

OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
500 N. Broadway Ave., 5th Floor Conference Room
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

REGULAR MEETING

May 22, 2009

MINUTES

Call to order and roll call

Vice-Chair, Darlene Callahan called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Members present were: Tom Alford, Darlene Callahan, Gene Christian, Ken Couchman, Wanda Felty, Lisa Hammond, Howard Hendrick, Ben Loring, Rocky McElvany, and Claudette Selph. Members not present: Bart Bouse, Mike Fogarty, Jerry Fry, Sandy Garrett, Terrica Grunewald, Mike O'Brien, and Terri White.

Review and approval of minutes from the March 27, 2009, Regular Commission meeting
Loring moved, Selph seconded to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2009, Regular Commission meeting as presented. Christian abstained. All other members present voted in the affirmative. Motion passed.

Director's Report on Agency Activities and Legislative Update – Lisa Smith

A written report from Ms. Smith was included in the Commission packet.

Ms. Smith reported that it has been anticipated that the OCCY will take a 4.9% budget reduction for FY 2010, which amounts to approximately \$128,000. We will be able to absorb this reduction by not filling some currently vacant positions within the agency.

Legislation

SB 659 – This bill has been signed by Governor with an effective date of November 1, 2009. This is the State Post Adjudication Review Advisory Board request bill (copies distributed) that will (1) allow more experienced PARB members to go into other PARB board executive sessions to help train new members; (2) allows OCCY to set up temporary PARB boards in areas where none exist; (3) adds a level of civil immunity for active PARB members acting within their scope of work as a PARB volunteer.

HB 2032 – This bill too has been signed by the Governor (copies distributed). This is the oversight bill that (1) strengthens the Office of Juvenile System Oversight's (OJSO) ability to interview residents of programs; (2) provides discretion to the OJSO to visit state-operated facilities once instead of twice a year, unannounced. (Some facilities are not in need of more than one visit in a year); (3) allows the OJSO to come to the Commission to talk about systemic themes, i.e. independent living conditions and services being provided in group homes. At the June Commission meeting Ms. Verity (Programs Manager over the OJSO) will bring to the Commission some systemic ideas the OJSO has identified across the board.

HB 1734 – This bill is on its way to be signed by the Governor. It provides for the OJSO to do certification on the two DHS state-operated shelters. The OJSO already makes two unannounced visits to these shelters each year; but the bill speaks to the OJSO certifying them

through standards developed in coordination with the child care advisory committee. Using their existing licensing regulations, the OJSO would have to come up with administrative procedures to certify each shelter.

Ms. Smith also complimented Mr. Mark James on the huge success of the recent Post Adjudication Review Advisory Board annual conference at the OSU campus in Stillwater. The conference was very well attended and received outstanding evaluations.

Report from the Nomination/Recession Committee on appointments to the Interagency Child Abuse Prevention Task Force (ITF) – Howard Hendrick, Ben Loring, and Jerry Fry
Hendrick moved, Loring seconded to approve the nominations of Ms. Martha Buchanan and Ms. Kelly White to the Interagency Child Abuse Prevention Task Force (ITF) as presented in a report from the Nominating Committee. All members present voted in the affirmative. Motion passed unanimously.

Report from the Office of Juvenile System Oversight – Joanne Verity

A written report from the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) was included in the Commission packet. Ms. Verity highlighted some of the items included in this report.

On page 5 of the report Ms. Verity noted several issues that required follow-up by the OJSO; (1) a particular facility that was operating without an operating agreement between itself and the Office of Juvenile Affairs. The OJSO worked on facilitating the agreement between the two and an agreement is now in place; (2) a facility was operating with two restraint procedures; one that allowed taking residents to the floor and one that did not; (3) another facility simply made up its own restraint system policy; using a national modality as a guideline they wrote a procedure just for themselves. The OJSO worked with the facility to suspend use of the facility's current restraint system until terms of the facility's internal policy were consistent with contract expectations.

Ms. Verity went on to say that the work of the OJSO in the last few years will serve as a basis of how they identify the systemic issues under the new statute. At the next meeting in June they will have proposals for how the OJSO should proceed under the new statute.

Oklahoma State Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, 2009-2010, from the State Department of Health – Grace Kelley

A draft of the Oklahoma State Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect was sent to Commissioners under a separate mailing. Ms. Annette Jacobi provided a brief introduction to the production of this plan.

Ms. Jacobi stated that our county has gone through about four different phases of child abuse prevention and truly the first three were not prevention focused. The first was trying to figure out if we actually have a problem and then trying to figure out the underlying causes of those problems. In the 1970s we moved into phase three where we actually wanted to do something about child abuse prevention and we thought we had the answers on how to treat child abuse, but in order to treat it, we had to detect it.

In 1984, Oklahoma was one of the first states to establish a child abuse prevention act, and the plan developed was one of most descriptive plans in the country. The plan sets out that the

State Department of Health will create a comprehensive plan; a plan that will drive how funding is distributed to the child abuse prevention fund and train people in child abuse prevention.

The child abuse prevention fund was initially funded at only approximately \$100,000 to \$200,000 and they were to provide comprehensive services in the late 1980s and early 1990s; i.e. billboards, educational materials, speakers bureaus, etc., all identifying child abuse and neglect, but not really preventing it in the first place.

Phase four then came about when people actually focused on how we prevent child abuse and neglect in the first place; Oklahoma was one of the first states in the country to put in statute again that we wanted evidenced-based programs. There are other programs across the country that have been known to show effects in preventing child abuse and neglect; most will tell you that the most promising practices are in home visitation programs.

Ms. Jacobi stated that the current report was written in its format to convey to its readers that we as a state need to start thinking in a much more global, community-oriented, problem solving method.

Grace Kelley added to the discussion on the report talking about the history of the process used to develop the report. She stated that the field of work in child abuse and neglect prevention is changing and how we as a state are going about addressing the prevention issue.

She stated that what was developed is a one year plan on beginning the process of addressing prevention issues. Over the past six months the ITF (Interagency Child Abuse Prevention Task Force) has been involved in an intensive process to develop this year's plan. Initially, a survey of the ITF membership was conducted to determine what they saw as the components of a comprehensive system of prevention in the state; what are the primary issues we have; what are they most concerned about; and what have they been looking at to address issues over the past few years. In November 2008, a retreat was held with over 90 persons in attendance where they also conducted the same sort of survey. In addition to the factors they looked at above, they also looked at other states and how they were addressing child abuse and neglect prevention in their state; in fact, they brought in two different states to talk about how they have gone about the process of addressing prevention issues.

Out of the retreat, seven issues (mental health, child welfare, domestic violence, sexual abuse, family support, substance abuse, and economic development) were identified as primary focal points and taskforces have been developed to address those focal points individually. Over the last few months, time has also been spent visiting with the taskforces, visiting with experts in the state to ask what the issues are. They also conducted six parent focus groups.

Ms. Kelley stated that following the visits with taskforces and the experts, some interesting things were brought to light; everyone of them indicated that if you work with a family what would be good, is to have cross training across agency lines and disciplines; this would help the frontline workers in identifying families who are stressed or becoming stressed, and if they had strategies that they could do at that point, they would be turning the curve and helping families get back on the right track, rather than waiting until something bad has happened.

From the parent focus groups they heard mostly that families are stressed, they are trying to juggle work and kids, one of the supports they need most are tips on how to parent. If you're living in a distressed community and you're getting assistance from other parents who don't really have the time or resources, then you're probably not getting the kinds of supports that

you really need. They also were told that there are not a lot of supports available for parents with special needs children; a lot of the parenting information is not focused on different populations.

Ms. Kelley stated that the plan presented today is a plan of action that the Health Department feels it can accomplish today with current resources available; it provides that child abuse prevention is something that we all need to work on and is each person, agency, and organization's responsibility.

Commissioner Selph stated that she had recent conversations with Grace Kelley and has attended and participated in meetings of the ITF. She indicated that while is very happy that the Office of Child Abuse Prevention hired Ms. Kelley as their representative and consultant, she is very disappointed in the final product of the plan presented today, she sees it as work that only just began 6 months ago, but she was looking for something that would have and should have started back in 2007 when the Commission last looked at a State Plan from OCAP.

Ms. Kelley attempted to address some the concerns Commissioner Selph had, stating that the ITF has gone through some dramatic changes in the last couple of years; however, during the last year or more they have had full quorums for their meetings; a lot of the members are new and are still educating themselves about the issue of child abuse prevention; they have set out an agenda over the next year that each of the seven focal points will have presentation time at their meetings.

Commissioner Hendrick added to the discussion stating that people should know that the prevalence of child abuse has actually dropped in our state and one might question why this is happening when you have record levels of out-of-wedlock births and a bad economy; one of the reasons for this is because a lot of the economic stress has been enumerated with a lot of other kinds of programs already in place; i.e. 60% of births were funded by the OHCA; more than half of the child population is on Medicaid in the course of a year; and in April 2009, alone, 1 out of 4 kids in Oklahoma was on a food stamp case.

He further stated that DHS will collect over \$300 million in child support this year; this is three times more than was distributed ten years ago. They will also distribute between \$75 and \$100 million more in food stamps benefits this year over last year.

He stated that while a lot of the artificial supports are still available to families; however, the natural supports to families are in the worse shape ever. There is a lot of anger in our culture; people who don't stay together often don't like each other and those types of environments become unhealthy for children.

Commission Hammond also raised concerns regarding the plan as it was presented to the Commission; she too felt that it was a plan to do a plan, not a plan to address the issue of child abuse prevention.

Commissioner Selph asked if it might be a good idea for staff and possibly a Commissioner or two to meet with the incoming new Health Commissioner when he begins his new position in July to talk about this plan and its implications. Most agreed that this would be a good idea and Director Smith will make this contact once the new Health Commissioner is on board.

McElvany moved, Loring seconded to approve the 2009-10 Oklahoma State Plan for the

Prevention of Child Abuse as presented. Hammond and Selph voted no. All other members present voted in the affirmative. Motion passed.

Public Comment

None

New Business

None

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.