

# MINUTES & NOTICE OF BOARD ACTION

BOOK 154 PAGE 0329

APPROVED *November 23, 1993*



## LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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*This document, upon approval in a public meeting by the Board of County Commissioners, serves as official minutes of such meetings as required under the Open Meetings Law, ORS 192.650.*

Pursuant to notice made by mailing agendas to news media, a selected list of jurisdictions and individuals in Lane County, a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held.

Questions should be directed to The Board Office Specialist 3, ext. 4203.

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November 2, 1993  
7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Harris Hall  
Main Floor

Chair Steve Cornacchia presided with Ellie Dumdi, Marie Frazier, Jack Roberts and Jerry Rust present. Sharon Giles, Recording Secretary.

PUBLIC HEARING/Implementation of House Bill 2004 (Lane County Commission on Children and Families).

Bill Van Vactor, Acting County Administrator, explained that in September the Board had received a briefing from the Department of Youth Services outlining the requirements of HB2004. He noted that he had met with Steve Carmichael, Director of Youth Services, and Rob Rockstroh, Director of Health and Human Services, to review the timeline of the requirements and the accomplishments that Lane County must pursue as the result of the Bill. Van Vactor indicated that the key date in the legislation is the initial organizational meeting required to be held by February 1, 1994. He remarked that a survey to gather information from agencies and interested parties had been mailed in mid-October and 90+ responses have been received and have been summarized for the Board. Van Vactor observed that a forum had been held on October 28 where approximately 25 individuals provided valuable input. He noted the purpose of this evening's public hearing is to receive input from citizens regarding the decisions needing to be made and that a follow-up meeting has been scheduled for the Board for next week where deliberations can occur. Van Vactor commented that decisions will need to be made soon, possibly next week, with regard to membership of the commission, whether it is lay or professional as well as the number of people that will serve, and structure as related to whether a new department will be created or which existing department will house this function. He indicated that this will permit the recruitment process to begin, so that qualified applications can be reviewed and appointments can be made to meet the February 1 deadline.

Cornacchia opened the Public Hearing.

Ray Broderick, 1375 Corum, commented that he is an investigator with the District Attorney's office, spending a majority of his time investigating child abuse cases and interviewing the victims and the offenders. He noted that this new process needs guidance, care and commitment to finding solutions. Broderick cited the case of a 6-year-old sexually-abused child, who mirrored her own life by beating on her own doll. He asked that people be chosen for this commission who can see this child as both the victim and the potential abuser.

Dennis Reynolds, 1860 Arthur, stated that he is employed at the University of Oregon as Child Care Coordinator of child care programs at the Erb Memorial Student Union and that his background is working with children before they are six years old. He indicated that he has served for the last four years on the Governor's state commission for child care. He noted that the present process allows the opportunity to shift from an intervention mode to an emphasis on prevention. Reynolds advocated for an independent commission, free from alignments with current departments. He stated that there is a perception within the community that the Youth Development Commission, housed in the same building as Skipworth, is part of the juvenile justice system. Reynolds suggested that three or more members of the new commission be current or past recipients of services and that provisions be made for necessary child care, respite care and/or offsets for loss of employment.

Carol Dickenson, 345 Kourt Drive, remarked that she has previously been a foster parent and questioned how this new model will affect the foster care program.

Benjamin Meyers passed on his opportunity to speak.

Jim Forbes, 44 West Broadway #501, stated that he is the Executive Director of Looking Glass. He recommended looking at a commission make-up of committed lay citizens. Forbes also noted that it is important to have diversity and to involve the business community, church memberships and PTA's. He suggested an advisory committee structure which would provide strong professional support to the Commission and be partners at the table. Forbes stressed that he thinks it is important to keep this function at Youth Services, noting that this department has moved toward focusing on prevention, intervention and treatment. He commented that it is important to build upon the strengths of the Children's Agenda and the Youth Development Commission, noting that any problems areas there are "fixable."

Stephanie Slayton, P.O. Box 5665, commented that she is the coordinator in Lane County for the Citizen Review Board, which is a division of the Judicial Department. She stated that the CRB reviews children in foster care and makes findings and recommendations on case plans to the Court and to CSD. Slayton remarked that many adoption cases do not finalize for over a year due to lack of funding for caseworkers. She indicated that some sexually abused children do not receive counseling because of lack of funding for counselors. Noting that prevention is important, Slayton

stated that it is important to recognize that services need to be kept in place. She stated that the CRB would welcome the opportunity to be consulted and provide information from their data base. Slayton asked the Board to keep the public comment period open for a few days so that fellow CRB members could provide input.

Jim Wilcox, 205 West 31st, stated that he has worked with children for 20 years in Head Start and as a high school teacher. He indicated the need to develop a system for "tracking" the development of children. Wilcox suggested the possibility of developing an interagency newsletter, as there is not adequate communication between agencies. He also suggested allocating some funds for experimentation with new approaches and alternative ideas. Slayton indicated the need for representation of youth and for commission members who are not professionals. He suggested an objective study of people who are being served, regarding their perception of the current system. Slayton summarized that it is necessary to 1) look at diversity, 2) appoint people who are representative of the community that is being served, 3) attempt not to create an impersonal, monolithic agency, 4) experiment with some alternative approaches, and 5) look at the future and growth issues.

Rob Laney, 36765 Immigrant Road, Pleasant Hill, echoed Jim Forbes' comments. He noted his involvement in Lane County's Budget Committee, the Citizen Review Board, and as an active board member and past president of the Relief Nursery. With regard to prospective locations for the new program and noting his respect for Rob Rockstroh, Laney stressed that the appropriate place for this task is in Youth Services with Steve Carmichael. He noted that Carmichael understands the importance of early intervention. Laney summarized that the responsibility for the administration/implementation of the programs should remain under the auspices of Youth Services.

Ann Aiken, 1790 Fircrest Drive, noted that one of her capacities is as a sitting Circuit Court Judge. She commented that she was a member of the Child Fatalities and Critical Injuries Task Force appointed by the head of the Department of Human Resources and the head of CSD. Aiken also stated that she had served as a member of the Governor's Commission on Pregnant Substance Abusers and numerous other children's programs in this community. She indicated she had worked hard for HB2004 after reading the Southern Maine Study regarding investigation of child abuse. Aiken stressed that services are sadly missing in this state. She noted that there are many models in Lane County: the Relief Nursery, the services for pregnant substance abusers, the New Start program at Sacred Heart, the Transition Program at LCC, etc. Aiken attributed much success to a committed YDC and the vision of Steve Carmichael. She remarked that it would be a tragedy to not give Carmichael the ability to continue to build on the vision that he has. Aiken commented on the abilities of Dan Close, the newly appointed member from Lane County on the statewide commission. She stated that her goal is that this opportunity be taken to put an array of services into this community.

Andrew McGuire, Springfield, stated that he is an employee of the Children's Services Division, but was here tonight as a father, a concerned citizen, and as a professional who has worked with children and is concerned regarding the direction the local commission will take. He stated that Oregon has one of the top five Children's Services Divisions in the United States and that re-inventing the wheel may be a mistake. McGuire emphasized that Governor Tom McCall had commissioned a panel, the Greenleigh Group, to take a look at what was happening with children in the state of Oregon, with services at that time provided at the county level. He indicated his hope that something could be learned from the report produced by that group. McGuire cited the issues of liability, accountability, and responsibility. He commented that it is necessary to make sure that no federal dollars are lost in this transition. McGuire expressed concern that, while 25% of children in closed custody in Lane County are children of color, there are no African-American parole/probation officers with any control to handle any caseloads.

Peter Watton, 1425 East 20th Avenue, commented that one problem is that there is a mandate, but not enough funds, people or time to do it. He urged the Board to remember that this is a continuing problem; and that if the citizens won't put up the money to support the services that are needed, then they can't place blame if that job is not done.

Suzanne Mann, 1880 Olive Street, stated that she is a child care provider, is president of the Oregon Association of Child Care Directors and works with the Early Intervention Program in Eugene. She asked that child care not get left out of the upcoming process. Mann expressed concern that children whose parents can't afford care don't get served. She encouraged the Board to use broad-based thinking when selecting people for the commission and to include the child care community.

Kerin Hoag, 931 Van Buren, commented that she is Director of the Child Care Resource Connection at LCC and is also an ex-client of many different parts of the social service system. She expressed concern about the lack of thought about transition from the current YDC process and suggested the need to allow people to get "grounded" around the new process. Hoag noted that it is not always necessary to keep reinventing the wheel. She also suggested utilizing the minority report that Jeff Lewis prepared several years ago. Hoag commented that it would be a beneficial blend to involve consumers who utilize the programs and line people from the social service organizations in the community with expertise and knowledge. She distributed a handout to the Board which provided a checklist of questions to help make service delivery choices for a pro-family system.

Craig Campbell, 269 Capitol Building, Salem, stated that he is Chief of Staff and Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House and chair of the YDC in Lane County. He reviewed the YDC's responses to the survey. Campbell indicated that the YDC felt it was important to have a group of people who were able to harness the resources of the community. He noted that the YDC recommended a commission with 9 or 11 lay members, taking into account diversity, in conjunction with an advisory committee with expertise.

Campbell stated that the YDC suggests a new and separate department, following the SWPIC model. Citing his long involvement with HB2004, he stressed the need for coordination, local input and a continuum of care to provide for the wellness of children. Campbell encouraged the Board to appoint people to the commission who have insight into the full spectrum of children's issues.

Responding to Rust, Campbell stated that the YDC's rationale for the commission's proposed location was public perception and concerns regarding Youth Services Department being the recipient of funding dollars.

Ron Meyers, 1750 Augusta, stated that his family has had problems with CSD in the past and that there needs to be deeper investigation into problems.

There being no one else present who wished to testify, Cornacchia closed the Public Hearing.

Cornacchia outlined questions he would like answered: "What is being transferred? What is being retained? Who and what is coordinating between the two and what the role of the Board is in creating policy? How much difference is necessary? What difference is worthwhile, regardless?" Noting that he does not have an intimate knowledge of the entire spectrum of services, Cornacchia indicated he had questions about the flexibility with services that are transferred regarding funding exercises and policy generation. He stated that the answers to these questions will have a direct bearing on the make-up and location of the commission and the requisite level of knowledge that will be required for members.


Van Vactor explained to the Board that he believes the heart of the function of the new commission is contained on page 2 of the handout entitled "Effects of HB 2004 on Lane County" (see material on file) summarized as "Prepare a county comprehensive area-wide service delivery plan for all services to be provided for children and families in the county:..." He suggested that he meet with Rockstroh and Carmichael tomorrow and prepare a written summary of expectations for the Board prior to Tuesday's meeting. Cornacchia expressed concern that since Lane County does not have or control all of the resources and services necessary in Lane County, he is still unsure about what Lane County is able to do, what state services are being retained and how it all fits together.

Roberts noted that not all questions will be able to be answered at this time and some of these questions will be answered with the help of the new Commission. He concurred with the need for a threshold determination as to the initial responsibilities of the Commission and what they will do in helping plan for the next two years. Roberts stated that he did not believe the initial decisions on numbers of people on the commission or its departmental placement needed to be final decisions and that evolution would take place and flexibility will be necessary.

Rust expressed concern about limiting the commission to only lay members as there are many in the community who wear different hats and may have varied experience. He noted that a tight definition of what a professional is may exclude potentially valuable members. Rust commented that a majority of lay membership may be more preferable. With regard to departmental placement of the Commission, Rust indicated that overhead and cost are a consideration for him, along with streamlining bureaucracy. He also stressed the need for total coordination on planning. Rust asked that the request to hold the written record open on the public hearing be honored. Roberts noted that this is not a quasi-judicial process, so people can provide information anytime.

Dumdi concurred with Rust regarding having a majority of lay members on the Commission, suggesting that professionals could be utilized as advisors. Roberts commented that the statute requires that the majority be lay. He suggested starting small and adding more if necessary. Roberts stated that he supports not making hard and fast rules at the beginning. Frazier asked if there were examples in other counties of different types of local structures. Van Vactor commented that the only other option, other than local commissions, is the ability to have a region-wide commission instead of just county-wide. Van Vactor indicated he would further address Frazier's question on Tuesday.

There being no further business, this meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

  
Sharon Giles  
Recording Secretary