

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



KCFCCC Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2017 12:00pm – 1:00pm
Kent County Administration
Room 311

Members/Alternates

Present:

Melanie Beelen, Ron Caniff, Candace Cowling, Lynne Ferrell, Judge Patti Gardner, Sandra Ghoston-Jones, Scott Gilman, Jack Greenfield, Lynn Heemstra, Adam London, George Meek, Jackie O'Connor, Jim Paparella, Julie Ridenour, Savator Selden-Johnson, Michelle VanDyke, Matthew Van Zetten, Patti Warmington.

Members Absent:

Chris Becker, Tracey Fountain, Cynthia Gladyness, Ron Koehler, Jacob Maas, Yazeed Moore, Teresa Neal, Diana Sieger, Michael Zoerhoff.

Guests:

Heather Boswell, Veneese Chandler, Kelly Climie, Kathy Freberg, Kristen Gietzen, Monique Harris, Maureen Kirkwood, Pam Parriott, Wende Randall, Annmarie Valdez.

1. Welcome & Call to Order

Adam London, Chairperson, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

After a review of the September minutes, a motion to accept them was provided by George Meek, second by Michelle VanDyke – vote was UNANIMOUS.

Adam asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting, provided by Jackie O'Connor, second by Candace Cowling – vote was UNANIMOUS.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Nominating Committee

Sandra Ghoston-Jones shared that she asked Julie Ridenour and Patti Warmington to co-chair the nominating committee in order to get a new Executive Committee in place for 2018. There will be an update at the next meeting.

A motion to accept the nominating committee as suggested was made by George Meek, Second by Lynne Ferrell – vote was UNANIMOUS.

4. **2018 Schedule**

Adam London mentioned the meeting schedule was provided as a handout and meeting notices were sent out for 2018.

5. **Updates**

- **Child Welfare Advisory Committee**

Sandra Ghoston-Jones said a meeting was held in late August with some of the individuals who were approached to be a part of the Committee. This Committee will be involved in the West Michigan Partnership for Children, providing oversight.

Those who are currently in place as part of the Committee include: Andy Thalhammer, Wayman Britt, Judge Feeney, Cole Williams and Sharon Loughridge. Sandra said there are still two positions to be filled on that committee. There are efforts underway to fill those positions.

In the meantime, Sandra plans to meet with Savator Selden-Johnson and Kristyn Peck to talk about the kinds of reports the committee will be reviewing, establishing a baseline that we'll look at as a charge for the committee. Once this is done, and the final two positions are filled, a meeting will be scheduled, hopefully by the first of the year.

- **Strategic Planning**

Sandra continued her updates, saying it's time to look forward to see where the KCFCCC Council needs to go from here. She said there has been a lot of successes, which need to be celebrated, but it's time to look at what work needs to be done.

A strategic planning process is in the works to talk about the future for the Council and to strategize to look at some ideas. This will take place in the 1st quarter of 2018.

The Health Department Community Needs Survey results will be part of the discussions, to include the community's input.

Matthew VanZetten added his comments, saying the challenges will be in ensuring we are not stepping on work that is already being done. Work by KConnect, early childhood work at First Steps and Health Department efforts including the beefed-up Community Health Needs Assessment have all provided a lot more systemic conversations. Finding the niche where the Council fits will follow determining the process in the first quarter of 2018.

Historically, the KCFCCC was the group who created First Steps. KSSN came from the School Age Subcommittee to realign Health and Human Services to support student achievement. KConnect came from conversations about alignment of efforts and looking at the same data.

Matthew added that this group needs to help determine how we move forward. There

is a lot of effort and energy out there and we don't want to step on it. Systemically, what are the major pieces we can help bring people together or work on collectively for better alignment appropriately, that is not already happening somewhere else.

Adam added that it is critically important that we are very deliberate and that everyone participates in that process. We have tremendous resources in this community and without a clear vision and strategic plan, there is a tendency to bump into each other and step on each other's toes.

Melanie Beelen added her comments about homelessness. She said she is curious to see what comes out of the conversations around Housing. This is a huge issue in the Baxter community. Also, the mental health piece and its connection to what is seen on television and in the communities.

Jim Paparella asked what the process is expected to be for Strategic Planning. Sandra answered the Executive Committee will talk about this at their upcoming meeting and will brainstorm to figure out what is at the forefront of people's minds right now and where we fit in and where we can have the most impact on a larger scale systemically. Following that she expects some direction in involving the full Council in having an effective strategic planning process that involves everyone.

Lynne Ferrell mentioned that last time there were barriers around what the County could do in terms of facilitation and budgets, etc. She asked what that looked like now.

Matthew said there are some potential opportunities around the budgeting process that could provide some resources. He also commented that having Sandra Ghoston-Jones on board is a big plus while beginning this process because of her background in strategic planning, as well as former work with AAAWM as a senior planner and that she is new and can provide a fresh look at our system.

6. Miscellaneous

Lynn Heemstra – Our Communities Children has a T-C Studio, a center for college success, aimed at 1st Generations Persons of Color getting to and through college. It is on the 3rd floor of the Grand Rapids Public Library. They have already served over 1,000 students in under a year of its existence. The hours are Monday through Thursday 10:00 am TO 7:00 PM, and Friday and Saturday by appointment.

Jim Paparella – He spoke to DA Blodgett/St. John's disaffiliation with Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization. The original disassociation was in the works for some time due to some funding challenges and also because the National Model held them to metrics that didn't make sense in terms of adapting the mentoring services to local need. He gave some examples of situations where it was not possible to meet requirements.

Ron Caniff – He mentioned First Steps for their Early Childhood Community Breakfast on the 16th. He added kudos for KConnect for their Accountability Partners Council meeting last week.

Candace Cowling – She announced that Dr. Veneese Chandler is the recent recipient of

the Tribute Award.

Jackie O'Connor – She said the Senior Millage Funding Process is just wrapping up. This happens to be the 20th year for dollars from the Senior millage. She said the funding process is long, beginning in October and was approved by the Finance Committee today, the full County Board must still approve before the funding is officially allocated beginning in January. There was \$10.6 million in funding this year. She thanked the County for this fund.

Julie Ridenour – The Steelcase Foundation is helping to fund an Eviction Intervention process in the 61st District Court. This has been done with a lot of collaboration from the County, DHHS services, based on a model that's being done in Kentwood. It is hopeful it will have a significant impact on the number of evictions in the community. Wende Randall from the ENTF can provide additional information if the group is interested. Julie added that the court is doing a session in court next week for local attorneys to update them on the process.

Scott Gilman – He thanked the County, Andy Thalhammer and Judge Rossi for working together to provide Kent County's first Mental Health Court. It will be operational this year. Judge Rossi seems really passionate in making a difference in people's lives.

Ann Marie Valdez – She provided a handout for a breakfast hosted by First Steps on November 16. About 130 are currently registered. She said it will be the sharing of the findings of their recent gap analysis.

Pam Parriott – KConnect recently gathered the entire network at the Accountability Partner Council Gathering. This consists of about 180 people working in the Collective Impact Initiative, which expands from prenatal to career. This happens twice a year. The current efforts are focused on strategy development. This recent meeting the first strategies were brought forward. In the Prenatal-3rd grade sector, this includes addressing low-birthweight in African American families. Also included was a decision tree strategy.

The second set of strategies surrounded the issue of school attendance.

KConnect, in partnership with some lead community partners, 1st Steps Kent, Kent ISD, ENTF, Talent 2025, ELO and To College Through College, are working together to begin to set a system map. It means a lead convening partner (for example, ENTF), it's five committees and all of the members that serve on those five committees, and begin to map them. An interesting view of how we are all working together, or could better work together to strengthen relationships emerges from that.

Pam offered to present the system map at a future meeting.

Adam London – He said there has been an uptick in the last two years of kids with elevated lead levels in their blood. This is a risk factor for performance in school, in decision making and other issues. A Task Force has been studying this issue for the last ten months. Toxicologists, environmental investigators, nurses, physicians, the Lieutenant Governor and a number of other experts have been informing the Task Force on the issue, sharing the opportunities and how to move forward. A set of

recommendations will be presented to the community later this month. A couple of community meetings will be held to hear what has been learned. A final report should be out next month. Overall, a lot of work has been done with lead. The rates of elevated lead levels in kids 20 or 30 years ago was at about 30 or 40 percent of all kids, compared to about 6 percent overall today. The efforts to remove lead from paint, gasoline, toys and food has led to these results. We still aren't where we should be, but work continues. The 49507 zip code has had the highest elevated blood lead levels in the state, including compared to Flint. A number of organizations and partners are working together to remedy this.

Additionally, the Health Department has been busy with the PFAS situation. It is an enormous effort right now. Adam said the information is available on accessKent.com where an entire web page is designated to the PFAS issue. He asked council members to point any staff, friends or neighbors to this website for information.

Matthew VanZetten commented on the lead issue. He asked the group to consider what could be done locally to address such issues in Lansing.

Ron Caniff – He reminded the group that it is election day. Please vote.

7. **Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday January 2, 2018, at the Kent County Administration Building, Room 311.