

**Kent County**  
**Family & Children's**  
**Coordinating Council**

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**KCFCCC Meeting Minutes**  
**April 10, 2018** 12:00pm – 1:00pm  
Kent County Administration Building  
Room 311

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**Members/Alternates**

**Present:**

Melanie Beelen, Candace Cowling, Lynne Ferrell, Sandra Ghoston-Jones, Jack Greenfield, Lynn Heemstra, Ron Koehler, Adam London, Jacob Maas, George Meek, Jim Paparella, Julie Ridenour, Savator Selden-Johnson, Diana Sieger, Michelle VanDyke, Matthew Van Zetten, Patti Warmington.

**Members Absent:**

Chris Becker, Ron Caniff, Tracey Fountain, Judge Patti Gardner, Scott Gilman, Cynthia Gladyness, Harold Mast, Yazeed Moore, Teresa Neal, Jackie O'Connor, Michael Zoerhoff.

**Guests:**

Maureen Kirkwood, Carol Paine-McGovern, Jessica Vail, Annemarie Valdez, Wende Randall.

**1. Welcome & Call to Order**

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

Adam asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting, provided by George Meek, second by Michelle VanDyke– vote was UNANIMOUS.

The minutes were tabled for the next meeting to give members a chance to review them.

**2. Public Comment**

None.

**3. Strategic Planning Update**

Sandra Ghoston-Jones gave a brief update on Strategic Planning for the KCFCCC. She said the Executive Committee did not meet, so they will look at the results of Sandra's

listening tour, and will discuss where we need to focus, what our priorities are and how as a council we need to move forward.

#### **4. Child Welfare Advisory Committee Update**

Sandra Ghoston-Jones updated the group, saying they met on March 15. She mentioned it is a public meeting, so KCFCCC members should feel free to sit in on the meetings. There is a lot of information shared at these meetings. This is a very engaged group whose members have a very deep commitment to making the necessary changes in our Foster Care system.

At the last meeting DHHS data and data from WMPC from MindShare was discussed. Sandra said that the data coming from MindShare has been eye-opening. She said there is a clear disparity in removals among children of color. DHHS is working to identify Foster Care that are relative placements to reduce the trauma for children.

Additionally, the Committee is also discussing targeted recruitment of Foster Parents by zip code.

The next KCFCCC there will be a presentation of the WMPC. Sandra noted that the work that is being done is being done in a way that is very passionate and she expects good things to come out of the WMPC Child Welfare Advisory Committee.

Savator Selden-Johnson added her comments about the findings of the WMPC on the disparity of removals of minority children. She said there are conversations taking place with the Casey Family Foundation to look at how to address this issue. GVSU Dean George Grant and Commissioner Jones have agreed to participate in the discussions.

#### **5. Network180 Update** – In Scott Gilman’s absence, this item was tabled to the next Agenda.

Matthew VanZetten provided a brief update. He said the Network180 Board has been trying to secure a line of credit, or Revenue Anticipation Bonds, to assist with cash flow so providers would not be concerned in these uncertain times. However, yesterday the bank backed out because the PIHP had discussions that caused the bank to be uncertain about the funds being paid back.

The group continued discussion on the issues Network180 is facing with the Medicaid funding and the potential of a private entity taking over running the PIHP.

There are many people trying to solve these issues that include the Mental Health Association, Community Mental Health Association and others. Phil Weaver from Hope Network West Michigan is being helpful. Currently all hands are on deck.

#### **6. Coalition to End Homelessness** – Jessica Vail began the discussion as some handouts were distributed. She provided an overview of the Coalition to End Homelessness (CTEH). She said they are a subcommittee of the Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF).

Jessica also said there are about 50 different member agencies in the community working on ending homelessness together.

The ENTF had four main goals set (which aligned with the Federal goals). They are:

- Ending Veteran homelessness
- Ending chronic homelessness
- Ending youth homelessness and family homelessness
- Setting the groundwork to end homelessness across the community

The goal to end Veteran homelessness was met by 2017. Jessica went on to describe steps taken to achieve that goal.

- Identifying those in the subpopulation that need to be housed
- Make sure emergency services are in place to get people quick help when they need it
- Use the coordinated entry system to link resources to people, tailored to their needs
- Swiftly connect to permanent or non-time limited housing
- Have Resources planned for system capacity to continue to prevent and end future homelessness

Next steps will be ending homelessness for Youth. This includes youth aged 24 and younger, who are literally homeless, or doubled-up.

- Identify youth by doing a literal count
- Build a by-name list
- Financial modeling report is done
- Build the resources

The CTE is looking for people to staff an advisory board that would meet quarterly. Jessica invited members of the KCFCCC to consider participating. They would like two members from the Council, if possible.

Homeless Families make up the majority of households the CTE houses. The biggest struggle is emergency resources for families. A diversion component has been added to the system and Family Promise is taking the lead on it. Local foundations have provided support to help move it ahead for the first year. The diversion program provides some mediation or financial resources.

Jessica mentioned to the group that with the budget cuts of Block Grants that are currently taking place, she wanted to make us aware that the CTE uses HOME funds to address homelessness. About 200 family households are housed with these funds each year.

After a few questions among the group, Jessica said they are having discussions with legislators to talk about funding and need in our community.

## **7. Miscellaneous**

- a. **Jack Greenfield** – He shared that Arbor Circle has an annual fundraiser on May 2. They will be raising money for mental health.
- b. **Savator Selden-Johnson** – She said the Families First Preservation Services Act becomes effective February 2018. There will be a listening tour to listen to the communities about the need for Title IV-E prevention services. It will include evidence-based mental health substance abuse prevention treatment. They will be looking at how to define foster care resources and maintenance payments to be made for children up to 12-months post-placement. There is a major energy about some new dollars federally authorized. Effective October of this year, the dollars will be issued to look at overview administrative cost. This is a real plug in thinking about our need for prevention services in the child welfare arena.

She also shared that removals are at a marked increase, 40 in the month of February. She said they are working hard to seek relative placement at the point of considering a removal. Savator said they are trying to work smarter, realizing there are licensing challenges.

- c. **Lynn Heemstra** – She said Our Community’s Children has an education program, called LEAD, which stands for Leadership, Employment, Achievement and Direction for 18-24-year-olds beginning May 1. Young people who attend the 90-hour program are eligible for potential employment in Mayor 100 Businesses. Applicants must be residents of Grand Rapids, from the Southeast and Southwest areas of the city.

April 27 will be Kidspeak, organized by the Mayor’s Youth Council. Some County Commissioners, City Commissioners and State legislators will attend. The topic will be on Immigration and Tearing Down the Walls. The meeting will take place at City Hall from 10:00 AM until Noon.

- d. **George Meek** – He said this meeting has been an informative meeting, unfortunately a lot of bad news. Adam London thanked George and the staff at Plainfield Township for all the work they are doing with the situation with PFAS.
- e. **Ron Koehler** – He said that Michigan schools’ MEAP scores are up slightly. He feels Michigan is in the top five states for improvement for fourth grade reading since 2015 and we are at the same levels in 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math as two of the reference states, Tennessee and Florida.
- f. **Jacob Maas** – One of the things West MichiganWorks! is focused on now are Medicaid work requirements. Senators Shirkey and a couple of others have proposed an amendment to Senate Bill 897 to require individuals to participate in 29 hours of work, job training in an industry with proven demand, or education in a field with proven demand, or a combination of the three, to count towards the work requirement. This means, in order to continue to receive Medicaid (including) Healthy Michigan, individuals would have to participate in some level of work activities. Interestingly, job search doesn’t count toward this requirement unless unemployment reaches 8.5%

regionally.

Jacob said they do work search requirement activities for TANF, Welfare reform, or PATH. They are a success because there is funding to support it, but there is no funding to support getting recipients higher earnings or a higher skillset in order to get them off benefits through Medicaid. Jacob said they are waiting to hear if there will be an amendment to this Bill.

Jacob also shared that in two weeks, April 25, there will be an event at DeVos Convention Center, where 9,300 students will see first-hand opportunities in IT, Health Care, Manufacturing and Construction. There are a lot of great jobs in those industries. The students come from seven counties in West Michigan, many from Kent County. There are over 100 employers attending the event.

- g. **Candace Cowling** – She shared that Family Futures will be sending out Adverse Child Experience (ACE) Questionnaire to families who have participated in the Connections Development Screening program over the 14 years (potentially 20,000 families). This should provide the prevalence of ACE with families that have used that service, but more importantly, this will show how this fits with the child’s development over the first five years. This is being done with support from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Grant.
  - h. **Adam London** – He shared the County Health Rankings were released a few weeks ago. For the past four or five years, Kent County for Health Outcomes has been ranked 16 or 17<sup>th</sup> out of Michigan’s 83 counties. Kent County is now ranked #12.
8. **Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday June 5, 2018, at the Kent County Administration Building, Room 311.