

**Medina County Family First Council
Planning Committee Meeting
February 24, 2009**

Attending: Sandy Calvert, Lynne Castele, Vincent DeGeorge, Diane Dockrill, Debra Grace, Suzanne LeSure, Judy Leuthaeuser, Jan Manes, Debra Radecky, Christine Ruf, Nick Solar, Phillip Titterington, Mead Wilkins, and Bradford Williams

Guests: Barb Meador and Carla Unkefer

1. Welcome

Nick Solar welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:40 a.m. Nick informed the Planning Committee that the City of Brunswick will have a levy on the ballot on May 5, 2009. If the voters do not approve the levy, Nick will no longer be employed by the City of Brunswick. As he is Chair of Council, the Bylaws Committee will work on the scenario should he not be part of Council and not be able to fulfill his duties as Chair.

2. Approval of Minutes

Debra Grace made a motion to approve the minutes from January 27, 2009. Debra Radecky seconded. The motion passed.

3. First Lady's Family and Children First Regional Forum

Vince DeGeorge and Chris Ruf will be attending a teleconference at the Lorain County Family and Children First Council on Thursday, February 26, 2009. Vince will attend the State meeting on Friday, February 27, 2009. He received information on the First Lady's Family and Children First Regional Forum on March 4, 2009. The agenda was e-mailed out to the six attendees. Our Council needs to be prepared with specific questions, be proactive and participate in the dialogue.

Mrs. Strickland's office published "First Lady's 88 County FCFC Visits – Prioritized Challenges and Issues" in July of 2008. From that document our Council determined what our priorities are. The agenda for March 4, 2009 has Mrs. Strickland speaking for about thirty minutes, then open dialogue with the attendees.

Discussion included:

- HMG needs to be part of the dialogue.
- At-risk population needs to be addressed
- There is a need to intervene early
- The blending of Head Start to the existing Help Me Grow program
- Medicaid match
- Individuals that are below poverty level
- Costly programs
- Decreasing caseloads
- Reduced funding
- Increased requirements
- Significant layoffs in some counties
- Significant challenges
- Possible move to the Department of Education
- Filtering down to the county level
- Newborn home visits are ceasing
- 34-45% reduction to the HMG budget
- Increased state spending due to the stimulus package
- Vince may get feedback on other First Lady Forums at the State meeting this Friday.
- Chris Ruf, Vince DeGeorge, Betsy Simon, Debbie Grace, Nick Solar, Randy Stepp are attending

4. Senior Needs Assessment

Nick Solar opened discussion by asking the Planning Committee, "Where does the lifespan commitment fit within our Council?" This issue was discussed at the Administrative Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 2009. Mead Wilkins met with Sandy Calvert concerning the Senior Survey. Sandy asked that Family First Council enter into an agreement with Jackie Kirby Wilkins of IntelliSolve, for \$15,000 to investigate the implementation of the six recommendations:

1. Improve Transportation
2. Increase Housing Alternatives and Affordability
3. Increase Financial Management Assistance
4. Increase Safety and Security
5. Improve Health and Well-Being
6. Enhance Public Awareness and Service Outreach

Due to the high cost of IntelliSolve's proposal, Vince DeGeorge recommended a lower cost alternative by implementing the recommendations with the assistance of Sandy Calvert and Amy Perrine. Sandy has agreed to be Chair of Senior Focus. Family First Council would look at existing coalitions (housing, health, transportation and financial stability) and join together with those resources to address the recommendations. Vince and Sandy would allocate their time towards this effort. Amy would assist Vince with the scribing responsibilities by increasing her weekly hours by five (approximately \$400 per month). Amy would do for Senior Focus similar to what Chris Ruf did with the PfS process. Amy would gather the information, tabulate it, and finalize the reports.

Sandy Calvert noted that Senior Focus has been nonfunctioning over the past year. Senior Focus coordinated the Senior Summit in July 2008. Joyce Giles resigned from Council in October 2008. Senior ICAT is different from Senior Focus. At a recent Senior ICAT meeting, it was suggested that the term "Senior Focus" be terminated. If Family First Council is willing to take this on as an initiative, then use the term Senior Focus and move forward. If Family First Council truly is a lifespan Council, then it needs to proceed with the recommendations and take responsibility for Senior Focus.

Discussion included:

- Lifespan Council
- Facilitate without external contract
- Increase internal staff time
- Seniors are falling through the cracks
- Not the time to drop the senior issues
- Integration of care
- Senior Focus is a subcommittee under Planning
- Need a good link to Planning
- Can use carry-over dollars from grants, HMG, and use some funding in projects and programs
- Senior ICAT has no direct link to FFC
- Planning is where the decision is made if we are to move forward with the recommendations
- Administration is for financial issues and the funding of the recommendations

Sandy Calvert further stated that she has been a member of Council for over a year and has attended Senior ICAT meetings to report on legislative issues. At the last Senior ICAT meeting it was discussed how Senior ICAT directly links to Council. Senior ICAT recommended Sandy discuss this with Council and see if there is the commitment to take on the recommendations. Senior Focus would be that entity. She is requesting a commitment for support from the staff with additional hours allocated towards Senior Focus. Senior Focus needs a place to house data, a place to go with resources and a centralized location. There has been six months of discussion without a commitment to go forward.

Debra Radecky noted that Senior ICAT is frustrated because Council has never really supported it. Senior ICAT is in our strategic plan and we are functioning. Senior ICAT receives support from the ADAMH Board and the Commissioners, but Council has not provided financial or administrative support.

Lynne Castele stated that Joyce Giles provided a Senior Focus report at the beginning of 2008. There were no issues brought to Lynne while she was Chair which were not addressed. Senior Focus has always been on the agenda at the Council meetings. There was confusion from the Administrative Committee that Senior Focus was not functioning. The Administrative Committee needed to know more about the issues before making a decision on funding.

Vince DeGeorge added that if we are going to be a lifespan Council then we need to go forward. This can be done in a very cost-effective manner. The ADAMH Board gives money to Senior ICAT, and Council needs to renew the effort by backing it up with funding.

Sandy Calvert noted that the ADAMH Board gave an additional \$10,000 and Pat Geissman gave \$7,000 from the Commissioners Ball for an intensive case manager position. Kathy Shooke from Catholic Charities is the intensive case manager. There are some funds, but Senior ICAT needs administrative support.

Suzanne LeSure made a motion:

The Planning Committee requests that Administration allocate resources and/or funding to support Senior Focus with the purpose of: 1 – Implementing recommendations of the Senior Needs Assessment Survey, and 2 – Strengthening the ties between Family First Council and Senior ICAT.

Debbra Grace seconded.

Discussion on the motion included:

- Have the Chair of Senior Focus take minutes
- Increase existing staff hours
- The amount of the programs have not decreased, but the funding has decreased.
- The Planning Committee has come to consensus to support the senior issues but it cannot wait for the new strategic plan
- Three part-time employees total one and one-half FTE's
- Vince does full-time work at part-time hours
- Need resources at the Administrative Assistant level
- Cannot support the issues within the hours that are now allocated
- Administration needs to discuss what the resources are including adding hours
- This is an internal budget issue
- An independent contract will not be considered.

The motion passed. **This will be an agenda item for the March 17, 2009 Administrative Committee meeting.**

5. Head Start

Carla Unkefer was appointed to the Early Childhood Advisory Council at the state level. The Advisory Council has met every month, or more often as needed. One of the Advisory Council's roles is to provide input to the Chair of the Early Childhood Cabinet and the Governor's office. Carla's role is to express concerns from the community level and to provide input from the county level. Carla is encouraging communication from Family First Council concerning early childhood issues. Head Start will be funded \$1.1 billion from the stimulus money. She is expecting a request for proposal to be out within the next week or two. The stimulus money is only for two years. After that we will have to investigate resources to continue the programming. Head Start currently serves about fifty children in Medina County. Head Start is setting up collaborative programs with existing childcare programs to train teachers on best practices. In Medina County, 490 infant and toddlers are at or below 100% poverty levels. Head Start works closely with Help Me Grow and will coordinate as to not duplicate services. Head Start needs letters of support for expansion in Medina County.

Mead Wilkins made a motion to ask Family First Council to provide letters of recommendations to Head Start. Judy Leuthaeuser seconded. The motion passed.

Discussion on early childhood mental health ensued and will be discussed at the next Youth Advisory Consortium meeting.

6. Adjournment

Mead Wilkins made a motion to adjourn. Phillip Titterington seconded. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jayme McCourt