

Members Present:

Linda Davis, Christine Holmes, County Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr., Kim Kampschroer, State Representative LaTonya Johnson, Susan Gadacz, B. Thomas Wanta, Judge Mary Triggiano and Judge Dwyer, Deana Alexander, Steve Gilbertson, Maria Rodriguez, Representative for District Attorney John Chisholm.

Linda Davis opened the meeting at 12:05 p.m. Ms. Davis wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and recognized the Partnership Council members for their continued service as volunteer members of the Council.

Meeting Notice

First, the notice of the meeting was published in the Monday, November 17, 2014 edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Second, the notice was faxed to the newspaper of record for the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Journal, on Monday, November 17, 2014. Finally, the notice was emailed to the Partnership Council stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on Friday, November 7, 2014. This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Approve Minutes

Minutes from the July 25 meeting were approved with the following correction: Sue Gadacz was not listed as attending the meeting. Ms. Gadacz will be added to the list of members attending the July meeting.

Minutes from the September 19 meeting were approved with the following correction. Deana Alexander was not listed as attending the meeting. Ms. Alexander will be added to the list of members attending the September meeting. (Ms. Alexander reported that she was in fact, not at the September meeting, so her name will not be added to the list of attendees.)

Complaint Resolution Process data Presentation

Rick Miracola presented the semi-annual Complaint Resolution report. He discussed that complaints are monitored to look for patterns and trends. Indications in the report are that the majority of complaints are being resolved. There has been a slight downward trend in the number of multiple complaints for this reporting period. Most

complaints are related to staff and services. The information is broken down to look at problems with services vs. quality of services.

Budget Process

Kim Swissdorf, Budget Director for the Department of Children and Families, explained the budget process and discussed funding requests and expenditures for the upcoming budget.

- Bureau requests for funding
 - o Funding for case aide positions.
 - o After-hours compensation - \$125.00 for week night shifts, and \$150.00 for weekends.
 - o Overtime compensation for Initial Assessment Specialists.
- Expenditures for fiscal years 2015, 2016 and 2017 are expected to rise, but would still be below budgeted amount.
- Equalizing in-home and out-of-home rates - moving from per family to per child rates paid to agencies.
- Increases in foster care and kinship rates are expected for 2016 and 2017.
- By February 2015, the governor decides what items he wants in the budget, the budget process is typically completed by July.

Questions related to budget discussion:

A discussion followed about the budget report. It was discussed that costs for the current budget period were not as high as originally predicted. It was clarified that the current backlog project is part of operational expenses and that DCF believes staffing levels can be maintained to avoid another backlog project in the future.

Ad Hoc Budget Committee

The Partnership Ad Hoc Budget Committee has made five recommendations regarding the budget and has sent these recommendations to the Department of Children and Families:

- Requesting that Case Aide positions currently (LTE positions) be made permanent positions in the Bureau.
- Support for after-hours compensation for work on after hours to be in line with that of private agencies.
- Support for case management restructuring.

- Asking for five million dollars in funding for other counties.
- Support for increase in payments to foster parents.

Motion regarding the draft Report of the Ad Hoc Budget Committee:

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to add the following language as the last sentence of paragraph #2: **“Staff and supervisors are required to maintain immediate access to a phone, a computer with internet service, and a quiet, private office environment when on call.”**

Progress on Access and Initial Assessment Functions

It was reported that there were originally 2,900 cases in backlog. What caused the backlog to grow was the convergence of a high vacancy rate and a large increase in the number of referrals to BMCW. As of November 19, 2014, the number is considerably lower at approximately 1,100. As long as BMCW can keep positions filled, we should not have a backlog situation. Currently there are twelve staff in training who will be moving off the training team in January. The Bureau will be interviewing approximately 70 prospective Initial Assessment staff people this week, with second interviews for approximately 30-35 of this group. We are hoping for a January 19 start date for IA specialists that are selected.

Recruitment Strategies

The Bureau is advertising to get new applicants. They are also meeting with colleges and universities to discuss hiring. The six-month hiring list will change in January, giving us a new list of candidates.

It was suggested by a community member that the retention problem seemed to start when the certification requirement for workers changed. According to Ron Hunt, this is not accurate. The original class hired after the certification change was made still has 27 members.

Caseloads

It was reported that the average caseload is 20-30 and that ideally workers would get 10 new cases a month. The numbers of new cases typically start to go up after school starts in November. The number of case being closed within 60 days is increasing. It was

noted that a factor that contributed to the backlog was a high vacancy rate. As long as we can keep positions filled, we should not have another backlog situation.

Work environment at the Bureau.

The Bureau is working on trying to improve morale, including reconvening the Group Forum and Morale Committee.

DCF Updates

Update on Community Listening Sessions

Community Listening Sessions were held on October 8 and October 29. An average of 30-40 people attended each session. Meetings discussed attributes of a new BMCW Director and key issues facing the Bureau:

- New Director needs to be able to manage the demands of the job.
- Support from Madison and Milwaukee will be critical.
- Need to focus on recruitment.
- Director will need strong child welfare skills.
- Needs ability to engage community/forg connections.
- Chance for opportunities vs. problems perspective.
- Is there a compensation range for the Director? (yes)
- Recruitment of new Director
 - Eloise is still looking at organizational structure as part of recruitment.
 - Localized search vs. national search.

Linda Davis requested an in-depth explanation of the Division vs. Bureau issue, including a pro/con information sheet.

Agency Updates

Tabled until the January meeting.

No requests to speak at Community Forum.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Zellner