

Draft

FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL
Monthly Meeting
April 9, 2009

Date: 4/9/2009

Place: Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired

Time: 10:06am- 12:06pm

Facilitator: Karen Zrenda

Recorder: Chris Sloss (respectfully submitted 4/21/09)

Attendees: *Voting members* –Karen Hlavac (Parent), Ann Gionet (DPH Conference call), Karen Zrenda (Parent/Co-Chair), Terry Cote (DDS), Cindy Stramandinoli (Parent), Joan Law (Parent). Laura Knapp (Parent/Co-Chair), Angela Spino (Parent) Michael Selvaggi (Parent)
Non-Voting members- April Dipolina (Parent/FSN coordinator), Lisa Sheppard (Parent/FSN coordinator), Alice Buttwell (Parent/FSN coordinator), Tesha Imperati (Parent/FSN coordinator), Jen Carroll (Parent/FSN State Coordinator), Tom Brooks (COC), Hal Gibber (FAVOR), Moira O’Neill (OCA) *Staff* – Chris Sloss

Welcome and Introductions - Meeting was brought to order by Karen Zrenda at 10:06 and introductions were made. A quorum of voting members is present today. April requested that we identify ourselves for those on the phone.

Acceptance of the March minutes

Motion to accept the minutes by Laura Knapp, seconded by Joan Law.

Discussion:

Karen Hlavac asked for clarification as to who made the motion that nominations be closed and who seconded that motion. Chris went back to her notes to clarify and the motion to close the nominations was made by Karen Hlavac and seconded by Robyn Trowbridge.

Terry asked for a correction to page three. Wherever Ethics Commission or Ethics Committee is listed it should be changed to accurately reflect the office as the Office of State Ethics. This change will be made.

Mike questioned the current procedure of a typed signature for the minutes as opposed to the use of an electronic signature which he believes is required. We will clarify if this is mandatory or not. If it is, Chris will begin to do this as required.

Vote in favor of accepting the minutes with the corrections, Those not in favor – Mike voting present, No abstentions, Minutes accepted.

Legislation updates:

Mike notified the council of a proposed change to the education statutes that would have a dramatic effect on the rights of children whereby the burden of proof in due process is put on parents. He does not know where the legislation currently stands.

Tom mentioned that H.B. 6402 – a HUSKY reform bill, has a lot of provisions in it, one of which affects children with special health care needs. It requires DSS to apply for an SCHIP waiver to provide funding for supports and services for children with special health care needs in home and community based services through HUSKY PLUS. See Tom's e-mail of April 6th for a summary of the bill. H.B. 6152 a catastrophic expenses pool has been changed to a children only bill. It has support from the insurance industry, it has a low fiscal note of under 200k to the state. Rep Schofield has expressed an interest in meeting with families for their input. Since this was a listed priority from the retreat it was suggested that if it this bill makes it through, the council should be actively engaged in helping to develop the program. Chris offered to reach out to Rep. Schofield (as a parent). Moira would be willing to accompany anyone who is willing to reach out to her with a few family members.

Correspondence :

Karen wanted to address the correspondence that Mike sent to Chris requesting copies of all members' appointment letters. She asked if he would like to clarify so we can discuss as a council if this is what we'd like to do. Mike replied that this is not up for a vote stating that he is requesting access to the letters of each appointed member and would like to know who controls our records? Karen stated that Chris is not the keeper of the record nor is she. Terry reminded him that DDS is the formal keeper of the records therefore he should submit his FOI requests to DDS's FOI officer, Joan Barnish. The Council is located for administrative purposes in the Department of Developmental Services, so therefore record keeping follows along.

Further discussion ensued regarding Mike's desire for copies of records and contracts, where he can access them (at DDS). It was suggested that he contact the FOI coordinator at DDS for further inquiries.

Discussion continued that Mr. Selvaggi has requested documents on behalf of the other members of the Council without first asking for input from those members or bringing requests to a vote. Mike would not respond to members comments without the dialogue going first "through the chair" suggesting that non-voting members do not have a right to participate in the discussions and that they are "irrelevant".

Comments noted that folks regularly attend other meetings in which it is the prerogative of the chair to recognize people and encourage their participation. This organization benefits from the fact that non-voting members care about the work of this group to the degree that they do and assist in accomplishing the mission of the council by sharing information from families. Kathy Bradley noted this is a unique council that supports children and their families so we value every single voice (voting, non-voting, families, professionals) because it will help us in the objective of serving the people we want to serve.

Laura asked for one final clarification on what it is that Mike is requesting: He noted he wants access to the council record history (minutes, financial records, individual meeting attendance history, appointment letters, etc.). Terry noted records were made available and that Mike was informed of whom to contact at DDS for that information.

By-Laws

We reviewed each section of the draft amendment to the By-laws for comments:

Question : Article II section 3-what is the existing statute? You can only be appointed for 2 consecutive terms (8 years).

Questions: Article II section 5 – Mike questioned the use of the word “participation.” Voicing concern that it leads you to believe that this word gives the network coordinators voting authority and thus changes our authorizing statute. Suggestion: change the wording to “participate in the discussion.” Karen offered to look into this to see if this word change would be in conflict with the statute as Mike still suggests.

Mike asked how officers are elected now and whether the Council has 2 co-chairs and co-chair designee? At the last meeting the Council voted to have Karen Hlavac step into the co-chair designee role. He asked Karen Z. how long she has been co-chair and whether that is in violation of the by-laws? He stated he is here: “To see that this council complies with the law.”

Cindy wants the minutes to reflect her suggestion that there is a conflict of interest that Mike does not follow the initiatives of the council. “You have a completely different agenda than this council.”

Terry pointed out the current By-laws say that the co-chairs are elected for a period of 6 months with staggered terms. Co-chairs are not precluded from serving for more than one term. Our issue has been that no one has stepped up until recently as a co-chair designee, therefore we could not implement that section of the By-laws. The council also had many times in which there was not a quorum and therefore could not take nominations.

Mike handed a prepared statement to Chris and requested that it be attached to the minutes. Chris passed the document to Karen who passed it on if anyone else was interested in looking at it. Karen mentioned that the minutes only need to reflect the discussion at the meeting and action that the council takes. The content of the document was not discussed at the meeting. Table Mike’s document to the next meeting agenda.

Mike made a motion to have the By-laws include a public comment portion of our meetings so that the public can address the council in the manner of their own choosing. There was not a second to this motion so it did not pass.

A question was raised as to the role of person who are non-voting and not appointed to the council. Suggested that we table this to our next meeting so we could get through the By-laws, however it was noted that we should clarify as it is raised at most meetings.

The proposed amendments to the By-laws will be revised and emailed to all members for review and for a vote at the next meeting scheduled for May 14th.

Motion to adjourn by Kathy and seconded by Joan. Motion passed