

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 25, 2020
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
DRAFT

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the meeting was conducted by Zoom rather than in-person. Copies of the agenda, *Jeanine B. Semi-Annual Settlement Report* for January – June 2020, and other materials were emailed in advance to the Partnership Council members and other interested persons who receive advance notification of Partnership Council meetings.

NOTICE OF MEETING

First, the notice of the meeting was published on the DCF and DOA websites on September 21, 2020 and in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on September 23, 2020. Second, the notice was faxed to the newspaper of record for the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Journal, on September 23, 2020. The notice was emailed to the Partnership Council stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on September 21, 2020. Finally, the agenda was posted on the front door of the DMCPs building at 635 N. 26th St. on September 21, 2020. This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Because the meeting was conducted by Zoom, the notice included information about how members of the public could connect to the Zoom meeting and how to locate the agenda and other meeting materials posted on the DCF website.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Michelle Bria, Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr., Supervisor Sequanna Taylor, Carmen Petrie, Libby Mueller, Tony Shields, Victor Barnett, Judge Laura Crivello, Christine Holmes, Dr. Mallory O'Brien, Representative LaTonya Johnson, Supervisor Patti Logdson, Representative Jessie Rodriguez. A quorum of the Partnership Council was present.

MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of July 24, 2020, Partnership Council meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATION OF JEANINE B. SEMI-ANNUAL JANUARY - JUNE 2020 SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE DATA, RICK MIRACOLA, BUREAU OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPs) has been released from 17 of the 18 enforceable provisions of the *Jeanine B. Settlement Agreement*. The only remaining enforceable provision is placement stability, I.D.9. This provision requires that 90 percent of children in foster care have three or fewer placements during the previous thirty-six months. Reported performance for the period January-June 2020 is 87.4 percent. Information about other performance indicators was also provided. Overall, DMCPs performance on these indicators continues to be strong.

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RESPONSE FROM JEANINE B. PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL, ERIC THOMPSON

Mr. Thompson began his remarks by acknowledging the excellent performance accomplished by DMCPs and its partners despite the difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Thompson noted that this work was accomplished by a strong resilient system, and that children had been kept safe despite many challenges. Mr. Thompson thanked the staff of DMCPs and its partner agencies for all their work and efforts during the pandemic.

Placement Stability

Despite the public health care crisis, Mr. Thompson noted placement stability for the period of April through June 2020 remained relatively stable. The percent for placement stability for January – June 2020 period is 87.4, which is down from 89.2 percent during the last annual reporting period for calendar year 2019. Mr. Thompson noted placement stability concerns regarding children aged from 0-4 years old. Mr. Thompson opined that we need to get this number back in the right direction.

Safety and Well Being

Mr. Thompson noted that the numbers regarding substantiated maltreatment in out of home care overall are very low and have been low for ten plus years. This is very positive, but we still need to monitor these numbers.

Ongoing case managers are doing virtual face to face visits during the pandemic and have been laying eyes on 97 percent of children in out-of-home care.

Despite COVID-19, the numbers for completed annual medical/dental exams have remained relatively stable.

Permanence

Mr. Thompson explained that the percentage of children reported as in care for more than 24 months, pursuant to Section I.B.4. of the Settlement Agreement, is artificially deflated because it is calculated against the baseline of 5,533 children specified in the Settlement Agreement. The number of children in care is currently just above 2,000. This means the percentage of children in care for more than 24 months is 26 percent, but this is still remarkably stable.

Reunification

Reunifications with parents or caretakers upon discharge from out of home care for January – June 2020 are at 57 percent. This is up from 49 percent for Calendar Year 2019. The percentage of children who are adopted in fewer than 24 months is at 21 percent for January – June 2020, down from 24 percent for Calendar Year 2019. We want to reverse this trend, but we are not too far off.

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Caseloads and Turnovers

Caseload size for ongoing case managers remains a challenging issue. We are averaging 13.3 children per caseload. At Children's Wisconsin Community Services, 30 percent of workers have caseloads greater than 15 children and at SaintA the percentage is 65 percent.

Case manager turnover numbers are going down, and we have been able to maintain a stable staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been a remarkable stability of systems during these troubled times.

AGENCY RESPONSES

Children's Wisconsin Community Services, Susanna Leggio

- Providing services during the pandemic has been very challenging.
- CW has experienced a dip in placement stability.
- There is a decrease in the number of kids in out of home care.
- Virtual learning has been hard on families. CHW is using student volunteers from Marquette University to help families with online learning.
- Monthly virtual support groups (by zip codes) have been started.
- There has been some dip in face to face contact numbers. Some documentation numbers are not truly reflective of all face to face visits during March.

SAINTA, Dwayne Marks

- SaintA's priority has been to work diligently to maintain good case practice and address caseload issues.
- SaintA is taking a multi-pronged approach to ongoing worker caseload numbers and has hired a recruiter for ongoing case workers and related positions.
- Saint A is working to have its staff reflect the demographics of the community served by SaintA.
- Currently, 55 percent of SaintA staff identify as a person of color.
- SaintA has turned attention to stress and anxiety while navigating the COVID-19 crisis.

DMCPS, Charmian Klyve

- DMCPS is proud of the work of our staff and partner agencies.
- We are in a good position for moving into Family First

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DMCPS Update, Charmian Klyve

- The Wraparound contract has been continued.
- We are fully engaged with our education liaison, who is helping to ensure that the best interests of kids are being honored.
- Access reports have started going up compared to earlier in the year. The numbers are down from previous years, probably because of virtual learning.
- We are anticipating an increase of Access report numbers when in-person schooling starts again.
- An RFP for the Ongoing Services contract was issued on September 16, 2020.

There will be a conference on October 16, 2020 to answer proposer questions. This meeting will be online via Zoom.

Administrator Klyve announced her retirement (or “departure” as she prefers to call it) and said she will be plotting out her next steps.

A motion was made and seconded to formally recognize Charmian’s contributions and to thank her for her service and for all that she has done. Motion passed unanimously.

Partnership Council committees established by the Council’s bylaws are Out-of-Home Care, Health and Education, and Critical Incident. Persons interested in serving on a committee should contact Michelle Bria or Bridget Chybowski.

It was suggested that there should be a separate special committee on racial equity and inclusion, or that equity and inclusion issues that could be integrated into each committee. There was discussion that the chairperson of each committee could decide how to incorporate these subjects into the committee’s work.

A slate of chairpersons and members of the three standing committees was proposed by Chairperson Bria. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed committee chairpersons and members. Motion passed unanimously.

Question: Are there terms for committees? Can any member attend?

Answer: Per DCF attorney Mary Burke, there are no term limits for membership on the committees. Yes, any member can attend committee meetings.

Reminder that committee meeting quorums are important, especially if a committee needs to go into executive session.

Future Partnership Council Meetings

- Council members were asked for agenda item suggestions
- Family First plan for DMCPS will be a standing item from November 2020 through 2021.

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- A survey will be sent regarding meeting dates for 2021.

Community Input

Bianca Shaw suggested that the equity and inclusion committee discussed earlier be a separate committee. She also suggested that maybe each standing committee could send one representative to the equity and inclusion committee?

Question: What factors besides COVID-19 are affecting the termination of parental rights (TPR) process?

Answer: Per Bridget Chybowski, there are a number of factors including documents, working with the District Attorney, getting birth certificates, and submitting referrals in a timely manner.

Closing Remarks

Chairperson Dr. Michelle Bria noted that this is Charmian Klyve's last Partnership Council Meeting as the DMCPD Administrator. The Council is very grateful for her work, and she will be very, very missed.

Motion to adjourn made and seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Gail Zellner.