

**CITY OF NORWALK
EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 9, 2010**

ATTENDANCE: Betsey Bain, Chair; Mary Budrawich, NPS EC Specialist; Cathy DeCesare, United Way Coastal Fairfield County; Barbara Fitzpatrick, Star Rubino Center, Adele Gordon, Norwalk Smiles; Catherine Bradshaw, Graustein Memorial Fund; Dr. Sally Grose, Community Representative; George Hensinger, Community Representative; Ed Musante, Chamber of Commerce President; Joan Parris, NCC Early Childhood Program; Betsy Perry, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center; Lynn Sadlon Mortiz, Fox Run Family Resource Center Director; Victoria Schilling, Norwalk Health Department; Jo-Ann Stabler, NEON/Head Start

STAFF: Barbara Smart, Rosalie Witt, NECC

OTHERS: R.A. Thorne, Norwalk Community Health Center

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bain called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

Ms. Bain said that there were some guests present and requested that everyone introduce themselves. Ms. Bain said that Ms. Bradshaw was the newly assigned Graustein Memorial liaison. Ms. Bradshaw said that she has been a liaison for about six years. She gave a brief overview of her assignments. Ms. Bain said that Ms. Bradshaw has skills with meeting design and other fields that would help the Council in upcoming discussions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2010

**** MS. GORDON MOVED MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2010**

Ms. Avery joined the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

Page 1, under **ATTENDANCE**, please add Barbara Fitzpatrick, STAR Rubino Center.

Page 2, under **Approval for Chair to sign**, paragraph 2, please change the following from

“ Ms. Sadlon asked if the Brighter Beginnings Academy would be included in the general overviews of programs. She had concerns about whether the program would have oversight and monitoring.”

To: “Ms. Sadlon asked if the Brighter Beginning Academy and other programs seeking school readiness funds would be included in the provider network. She thought this would be beneficial to programs seeking funding in the future.”

Page 3, under **United Way - Approval for chair to sign**, first bullet point, please change the “Family Alliance Coordinator” to “Family Alliance Support Coordinator”.

Page 4, motion – please change the following from :

**** MS. DITRIO MOVE TO AUTHORIZE MS. BAIN TO SIGN THE GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE UNITED WAY ON BEHALF OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL.**

**** DR. GROSE SECONDED.**

Ms. Ditrio asked who the employer would be. Ms. Bain said that this question

TO:

**** MS. DITRIO MOVED TO AUTHORIZE MS. BAIN TO SIGN THE GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE UNITED WAY ON BEHALF OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL.**

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Ms. Ditrio asked who the employer for the Family Support Alliance Coordinator would be. Ms. Bain said that this question

Page 4, paragraph 3, line 2: please change the following from: “the application was focuses on only” to: “the application form focuses on only”

Page 4, under Council Structure, paragraph 1, line 1: please change “Ms. DeCesare to chair for” to “Ms. DeCesare to lead for”

Page 4, under Council Structure, paragraph 2, line 5: please change from “between the employer and the employee.” To “between the employer and the employee and/or union contracts.”

Page 5, paragraph 3: please change “Mr. Schmidt left the meeting” to “Mr. Musante left the meeting.

Page 5, motion: please change the following from:

****MS. SCHILLING MOVED TO HAVE THE GRAUSTEING LETTER BE STUDIED CLOSELY BY THE COUNCIL MEMBERS IN LIGHT OF THE WORK THAT GOES ON OF THE WORK OF THE MANAGEMENT, STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND DSICUSSED IN THE MEETING ON MAY 19TH AT 8:30 A.M.**

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Page 6, under Other, please change the bullet points from:

- DSS will be providing bonuses and
- There is now a requirement for DSS to give 30 days notice before closing a program.
- There was also a change in HUSKY re-determination period.
- PLTI was saved.
- The Parent Trigger bill passed. This allows parents to make the school system to task if the school has failed NCLB two years in a row. Mr. Hensinger then gave the details of the Connecticut ruling.
- The enrollment cap has been removed from the Charter Schools. Discussion followed about the number of Charter Schools and how this affects the Race to the Top funding and the requirement that all preschool teachers have Bachelors by 2015.

TO:

- DSS will be providing bonuses and was changed to align with HUSKY
- There is now a requirement for DSS to give 30 days notice before closing a program.
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**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2010 AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

GOOD NEWS – HEALTH CENTER

Ms. Bain said that the new Health Center is opened and continues to be successful.

Ms. Bain said that she had had read several reports on the programs and duly impressed with the positive ratings. Ms. DeCesare said that she had read in an article in the Hour that praised the quality of the data. The discussion then moved to an email that was received, which was also very positive.

UPDATES – GRANTS

A. School Readiness Grant –

There was nothing new to report.

B. Quality Enhancements –

There was nothing new to report.

C. Graustein Grant –

There was nothing new to report.

D. United Way –

The application has been submitted.

STAFF UPDATE – CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS

Ms. Bain said that this was an brief update on the staff and that the latest information she had on the Early Childhood Instructional Specialist. The candidate has been interviewed by both the interim superintendent and the new superintendent. The outcome of this interview is not yet known.

Dr. Grose left the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Ms. Budrawich said that the school budget was approved last night and that the Early Childhood Coordinator position was included. The discussion then moved to the changes that would be occurring at Central Office because of the budget reductions.

The support team will now be relocated in Room 311 for the new Early Childhood Coordinator, the Family Support Coordinator, and other staff for the Early Childhood program. There is also a small conference room that would be available for

subcommittee meetings, which will help with room allocations. The discussion then moved to the new Special Education Director, Ms. Smith, who has been hired recently.

STRUCTURES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL

Regarding the Early Childhood Instructional Coordinator, the interviews will be done in late July. The feeling of the Steering Committee is that there should be one interview team and it is hoped that there will be two or three final candidates to send to the Mayor for approval.

Ms. Bain said that since Ms. Wilock's obligation to the Early Childhood Council was initially expected to end on June 1st because it was originally expected that the new Coordinator would be hired. During the interim until the new coordinator is hired, Ms. Bain and Ms. Smart will be filling the gap.

Ms. Budrawich was asked if she would help the new Early Childhood Coordinator. Ms. Budrawich said that she would be available via phone or email for those who had questions, but that any attendance at meetings would be considered a paid consultation.

Ms. Bain said that the focus would be the membership of the Council. Ms. Bain said that she would be open to holding regular bi-weekly meetings for discussions on the Council Structure. The bylaws need to be looked at. Come September, Ms. Bain said, she would like to have a proposal for bylaws, Council structure, and goals ready for approval. Then the development of the strategic plan can be the focus of the meeting. A brief discussion then followed on the timing of these meetings. Ms. Bain said that she would be in touch with everyone on this.

COMMITTEE UPDATE

In the past during the summer, there had been a Program Committee Retreat. Ms. Parris said that the Committee would be meeting in July and it is being planned.

Ms. Schilling said that she had concerns about Ms. Paul's statement at the last meeting regarding the impact of the economy on the providers. Ms. Budrawich said that this had been discussed at the last provider's network meeting. The State School Readiness group has been very clear on the fact that the providers can not exclude children because of reduced or non payment of fees. Ms. Budrawich said that this might be a topic that could be discussed in October in the meetings. Ms. DeCesare said that in Westport, there had been a Day Care scholarship fund established by the former United Way of Westport for those people who worked in Westport but couldn't afford the Westport day care fees. Ms. Bain said that the discussion of solutions would be best handled at the sub committee level so that the details could be handled before bringing it to the Council. Ms. Sadlon disagreed, saying that the Council would allow people to tap into many different views. Ms. Bain said that this would bring the issue back to the to what is the role of the Council

DISCUSSION

Ms. Schilling said then said that there is a quarterly meeting of the Norwalk Health Families, the CT Dept SS Help Me Grow program and others. This is an opportunity for the outreach workers to get to know each others. On June 1st, there was a meeting on raising one's racial I.Q., which was very impressive. Ms. Sadlon said that having these speakers would serve the multi-cultural requirement for the State. Ms. Schilling said that this might be a good idea for the spring conference.

A list of the various issues faced by the families in Norwalk was distributed to the Council Members. It was noted that this was not an exhaustive list nor is it prioritized. When the Committee works on Goal Three, they will have to decide what the Council's job should be from the items on the list. Discussion followed on which indicators should be used for the needs assessment.

Ms. Bain then asked what the next steps would be. Ms. Schilling said that the Health Families Collaborative would be focused on this in September. Hopefully, there will be a positive response from the United Way and this will allow a Family Alliance Support Coordinator to be hired.

Ms. Schilling said that there was a special education needs gap for three to five year olds. She said that she wanted to bring this to the attention of the new Special Education Director. Ms. Budrawich said that while there was a new Special Education Director, a new Superintendent of Schools and Child First program, there was also a perception that Special Education services were being "given away". There is also a new Director of Pupil Personnel on board, also. Ms. Budrawich strongly suggested that Council ask Child First to take a lead on convening a group to discuss this issue. She also suggested that this group be a small group discussion. Discussion on how to facilitate this followed.

Ms. Schilling said that if there were additional items to the current list, members could email them to her or Ms. Sadlon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Early Childhood State Advisory Group having public hearing at NCC on June 14, 2010 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Bain said that she would like to recognize and thank those who would not be returning, such as Ms. Budrawich, who is retiring, Ms. Wilock, Ms. Witt, and Ms **Ajar**, whose assignment changed. Ms. Budrawich is retiring. The Early Childhood Council has been moved from the Youth Services Department and Ms. Wilock Ms. Bain wished all

those who are leaving well. Ms. Schilling and Ms. Smart presented Ms. Witt and Ms. Budrawich with pots of petunias.

Ms. Budrawich said that it would be important to remember that Ms. Parris is on the State wide Advisory Committee. Head Start requires that every state form an Advisory Committee for coordinated system for care and education. Mr. Hensinger said that he was on the data and quality subcommittee.

Ms. Parris said that the NCC Early Childhood program would be going through the accreditation program. She said that it would be important for the Council members to individually give NCC input on their thoughts about the program.

Mr. Hensinger said that Care for Kids has actually cut checks to the providers. Ms. Budrawich reminded everyone that this was from ARRA funding and the providers have the funds to spend as they see fit. The Norwalk group decided to make program improvements.

Ms. Bain said that she had asked the members for their thoughts on about the Council. She pointed out that there is a limitation in the Bylaws that caps the Council at 35 and it has been suggested that the cap be removed. Ms. Smart said that she had received 7 responses. Ms. Bain said she would be personally contacting each and every member over the next few weeks.

Ms. Schilling then said that she felt a round of applause was due for Ms. Budrawich, Ms. Witt, Ms. Wilock and Ms. Ahuja for their hard work.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. BUDRAWICH MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. AVERY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services