

**LANCASTER COUNTY CHILDREN & YOUTH AGENCY
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

November 18, 2008

Board Members Present:

Karen Jaskot, Commissioner Scott Martin, Roger Glick, Alice Yoder, Amy Jo Lutz-Phillips, Kimberly Ibarra, Dolores Reidenbach and Dr. Brian Young

Staff Present:

Crystal Gingrich, Amy Campbell, Betsy Frame, Greg Landis, Ann Long, Kurt Miller, Lisa Runge, Nancy Schuyler and Kali Kunkle

Excused: Kathryn Gregoire, Patrick McBrearty, Edward Tobin, Fr. Allan Wolfe and Nancy Valkenburg

Public: None

Guests: Carol Arena, Home/School Visitor, Columbia School District

Call to Order:

Board Chair Karen Jaskot called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

Approval of Board Minutes:

Commissioner Martin made a motion that the minutes from October 2008 be accepted. Dolores Reidenbach seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business: None

New Business: Nancy Valkenburg has missed three consecutive meetings due to having hand surgery. She is requesting to be able to remain on the Board. Kimberly Ibarra moved to allow Nancy to remain on the Board. Dolores Reidenbach seconded. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

- **Community Relations:** There will be a meeting on December 9, 2008, at the Agency. The meetings are currently scheduled for every other month. If you are on the committee and unable to attend, please contact Amy Campbell.
- **Children's Services:** The committee met last month and discussed the foster care department. They are meeting after today's Board meeting and will be discussing new initiatives the Agency is involved in.
- **Nominations:** Alice Yoder and Dr. Brian Young were recently approved and Attorney Dan Lieberman will be approved today by the Commissioners. There will have a new Board member orientation on 1/20/09, immediately following the Board meeting.
- **By-laws:** There are no suggested amendments and there was no meeting held.

Quality Assurance Department: Amy Campbell

- Amy distributed a current staff organizational chart. There are two protective caseworker, two placement caseworker, one clerical and one fiscal technician positions vacant. The County has instituted a new hiring process, to assure that any position is needed and cannot be absorbed by other existing workers. There is also a hold on the new Adolescent Intake unit, which we were hoping to start in January 2009.
- The Office of Children, Youth and Families has issued several Bulletins recently. One of them is a new Safety Bulletin. Amy distributed two examples of some of the new tools which were included in the Bulletin. This new Bulletin was issued to standardize safety assessments Statewide. Amy Campbell, Robin Boyer, Kurt Miller and Nancy Schuyler have recently been trained by the State and will now conduct safety trainings for all the staff. These trainings will begin by July 1, 2009.

Fiscal Report

- Pedro Rodriguez distributed a 2008 CYA Expenditures and Revenue Report. The State has changed the databases for submitting invoices. Pedro has been unable to submit the first quarter invoice until the State resolves some problems with the new databases.

Intake Department: Greg Landis

- Greg Landis updated the Board on the Intake and CPS units. The referrals to the Intake unit have modestly increased since last month. The referrals to the CPS unit drastically increased at the end of October.
- Currently there are three children in foster care that are from Mexico. The grandmother is a citizen and resident of Mexico and is interested in caring for these children. A home inspection was orchestrated by Congressman Pitts' office and the Mexican Embassy. Based on the home inspection and interviews with the grandmother, the Agency is recommending the children be released to the grandmother in Mexico. The caseworker is assisting the grandmother with the process of obtaining the necessary passports and traveling papers for the children.
- There is also an eight year old boy with MR and significant medical issues who is need of placement. The MH/MR system does not have a long term program. The grandparents are no longer able to care for this child and the mother will not care for him. The Agency is exploring placement options. This special needs child is difficult to place.

Placement Department: Betsy Frame

- Betsy Frame updated the Board on the Adoption and Placement units. The placements have continued to increase and become more challenging during the month of October. There were six children reunified with their parents, 11 adopted and one child released to a relative, during the month. This Thursday, an "Adoption Day" will take place when the adoption of 15-20 children will be finalized. Judge Jay Hoberg has also set aside a half day in December when 8-10

- additional children's adoptions will be finalized. Approximately 95 adoptions have been finalized during 2008.
- The Independent Living program continues to serve youth 16-21 years of age. The youth have expressed a lack of job opportunities after graduation. If anyone has any opportunities, please contact Steve Welters, Independent Living Coordinator.

Protective Department: Kurt Miller

- Kurt Miller updated the Board on the Protective and Resource units. He also distributed a monthly reporting form, documenting the statistics and changes in his department. He included the number of families and children the Protective units are currently serving and the types of issues they are addressing. The number of protective cases has continued to increase and there were approximately 21 children placed into foster care in October. Families have become increasingly stressed and as a result, sometimes become less cooperative with their caseworker.

Orientation

- The Board voted to move the orientation to after the January Board meeting. Alice Yoder moved to amend the orientation date and Dolores Reidenbach seconded. Motion passed.

Director's Report:

- Crystal met with the Commissioners yesterday to review current vacancies we have, as well as the new Adolescent Intake unit slated for January 2009. A decision on the unit should be received by the end of the week.
- The County Budget will be presented to the public on December 2, 2008.
- The County continues to meet with the Union to negotiate a new contract. Meetings are currently being held every other week. Crystal is hopeful a new contract will be in place before the end of the year.
- The raises for County employees will be approximately 2.75%. The County is considering giving everyone their raise at the beginning of the year instead of when their annual performance evaluation is completed. Commissioner Martin mentioned that the County switched dental and vision plans for 2009, so that there would be no increase in cost to the participants. The County will have the same health care provider and there will be a slight increase in the rates for 2009. The Commissioners did not want to raise taxes this year or lay anyone off.
- We are waiting to hear back from the State regarding the 2009/2010 Needs Based Budget and whether the budget we have submitted will be approved.
- There was a Title IV-E audit on October 28, 2008. A public consulting group reviewed fiscal records and how we draw State and Federal funds. The consulting group noted that there were no errors, no need for a plan of correction, and that the staff was very cooperative. Deputy Secretary Richard Gold also sent a thank you letter and said we are a model county for the State.
- Crystal reviewed and circulated pictures of a case of significant physical abuse which was in the paper in October.

- The Child Welfare Training Program will be providing a staff training to all staff called “Engaging Clients from a Strength-Based, Solution Focused Perspective” at the end of November and beginning of December. It will focus on engaging families in more purposeful ways.
- We are continuing to work on improving the morale of the Agency staff.
- Crystal and the management team met with Lancaster City Churches on October 30, 2008 to discuss partnership opportunities. Commissioner Dennis Stuckey and Commissioner Scott Martin were also in attendance. Positive conversation occurred and one of the churches volunteered to assist the Agency with various projects. They are interested in providing us space for family group decision making conferences.
- Crystal attended a resource parent training on Saturday, November 15, 2008, and talked about new initiatives we are pursuing. She met with several parents going through the initial training to become resource parents.
- Commissioner Martin discussed that the Commissioners are currently working on the initial plans for a new Children and Youth building. The County can only rent the building at 900 East King Street until September of 2015. There is some money already slated for the new building, which is to be built on the Sunny Side Peninsula near the Youth Intervention Center.

Upcoming Events

- A staff Harvest Luncheon will be held on November 20, 2008 at the Youth Intervention Center at 11:30 am.
- The Resource Parent Association Holiday Party will take place on December 13, 2008. More details will be given in the near future.
- A staff Christmas Party will be held on December 18, 2008 at the Youth Intervention Center at 11:30 am

Public Comment: None

Meeting was adjourned at 9:02 am

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2009
7:30-9:00 am
at the Children and Youth Agency
900 East King Street, Lancaster, PA**

Respectfully Submitted,

Kali Kunkle