

Draft

FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL

June 11, 2009

Place: Commission on Children

Time: 10:20am-12:10pm

Facilitator: Karen Zrenda

Recorder: Chris Sloss (Respectfully submitted 6/16/09)

Attendees: *Voting members* – Karen Zrenda (Parent – Co-Chair), Laura Knapp (Parent-Co-Chair), Cindy Stramandinoli (Parent), Terry Cote (DDS), Joan Law (Parent –Call in), Robyn Trowbridge (Parent), Merva Jackson (Parent-Call In), Terry Walsh (Parent), Michael Selvaggi (Parent-Call in until 10:26 am) *Non-voting members* - Deb Pagano (SICC/call in), Alice Buttwell (FSN/Parent call in), Lisa Sheppard (FSN/Parent call in), Tom Brooks (COC), Jen Carroll (FSN/Parent), , Eveleen McDonald (OPA), April Dipollina (FSN/Parent) Moira O’Neill (OCA) *Staff* – Chris Sloss

Welcome and Introductions - Meeting was brought to order by Karen Zrenda at 10:20 Introductions were made. A quorum of voting members is present today.

Discussion regarding the May minutes :

Changes to Minutes: (1) Under Public comment second paragraph giving power to OCA should be changed to OHCA (2) Jennifer Carroll is mistakenly listed as Call-in.

Mike commented that according to FOI, minutes must be posted within seven calendar days. The minutes were posted within seven business day. After some discussion, Tom Brooks stepped out to get clarification from FOI who reside in the building.

As a point of order Mike mentioned that the chair alleged that in his emails he claimed the meeting was cancelled. He commented he did not say this, his wording was that the meeting “shall” be cancelled.. There was some discussion about the terminology then Karen asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to explore this further. Mike wants it noted that he was not out of order. The chair already determined he was out of order. Karen asked if anyone wanted to address this further. No comments so we moved on with the agenda.

Public Comment – Mike asked for the date when the co-chairs were elected into office and the date they were appointed as parent members of the council. Karen said in order to give completely accurate information she will need to get back to him. She stated she has told him in the past that the council did not have anyone interested in stepping up as a co-chair which is why she has remained in this position for some time. Mike requested that Karen step down immediately.

Karen asked for a motion for discussion for her to step down. Mike requested that she step down immediately unless she can show proof of her authority to be there. There was no second. Questions were presented to Mike about what exactly he is looking for and why. He said that he wants to know if her appointment is up and if she is representing us illegally. Karen stated that her appointment is not up until 2010. Terry C. reminded Mike that the council legally voted at the March meeting for Karen to remain on as co-chair.

Terry W made a motion to move on with our agenda, seconded by Laura Knapp all in favor, none against, none abstain. Mike objected and at 10:26 am he stated that he refused to participate in the meeting further, stating that there was no longer a quorum and hung up. It was determined that there was still a quorum. Still present were voting members: Terry Walsh, Robyn Trowbridge, Karen Zrenda, Laura Knapp, Cindy Stramandinoli, Joan Law and Terry Cote.

Tom returned to the meeting and reported on what he learned from an attorney with the FOI commission. She stated that the rule for filing minutes is 7 calendar days after a regular meeting and 7 business days after a special meeting. She said that the nuances of this had become so complicated that the attorneys had to make a chart. A copy of this chart was shared with members. As we have done in the past, the Council will make every effort to comply.

Acceptance of the May Minutes

Terry Walsh made a motion that we accept the minutes from May with the minor changes noted above, seconded by Robyn Trowbridge, all in favor, none against, no abstentions.

Vote on the Proposed amended By-Law

Thanks to the COC for mailing the by-laws to the voting members. Discussion ensued regarding the use of Roberts Rules and use of the word “governed” in the by-laws. It was suggested that we consider the use of the word “guided” instead. After further discussion the council decided that we would accept the By-laws as is. The Council will seek additional advice and address at a future meeting, possibly inviting someone to provide a “Roberts Rules” training since not everyone is familiar with the nuances of Roberts Rules. The co-chairs will look into this.

Laura Knapp motioned to accept the proposed amended by-laws as written. Seconded by Cindy S. all in favor, none against, no abstentions. The by-laws are accepted as amended.

Legislative Updates:

HB 6309 – An act concerning administration of the Dept. of Developmental Services. This bill addressed making minor technical changes concerning the internal administration of DDS and entities under them. It was agreed upon by the house and senate but it got to midnight before they could pass several bills (this being one of them) so didn’t get through.

HB 6152 – An act establishing a catastrophic medical expenses pool- It had made it to the house and was on the call list but never came to a vote so it died in the house. This bill made a lot of progress, so thanks to all who worked so hard to try to pass it. The content of the bill was never an issue; we generally had a lot of support. The downside centered around our current economic climate that made folks uncomfortable.

SB 301- An act concerning health insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorder - Centers around insurance support for folks with autism. Great news, this has passed!

Tom shared COC’s June 2009 Legislative Update and noted that it is important that we acknowledge the huge budget issues and the need for people to voice our concerns to both the governor and the legislature. Many of the programs we care about are in jeopardy of losing funding. The legislature will be negotiating a budget in the coming days which will have a long lasting impact on our families. The COC has been saying that research shows that in a recession, children that fall into poverty are impacted far longer. It’s important that we all make our voices heard whatever our position is and that the message not be limited to one particular program but rather that the message encompass the budget as a whole for families in the state.

Jen reported that the FSN has received requests to write letters to legislative leadership in regards to the Medicaid cuts, the DDS situation, and the Voluntary Services situation among others. They are working hard trying to get families to respond and contact their own legislators. There is so much need for advocacy from families. She is concerned that their letters are being diluted since they are writing weekly about a variety of programs.

The Council discussed the idea of a letter to legislators and the Governor from the Council, expressing our concern for proposed budget cuts. Karen asked for volunteers to help compose a letter from the council. Eveleen, Laura, and Moira offered to help. Moira has an intern, Kate, who might be able to draft the letter. Offers of assistance also came from Terry W, Chris Sloss and Merva . Eveleen suggested that we incorporate a report from the Poverty Council into this as it has statistics and other helpful information we need to support this.

(Note: Amended By-Laws Quorum: A quorum of the council is constituted when a minimum of one-third of the voting members of the council, excluding vacant appointments, are present; and a minimum of one-third of those voting members appointed as family members or individuals who advocate for children with disabilities, excluding vacant appointments, are present. Council action shall require a majority vote of those members present at a meeting at which a quorum has been constituted.)

Laura Knapp made a motion for the council to write a letter and address the issues identified around the budget cuts and the impact it will have on children in CT. Terry W. seconded, all in favor, none against, Terry C. abstained

Website: The new website should be ready to launch soon. We will have the ability to post pdf's and links which will allow us to share information more easily. There is a working calendar that allows us to post events both regionally and on a statewide scale. A listserv option is available through this new site so we will continue to work through the details to get that aspect up and running as well. Hopefully these changes will encourage families to visit the site often and use it as another resource for information.

Retreat: Council members suggested two dates for the retreat: August 27 and September 10th. Chris will send an e-mail all council members to determine a date that works for most.

Agency and Network updates: April – April commented that last fall, she had started getting interest from parents in her area to attend CTFSC meetings and participate. However, she feels she can no longer do this due to the focus the Council has taken in response to one member's concerns. It has gotten in the way of being proactive for families and children. The Council needs to get back to the business at hand.

Jen – The network had a full staff meeting with OPA that was tremendous. They meet regularly with the Child Development Infoline staff and are planning along with CPAC, CDI and OPA and others a big event in the fall. Once they know the outcome of the special session they will focus on special education resource information to help families find direction of where to go from here. There is a lot going on in the regions so Jen will prepare a full report for the retreat.

Laura – The Special Kids Support Center at CCMC received the Title V Care Coordination grant. It's a 3 yr grant with the option to renew for 2 yrs without going through an RFP.

Appreciation for Terry Cote: The Council presented Terry a proclamation from the Governor recognizing her commitment to the CT Family Support Council for the last 15 years. Members shared thoughts and expressed their appreciation for her hard work and dedication on behalf of children with disabilities and their families. **THANK YOU TERRY COTE!!!!**

Meeting Adjourned at 12:10pm