

**Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect**  
**Friday July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 11:00 a.m.**  
**Hall of Justice**  
**925 Ottawa Street, Lansing, Michigan 48909**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Chair Kenneth Tacoma, Shannon Lowder, Robin Eagleson, Kelly Ramsey, Robert Sykes Jr., Fred Gruber, Susan Hull, Jennifer Pintar, Julie Nakfoor Pratt, Gary Anderson, Lori Budnik, Betsy Boggs. DHHS: Sheldon Mayer, Carol Viventi, SCAO: Noah Bradow. PAAM: Julie Welch.

**Members Present via Conference Call:** Linda Hallmark, Carol Hackett Garagiola, Designee for Director Lyon, Lani Forbes. DHHS: Stacie Bladen

**Members Absent:** Danita Echols

**1. Welcome**

Judge Tacoma called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

**2. Public Comment**

No public comment was offered.

**3. Consideration of the Minutes**

**Motion by Susan Hull for Task Force to approve minutes from GTF meeting on 05/20/2015.**

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lori Budnik. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.**

**4. Financial Report- Lani Forbes**

A written report was submitted by Lani Forbes. A request was made by Lani Forbes for a full Task Force approval for the new financial reporting process.

**Motion by Jennifer Pintar to approve the financial report.**

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betsy Boggs. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.**

**5. Committee Reports**

**Financial Report – Lani Forbes**

Lani Forbes stated 37% of the 2013 budget has been spent. At this time, the Task Force has approximately \$50,000.00 which is unallocated for FY 2015. Funding allocations must be made by October 1, 2015 to ensure that the remaining funds do not need to be returned to the federal government.

**Motion by Robert Sykes Jr. to approve the Financial Report.**  
**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robin Eagleson . Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.**  
**DHHS Update – Deb Buchanan**

DCH/DHS Merger –The goal of the combined agency is providing services that are more person- centered.

Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA) – DHHS Children’s Services is still working under the MSA. Currently, DHHS is in the process of negotiating an updated MSA. The goal of DHHS is to remove items from the MSA which have been achieved, such as creation and implementation of a centralized abuse/neglect reporting unit, which will allow focus to be placed on items of the MSA where compliance has not yet been achieved.

The FY 2016 DCH/DHS combined budget has been approved by the legislature. The closure of Maxey Boys’ Training School on October 1, 2015 is in process. The youth currently housed here are being moved and the decisions of the new placements are based on the best interest of the child.

DHHS has made the decision to close some local DHHS offices. Despite closure of these offices, there will be no staffing reductions. Staff are being moved to other locations and/or are able to work from a mobile worksite. For example, the building in Kent County that currently houses the Statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Centralized Intake System is being closed. Centralized Intake staff will either move to another DHHS building in Kent County, Ingham County, DHHS Central Office, or become a part of the mobile workforce. The intent of the mobile workforce is to take the work out to where the families are. DHHS has not received negative feedback from staff regarding mobile workforce. However, Gary Anderson pointed out that during the Citizen Review Panel focus groups an ongoing trend was that caseworkers, especially young and inexperienced caseworkers feel isolated when forced to work mobile. Other Task Force members indicated concern with technology (cell phones, computers) not working in rural areas and this causing issues and burdens for staff. DHHS agreed to bring this issue before the worker resource team that functions under the Department’s Strengthening our Focus Advisory Council for review and assessment.

The DHHS Children’s Services MiSACWIS system continues to be updated regularly to ensure that required information is captured and caseworkers are able to input all necessary information. The numbers of calls to the help desk have consistently decreased and data fixes are being resolved. Child welfare staff members report that they are becoming more comfortable working in the MiSACWIS system. – Continuing to improve and we are making progress. Numbers of Help Desk calls are down. System fixes are being resolved. Staff is becoming more comfortable. Children’s Services Administration Director Steve Yager continues to meet with the MiSACWIS management team on a weekly basis to ensure that priority updates and issues with MiSACWIS are being addressed timely and in an effective manner.

DHHS is in the early stages of a foster care caseload study. Currently, a foster care caseload is 15 children per worker. The caseload study will focus on the amount of time it takes for a foster care worker to complete all policy requirements on each case. The outcomes of this case study can be provided to the Governor’s Task Force once completed. DHHS is also considering the potential to complete a children’s protective services caseload study.

As a result of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014, DHHS is making modifications to policy manuals as well as to the MiSACWIS system to

assist in the identification and assessment of potential sex trafficking victims. This work remains ongoing through the department.

**Project Funding Evaluation Committee – Lani Forbes**

The committee has developed a template for funding requests to ensure that anyone requesting funding through the Task Force will be doing so within the requirements of the Children’s Justice Act Grant. Currently there are two grant applications that have been received; however, these need to be sent back due to being incomplete. As a result, the recommendation is to extend the funding request deadline to August 1, 2015. This will still allow for funding to be granted prior to the end of the fiscal year.

**Motion by Robin Eagleson to extend the deadline for the proposal applications. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fred Gruber . Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.**

**Minimum Standards Training – Shannon Lowder**

Dr. Lowder reported that DHHS has agreed to include training requirements in its contracts with mental health professionals who provide mental health services to children and families in the child welfare system. Dr. Lowder has researched web-based training for mental health professionals available through the company "Relias." Purchasing web-based training for DHHS mental health professionals through Relias would cost \$25,776.00 per year, plus a one-time set-up fee of \$3,500.00, for a total cost of \$80,828.00 for a three-year service contract.

**Motion by Robin Eagleson to approve the spending for the three years with \$29,276.00 funding for the first year and \$25,776.00 a year for the remaining two years. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fred Gruber . Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.**

**Citizen Review Panel – Robin Eagleson**

The last Citizens Review Panel focus group was conducted in Detroit. The final report is in the process of being completed, and will be provided to the Full Task Force once finalized. It is anticipated that the report will be ready for review by the Task Force on December 11, 2015. Gary Anderson stated he has doctoral/masters students available to analyze the data obtained by the CRP via the surveys provided at each focus group.

**Summit Committee – Sheldon Mayer**

The 2016 Summit will be held May 4-6, 2016 at the Grand Traverse Resort. Task Force members will be responsible for their own dinner on May 4<sup>th</sup>, as it will not be provided. No networking sessions will be held. A potential key topic for the 2016 summit is human trafficking. The committee is also looking at starting earlier in the day to be cognizant of attendee’s time. Breakout sessions will be held again, with repeating each breakout on the second day to allow attendees to participate in all sessions offered.

**Legislative Committee – Robert Sykes Jr.**

Robert Sykes stated HB 4028 will be discussed in the “New Business” portion of the meeting.

### **Training Committee – Julie Nakfoor Pratt**

Children’s Law Section stated they could not host the training clearinghouse. Noah Bradow has received permission from SCAO for SCAO to house the database. This will require a motion to approve the change in the location of the clearinghouse. The motion was tabled until the next meeting to ensure the location of the data will be housed at SCAO.

Noah Bradow stated SCAO would not be utilizing the \$260,000.00 per year which was previously approved by the Task Force. The request for funding will be reduced to \$240,000.00 per year for each of the three years under the new Interagency Agreement. Noah Bradow has submitted an estimated budget for SCAO and is certain the entire allotted budget will be spent. Updates for SCAO spending will come at the end of the month.

**Motion by Gary Anderson to approve the funding of \$240,000.00 to SCAO for each of the three years.**

**Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robert Sykes Jr. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.**

### **Mental Health Committee – Dr. Shannon Lowder**

The committee is reviewing their goals, and will meet again in October prior to the full Task Force meeting. Dr. Lowder provided an update earlier in the meeting on this committee’s activities regarding the mental health therapist training.

### **Child Protection, Well Being and Permanency committee – Fred Gruber**

A working paper was provided to the Task Force prior to the meeting. Key points from this paper include concerns regarding the educational disparities for children in foster care versus children in the biological home. This paper indicates that trainings regarding educational services for children in the child welfare system should be considered.

### **Adoption Committee – Betsy Boggs**

The committee met this morning and discussed the data DHHS will be collecting as a result of a federal mandate regarding disrupted adoptions. Betsy Boggs indicated that she will be able to obtain this data from DHHS and utilize this to inform future goals of this committee.

### **Protocol Committee – Julie Nakfoor Pratt**

The Task Force has received a letter from the president of the Michigan Friend of the Court Association as well as two additional agencies indicating their support of the protocol initiative. At the present time, the committee is waiting on the responses from nine other agencies.

The Forensic Interviewing Protocol is now being looked at by the committee for updating. This will be discussed at an upcoming committee meeting and the outcome of those discussions will be brought before the full Task Force.

**New Business –**

**HB 4028 – Robert Sykes Jr.**

The legislation committee opposes the “Responsible Father Registry” bill. Thirty-three states have some form of this bill passed. The bill requires registration by the men with the Department of Health and Human Services. The committee is looking for support from the Task Force with opposition to this bill.

Judge Sykes will prepare a letter to the bill sponsors, to be signed by the GTF Chair, indicating opposition of the Task Force to this legislation.

The committee asked the Task Force to oppose this bill.

**Motion by Julie Nakfoor Pratt to approve the support of opposition of HB 4028. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Shannon Lowder. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.**

**6. GTF Chair Report – Judge Kenneth Tacoma**

The Task Force needs to be mindful of the Children’s Justice Act Grant requirements and what funding can be allocated for. This is something monitored closely and needs to be adhered to by the Task Force.

Judge Tacoma received a letter of resignation from Larry Watkins. There is now an opening for his position on the Task Force.

Gary Anderson stated he will not be seeking re-appointment.

Sheldon Mayer will send out the federal requirements for the appointment process to the entire Task Force. In addition, the three year assessment is due with the next grant application. This process should begin soon.

**8. Future Meeting Schedule**

The next meeting will be held on 10/16/2015 at the Hall of Justice.

**9. Adjourn**

**Motion by Robin Eagleson to adjourn the meeting. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robert Sykes Jr. Full Task Force motion carried unanimously.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.**