

Child and Youth Services Committee Meeting
Douglas County, Nebraska

Tuesday, December 13, 2016

The meeting convened at 2:03 P.M. in Room 903 of the Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68183. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is located on the wall near the entrance of the room. A notice of the meeting was published in the December 6, 2016, issue of *The Daily Record*. County Commissioners present at the meeting were Chris Rodgers and Mary Ann Borgeson. Others present at the meeting included Patrick Bloomingdale, Catherine Hall, and Pam Murphy, Administration; Brad Alexander and Mark LeFlore, Douglas County Youth Center; Shelly Hug, Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative; Shawne Coonfare, Juvenile Assessment Center; Emily Adams and Amber Parker, Operation Youth Success; Melanie Williams-Smotherman, Family Advocacy Movement; Willie Hamilton, Black Men United; LaVon Stennis Williams, ReConnect; and Constance Mierendorf, Douglas County Clerk/Comptroller's office. Chris Rodgers chairs the Committee.

A video recording of the meeting is available on the Douglas County Website:

<http://commissioners.douglascounty-ne.gov/board-meetings/videos>

Douglas County Youth Center

- Brad Alexander reported that the average youth population in November was
 - 81 in Secure
 - 8 in Staff Secure
 - 31 in the Home Program
- On December 13, the population was
 - 76 in Secure
 - 12 in Staff Secure
 - 32 in the Home Program
- The Adoptive Living Unit Program, which has been in operation for 3 years, is going strong. Community support has been excellent. There is actually a waiting list for community partners to come to speak to the youth at the Center.
- The State Department of Education will begin to accept partial credits for students during the 2017-18 school year. Often, youth at the Center do not stay long enough to earn a full credit, so this gives them the opportunity to be awarded partial credit for their work that can be transferred to their home school.
- The Center has been able to schedule a Special Education teacher 3 nights/week. Many students have IEPs (Individual Education Programs) and difficulty focusing during the day; the Special Education teacher is especially helpful to these students with completing tests. Approximately 35% of the students at the Youth Center have some special needs.

- The EPIC Center continues to do well and will be moving to Blackburn and the Boys and Girls Club at 27th and Hamilton in January. The Center continues to help students who do not seem to have promise, but once involved with the EPIC Center, show marked progress.
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be held in February. The last conferences were held in November and 10 families participated. Surveys were conducted to ask parents about their experiences and the results were positive.
- On Saturday, December 17, Barnes and Noble will hold their Book Drive for the Youth Center. The Center will receive 15% of the amount of purchase both in-store and on-line. Last year, the Center received \$984 from the book drive.
- The Multi-Disciplinary Treatment Team consists of a mental health professional, education specialist, medical staff, and probation expert who focus on youth who are about to be released as well as youth with mental health issues. The holistic view that multiple professionals provides helps identify barriers to a youth returning home. Generally, the team serves 3-6 youth at a time.

Juvenile Assessment Center

- Shawne Coonfare said the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) is participating in statewide training academies for assessment and diversion programs. The goal is to standardize best practices for all personnel around adolescent brain development and trauma-informed training. Other best practices are being standardized to include assessing drug testing and diversion.
- JAC is participating with Lancaster County on levels of case management. Lancaster County is bringing in some national experts on case management and JAC will meet with them in March.
- The Juvenile Justice Institute (JJI) is putting in some applications for surveying families to determine if JAC is effectively serving them.
- JAC is working with Anne Hobbs at JJI on a number of data feeds. It is also working on data for the Douglas County Attorney.
- JAC became fully staffed on November 28; however, due to 2 medical situations, it is again under staffed with referrals slightly up.

Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative

- Shelley Hug said most of the working groups do not meet in December; however, the Alternatives Committee would like to focus on the successes of the alternatives in the new year.

- The Data Committee would like to create a separate data memo that addresses DMC (Disproportionate Minority Contact) and a dashboard next year with some juvenile justice indicators.
- Case Processing will work with Technical Assistance to move processes through steps more efficiently.
- The DMC Committee is planning a training tentatively for January 28. This will be the third in a series that targets the community to inform citizens about what can be done about DMC.
- Patrick Bloomingdale said he would like to see an outside expert come to Douglas County to assess DMC.
- Discussion followed including funding for a consultant, participation by various power point players in the juvenile justice system, the validity of instruments being used for assessing DMC, state funding for DMC and the shifting of blame around the system.
- Mr. Bloomingdale said he would look into identifying a national expert who can help strategize about how to approach key power players in the system to engage them in DMC solutions.

Operation Youth Success (OYS)

- Amber Parker said OYS has a new hire, Emily Adams, data analyst, who began on December 12. She will be working out of the Juvenile Probation office.
- Ms. Parker said that the OYS working groups had been targeting DMC in each of their meetings and they were all working on deeper, more specific DMC goals.
- Strategies for Youth held Juvenile Justice Jeopardy facilitator training on November 17 and 18 at NorthStar, the City-County building and Heartland Family Services Youth Links. 59 facilitators were trained with the help of 17 youth volunteers. The facilitators included people from the bar, juvenile probation officers, SROs (School Resource Officers), and representatives from the community.
- All Community Based Aid applications were submitted November 21. The first level of review was held on December 12, and recommendations will come to the Douglas County Community team on December 15 at UNO.
- Commissioner Borgeson inquired about where committee plans for reducing DMCs can be found.
- Ms. Parker said the committees are working on updating their existing work plans. Meetings occurred last week, so they have not been posted yet. Once there are concrete recommendations, they will be posted on the web site.
- Discussion followed about the role of the DMC committee in assisting committees craft their plans and leading the discussion on how to approach DMC issues.
- Mark LeFlore said the DMC committee is willing to work with any of the committees.
- Lavon Stennis Williams raised a question about the cultural sensitivity in the development of the Juvenile Justice Jeopardy game.

- Commissioner Rodgers said he had attended the Jeopardy game at Youth Links and he believed it was fair.
- Discussion followed about ways to get the DMC message out to the public. Some community meetings have been held but have had poor attendance. It was suggested that an informal setting with pizza could attract community members. Community cafes are venues where disenfranchised people can be heard.
- Mr. LeFlore said he has been speaking to any group that invites him since 2014. He has presented DMC information to many churches, the Salvation Army, Goodwill, neighborhood groups, Boys and Girls Club, Girls, Inc, and UNO. His goal is to provide information to groups to process and then allow them to see how they might use that information.

Other Business

- Commissioner Rodgers said Community Based Assistance (CBA) may be in jeopardy in the new state budget.
- The County's aim should be to get more of the CBA funding into the general budget.
- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice statewide advisory group met to discuss statewide reform of the DMC committee. Currently, the conversation is about the makeup of the committee.
- The goal will be a concerted statewide update to the DMC effort.

The meeting adjourned at 3:18 P.M.