

**Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Friday, February 13, 2009**  
**BMCW Administrative Site**  
**Minutes**  
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**Present:** Cyrus Behroozi, Linda Davis, Mary Pat Bohn, Cathy Swessel, Frank Gaunt, Wanda Montgomery, Francine Feinberg, David Hoffman, Janel Hines, Pastor Archie Ivy, Dr. Earnestine Willis, Connie Schlulze for Senator Alberta Darling, Deborah Blanks, Colleen Ellingson, Jennie Dorsey, Mary Sowinski, Mark Campbell, Kenneth Munson, Dr. Lynn Sheets, Nancy Wettersten, Lynn Wieser, Anita Cruise, and Pam Matthews.

Pastor Ivy opened the meeting with greetings and introductions.

**Minutes:**

Minutes from the January 9 and January 16 Executive Committee meetings approved as read.

**Fostering Hope**

Angela Carron, Dr. Lynn Sheets and Vanessa Claypool presented information on the Fostering Hope program:

- Fostering Hope advocates for children in foster care and provides long-term support to families.
- All team members are volunteers who come from the faith community. Progress is being made to identify churches in Milwaukee with whom to work initially.
- Targeting zip codes where foster families are located.
- Fostering Hope is a ministry of service – not of words.
- Volunteers act as an extended family during times of need. They provide emotional help and practical supports such as transportation, monitoring visits and tutoring.
- Funding comes from a HWPP development grant. Participants include the Medical College, Children’s Hospital, Colarelli Family Foundation, CSSW, BMCW and UWM.
- Focus is on foster parents. The goal is to develop a relationship between foster parents and volunteer teams.

**Partnership Council Membership**

Janel Hines provided information on Council Membership.

- The Partnership Council is recruiting new members.
- Current vacancies include three public members and a children’s services network nominee.
- The Assembly Minority Leader will make an appointment.
- The Milwaukee County Executive will make two new nominations.
- The Committee recommended Colleen Ellingson, Francine Feinberg and Sue Jeskewitz as new Council members.

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**Community Meeting**

The Bureau is not required by the settlement agreement to hold community meetings. Committee members discussed community involvement in the Community Meeting:

- The meetings need to be more informative and involve the community in helping to fix what is wrong.
- Meetings need to be more of a public accounting, engagement process.
- Changing the time of the meeting should be considered. It would be helpful to have the meeting outside of regular business hours. Perhaps we could rotate times.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to hold a special Partnership Council meeting in March with the focus on the Settlement Agreement. The meeting will be held from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with the location to be determined.

**Closed Session Guidelines**

Nancy Wettersten provided the Executive Committee with a review of guidelines regarding closed sessions during Partnership Council meetings.

- A governmental body must give advance public notice of each, and conduct all of its business in open session, unless an exemption applies.
- Reasons for going into closed session are narrowly defined (i.e. medical, social and personal history of a specific person).
- Every meeting must begin in open session.
- The Executive Committee and/or Partnership Council cannot share information received in closed session.
- The Partnership Council and Executive Committee must limit all discussion, while in closed session, to matters covered by the exception.
- In its role as a Citizen Review Panel, the Partnership Council may receive information that the general public is not allowed to have.
- No official actions can be taken in closed session. Voting on issues must be done in open session.

**Medical Review Update**

Mark Campbell gave an update of the Medical Review being conducted by the Bureau:

- 470 reviews out of 560 have been completed. Only 19 children still need to be scheduled to be seen.
- The review team was onsite at LaCausa for 2 weeks.
- Review team includes state adoption staff and certified Quality Service Review reviewers.
- Mr. Campbell and the review team commended LaCausa staff for their professionalism, "absolute dedication" and very good case practice.

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- Frank Gaunt of LaCausa reported that the review was a positive experience. The outside validation staff received from the review team turned into a morale booster for LaCausa staff.
- Reviews will be happening at Regions 1 and 2 during the next few weeks. Review team hopes to wrap up by the end of March.
- Feedback received from foster parents so far indicates their support of the reviews.
- Kathy Elertson, Bureau Nurse Practitioner, has been extremely helpful and was onsite during the review.

Discussion of the review process followed:

- Medical due diligence is important. Avoid being reactionary.
- Medical due diligence should be considered in agency performance review and contract compliance.
- Need to be proactive. Medical evaluations should take place before a child is in care for ten months.
- GAO recently released a report on medical reviews of children in child protective services in 10 states.

**BMCW Director Recruitment**

Lynn Wieser DCF Human Resource Director explained the process involved in recruiting the new Bureau Director.

- The Bureau Director position is a classified civil service position.
- Candidates must go through an exam process. It is a competitive, merit-based process.
- Although the recruitment has an open-ended timeline, it is expected the process will take six to nine months to complete.
- Position expected to be announced March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 3 human resource staff members will be focused on BMCW Director recruitment.
- The Department can seek out individuals who might be interested in the position.

Lynn asked the committee for their thoughts/suggestions regarding expectations for the “ideal” candidate:

- Candidate should be someone who has experience leading an urban child welfare agency.
- According to committee members, the Bureau is seen as a reformed child welfare agency with great community support. The bureau’s public/private partnership is also seen as a plus.
- It was suggested that Partnership Council members be included to help rate applicants.
- Could get input on the “ideal” candidate from our private partners, foster parents and biological parents.

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- Lynn will forward the Director position description to Council members via e-mail and will provide progress reports.

**Child Deaths/Egregious Incident Report**

Mary Pat Skelly Bohn reported that there were no child deaths in the past month and one egregious incident.

**UPDATES – BMCW / Transition / Corrective Action Plan**

**New Section Chief**

Matt Gebhardt is the new Access and Initial Assessment Section Chief. Matt will be starting with the Bureau on March 2.

**Transition**

Cyrus Behroozi reported that there has been good turnout at the community transition meetings. The next meeting will be at region 3 on Tuesday, February 17 at 10:00

- The Bureau is developing a document to track recommendations/ suggestions from the CART team. The tracking form is in a draft form. Once it is finalized it will be shared.
- It was suggested that we do a count of the number of children each worker is covering and how we are ranking them. Mary Pat will work on getting this type of information to council members.
- Caseload size for some workers will increase during transition times.
- We need to take a long-term view of things and view them in context during the transition process.
- Linda Davis requested a point in time report on all workers and their workloads, including number of cases and number of children each worker has on that single day, the number of vacancies in each area and the same information for supervisors.
- It is important to maintain communications regarding clients as well as contracts during this time.
- The transition will not affect services.

A question was raised about how parents can access health information regarding their adopted children. This information is available through adoption search in Madison. Attempts are made to get child health information during the TPR process. This is not a perfect process since it is often based on self-reporting by parents. CSSW can provide adoptive parents with whatever information it has.

**CEO Updates**

Cathy Swessel, CSSW

CSSW has completed the foster parent handbook for distribution to families. Workers will

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meet with families when handbooks are distributed. We will try to get the handbook on the BMCW website and make it available in Spanish as well.

Frank Gaunt, LaCausa

Frank reported that two months into the transition there have been three staff resignations from Ongoing Case Management and 1 resignation from Safety Services.

Wanda Montgomery, CFCP

Wanda thanked Dr. Sheets for the recent training she did for CFCP staff on the early identification signs of abuse. Wanda is interested in scheduling trainings with Dr. Sheets each quarter.

Wanda reported that during the recent major power outage at Region two, staff was relocated to other regions. There was no disruption of service.

Mary Pat Bohn expressed her personal thanks to Administrative Section Chief, Mark Ramion for making sure that he “crossed every “t” and dotted every “i” to ensure the safety of all staff involved. Mary Pat also thanked Carolyn Lee, Diana Mravik and the clerical staff at Region 2 for all their help during this time.

The Black Women’s Network is honoring a CFCP youth with a scholarship at its annual event.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Zellner