

**SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
MINUTES
November 1, 2006**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

William Alford
Tom Armstrong
Elizabeth Bartz
Angela Tucker Cooper
Sarah Kisner
Connie Krauss
Bob Kulinski
Vivian Celeste Neal
Gene Nixon
Jim Lawrence
Bob Pfaff
Jean Van Ness
Karen Talbott
Cheryl Urban
Bernett Williams
Randy Zumbar

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

May Chen
Jeffrey Heintz
Delores Jones
Reverend Sandra Selby
Dr. Carl Simmers
Mike Wise
Elaine Woloshyn

DJFS STAFF:

Pat Divoky
Julie Seeley

GUESTS:

Darlene Mims, Associate Director of Operations, ADM
Gary Binns, Director of Finance, Children Services
Linda Phelps, Director of Finance, Summit County
Donna Skoda, Summit 2010
Greg Brown, Center for Community Solutions, Summit 2010
Rich Marountas, Center for Community Solutions, Summit 2010
Pete Crossland, Summit County Council
Katerina Papas, Interim Executive Director, Children Services
Cindy Johnson, CSB Board Chair
Dottie Schrum, Assistant Superintendent/ MR/DD

CALL TO ORDER

Karen Talbott called the meeting to order at 12:14 p.m. A quorum of members was present.

APPROVAL OF July 19th, 2006 SSAB BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of the July 19th Board meeting were unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Karen reported that the Executive Committee on September 21st voted via e-mail to select the Making a Difference Award recipients. No other items were discussed.

BUDGET & LEVY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Bartz referred Board members to three memos which described highlights of ADM, MR/DD and Children Service's 2007 annual budgets that the Budget & Levy Review Committee had reviewed.

Elizabeth reviewed some items on ADM's budget and asked for any questions regarding the 2007 budget. Randy Zumbar noted several efforts which are in place to generate additional revenue for the ADM Board. A motion was made to approve ADM's proposed 2007 annual budget and the motion passed unanimously with three abstentions (Angela Tucker Cooper, Jim Lawrence and Randy Zumber).

Elizabeth stated that Randy Zumbar is retiring and a search committee is in place. Karen thanked Randy on behalf of the Social Services Advisory Board for his service and extended good wishes for his upcoming retirement.

Elizabeth described MR/DD's 2007 budget proposal, which is the first year of a new levy that included a significant increase. This increase in levy funds is expected to eliminate the adult services waiting list. Elizabeth noted progress on two issues, an increase in transportation as well as health care cost efficiencies. A motion was made to approve MR/DD's proposed 2007 annual budget and the motion passed unanimously with two abstentions (Tom Armstrong and Karen Talbott).

Elizabeth stated the Budget & Levy Review Committee had reviewed the proposed 2007 Children Services budget. The budget was approved by the Children Services Board on October 24th. The Budget & Levy Review Committee compared the Children Services 2007 proposed annual budget to the levy proposal that Children Services had presented to the SSAB Board in May. Elizabeth reported that Summit County Council had not met with Children Services back in May and so may not be aware of some of the details of that levy proposal. Elizabeth noted that in the levy proposal, staff positions were projected to be eliminated and that the Children Services 2007 annual budget just accelerates elimination of those positions. Children Services will not be on the ballot in 2006, and thus only has the opportunity to go to the ballot in November 2007, unless Children Services is part of a special election in May or August. The current Children Services levy expires at the end of 2007. Elizabeth noted several changes to the memo that had been distributed to Board members which summarized the Children Services 2007 annual budget. The proposed budget includes a reduction of 52 FTE's. Position elimination notices are scheduled to be sent to staff within the next 30 days. Next to staffing, paid placements are the second largest expenditure and reductions and other initiatives to reduce this expenditure are being planned. Reductions in non-wage expenditures are also noted in the budget proposal. The Children Services projected carry forward balance at the end of 2007 is \$29.6 million dollars. Elizabeth reinforced that

several events at Children Services provided justification for reductions in staffing; 1) the closing of the receiving unit 2) a reduction in referrals to Children Services and 3) identified overstaffing in administrative areas. Children Services does not plan to eliminate any social work positions, and in fact, the hiring of social workers is in progress. The Budget & Levy Review Committee is concerned regarding passage of a Children Services levy and the timing of the levy, so as not to be on the ballot at the same time as ADM. The Committee has recommended approval of Children Services proposed 2007 annual budget.

Elizabeth called on Mr. Pete Crossland, Summit County Council member, to make some remarks. He encouraged the SSAB to not recommend approval of the 2007 Children Services annual budget because of the effect of lay-offs on the ability of Children Services to pass a levy. He stated that County Council is eager to have Children Services put a levy on the ballot when they feel a levy would pass, and if a levy does not pass by the end of 2007, the agency would be in crisis, perhaps needing to cut half of the staff. Mr. Crossland thanked the Board for allowing him to speak. In response to a question regarding why Summit County Council did not review the levy proposal in May-July of 2006, Mr. Crossland stated that Council did not feel the levy had a chance that it would pass at that time. Mr. Crossland stated that Summit County Council has just completed a plan that would allow Children Services to operate until the end of 2008 without the need for lay-offs by loaning Children Services a portion of the County's "rainy day" fund.

Cindy Johnson said that she had found out about this Council plan through the newspaper and that the loan had not been approved by a vote of Council. She asserted that a loan could put the agency in a worse financial situation. Cindy stated that many agencies, not just Children Services, are cutting staff. In addition, Cindy stated that Council members have not studied the proposed 2007 Children Services budget as yet, and Council members may not have all the facts. Cindy stated that the proposed budget is fiscally responsible to taxpayers, without significant impact to services. In addition, a reduction in staffing would allow for a smaller levy request in 2007. Cindy also confirmed that negativity toward the agency is coming from certain groups and that the Children Services public relations staff is saying that there is generally a positive view of the agency. Cindy asked for County Council to refrain from reporting that the agency will have trouble getting a levy passed.

Linda Phelps stated County Council has the right to increase or decrease Children Services annual budget and can take the recommendations of the Social Services Advisory Board into consideration.

Members of the Budget & Levy Review Committee and other Board members expressed concern and regret that staff reductions are necessary at this time. A motion to recommend approval of the Children Services 2007 annual budget was made. The motion passed unanimously, with four abstentions (Cheryl Urban, Bob Pfaff, Vivian Celeste Neal and Tom Armstrong).

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Bernett Williams asked for formal approval by the SSAB Board to authorize the Center for Community Solutions to utilize carryover monies in two ways; 1) to support the efforts of Dave Alexander for the continuation of the Partnerships for Success program in the amount of \$20,040 per year, and 2) to support the efforts of the three neighborhood initiatives in Buchtel, Lakemore, and Barberton in the amount of \$17,400, shared equally. Akron Summit Community Action Agency would be monitoring how the monies in the neighborhoods would be spent. A motion was made to have carryover monies expended as described. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board members.

Rich Marountas provided an update on the Older Adults Committee. A handout regarding establishment of a Senior Independent Living Council (SILC) was distributed and the mission and objectives of the Council was discussed. Letters and phone calls will be made to invite individuals to join the Council and an initial meeting will be scheduled for January 2007.

Donna shared several updates regarding the data sharing pilot project and a handout was distributed. She stated that Demo Solaru, of Provider Gateway, has met with DJFS, Children Services and Court staff several times to discuss initial plans for data sharing. The agencies felt that some legal direction was needed. Dave Nott, of the County's legal department, will be working with the legal staff of each of the agencies to ensure that any legal issues are addressed as the project moves forward. Dave has shared with the agencies' legal staff some examples of data sharing agreements and they will be meeting together with Dave to draft an agreement for this project.

OLD BUSINESS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FORUM

Cheryl Urban stated that the feedback on the Making a Difference Forum held on October 11th has been excellent. The event was within budget. Cheryl requested Board members to provide suggestions for keynote speakers for next years Forum which is to be held in October 2008. The efforts of Forum planning committee members were acknowledged. Connie Krauss noted Cheryl's and the University of Akron's contributions in making the event a success. Several Board members mentioned that availability of parking was an issue. Lack of parking will be addressed by the planning committee in preparation for next years Forum.

STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVES

Karen informed the Board that the strategic planning initiatives and action teams from the Board Retreat have not been forgotten, but due to time constraints, these will be addressed at the next Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

LETTER FROM RANDY ZUMBAR TO MR. MCCARTHY

Karen distributed a letter sent by Randy Zumbar to Mr. McCarthy regarding the growing concern by ADM and its partner agencies of the financial impact of residential placement of children with behavioral health needs outside of Summit County. Mr. McCarthy has responded to the letter by asking that the SSAB address this issue. Randy explained that the Summit County Children's Cluster could be more fully utilized to help develop a set of criteria which would provide a basis to effect more cost effective and improved placements/services to these multi-need children within Summit County. ADM must pay a 40% match to Medicaid for these children and Randy projects that it costs Summit County approximately \$800,000 per year for them to be placed outside the County. Vivian Celeste Neal asked that Akron Public Schools be added to the discussion group and also concurred that addressing this issue could lead to substantial savings. Karen asked if there were any Board members who did not feel that this was an appropriate topic for the Board to address. With the Board signifying agreement, Karen stated she will take the issue to the Executive Committee to determine the structure to address it.

ADM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SELECTION

Karen noted that the SSAB was given the opportunity to interview final candidates for the new Executive Director of the ADM Board. She reported that Vivian Celeste Neal and Bob Kulinsky were able to participate in the selection process to represent SSAB.

OTHER

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next SSAB Board meeting is scheduled to be held on January 17th, 2007.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

Karen noted that disclosure statements are due by January 31st, 2007. She asked members to complete and turn in the disclosure statements today, if possible. If disclosure statements are not completed by the deadline, a member will have presumed to have resigned from the Board per the Code of Regulations.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:36 p.m.