

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
Minutes of Meeting  
March 2, 2010  
Kenosha County Administration Building

Committee Members Present: Ed Kubicki, Terry Rose, Jeff Gentz, Dick Kessler, Jennifer Jackson, Ali Khaleel

Committee Members Absent: Alice Wei (excused)

Staff Present: John Jansen, John Milisaukas, Carolyn Feldt, LaVerne Jaros, Fran Petrick, Dave Geertsen, Frank Volpintesta

Others Present: Supervisor John O'Day, Byron Wright, Carlos Frick, Bob Pitts, Mary Jonker, Joe Potente-Kenosha News

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Ed Kubicki.

2. Citizen's Comments - None

3. Resolutions to Approve the Re-Appointment of Frank Santapoalo to the Brookside Board of Trustees

Dick Kessler stated that Frank Santapoalo has attended 47 out of 47 meetings. This Board meets once a month. Bob Pitts added that Mr. Santapoalo has been very active on this Board.

MOTION to approve by Jeff Gentz, seconded by Dick Kessler. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Brookside: Resolution to Create an Endowment Fund for the Purpose of Accepting Donations to Brookside Care Center

Fran Petrick said that this resolution is quite self explanatory. This is to create an official vehicle to enable Brookside to receive donations that are beneficial to Brookside and its residents. This delegates authority to the Brookside Board of Trustees to spend the funds for the benefit Brookside and its residents. Terry Rose questioned the language in the last paragraph about creating or contracting with a foundation or trust, asking if this was necessary. Frank Volpintesta said he put this in as an alternative, because in the future it would be beneficial if the trust fund received \$1 million or more. Dave Geertsen added that we could go with the Kenosha Community Foundation; we would not go to an outside party that would charge huge fees.

Ms. Petrick stated that there is no money going into this fund now. We are just setting it up. Jennifer Jackson asked if this will appear as a budget line. Mr. Geertsen replied 'no', it will be on the County books as a trust fund and audited annually.

Mr. Volpintesta explained that in the past, all donations needed to be approved individually by the County Board. This fund's creation will negate the need for County Board approval in the future. Each donor will be able to designate how the funds are to be used.

MOTION to approve by Jeff Gentz, seconded by Terry Rose. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. DADS: Resolution to Accept Bequests, Gifts, and Annuities from June V. Davis or her Estate

LaVerne Jaros stated that we received a donation from the estate of a family who had been involved in our services. Carolyn Feldt and Bernie Vash prepared the resolution. Ms. Feldt had discussions with the executors of the estate on how they wanted these funds used. As a result, our reception area will be remodeled at a cost of \$46,850. The balance will be spent at 20% each year for 5 years for the procurement of needed services on behalf of older adults and persons with disabilities.

This individual wishes to remain anonymous.

MOTION to approve by Jennifer Jackson, seconded by Dick Kessler. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Presentation on Homelessness

Byron Wright, Director of KHDS, said that he has spent 28 years working with 17-year olds and 18-21 year olds who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. Fortunately, in Kenosha County, if you are 16 or 17, you will be taken into the system and you will not be homeless. The County has contracted with KHDS for Independent Living for 17-year olds. Many people would be homeless without this County program. We have served 1,300 youth over 25 years. 25 kids are in Independent Living right now. In 1985, we began seeing kids age out of the system and end up homeless. In 1990, we wrote and received a federal grant to work with 18-21 year old homeless youth. This grant funding continues. Saying that people are adults at age 18 isn't so; they are children. Especially these immature youth with abuse & neglect backgrounds. We also have HUD grant funding.

We have 26 beds for 18-21 year olds. 12 are for teen parents, and 12 are for single individuals. The average teen mom has 2 kids. We work for 18 months with these kids. If you come to the attention of Crisis at age 16 and you are homeless, you will probably end up in placement. We just hired a 30-year old who had been in our Independent Living program. It's important to continue working with the older kids in the system. We tell our kids in Independent Living that they can come see us for the rest of their lives. Being in foster care is the biggest predictor that you will be homeless. 18% of those kids are homeless within 3 years. That's a high rate. Of those growing up in care, 25% go to college, compared to 57% normally. The pregnancy rate is twice as high. The Illinois system allows kids to be up to 21, compared to Wisconsin which is age 18. This makes a big difference in the numbers going to college and teen pregnancies. Wisconsin also puts 18-year olds into the State adult prison system. This was a really bad idea. They are still children.

Mr. Wright has been with KHDS since 1982. He's talked to people in their 40's, who were previously in their programs, and many of them are doing well. There is currently a waiting list of over 100 for the 18-21 year old program. We have a drop-in center for the homeless kids to check in with us. These kids know us. We don't need to do any outreach. We are very well known. Some of our previous kids are now foster parents. The average age for kids able to be on their own (paying their own bills, etc.) is 25. Many of the 18-21 year olds on the waiting list are street smart.

Carlos Frick, from Kenosha Unified School District, distributed an informational sheet on the KUSD statistics. As of 3/1, KUSD had 346 students identified as being homeless. They use the McKinney-Vento Act homeless definition, which is somebody who does not have a fixed, regular residence, or who are living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, etc., or are living with 2 to 3 other families in the same house. The year-end totals of homeless students has increased from 249 in 2003-04 to 514 in 2008-09. The economy could be the reason for this increase. Our focus is on the students, not the parents. We do everything possible to be sure these kids receive a consistent education. Since the beginning of the school year, 54 students have left the district, 24 have found permanent housing, leaving 268 currently homeless. Of the 268 kids, 83 are high school students, which is a high number. We are not allowed to let people know who the homeless students are. 77 students have been referred to us by community organizations in the ESN. The average age for a homeless student is 10 years old. Many of our students would change schools when they have a new home, but we provide transportation to be sure they can remain at the same school. We project the year-end total of homeless students will be 600.

Mr. Wright said that KHDS currently has 26 in Independent Living that are aged 18-21, and 24 kids who are aged 17. They are placed in apartments, rooming houses, private landlords, and other scattered sites. We have 4-5 landlords that we have been with for years. He estimated that 500 - 600 kids up to the age of 17, and 100 aged 18-21 were homeless. Kids are referred to the Women & Children's Horizons Shelter, Shalom Center, Salvation Army, and the Job Center.

Jeff Gentz stated that totals about 700 kids between 0-21 that are homeless. That's disturbing.

Jennifer Jackson said she would like a little deeper comparison into how Kenosha County compares with other communities of our size as it pertains to homeless youth.

7. Such Other Business as Authorized by Law - None
8. Committee Members Comments - None
9. Adjournment

It was moved to adjourn by Terry Rose, seconded by Dick Kessler. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Davis  
KCDHS Secretary

F:Sharon/HSCmin 3-2-10