

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council

Friday, July 29, 2016

DMCPS 635 N. 26 St.

Minutes

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Members present: Mark Mertens, Representative for Senator Alberta Darling, Christine Holmes, Milwaukee County Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr., State Representative LaTonya Johnson, Tony Shields, Milwaukee County Supervisor Deanna Alexander, County Supervisor Steve Taylor, Delvyn Crawford, Steve Gilbertson, Libby Mueller for District Attorney John Chisholm.

Call meeting to order.

Meeting was opened by Chair Mark Mertens with greetings and introductions.

Notice of Meeting for July 29, 2016.

First, the notice of the meeting was published in the Thursday, July 28, 2016 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 Thursday, July 28, 2016. Finally, the notice was emailed to the Partnership Council stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on Wednesday, July 27, 2016. This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the May 27, 2016 Partnership Council Meeting. Motion was approved unanimously.

Presentation of Vision/Mission Statement for the Council, Mark Mertens, Chair

Discussion was had regarding the various responsibilities of the Partnership Council. Issues and ideas discussed included:

Mission/Vision Statement

- How can we improve the process?
- What are the duties of the Partnership Council?
- Should we be holding more public meetings of special interest? Do we need more community meetings?
- Since the Partnership Council is also a Citizen Review Panel, do we know what the requirements are for each entity, and are we compliant with both? It was suggested that the recently canceled training for Partnership Council members might have addressed some of these questions, and another training opportunity might be considered.
- What other things should be happening to engage the community? How do we ensure we are being responsible to the people we serve?

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- It was suggested that we hold meetings that are community based, keeping in mind that community members can't be expected to miss work to attend these meetings. Could we consider having meetings in the evening to make it easier for community members to attend?
- Does the Council Chair have the authority to decide when/where meetings will be held?
Sarah Henery will check on this.

Strategic Planning

We should be bringing more constituents into the Partnership Council, and need to identify who these constituents might be. This needs to be done in a strategic way. Meetings should be more planful and intentional. In the past, meetings seem to have been more reactive than planned. It was suggested that we discuss development of a strategic plan during a future meeting

Recommend Policies and plans

Another of the responsibilities of the Partnership Council is to recommend policies and plans. How is this done? Per Fredi Bove, a report for Secretary Anderson is prepared at the end of the calendar year with help from Attorney Sarah Henery. The next report will be due in January 2017. Secretary Anderson reviews the report and provides a response which is distributed to the Partnership Council.

How do we evaluate our effectiveness as a Council?

- Do we have established outcome measures?
- Historically, we have been looking at issues pertaining to the lawsuit during meetings, but don't seem to have a strategic plan for looking at other specific issues.
- Discussion of a strategic plan will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Financial

- Representative Johnson raised the question as to whether we are asking for or have asked for a set of funding for Milwaukee to help prevent future backlogs. According to Representative Johnson, there has always been a backlog, sometimes exceeding 1000 cases. This is not a fluke. We need to make sure there are funds available to deal with future backlogs and be planning in advance to prevent backlogs from happening at all.
- Chair Mark Mertens asked how much information Partnership Council has received about backlog issues in the past. Reports regarding the backlog happen periodically, but the perception seems to be that the Partnership Council has not been provided with specific numbers on a regular basis. It was suggested that reporting of case number information should be part of each Partnership Council meeting.

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Agenda Setting

The partnership Council should be an interactive body and needs input regarding items for meeting agendas. It was suggested that an e-mail is sent out asking for agenda items.

Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services Administrator's Report

Division Administrator, Robin Joseph, reported that "good things are going on" in the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services.

We continue to hire staff at all levels. Kevin Boland was recently named Initial Assessment Bureau Director. Mark Ramion has been appointed as the Director of the Quality Operations Bureau, and Deanna Alexander will be starting in August as the Ongoing Services Section Chief. Initial Assessment interviews are ongoing.

Access and IA

- Access staff handles the calls/reports that come into DMCPS, so it is essential that we have enough staff to cover the volume of calls we receive.
- From January of this year to date, Access staff received in excess of 10,000 calls.
- No calls go unanswered whether received directly in Access or through our answering service. Currently, 80 percent of all incoming calls are being handled directly in Access, with the benchmark being 75 percent.
- Eighty-five percent of all incoming calls are being screened within 24 hours. The benchmark is 75 percent. There has been a 30 percent increase in timely screenings since the beginning of the year.
- We are using fewer IA staff in Access. Seventy-four percent of calls are being screened solely by Access staff, with the benchmark being 65 percent. Ultimately, we want Access to do all their own screenings though we will continue to do more cross training of staff.
- In an effort to focus on cohesion and better oversight, physical changes are being made to the Access area. Access supervisors have moved closer to staff. Supervisors are coming in earlier and staying later. A new second shift Access supervisor has been hired since the beginning of the year.

When asked about staff retention, Director Joseph reported that it is going well, especially in Access. Staff want to work in Access. We are not worried about staff retention. The Division currently has ten openings out of a full staff of 123. When Initial Assessment workers leave, they leave for a variety of reasons, much like people leave other jobs. Question was asked about the number of cases per worker. Interim Quality Improvement Section Chief, Phillip Zellmer

reported that the average caseload for Initial Assessment workers varies and is currently approximately 15 cases per worker.

It was requested that future Division updates be presented in PowerPoint form with hard copy handouts.

Training for Partnership Council Members

Discussion was had regarding the value of training (possibly to include active shooter training) for Partnership Council members in light of the fact that a recently scheduled training was canceled due to lack of interest. . Past trainings explained different areas of CPS and provided information that was basic and potentially beneficial to any Partnership Council member. It was further explained that the active shooter training done for staff at the DMCPS office provided general information and was not site specific. It was suggested that we might start with a training here at this building and expand if and when there is a need or interest. The new Sojourner building was suggested as a possible location for meetings. Partnership Council members are asked to think about whether or not training should be rescheduled.

Youth in transition: Supporting Successes of Children Coming Out of foster Care

The Partnership Council is making an effort to look at what's happening around the state regarding agencies helping youth in transition. Many of these agencies provide valuable services, and the Partnership Council should be looking at how we might be able to roll out these services to help our families. Robert Cherry from Employ Milwaukee and Michele Bria of Journey House presented an overview of their respective agencies

Partnership/Ongoing Services Reports

Tabled until next meeting due to lack of time.

Community Forum

Mark Mertens reminded the group that the next Partnership Council meeting in September is the Community Meeting, and we will be requesting ideas for agenda items.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Zellner