Vice-Chair Nominee**

Mr. Gritter asked if there was anyone the Council wished removed from the list for separate consideration. There were none.

Mr. Gritter presented the Executive Committee recommendation to elect Diana Sieger as Chair. Mary Alice Williams supported, motion carried.

Mr. Gritter presented the recommendation to elect Karl Hascall as Vice Chair. Andrew Zylstra supported, motion carried.

Mr. Gritter presented the recommendation that the above slate of electors be elected as the members of the 2002 Executive Committee. Ms. Holmes-Garrison supported, motion carried.

Mr. Gritter congratulated the new Executive Committee, and thanked the Council members for their support and commitment to families and children in Kent county. He invited Ms. Sieger, as the new Chair, to take up the gavel for the remainder of the meeting.

Ms. Sieger thanked Mr. Gritter for his leadership and dedication to the Council. She stated that Mr. Gritter's leadership has been instrumental in bringing the Council to where it is today. She stated that the recent transition in Council membership, staffing, and structure was facilitated by Mr. Gritter's diplomacy and leadership.

IV. Recognition of Members Rotating off the Council

Ms. Sieger extended thanks to the four members rotating off the Council due to the restructuring, Ellen Brubaker, Richard Gritter, Lynn Heemstra, and Maria O'Hare. She expressed the Council's appreciation for their commitment and services, and invited them to continue to stay involved in the Council's efforts.

V. Presentation of Annual Report

Ms. Archbold presented the draft Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council Annual Report for Council review, input, and action. The Annual Report highlights the Council's efforts over 2001 to increase its effectiveness and enhance its ability to focus on specific systems improvements. She stated that the Annual Report emphasized that the Council is poised for action, and that the 2002 Annual Report would show the first results of the Council's action. She stated that the Annual Report would be distributed to the Board of Commissioners, and would be used as an informational tool for the community as a whole.

Ms. Archbold stated that as directed in the Council's Bylaws, a record of members' attendance was included for the Council's review, and would be included in the report to the Board of Commissioners. She stated that the report was not editorial, and did not indicate reasons for absence nor the level of informal participation of members. The attendance report would not be included in the report distributed to the general community.

Lynne Ferrell asked who the audience of the report would be. Ms. Sieger replied that the audience for the report was the Council, the Board of Commissioners, and the general community. Ms. Ferrell suggested that an overview of the Council's history and role in the community be included as background information for individuals who may not be familiar with the Council. Ms. Archbold will add the information.

Mr. Hascall moved that the Council approve the Annual Report, with the addition of background information about the Council. Mr. Zylstra supported, motion carried.

VI. Children with Multiple Out-of-Home Placements

Jim Poelstra distributed a letter from the State FIA office asking the local office to review a listing of Kent county children with five or more placements. Mr. Poelstra presented the local FIA's report in response to that letter for Council discussion and input.

Mr. Poelstra reported that the list included 63 children with five or more placements, out of a total 400 children in out-of-home placements at that time. He reported that the local office and the private agencies which supply foster care have reviewed the 63 cases. He stated that the list was an old list which does not reflect the county's current status, and that several improvements have been made in Kent County in recent years that should decrease the number of children with multiple placements. An example of this is the closer partnership with Community Mental Health to ensure that the children received mental health services. A complete copy of the report is enclosed.

Mr. Poelstra stated that there are issues with the way that placements are counted. He stated that Kent County has a program design that brings all children entering out-of-home placement through a temporary shelter program (KidsFirst Program). The State report counts this shelter placement as one placement, which does not put Kent County on equal standing with the other counties in terms of calculating the number of multiple placements. In addition, respite care is included in the calculation. Mr. Poelstra stated that the local office makes the argument that respite care is part of the treatment plan for some children to prevent broken placements, and should not be counted as a separate placement.

Mr. Gritter and Mr. McKenzie recommended that it be communicated to the State that respite care and the use of Kids First should be considered a positive part of the placement plan and should not be included in the number of out-of-home placements.

Mr. Poelstra reported that one of the key themes found throughout the cases was the influence of substance abuse. Ms. Nussbaum asked whether the problem was substance abuse on behalf of the parents or the children. Mr. Poelstra reported that both were issues. He reported that the local FIA had identified parental substance abuse as a key problem in approximately 60 percent of cases resulting in out-of-home placements. Mr. Gritter reported that Wedgwood saw a similar correlation among Wedgwood children, in that between 50 and 70 percent of teenagers in Wedgwood's program had a substance abuse problem. Mr. McKenzie reported that St. John's Home has found that approximately 50-55 percent of the parents of the children in their program are using substances.

Mr. Zylstra asked for clarification on the section of the report that states that for the most part, the case records did not have documentation on the provision of mental health services from our mental health community or substance abuse treatment services from the substance abuse treatment community. He asked whether the issue was one of reporting. Mr. Poelstra replied that the case records show that the problems had been identified, but did not record treatment. He stated that the community has made significant progress toward ensuring that treatment is provided in those cases where it is need.

Mary Alice Williams asked whether the children had received formal assessments.

Mr. Poelstra responded that of the 63 studied cases, 15 were in residential homes and thus receiving treatment. He stated that for the remainder of the children, which are placed in foster homes, the issue is the FIA's ability to access mental health and substance abuse services for those children. Mr. Poelstra stated that the reason this report is being shared with the Council is to solicit community input into solving the problem.

Bonnie Huntley noted that the community has made some efforts to address the problem of substance abuse in children in out-of-home placements. For example, every youth placed in out-of-home placement through the delinquency system has a mental health assessment. She suggested that there may be a need to systematically assess children placed through the abuse/neglect system.

Mr. Poelstra reported that there is now an assessment process built in through St. John's Home. He reported that another problem the report reveals is that the majority of these children are now aging out of the foster care system. He stated that there is a real need for the community look at how to transition these children into the adult mental health system.

Mr. Zylstra stated that there seemed to be two separate issues: 1) whether children in foster care are getting mental health and substance abuse services (and are they provided by mental health specialists or through social workers), and 2) the need to look at the transition of older kids from foster care into adult services. Mr. Zylstra reported that FIA is setting up a committee to address the second issue, and he will report back to the group on their findings.

Mr. Gritter asked about the statement in the report that Kent County has a need for special resource assistance in locating appropriate residential treatment programs for children with a history of failed placements in foster care. He asked whether the need was for funding or for services. Mr. Poelstra responded that in the last four or five years, there has been a large number of children placed in foster homes. He stated that the agencies were working on recruiting additional foster parents, but that needed support, as well as options for those kids that are hard to place.

Mr. Van Rooy reported that the efforts to decrease multiple placements have been moving in the right direction, but that the resources are not there to support the agencies' efforts. For example, State funding has increased at only half the rate of the cost of living over the last ten years. He stated that it is easy to find funds to build buildings, but the agencies lose money on each bed that they open. He stated that the agencies must rely on charitable contributions to make up the difference. Mr. Van Rooy stated that despite these hardships, however, Kent County has been very successful in reducing the recidivism rates from the double digits to the single digits.

Wendy Jackson stated that a main concern was the usefulness of this indicator in measuring Kent County's response to improving outcomes for children in the abuse/neglect system. Dr. Huntley suggested that the Council draft a letter to the State FIA office outlining Kent County's success in reducing recidivism rates, and asking that respite care and the use of KidsFirst not be included when calculating Kent County's number of repeat placements. Ms. Sieger asked staff to work with Mr. Poelstra, Mr. Zylstra, Mr. Van Rooy, Mr. McKenzie, and Dr. Huntley to draft a letter for Council discussion and input at the next meeting.

VII. Committee Updates

There were no updates for the Early Childhood, Elementary School Years, or Middle & High School Years committees.

Ms. Davis presented an update on the Ongoing Family Support Committee. She stated that the committee was looking at one of the issues addressed in Mr. Poelstra's report: substance abuse as it relates to families identified as at risk for abuse and neglect. She reported that the committee is seeking input directly from the caseworkers that work with these families about ways that it can enhance current efforts to identify and treat substance abuse early for families at risk of abuse and neglect. Ms. Davis stated that the enthusiasm and cooperation of all the partners for the efforts has been wonderful. She stated that the committee's next step would be to gather together the "front line staff" that work with families to identify specific strategies to accomplish its goal.

VIII. Updates & Administrative Items

A. SF/SC and CP/CP Expenditures

Ms. Archbold presented the Strong Families/Safe Children (SF/SC) and Child Protection/Community Partners (CP/CP) year-to-date expenditures for FY2002. She stated that the purpose of the monthly report was to ensure that all contractors are up to date with their expenditures so that no funds would be returned to the State. She reported that all contractors are on track.

B. Material Distribution

Ms. Archbold directed the participants' attention to the binders distributed at the beginning of the meeting. She stated that the purpose of the binders was to serve as a resource for Council members and their alternates about Council history, structure, membership, SF/SC and CP/CP plans, policies and procedures, and other information. Also included is Multi-Purpose Collaborative Body (MPCB) information and the Kent County Family, Youth, and Children's Services Plan. She stated that although the Plan is technically expired, the Council's committees have continued to work under the Standards for Children outlined in the plan. A section is included for future Committee Action Plans, which will serve as the Council's Action Plan for the coming year.

C. Location

Ms. Archbold reported that only 14 members or alternates have responded to her request for their preference regarding Council meeting location. She asked that anyone who has not yet placed a vote contact her no later than January 11, 2002. The choices for Council location are Wedgwood Christian Youth and Family Services, United Way, and the Kent County Health Department.

IX. Other Community Information & Updates

There were no items offered.

X. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:30pm. **The next Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council meeting will be February 5, 2002, from 12:00pm – 1:30pm at the Kent County Health Department, 700 Fuller, N.E.**