

**Kent County**  
**Family & Children's**  
**Coordinating Council**



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**KCFCCC Meeting Minutes**  
**September 9, 2008, 12:00pm – 1:30pm**  
MSU Extension Offices – **Room B**  
775 Ball Avenue, NE

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**Members/Alternates Present:** Susan Broman, Candace Cowling, Lynne Ferrell, Jack Greenfield, Kristen Geitzen Lynn Heemstra, Paul Ippel, Kevin Kornaska, Sharon Loughridge, Carol Paine-McGovern, Mark Peterson (for Dona Abbot), Sandra Walls (for Cathy Raevsky), Judi Bosscher (for Patti Warmington), Andy Zylstra

**Members Absent:** Tom Czerwinski, Bev Drake, William Forsyth, Bob Haight, Judge Patrick Hillary, Ron Jimmerson (Cascade Engineering), Cathy Raevsky, Debra Holmes-Garrison, Diana Sieger,

**Guests:** Wayman Britt, Daryl Delabbio, Barbara Hawkins-Palmer, Su Hood, Dave Neifer, Jim Talen

## **1 Welcome & Call to Order**

Carol Paine-McGovern opened the meeting with a welcome and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Carol asked Wayman for an update on Matthew VanZetten. He said Matthew's surgery went well and he's home and recovering very quickly.

When asked for approval of minutes, Paul Ippel moved, seconded by Sharon Loughridge and supported by all. Minutes were filed.

## **2 Kent County Budget Presentation**

Carol introduced Daryl Delabbio who provided an overview of the County's 2009 Budget. Daryl said the County has a General Fund Budget of \$165 Million. He said the 2009 Budget looks pretty good. The departmental requests have come in \$500,000 over our revenue, so we'll have to make some cuts to provide a structurally balanced budget. He went on to say that even if he provided a balanced budget, we would still lose some General Fund Reserves because we will have to place some in the Emergency Operating Fund as well as the Cash Flow Fund.

He said in the past we used to send out tax bills in December, which covered 3 millages: Operating Millage, Corrections/Detention Millage and the millage for Senior Services. When the State of Michigan started to experience budget issues, they eliminated revenue sharing from their budget, a total of \$180 Million. They had the counties collect the millages in July instead of January, transitioning it over a 3 year period. The transition was complete in July 2007. So now the tax bills for the operating millage go out in July and the taxes are collected in August and September for the

fiscal year that began in January. He said we need funds to carry us from January to August/September.

Daryl said there were 2 issues that the County has faced since that time. The 1<sup>st</sup> is the Revenue Sharing Fund. It was created by the State who mandated the County would collect 4 years of taxes in 3 years. We were required to put the money in a special Revenue Sharing Reserve. Daryl said we draw \$10-11 Million annually from that fund, as if we were receiving Revenue Sharing.

The fund will be depleted in 2011. The question now is whether or not the State will restore Revenue Sharing. We are planning as if we will not receive the funds. If we plan to eliminate \$11 million out of the budget, making cuts in programs, services and personnel, the State will say we don't need it. Daryl said the problem is in how to plan to not receive the Revenue Sharing, but still show the need for the money. He thinks we will have a good indication whether or not we will get the funds once again when Wayne County is scheduled to begin receiving Revenue Sharing Funds again in 2010.

The County has also been facing the Corrections/Detention Millage, due to expire in 2009. This fund is about \$14-\$15 Million. Fortunately, the Millage was approved by the voters and won't expire again until 2029.

Daryl said we have a Hotel/Motel tax that makes payments on DeVos Place. He said the County is the primary funder of the construction of DeVos Place. That debt is \$95 Million and is paid for specifically by the Hotel/Motel tax. Daryl continued saying that current expenditures exceed revenues and have for a number of years. He said we built up a fund balance, but the reserves will be depleted in 2010.

The County needs economic development, but Daryl said we need to limit what we fund. We rely a lot on property taxes. We're seeing taxable values and State Equalized Values go down. In 2009, Bob White says inflation rates are 4.4%, which is good news because it will help property tax values. Daryl went on saying property taxes will increase, but so will demand for social services as they do when the economy is bad. The County uses General Fund reserves to fund those operations.

In 2001 the County had \$120 Million Fund Balance. The County Board said we are supposed to be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars, but that did not mean hoarding. They wanted to look at reinvesting some of the money in the community. He said after doing that, our fund balance is now \$70 Million, but only \$12 Million is unreserved.

Daryl has to provide the Board of Commissioners with a balanced budget plus a surplus. He said in 2009 he will not touch the Prevention Initiative Budget. There are services the County is mandated to do and some that are discretionary. Some of the discretionary services are the zoo, parks, Prevention and unmet needs.

We are reducing our staff. The County is not impoverished, we are on solid financial footing, but it is not business as usual at this time.

When Lynn Heemstra asked what kind of cuts the County is making, Daryl replied that most were program-specific, funded by the State. There were about 50-75 staff cuts at the Health Department. Other departments include Parks, Zoo, Cooperative Extension, Sheriff, Fiscal Svcs., Bureau of Equalization, Treasurer's, Clerks, and Deeds. No department is immune.

Carol Paine-McGovern said the KCFCCC appreciates the County's strong support of the Prevention Initiative.

### **3 Suicide Prevention Plan**

Barbara Hawkins-Palmer and Su Hood gave the group an update on the Suicide Prevention Plan.

Barbara started by giving a background on how the Suicide Prevention Plan began. She said the Federal government put out a Suicide Prevention Plan and Strategy in 2001 and encouraged states to do the same. The State of Michigan did in 2005. In 2007 Kent County began working on a suicide prevention plan.

Kent County's Suicide Prevention Plan can be found on [Healthykent.org](http://Healthykent.org) and Network180's websites.

Su talked about the things they have learned about suicide. She said it is generally an isolated event in families. There are resources that people need to know about. Their mission is to educate the public on suicide, reduce deaths by suicide and suicide attempts. Suicide is now termed as "completed" as opposed to "committed", since committed refers to committing a crime.

Su mentioned the lengthy list of agencies that have endorsed the Suicide Prevention Plan.

In the statistics Su talked about, she said of all the deaths that occurred in Michigan in 2006, suicide was the number one cause over Homicide and HIV/Aids. An average of 52 suicides are completed per year in Kent County. The average age of persons completing suicide is 20-44 (41.3%) and age 45-64(36.5%). The gun is the most widely used method of completing suicide.

Some of the risk factors include: Stress, prior attempts, family history of mental illness, family violence.

The plan outlines 5 goals:

- ♦ Community Awareness and Education
- ♦ Develop Community-based Prevention Program
- ♦ Implement Training for At-Risk Behavior & Deliver Effective Treatment
- ♦ Provide support for Kent County residents affected by attempted or completed suicide
- ♦ Provide on-going support for Suicide Prevention Plan and monitor data

Su said the program is already going on in a number of schools in the County. It gives them the opportunity to work with teens in need of mental health services.

The committee is working on putting together a formalized support group. As part of the group, suicide survivors will go out to the family members and friends of a person who has completed suicide.

Beginning October 1, a grant from the State will fund a part-time coordinator for 3 years to assist the Suicide Prevention Team in getting the plan out.

They hope to have more monitoring of completed suicides to give them better records.

Barbara Hawkins-Palmer said one of the goals is to get the word out and to get agencies to provide their endorsement and get their signatures on a form saying they will endorse the plan. The names will be listed on their website.

Their next steps are to provide notification of community events. Barbara said on October 4 they will hold the Out of the Darkness Walk at Millennium Park. The Suicide Prevention Coalition has a team of 4 in the walk.

The coalition is asking the KCFCCC to endorse this effort.

Wayman Britt asked if there was a cost to endorse. Barbara answered there was no cost, although financial contributions are accepted, the effort is funded by the State.

Candace Cowling asked about raising public awareness and the effect on teens. Her concern being too much publicity could cause teens to glamorize suicide. How do we deal with that?

Su Hood said it is one of the issues they deal with. She said it is a myth that talking about suicide will lead to suicide. She said it is more how you respond after suicide. She said they have to be particularly aware of that. In the school program the parents will have to sign off for their child to be involved.

Barbara said some schools have been receptive to this program and some have not. She said Grandville has had 5 suicides in the last 4 years so they have had to change their way of thinking on the issue. They have changed their approach now. She said they learn in their Health class where to go for help.

Su said she will send a copy of the plan to the KCFCCC

A copy of the plan is available on-line at:

<http://www.healthykent.org/suicideprevention/Healthy%20Kent%20Suicide%20Prevention%20Plan%207-1-2008%20.pdf>

Carol Paine-McGovern asked for a motion to endorse the Suicide Prevention Plan.

Sue Broman moved, supported by Lynne Ferrell, approved by all.

#### **4 Children's Rights Settlement**

Carol asked Sharon Loughridge for an update. Sharon said the Michigan Federation had their Annual Senior Management Conference last week. They are a state-wide organization that represents some private agencies across Michigan, primarily Child Welfare agencies. One of the presentations was from the monitor, Kevin Ryan and his staff, who talked about the Children's Rights Lawsuit. She said it isn't in place yet as it happens in the Federal court system in Detroit on October 7. There were a lot of questions asked, but they got a lot of "we don't know yet."

Sharon said one of the big changes will be all relatives will have to be licensed to provide care for children. Any new placements of children in a relative's home effective October 1 must be a licensed home. Over the next 2 years there must be a plan in place for relatives who currently provide daycare to become licensed. If that can't happen, the children must be moved, although there is a provision for exceptions, probably for about 10% of the cases.

Sharon continued saying another provision of the lawsuit the State must establish treatment foster care homes for kids with a lot of emotional problems.

Another requirement will be the use of shelter care for kids, which provides for a maximum of 30 days for the 1<sup>st</sup> occurrence and 7 days for the 2<sup>nd</sup> stay. The 2<sup>nd</sup> stay cannot happen in the same 12 month period as the first. She said this will have a huge impact on how agencies develop shelter homes to be sure there are other alternatives available for these kids. There are a lot of requirements for supervisor training and education, including that they will have to have a Masters Degree. Private agencies have the educational requirements in place already because it is an accreditation requirement. Another change is the caseload size, which will be limited to one social worker for every 15 kids, where the average is now one for every 23.

Andy provided some input by saying first of all, this was good because it will require funding we didn't have before. He said the State is committing to meeting the Federal requirements by 2010. He said the fiscal implications are a concern because it is going to cost money and he doesn't know where the money will come from.

Another concern he has is there's little emphasis on prevention. They are also talking of splitting up the services into 2 County directors, one for Public Welfare and one for Child Welfare. The Child Welfare director would be appointed by the State and it could be someone outside of Kent County.

Wayman added he met with Stan Stewart and his staff and explained to them they can't understand the collaborative efforts between the KCFCCC and the County. He's worried that will change because they don't have any concept of what we do in Kent County. He continued saying unless they fund the increased requirements, it could cost the County an additional \$1.5 Million per year for Child Care Fund programs. That is what we are anticipating and we have no say in it.

## **5 Youth Master Plan**

Carol Paine-McGovern said Lynn Heemstra presented the Youth Master Plan to the KCFCCC in June and was asked to pull together a group of people to talk in more detail. At the requested meeting came a recommendation that the consultant, Karen Pittman, come in 1-2 hours to sit down with the KCFCCC and talk about experiences she has had across the country working with and doing a Youth Master Plan by county, not just the city.

Lynn shared that Karen Pittman would be coming in on September 19 from 8:00-11:00 am for anyone who would like to attend. From 11:00-12:00 that day she will meet with the KCFCCC Steering Committee and the Youth Commission. From 12:30 -2:00 pm she is scheduled to meet with the Coordinating Council. This will be on a first-come, first-serve basis at the KISD. RSVP's are needed today or tomorrow.

Carol asked the group to look at their schedules and RSVP if they are available to attend.

## **6 Great Start Collaborative Update**

Lynne Ferrell said this has evolved from the Children's Partners. It has been a busy summer. She said they have played a major role in the 1<sup>st</sup> Steps Initiative launched this summer with Lynn Heemstra, Doug DeVos and Kate Pew Wolters. She said they also launched the Children's Health Care Access Program for Medicaid kids. It's going very well. The initial launch was August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Next focus will be on Family Friends and Neighbor Care, the unlicensed caregivers.

They will also be launching the Home Visit Initiative, a county-wide effort to provide 1<sup>st</sup> time parents under age 25 with a home visit.

Lynne said they have a pretty comprehensive communications plan that is running along side of all of this. It will encompass press coverage, speaking engagements, etc. There will be one-on-one meetings with legislators and business leaders to help them understand what we are trying to do. The plan is to build the program around children to prevent issues before they get to the treatment phase. We have around 35 members working diligently.

Some of the other things happening is the Parent Coalition component of the Great Start Collaborative. It is a group of about 25-35 members who have gone to Lansing to talk about Child Care, Substance Abuse, talk with each other about parenting and are working in tandem with some of the committees to help strengthen what they are trying to do to make sure parents have a voice in this effort.

Coming next, they have contracted with the Delta Strategy to finance the project the County is doing to look at the number of dollars going into Early Childhood programs. There's a lot of work to do.

There is also a group forming around preschool, calling themselves the Preschool Task Force. It is Head Start GSRP – Great Start Readiness Program.

Carol Paine-McGovern commented the Grand Rapids Press has done a good job and Susan Broman was on TV with Ben Emdin on Michigan Week. This will continue over the next 4 weeks.

Andy Zylstra asked about the funding of these programs. Lynne Ferrell said everything that has been designed and launched is funded. For example, the Children's Healthcare Access Program is funded through the pilot. It is positioned to be a pilot. The idea is to prove that we can reduce the number of ER visits enough to offset the investment in the program, so they can go back to the partners to convince them to fund it on an ongoing basis.

This is a reallocation of existing Medicaid funding. They are paying the doctors more to provide primary care visits, expecting less ER visits.

## **7 Kent School Services Network Update**

Dave Neifer said he had a busy summer. Most of their sites have been doing resource fairs. They have had a lot of summer programs. Comstock Park ran programs literally all summer. He said the big push now is data dumping. They promised the leadership team the first hard data in October. They've had some data over the summer. A year ago they did a teacher survey, and it was done again in the spring. They had a lot higher participation and the results were extremely positive. From 64-80% of teachers and others in schools know what KSSN is. They know what the Community Schools Concept is, and gave an overall rating of 57% of teachers where they are located that talked about improving school climates. He continued, saying there were 2 schools for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 5 to 7 years that have made ...**(Burton & Sibley)**..... They have also seen increased attendance in these schools. Dave said this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year for the pilot and they have been seeing great results for this exciting project.

## **8 Public Comment**

Lynn Heemstra mentioned the Grand Rapids Public Schools want to get the word out to the community to make sure kids are in school on September 24 for a count.

## **9 Miscellaneous**

Carol said she has the Non-Profit Leadership Institute Grand Valley on the same day as the Annual Governing for Success Conference. It is from 7:30-2:30 and they will bring in Hildy Gottlieb, who is president of Health for Non-Profits.

Candace Cowling said the Family Resource Guide is updated and has been printed in Spanish as well for the first time. She also mentioned that Sue Toman has joined the Family Resource Council as the new COO.

## **10 Adjournment**

Carol adjourned the meeting at 1:32 PM, mentioning the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, November 4, 2008

**Next Council meeting:** Tuesday, November 4, 2008, 12:00pm – 1:30pm  
MSU Extension Room B