



Members

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|--|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dana Ainam                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Robyn Cole                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Benjamin Hazelton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jerry Moore   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christine Stetzer     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Arenz          | <input type="checkbox"/> Leslie Currin                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cathy Kaufmann    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pam Patton    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christine Stolebarger |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Balter by phone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Terry Fennell for Don Darland | <input type="checkbox"/> Jean Lasater                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Angela Sherbo | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruth Taylor           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Iris Bell            | <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Sara Gelser                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Christina McMahon            | <input type="checkbox"/> Becky Smith              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nan Waller            |

DHS Staff

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erinn Kelley-Siel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nancy Keeling | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Bouska for Madeline Olson |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mickey Serice     | <input type="checkbox"/> Debbi Kraus-Dorn         |  |

Minutes: Pam Pearson

Guests: Robin Christian – Children First for Oregon. Eric Moore – DHS-CAF

**OVERVIEW OF AGENDA, APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION:** The 1/14/09 CWAC minutes were approved.

- Hazelton: The Future Issues Work Group (FIWG) decided CWAC’s current list of issues, though important, will be set aside to focus on a coordinated effort on what needs to happen to sustain services to children and families in our state. Today, we will try as a committee to reach consensus from a policy vantage point, recognizing we each come with both a collective hat as CWAC members and with our individual hats. The Child Safety Work Group recently released their final report and we are kicking off today’s discussion with an overview of their report by Robin Christian.

**CHILD SAFETY WORK GROUP (CSWG) REPORT – Robin Christian**

- Christian: Provided an overview of the charge and membership of the CSWG, their broad vision of what they want child welfare to look like and how to get there. Their recommendations are intended to be short term. She is hopeful that CWAC will become the steward of the recommendations and create a collective vision for both the short and long term. The recommendations are divided by three goals (p. 7 of report). They were aware of other current

initiatives and built on the work of others. She understands that the current budget situation puts us in a protect mode.

- Sherbo: Have the recommendations been priced?
- Christian: No. They did think about how much it would take to implement them in one branch, but nothing beyond the thinking stage.
- Sherbo: If CWAC is to be the steward, could we ask that they be cost out? We may find some are not as expensive as we think.
- Kelley-Siel: Some fall outside DHS, but we could make a best guess.
- Arenz: Please consider the children in high-end care.
- Kelley-Siel: The request is to price the recommendations in the report.
- Patton: It is important to price them. They are meant to keep children safe and to reduce abuse. In the prevention story, the older teens sometimes are forgotten.
- Kelley-Siel: There is a continuum to include teens in care. We will give CWAC the work that each subgroup did that underlies the recommendations.
- Kaufmann: In addition to the short term recommendations, the work group did some preliminary thinking on medium and long term recommendations. The report focuses on the short term as something concrete and possible to move forward. These are not meant to include everything, but to be a concrete first step.
- Patton: As advocates, CWAC members need to be able to educate legislators about the impact of their decisions, including long term costs. We should make a statement about how Oregon will pay later if these recommendations are not implemented now. We need to give legislators the big picture.
- Kaufmann: Would it be appropriate for CWAC to say we received the recommendations, are deeply concerned about the budget, and recognize the need for new revenue to move them forward?
- Kelley-Siel: This segues to the bigger conversation on budget.
- Kaufmann: Proposed a motion that CWAC write a letter taking a position that the recommendations are important and calling the legislature to move forward in finding new revenue.
- Balter: Were the recommendations considered the most important and effective to meet the goals, or were they a compromise of the work group members?
- Christian: They were considered most important and effective. No one would have been satisfied with anything less. There were compromises in the individual participants' roles. She referred to the last sentence on page 6 of the report: "The group overwhelmingly (*emphasis added*) agreed that if fewer

families suffered from issues of drug, alcohol, mental health and domestic violence, families would be more stable and intervention by the state would be less necessary.”

- Kelley-Siel: There was some group debate around early intervention and the role of government in families most at risk of child welfare entry. The number of families in the TANF Family Supports and Connections Program is increasing; however, all TANF caseloads increased. The total number in foster care has decreased. The proposal that rose to the top regarding early intervention was for increased local supports through non-governmental programs.
- Arenz: Foster care is down about 1,000 children from a year ago. The CSWG report says 15,000 were in foster care.
- Kelley-Siel: The 15,000 number is from 2007 data. We have 2008 data now (distributed CAF Child Welfare presentation document for Ways & Means). The average daily population is a different number than the number of children who spent at least one day in foster care. In 2008, 13,965 children experienced foster care.
- Hazelton: Cathy Kaufmann’s motion was to have CWAC take a position of supporting the advancing of the CSWG recommendations and communicating that support to the legislature. It has two tiers: 1) the recommendations are important and if new revenue is needed, so be it; and 2) at the very least we cannot afford to move backward during the budget crisis.
- Patton: The message is not to get new revenue and use the new revenue to fund the implementation of the recommendations before anything else. We don’t want to say that funding be taken from something else.
- Moore: In the current budget climate, there is value in determining what it would cost to implement the recommendations. Many legislators are not on the W&M Human Services Subcommittee and, therefore, the discussion with them should be coupled with an explanation of where the proposed budget reductions hit each of the recommendations. Cuts already taken have already made an impact. For example, cuts in the courts have, in effect, increased their caseloads. It is important to cost out the recommendations, but also to show the impacts of the budget reductions right now.

- Sherbo: Bruce Goldberg charged the CSWG to prioritize short and long term recommendations for three goals.<sup>1</sup> Robin Christian recommended that CWAC, a statutorily charged group, monitor the recommendations. CWAC supports the recommendations. She believes CWAC should go on record that they need to be funded and supports the raising of additional revenue.
- Arenz: When we find out how much they will cost, by not funding them there is, in essence, a cut by not making the services available. Suggested one possible message is to recommend the legislature not decouple the progress from investments already made. She is not sure about asking for new revenue.
- Hazelton: Janet's statement above appears to be a counter motion to Cathy Kaufmann's.
- Christian: Asked if the objective was to express CWAC being in favor of the recommendations. That would be an easy statement to make.
- Patton: But it carries no weight.
- Arenz: An "ask" needs to be attached such as addressing future funding and holding harmless the current investments.
- Kaufmann: In this budget situation, holding harmless means new revenue. That would be the purpose of sending a recommendation to the legislature.
- Patton: Do we need to say that disinvesting now will cost more in the long run? Maybe we should say that we do not support taking money away from others to pay to implement these recommendations.

- ACTION:**
- **CWAC will be given the CSWG background information for the CSWG recommendations.**
  - **DHS will cost out each recommendation and provide that information to CWAC.**

**MOTION APPROVED:** **CWAC will communicate with the legislature that it supports the CSWG recommendations, they are the right recommendations to get to the objectives CSWG wants to achieve and revenue would be needed to implement them or at the very least not**

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<sup>1</sup> Page 5 Child Safety Work Group Final Report

1. Improve family stability and reduce the number of child abuse and neglect victims in Oregon;
2. Reduce the number of abused children coming into foster care by improving in-home and relative supports for those children; and,
3. Ensure that those children who do come into foster care live in safe, supportive and healthy environments in which they can thrive, rather than just survive.

**go backward. [Note: see action item on page 11 for information on how CWAC plans to develop this communication.]**

There was discussion about whether CWAC can make a recommendation asking for new revenue. Certain CWAC members cannot carry that message because of their individual roles and the entities they represent.

## **INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENTS**

- Kelley-Siel: Appreciated those who were able to testify at our budget's public hearing before Ways and Means. Our budget documents are available online at: <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/aboutdhs/budget/09-11budget/index.shtml>.

Getting back to the earlier discussion on numbers in foster care: For 2008, approximately 14,000 children spent at least one day in some kind of foster care (includes family foster care, residential treatment, BRS and in DHS custody but with a parent [trial home visit]). The average daily population was 8,775. The ADP for family foster care was 6,200. Each number is about 1,000 less than for 2007. The legislature has asked what is driving the decrease.

- Sherbo: How many children are coded as being in foster care but are physically with a parent on a trial visit?
- Kelley-Siel: We will get that number from Kevin George. Since our W&M presentation, her focus has been on international adoptions. In 2005 a child placed for adoption in Mexico was killed by a relative. Last summer, the Hague Convention passed. We have created a Diversity Unit and removed other work from that manager's desk to focus on diversity and international issues. We hired a new adoptions manager with expertise in international adoptions. *The Oregonian* will be publishing two articles simultaneously on the Mexico case and the Hague Convention. We have suspended international placements for the time being until we can fully avail ourselves of the Hague Convention. We have asked the legislature for enabling legislation to avail DHS to Hague as was done with the Vienna Convention. While international placements are suspended, if a current case goes to adoption committee to consider a family outside the U.S., the committee will meet and make its decision, but the placement will not occur. This impacts a very small number of children (5). In the last ten years, only 27 international placements were made (13 in Mexico). On the reverse side, 18 children placed internationally in the U.S. have been killed by their adoptive parents.

- Sherbo: A deeper subject for future discussion may be to look at the tension between current caretaker and relative applicants.
- Kelley-Siel: We have some fact sheets that may be helpful. One outlines the actions taken since the child died in Mexico and one is a Hague FAQ. That child's legacy is children are safer now. We have more thorough home study forms that Mexico has agreed to use. The more messaging from around this table the better to acknowledge the actions the legislature has taken and to keep them focused on the bigger issues.
- Christian: Children First for Oregon is working on a media campaign and a primary message will be to stop saying DHS is broken. She offered to share that messaging with CWAC. If members are interested they can contact Cathy Kaufmann or her.

**ACTION: Kevin George will be asked to provide CWAC with the number of children coded as being in foster care but physically with a parent on a trial visit.**

**[Note, the data below shows that of the ADP of 8,775 children in foster care, 1,103 children were on trial home visits]**

Family Foster Care (SFAM,SREL,SGRP, SEFC)	6,200
Residential (SRES, SEAS, SAOC)	518
Psychiatric Hospitalization	65
Independent Living	29
Trial Home Visits	1,103
YTRA Tracking (DD Children, Runaways, Alternative placements)	860

8,775

Note: Bruce Goldberg arrived at this time.

## **DHS/CAF BUDGET REDUCTIONS**

- Goldberg: To end the above discussion, our concerns about the newspaper stories are not to defend DHS but to focus on the right issues about keeping children safe. Moved on to the budget with the understanding that what he says today will be out-of-date immediately. The economy continues to get worse. There has been a 50% increase in unemployment in half a year. Oregon has a \$3 billion shortfall for next biennium, which is close to 25% of the total state budget. Oregon will get more than \$3 billion from the federal stimulus package, but it includes investments to create jobs and is not intended to only to cover the shortfall. It does directly address the shortfall with increases in the Medicaid match (\$800 million) and small amounts for the TANF, ERDC and Food Stamp programs. There has been a 21% increase in Food Stamps from February 2008 to February 2009. Also a 20% increase in TANF, which translates to a 20% increase in the number of destitute families with children.

This biennium we have an \$850 million shortfall. Add that to the \$3 billion for next biennium and we have a \$4 billion problem. It may be worse after the May revenue forecast. The legislature has between \$2.2 billion and \$2.5 billion from a variety of sources (including stimulus dollars and rainy day funds), but that still leaves a \$1.5+ billion problem. The legislature has filled the shortfall for the current biennium. There are only two ways to solve the next biennium shortfall: cut programs or raise revenue. The solution will probably be somewhere in the middle. You are all probably seeing the same difficulties in your offices.

On the plus side, as Winston Churchill said, "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste." We will use creativity where previously there was inertia. It is time to remind everyone of the important work we do. Hurricane Katrina showed the importance of emergency planning and how our cities are just one disaster away from being destitute. We are learning there is an opportunity to understand what human services do and the need for a human services safety net. It makes no sense to cut these programs when they are needed more than ever.

- Waller: Has heard that the legislature may prepare a budget for only one year and come back for a re-look. Do they understand that federal funding can be lost with some GF reductions? Has the CFSR been suspended?
- Goldberg: It is unknown if the legislature will do a one year budget.
- Kelley-Siel: The CFSR will not be suspended. We have not yet recovered from cuts in 2003 and there are not many programs where reductions don't

draw down federal money. We still have questions about how the federal stimulus money will come to CAF.

- Goldberg: On the one hand we don't want to cut programs that leave money in Washington, D.C., but that puts greater pressure on programs funded with only general funds. Many mental health services are GF only. If we cut them, criminal justice and child welfare costs will increase later. We have to tell that story.
- Patton: Do legislators understand the connection between mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, crime and child welfare?
- Goldberg: They do, but it needs to be reinforced. It isn't that they don't understand, but the politics around raising revenue are very difficult.
- Kaufmann: Has talking points from the Human Services Coalition she can share with CWAC. Is there a date for the April reshoot?
- Goldberg: W&M may hold statewide hearings to show what the reductions will be. The reshoot will be towards the end of April or beginning of May. Our budget is based on caseloads from six months ago.
- Waller: Does the legislature have time for the big conversations on what Oregon wants to be? We have one of the highest rates of GF going to corrections. Will there be talk about changing that?
- Goldberg: Some of those conversations are beginning, but we are in react mode right now. He is not sure there will be time for such a conversation with the legislature ending in June. It may happen during a February 2010 session or the development of a second year budget if they go that route.
- Waller: There is the DHS budget and the budgets of everyone else at the table.
- Goldberg: An important message is that 85% of the DHS budget is spent in the local communities. It is a false perception that we can solve the problem by cutting state employees and benefits to illegal aliens. The more that message is spread the better. The general fund goes approximately half to schools, 25% to DHS and 25% to public safety and corrections, with about 5% to all other agencies. Reductions will probably start with those proportions, but not dollar for dollar.
- Patton: Will corrections be held harmless due to mandatory sentences?
- Moore: Has heard the legislature is hearing bills to abolish some mandatory sentences.
- Waller: How cases will be charged may also have an impact.
- Moore: The plan to have the courts closed on Fridays will mean fewer cases will be charged. That will affect Measure 57 too.

- Arenz: There have been legislative discussions about how to delay the implementation of Measure 57.
- Waller: Pending legislation from a variety of sources could impact CAF's work. CWAC should be aware of this legislation and members can choose whether or not to weigh in.
- Sherbo: Asked about the status of a CWAC legislative call in that was suggested at the last meeting.
- Arenz: The call in will let us know what is moving.
- Moore: It is important for us to know DHS' positions on the important bills.
- Kelley-Siel: A weekly call in can help provide that information. We can send a list of the bills with our priority levels. You may not want to agree with DHS' position on some and we are OK with that.
- Kaufmann: Offered to provide the call in number.
- Hazelton: The calls may need to begin with a budget discussion regarding who can participate, at what level and if and how CWAC can agree on a common vision.
- Sherbo: Could we use our Principles of Child Welfare Change document?
- Balter: That was about system reorganization. FIWG felt there was not enough time for CWAC to come to consensus. For a tool, we can ask how the reductions affect our four goals<sup>2</sup>. Those goals help him when he meets with a legislator as a CWAC member in that he can ask how the legislator's proposal affects the goals. That was why he asked how the Child Safety Work Group's recommendations related to the four goals.
- Arenz: The bottom line will be preservation of the system. Some impacts of reductions will not be seen right away.
- Kelley-Siel: Distributed copies of CAF's budget presentation. Page 17 gives the legislature credit for their previous work. We explained the reductions along the themes on page 2. Legislators do understand the addictions issue. We explained foster care rate redesign and how the savings will go to support work in other systems having caseload increases (such as TANF). Child welfare will not be held harmless due to cuts in addictions treatment. We will have problems meeting the CFSR even with no cuts. She also handed out a listing of CAF's spending changes for the 07-09 biennium rebalance and talking

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1. Preventing foster care placement;
2. Assuring that children placed in foster care are safe and are thriving;
3. Providing permanency for children placed in foster care in a timely manner; and
4. Identifying strategies to reduce over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system.

points about those changes. You can see what we were saying in our budget presentations and hold that up to the CSWG report.

- Bouska: How do these principles guide how we move from here?
- Arenz: We have a direction from Erinn, we have a budget and have made a common commitment.
- Sherbo: Is there a way to increase our effectiveness since we don't meet often? Example of perhaps having all of CWAC at a legislative hearing with a consensus statement.
- Arenz: The weekly phone calls will be a great aid.
- Taylor: One obstacle is that while in our meetings we are all committed, but we are not organized to be effective when we leave.
- Kelley-Siel: Had two suggestions for CWAC to consider. Members could testify at public hearings on the budget reshoot about not cutting and not going backwards. Also members could testify about the budget for addictions and mental health. There are points in time in the budget process for CWAC input. CWAC can decide who can attend as the face of the committee.
- Waller: We should be visible and visual about what will happen if the state does not invest in our families. Gave the comparison of how the education community has a full room at their budget hearings. CWAC is the collective of perspectives.
- Kelley-Siel: April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and May is Foster Care Prevention Month. They may provide opportunities for CWAC. Members can follow up with individual meetings with legislators. There are message opportunities other than sending a CWAC letter.
- Stetzer: During budget crises, people can perceive that education and human services are in competition. We should have something that shows the legislature how they tie in with each other and should not be competing. Schools cannot teach children that are being abused.
- Arenz: That goes for children who are hurt, hungry or homeless.
- Bouska: AMH's budget public hearing is March 18. Children's Mental Health day is May 8. These are two opportunities to show support for each other and how they are interrelated.
- Waller: The message can be: Now more than ever we need to work together for children. Don't allow us to be set up to compete, but let us agree to discuss how to share the reduced pot.
- Hazelton: This gives us a framework to carry forward during the legislative call ins.

**ACTION: The discussion on how CWAC can carry forward a shared message to the legislature will continue during the upcoming legislative call ins.**

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **CWAC CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

- Kelley-Siel: Thanked Benjamin for serving as interim and for the input from members on filling the chair and vice chair positions. She talked with FIWG and feels it would be good to hold off filling the positions permanently until a draft work plan for CWAC is prepared. She will work with FIWG on a work plan of the big issues. The next two CWAC meetings can focus on the legislative process and budget issues. We can take a break in August and then kick off a work plan in the fall to adopt for the next 12 months.

**ACTION: All agreed to Erinn's above proposal. Benjamin will continue as interim chair for the time being.**

Meeting adjourned.