

Nebraska Children's Commission

Twenty-eighth Meeting
October 21, 2014
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Country Inn & Suites, Omaha Room
5353 North 27th Street, Lincoln, NE

Call to Order

Karen Authier called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and noted that the Open Meetings Act information was posted in the room as required by state law.

Roll Call

Commission Members present: Pam Allen, Teresa Anderson, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, Susan Staab, and Diana Tedrow (9:05 a.m.).

Commission Members absent: Kim Hawekotte and Norman Langemach.

Ex Officio Members present: Senator Kathy Campbell, Senator Colby Coash (9:05 a.m.), Hon. Linda Porter, Thomas Pristow, Julie Rogers, and Vicky Weisz (9:05 a.m.).

Ex Officio Members absent: Ellen Brokofsky, Senator Jeremy Nordquist, and Kerry Winterer.

Also in attendance: Bethany Connor and Leesa Sorensen from the Nebraska Children's Commission.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Mary Jo Pankoke to approve the agenda, as written. The motion was seconded by Gene Klein. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Teresa Anderson, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, and Susan Staab. Voting no: none. Kim Hawekotte, Norman Langemach, and Diana Tedrow were absent for the vote. Motion carried.

Approval of September 16, 2014, Minutes

A motion was made by Beth Baxter to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2014, meeting as written. The motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Mary Jo Pankoke. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Teresa Anderson, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, Susan Staab, and Diana Tedrow. Voting no: none. Dale Shotkoski abstained. Kim Hawekotte and Norman Langemach were absent. Motion carried.

Chairperson's Report

Karen Authier provided a very brief chair's report by noting that she had been out of town on vacation and had returned home the night before the Commission meeting. Karen noted that her family and the ocean were all great.

Legislative Update

Senator Kathy Campbell reminded Commission members of the upcoming interim study hearings and noted that the dates and times for hearings are listed in the September 16 meeting minutes. She noted that the next hearing that may be of interest to Commission members is scheduled for October 24 at 9:00 a.m. The hearing on LR 533 is an interim study to assess the enrollment of former foster youth in the new Medicaid category for youth formerly in foster care up to age 26. The hearing on LR 539 is after that, and examines whether the maximum payment rate in the Aid to Dependent Children program is adequate to meet the goals of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, including keeping children in their own home. Senator Campbell also noted that the hearing on LR 592 would be in the afternoon on October 24 and it examines various methods of behavioral health workforce development.

Senator Campbell also provided information on the public hearing on the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) system and noted that the hearing provided a good record on the issues to be considered. Senator Campbell asked Commission members to get in contact with her office if they had anything to add to the GAL discussion.

Karen Authier then encouraged Commission members to consider attending or listening to the hearings through the internet. Karen noted that hearings provide a good head start for understanding the issues that Commission members will be asked to make recommendations on in the future. Karen also noted that Bethany was working on a summary of the GAL hearing testimony.

DHHS Update

Thomas Pristow updated the committee on Alternative Response (AR), Results Based Accountability (RBA), Bridge to Independence (B2I), and the Attestation Report of the Department of Health and Human Services Child Welfare Program. Thomas noted that DHHS is continuing to work on the implementation of the AR program. Thomas indicated that DHHS is planning to provide the Commission with an update on the AR Pilot Sites data at a future Commission meeting. Thomas stated that data is still being loaded for RBA. Thomas indicated that some providers are having difficulty with the data loading process and that DHHS is working with those providers to resolve those issues. Thomas stated that Bridge to Independence successfully began as of October 1, 2014. The program currently has 79 enrollees. Thomas also noted that staff have been hired and are in place to help young adults across Nebraska. Finally, Thomas gave an update on the Attestation Report regarding the audit of the DHHS Child Welfare program. Thomas indicated that there were 11 findings in the report and that 9 of the 11 have already been worked on with federal and state partners. The remaining two findings related to a single payment issue that has been corrected.

Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare Annual Report

Julie Rogers provided an overview of the Office of Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare Annual Report for 2013-2014 that was issued on September 15, 2014. Julie highlighted the recommendations that she made regarding caseworker turnover; the need for a state level definition of trauma informed care; the importance of family finding and working with extended family in the placement process; workforce development; and changes that are needed in the juvenile justice system. Julie also referenced the number of investigations done by her office due to complaints that are filed.

During the discussion on family finding, David Newell reviewed the Nebraska Adoption Project information that was provided to Commission members. This project will test intensive child-focused adoptive parent recruitment models in order to improve the permanency outcomes for “hardest to match” children/youth in the Eastern Service Area of Nebraska’s child welfare system. Three evidence-based models will be used, which include Family Finding, the 3-5-7 Model, and Wendy’s Wonderful Kids.

Julie concluded her remarks with issues that she will work on in this next year, including assessing how the OIGs office can be a part of the oversight process for AR and working with DHHS on development of a grievance process. Commission members discussed how recommendations in this OIG report and other reports can be more effectively utilized in the strategic planning process by the Commission. The Commission also discussed caseworker caseloads and turnover. Susan Staab indicated that the workforce workgroup needed to look at recommendations made in the report. The workforce workgroup indicated that they would have recommendations to review at an upcoming meeting.

Juvenile Services (OJS) Committee Update and Action Items

Julie Rogers provided an update on the Juvenile Services (OJS) Committee. The committee met on October 7, 2014. At the meeting the committee met with Jenn Piatt to review the recommendations made in the committee’s December 2013 report. Jenn is currently working on drafting legislation that will reflect some of the recommendations made by the committee. Julie also noted that there are a variety of juvenile justice projects that members of the committee are involved in at this time including collaborative efforts with CSG and FSG. It was noted that a future Commission meeting should include updates on some of these initiatives. At the conclusion of the committee report, Julie provided information on committee membership nominees that the committee was recommending to the Commission members for their approval. The Committee recommended adding Tom McBride from NJJA; Jeanne Brandner from Probation; and Nicole Brundo as a Juvenile Services County Attorney representative. The committee was also recommending having Nicole Brundo as the co-chair of the committee and approving Tony Green as a voting member of the committee. The Juvenile Services committee was also asking the Children’s Commission to expand the size of the committee to accommodate some additional members to represent the defense bar; a consumer voice, and a DMC representative.

Gene Klein made a motion to: approve the list of nominations from the Juvenile Services (OJS) Committee - included Tom McBride from NJJA; Jeanne Brandner from Probation; and Nicole

Brundo as a Juvenile Services County Attorney representative; approve Nicole Brundo as the co-chair of the committee; approve the movement of Tony Green to a voting member of the committee; and to table consideration of all new committee nominations until the committee has people to fill the representative spots. The motion was seconded by Susan Staab. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Teresa Anderson, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, Susan Staab, and Diana Tedrow. Voting no: none. Kim Hawekotte and Norman Langemach were absent. Motion carried.

Analysis of Child Welfare Funding in Nebraska

Mary Jo Pankoke and Karen Authier provided information on an opportunity for the Nebraska Children's Commission to work with Child Focus and the Sherwood Foundation on an analysis of Child Welfare Funding in Nebraska. It was noted that Kristen Williams from the Sherwood Foundation has asked the Children's Commission to be involved with the design process of an analysis for child welfare funding in Nebraska. Commission members discussed the importance of this type of report in the strategic planning process and making sure that the report addresses all the funding streams used in Nebraska including public health funds. A suggestion was also made that the process needed to include working closely with Liz Hruska or someone from the Fiscal office.

Mary Jo Pankoke made a motion that Karen Authier, Commission Chair, appoint one or more Commission members to serve on a Steering Committee to help design an analysis of child welfare funding in Nebraska. The motion was seconded by Susan Staab. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, Susan Staab, and Diana Tedrow. Voting no: none. Teresa Anderson, Kim Hawekotte and Norman Langemach were absent for the vote. Motion carried.

Statutory Taskforce Report

Karen Authier presented a statutory matrix on behalf of the Statutory Taskforce. The taskforce included Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Senator Kathy Campbell, Michelle Chaffee, Mary Jo Pankoke, Thomas Pristow, and Julie Rogers. The matrix included needed Commission action and listed the six legislatively assigned tasks that the Commission still needs to address from LB 821. The tasks include networking; reviewing DHHS structure; assessing the lead agency model; supporting evidence-based prevention and early intervention; identifying child welfare indicators; and developing a statewide automated child welfare information system. The Commission members discussed the various requirements and potential ways of accomplishing each task. It was suggested that the Commission may want to review the Ummel Report and the original Hornby Zeller report. It was noted that a new Hornby Zeller report is due out in December 2014. Commission members also discussed the upcoming legislative resolution hearings that would impact the work noted on the matrix.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mary Jo Pankoke made a motion that the Statutory Responsibilities matrix should be incorporated into the strategic plan after being updated to

incorporate appropriate action items still needed and timelines for completing those actions. The motion was seconded by David Newell. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Teresa Anderson, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, and Diana Tedrow. Voting no: none. Kim Hawekotte, Norman Langemach, and Susan Staab were absent for the vote. Motion carried.

Structure Taskforce Report

Julie Rogers indicated that the Structure Taskforce did not have an updated report since the group was not able to meet until the end of October. Julie noted that the taskforce will be continuing work on the recommendations and thanked those Commission members who provided input. Commission members were asked to provide any additional feedback to Julie.

Strategic Plan Document Review and Discussion

Karen Authier noted that further Strategic Plan discussion would be deferred until the November meeting. Karen noted that updates would be made to the Statutory Responsibilities matrix and a workplan would be created for the Commission to consider and discuss at the November meeting.

Next Meeting Planning

Commission members discussed the need for a Commission meeting in November and doing a retreat in January. It was noted that topics for November need to include: Bridge to Independence report; workforce workgroup recommendations; and statutory priorities. It was noted that the Bridge to Independence Committee would have a report and an action item for the November meeting. Karen asked Commission members to send any additional agenda items to Leesa by e-mail. The January retreat will cover data issues with a presentation from Chapin Hall and an orientation time.

New Business

None.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Tuesday, November 18, 2014, 9:00am-3:00pm. Country Inns & Suites, Omaha Room, 5353 N. 27th Street, Lincoln, NE.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Susan Staab to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Deb O'Brien. The meeting adjourned at 12:06 pm.