

Minutes

April 2, 2007

9:00 am

Concord Hilton

1970 Diamond Blvd., Golden Gate D, Concord, CA

Item 1.0 – Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:06 am.

Commissioner Joan Means informed the Commission that she would need to leave at 10:20 a.m.

Commissioner Federal Glover informed the Commission that he would need to leave at 10:00 a.m.

Item 2.0 – Roll Call.

Commissioners in Attendance:

Judith Ortiz, Dr. Michael Zwerdling, Joan Means, John F. Jones, Supervisor Federal Glover, Dr. William Walker, Joe Valentine

Alternates in Attendance:

Susan Wittenberg, Belinda Lucey, Kathy Lafferty, Toni Robertson, Cheri Pies, Edward Lerman, Valerie Earley

Commissioners and Alternates who arrived after the initial roll call:

Cheri Eplin

Sean Casey informed the Commission that the retreat will begin by setting up policies and procedures, and then the Commission will review the budget and take final action at its May meeting on the budget. Today the discussion will be focusing on strategies, staff capacity, and smaller allocation adjustments among the strategies. Also, the discussion will include looking at the future beyond the next year, but in alignment with Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), to be looking at three-year time frames. This does not mean that the commission will be approving budgets for three years. The discussion will also include our evaluation program. David Barkan will be facilitating the meeting.

Item 3.0 – Revenue, Sustainability, and Criteria for Program Expansion.

Sean Casey stated that last fall the Commission reviewed sustainability work on how we can expand the strategies and the investment we make now given the amount of funds in our sustainability plan. Funds were put aside from the very first years, and these funds will decline over time and the thought was that the Commission could provide funding for 20 years. Things are doing better than we expected. The State of California is doing a better job at collecting taxes and interest rates are significantly higher than when the plan was first completed. The current amount of sustainability funds is roughly around \$38-39 million.

It is important that the Commission is clear about expansions in the strategies. Are there others that need to be added to the list to be expanded? Within existing strategies, there may be opportunities to expand services.

The Commission then held a discussion. Comments included:

- I would like to see the Commission put funding toward childhood obesity.
- I am concerned that the Commission becomes static in addressing the needs of the community. It may be that we look at our existing strategies and see if we can have subsets. We need to be responsive.
- I don't think the criteria needs to make us less flexible. We need to be thoughtful and creative about it. Strategies are larger by definition. I am inclined to agree that we need to leave strategies as they are.
- Strategy reviews may bring up emerging issue that one of our strategies does not touch on.

Sean Casey replied that the Commission would need to consider how to address issues in its existing strategies. The Commission also needs to look at its existing structure and staffing needs before it addresses any new strategies. There have also been discussions on having a response fund that would address emerging issues in the community which has been added as a line item in the FY 07-08 budget, although there is not yet a process in place for this funding.

Additionally, during the strategy review meetings, it became apparent that West County is lacking in home visiting services, therefore the Commission needs to consider adding funding under the Home Visiting strategy for those services. As strategy review meetings are held over the next two years, staff may come back to the Commission to request addressing specific items related to strategies.

Consider the following recommendation: That the Commission adopt the target of approximately \$1 million dollars in additional program spending to be allocated over the three-year period commencing FY 2007-08 to FY 2009-10 using the following criteria for expansion:

- 1. No new strategies are to be created**
- 2. Build on what appears to work within the strategies**
- 3. Wherever possible, use the most effective methods available**

The Commission then held a discussion on the proposed recommendation and agreed to move forward the following revised recommendation:

Consider the following recommendation: That the Commission adopt the target of approximately \$1 million dollars in additional program spending to be allocated as soon as possible and to be sustained, using the following criteria for expansion:

- 1. Build on what appears to work within the strategies**
- 2. Current strategies will be reviewed and revised to address emerging issues and needs.**
- 3. Use the most effective practices available**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the above stated revised recommendation. **Approved.**

Public Comment.

None given.

Item 4.0 – Review findings from the Strategy Reviews.

Sean Casey informed the Commission that strategy reviews have been conducted for Home Visiting, Mental Health Therapeutic Services, and Substance Use Strategies. These reviews will be used to conduct in-depth analysis on the breadth and depth of the strategy and review how we are doing on the existing strategy.

4.1 – Home Visiting.

Sean Casey reviewed the staff report with the Commission. He stated that this strategy is focused on three areas: West County (Richmond/San Pablo); Central County (Monument corridor); and East County (Bay Point/Pittsburg/Antioch).

Since Doctors Hospital no longer provides labor and delivery services, births are now taking place at Alta Bates hospital which is outside of our county. The review has shown that West County is underserved.

The Commission then held a discussion. Comments included:

- Suggest that the language for the services include support for women in detention centers.
- Add under next steps on page 4 the item "nutritional education".
- There needs to be a greater degree of collaboration with existing agencies already providing services in West County.
- Include in the language "pregnant women", etc.

Questions and Answers included:

Q: As additional strategy reviews take place, will each strategy be increased or will we have no funds left to do so?

A: This expansion still leaves \$700,000 to look at other strategies as we review them going forward. There is no practical way to look at every strategy at the depth and detail as one. That is part of the process I think the commission needs to do is to look at individual strategies over time.

Q: Where did the \$300,000 come from? For this cost, we would expand the current program to cover those we are currently missing, but we would not change the programs?

A: We would be talking about the same home visiting services and expanding those services in West County.

Consider the following recommendation: That the Commission augment the funding for the Home Visiting Strategy by \$300,000 in Fiscal Year 2007/08 and maintain the augmentation in the succeeding years in order to expand home visiting services in West County, particularly, but not only, for African-American children.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the stated recommendation. **Approved.**

4.2 – Mental Health Therapeutic Services.

Sean Casey reviewed the staff report with the Commission. He stated that staff is still in the process of working on a larger system of care for children. The next level is to work with agencies and services that are providing services to children. This is a system development in progress. We would like to use our resources as facilitator, convener, and building out larger areas in mental health. Secondly we introduced wraparound services that have made a lot of progress. We need another year to fully get to the model we wanted. Lastly, we need to work on improving data collection.

Public Comment.

Arlette Merritt, Early Childhood Mental Health Program, thanked the Commission for its support in funding for mental health services. She stated that her agency provides childcare solutions and expanded mental health program, has been around for 35 years and serves a number of programs. For the entire time the agency has been in existence we have served African American families. The demographics have changed dramatically in West County. Of our 35 staff, nine are bilingual Spanish speaking. First 5 provides \$175,000 in funding to serve West County but it is not enough to serve the Spanish speaking families. We desperately need money in West County and First 5 is the only funds available for non-medical families in West County. She further stated that she came to the meeting in the hopes that First 5 could find a way to provide additional funding for Spanish speaking families in West County.

Chairman Joe Valentine thanked Arlette for her comments and stated that in the previous motion the Commission did approve expanding home visiting services in West County.

4.3 – Substance Use.

Sean Casey reviewed the staff report with the Commission. He stated that this is a highly intensive program. The Commission funds over \$900,000 a year for a small number of families. Staff would like to work with the Program and Evaluation Committee (PEC) since the work that is being carried out through this program could apply to a number of residential treatment programs. I don't think it means additional funds, but redistribution in the strategies.

Item 5.0 – Review findings from the “Regional Linking Bees”.

This item was not discussed and will be discussed at the May Commission meeting.

Item 6.0 – Review findings from the Evaluation Program Assessment.

This item was not discussed and will be discussed at the May Commission meeting.

Item 7.0 – Meeting Staff Capacity Needs.

Sean Casey reviewed the staff report with the Commission. He stated that regarding evaluation, we believe that more evaluation work can be brought in house so that we can develop and report out on a timely manner and that we are able to contract out for evaluation for a broader level. The recommendation is not for increasing our evaluation dollars, but rather, redistributing it by adding an evaluation manager and program assistant positions. Also, initially three program staff were hired, and we currently only have two program staff. The recommendation is to increase the level of program staff to three and adding a program assistant position. Administrative funds will be redistributed to allow for an additional administrative assistant. The recommendation is only for addition of program staff.

We have learned that in the last few months, through the linking bees process that we do not have the staff capacity to handle do those things.

The Commission then held a discussion.

Consider the following recommendation: To approve the addition of up to \$145,000 combined to the salaries and wages and benefit lines of the Program area of the budget to fund the addition of a Program Specialist and a Program Assistant.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the stated recommendation. **Approved.**

Item 8.0 – Strategy Allocation Adjustments.

a. Early Childhood Education/Parent Education

Consider the following recommendation: Authorize the augmentation of the Parent Education strategy by \$177,000 and the reduction of the Early Childhood Education strategy by the same amount for the purpose of combining the services currently carried out by one provider under two separate contracts.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the stated recommendation. **Approved.**

b. Information and Referral

Consider the following recommendation: Authorize staff not to renew the contract for the Network of Care website at the end of the 2006-07 fiscal year.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the stated recommendation. **Approved.**

c. Mental Health/Home Visiting

Consider the following recommendation: Authorize the transfer of \$90,000 in currently uncommitted funds within the home visiting strategy to the mental health strategy for the purpose of adding the CRT mental health specialist, currently a First 5 contract employee, to the existing mental health contract.

Sean Casey informed the Commission that there was an error in the recommendation and the correct amount should be \$80,000.00, therefore the correct recommendation is as follows:

Consider the following recommendation: Authorize the transfer of \$80,000 in currently uncommitted funds within the home visiting strategy to the mental health strategy for the purpose of adding the CRT mental health specialist, currently a First 5 contract employee, to the existing mental health contract.

Chairman Joe Valentine made the following statement:

I have an interest in Agenda item 8.0.c because I am employed by the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department and receive salary and reimbursement for expenses from the County. However, I am not employed by a County Department that is directly involved in this proposed contract or grant. I am not legally prohibited from voting on this matter. Please record my disclosure in the Commission's minutes.

Alternate Edward Lerman made the following statement:

I have an interest in Agenda item 8.0.c because I am employed by the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department and receive salary and reimbursement for expenses from the County. However, I am not employed by a County Department that is directly I involved in this proposed contract or grant. I am not legally prohibited from voting on this matter. Please record my disclosure in the Commission's minutes.

Alternate Valerie Earley made the following statement:

I have an interest in Agenda item 8.0.c because I am employed by the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department and receive salary and reimbursement for expenses from the County. However, I am not employed by a County Department that is directly I involved in this proposed contract or grant. I am not legally prohibited from voting on this matter. Please record my disclosure in the Commission's minutes.

Dr. William Walker made the following statement:

I have an interest in Agenda item 8.0.c because I am employed by the Contra Costa County Health Services Department and that department is directly involved in this proposed contract or grant. I will abstain from all participation on this matter. Please record my disclosure in the Commission's minutes.

Cheri Pies made the following statement:

I have an interest in Agenda item 8.0.c because I am employed by the Contra Costa County Health Services Department and that department is directly involved in this proposed contract or grant. I will abstain from all participation on this matter. Please record my disclosure in the Commission's minutes.

Yes:

Judith Ortiz
Dr. Michael Zwerdling
Cheri Eplin
Kathy Lafferty for Joan Means
John F. Jones
Joe Valentine
Valerie Earley for the County Administrator Children's Services Seat

No: None

Abstain: Dr. William Walker

Not present for the vote: Supervisor Federal Glover
Joan Means

Item 11.0 – Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.