

**PACT 4 Families Collaborative
Executive & CEO Board Retreat Meeting Minutes
Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center
September 14, 2009**

Present: Arliss Stenger George Dubie, Loren Hacker, Greg Schmidt, Becky Romosz, Tammy Thompson, Jill Bruns, Dick Larson, Amy Wilde

Absent: Debi Brandt, Jerry Brustuen, Jane Remiger, Bob Fox

Ex Officio: Deborah Sheehan

Guests: Rick Pietrick, Rod Halvorson, Ed Downey, Rick Loseth

1. PRESENTATION OF 2008 AUDIT BY THE OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

Richard Pietrick, Audit Director with the Office of the State Auditor, reported on the audit performed for the year ending 2008, and noted this presentation report is part of a required communication to briefly discuss the contents of the audit results. Although the audit is not currently finalized Pietrick added it will be very soon and he has reviewed the draft financial statements closely and is certain the findings will not change. He stated the terms of the audit noting that the primary focus is to render an opinion on the financial statements and provide local governments with an independent analysis of the effectiveness of their organizations and work to ensure that local government activities are being administered in accordance with Minnesota law. Pietrick stated that the audit performed was to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. In summary auditor's results renders an 'unqualified opinion'. An unqualified opinion is the best belief and states that the financial statements are presented fairly, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Pietrick noted PACT 4 has successfully resolved all prior written comments with no written findings or internal control matters to report in the current year audit.

The Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) is completed locally by PACT 4 staff. This is an unaudited section that is intended to serve as an introduction to the basic financial statements. The MD&A is required to accompany the basic financial statements and therefore, is included as required supplementary information containing explanations of program differences, federal programs, financial analysis, and capital assets.

In closing, Pietrick discussed the audit closing process and noted that all officials of PACT 4 will receive a copy of the complete management and compliance report by mail and offered to come back upon the Boards request when the audit is formalized to review the financial statements.

[Pietrick exits meeting]

2. GENERAL BOARD BUSINESS

Approval of Proposed Agenda

Hacker moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Stenger second. Motion unanimously carried

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Bruns moved to approve the August 2009 Meeting Minutes as presented. Hacker second. Motion unanimously carried.

Fiscal

a. Month End Cash Balance Financial Report

The month ending August 2009, noted a cash balance of \$5,272,489.84 with monthly interest earned at \$73.35. Total revenue for the current month was \$114,891.35 with expenditures totaling \$879,997.07. The fund Balance Sheet and Cash Balance report were distributed for review.

b. Discretionary Grants / Flexible Funds Review

A Report on Discretionary Grants and Flexible Funds was distributed for the month ending August 2009. Paid Discretionary Grants ending this period equaled \$1,500; with an YTD total at \$9,632.10 and a total budget allocation of \$12,500. Paid Discretionary Plus Grants for this period equaled \$4,586; YTD at \$30,586 with a total budget allocation of \$60,000. Paid Flex Funds this month totaled \$1,191; YTD \$1,452.31 with a total budget allocation of \$3,000.

c. Review & Approval of Bills

After review and discussion of payables totaling \$757,896.21, Schmidt moved to approve bills as presented. Stenger second. Motion unanimously carried.

Committee Updates

a. PACT 4 Committee Reports

There was no scheduled Full Collaborative Meeting and most committee's not having a scheduled meeting. Romosz had no official report from the Parent Advisory Committee or Mental Health Sub-Committee.

The Brain Conference Committee continues planning for the November 19, 2009, conference. Speaker contracts are not confirmed; however Esther M. Sternberg M.D. is still the planned speaker for this year's focus on the *Healthy Brain*.

Personnel

It was noted that PACT 4 will not incur any increased cost related to health or dental coverage for 2010.

No replacement has been confirmed for the position of Youth Coach since last month discussion. Interviews are scheduled for Friday, September 11, 2009.

Grant/Program Updates

As we come to the end of closing out the 07/09 LCTS grant cycle, Sheehan noted that the submitted reports are reviewed three times for evaluation, program narrative and financial by internal staff. Reports then go on to Sheehan for final approval to release payment. Bruns noted excitement from local public health staff on the accessible services because of the Birth to 5 grant recently received. Sheehan added that we continue waiting to hear on three grant proposals still pending.

Schmidt attended the School Connectedness Conference giving a very positive report on the practical and sensible information presented on research and realistic strategies in working with kids. Schmidt also noted he used information learned at the school in-service and sharing parts of the PowerPoint presentation that was made available after the conference. The PowerPoint from this conference is available for viewing on the PACT 4 website.

It was noted that several area partner agency staff attended the Poverty Conference and reported it was again very good and had gained very useful information. The Poverty Conference is coordinated through Heartland CAA.

The next scheduled meeting for the PACT 4 Executive Board is Tuesday, October 6, 2009; 11:30 a.m. in room 2055 of the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building in Willmar.

3. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Downey distributed responses of a short survey completed by the membership of PACT 4. Those present divided into groups each reviewing responses to a question from the PACT 4 member survey and discussing ways to incorporate member responses into priorities for a legislative agenda in order to take an active advocacy role for our constituents. The groups and discussion are as follows:

- 1) *As we look to the future of PACT 4 what areas of service to children and families would you like the Collaborative to focus on?*
 - Be flexible and stay broad in our focus. Go with political climate.
 - Felt grant writing is essential for the sustainability of PACT 4.
 - Prevention is important but difficult to measure outcomes.
 - Mentoring is still important. With current programs being cut or reduced greatly in their funding it is essential to seek opportunities to keep these programs running.
 - At times staff feel hopeless – what can we do to sustain good workers and alleviate burnout?
 - Learn from the past. Staff has been impacted greatly by past funding and programs (such as Project SUCCEED, PRIDE and the Wraparound Initiative to just name a few). We have been able to implement changes and build capacity through training and funding. If we narrow our focus too much we may miss opportunities. We need to look at what is reasonable and what is attainable.
 - Our hope is that every kid has a hero.
- 2) *The Collaborative is only as strong as the partnership created by members coming together. With a decrease in the LCTS funds available for the Collaborative to grant out to partners, there is risk of partners drifting away from PACT 4. How can we keep the partnership strong and members actively at the table?*
 - Educate members on the impact PACT 4 has. The value to local partners is less clear when there are no dollars involved. Talk about the LCTS reimbursement and impacts of grants. If PACT 4 goes away... it will never come back again.
 - Want an educational piece incorporated into each Full Collaborative Meeting so all members feel something of value. Put less importance on grants and put more emphasis on how we tie into their basic fundamentals and beliefs.
 - When members leave PACT 4 the impact is in the value of their input and the filling of gaps that are missing in services to kids and families – not so much in the dollars lost in membership dues.
 - Ask each partner to present at least one time per year and give them the opportunity to share their passion and what motivates them.
 - Communicate evaluation data and ask for input.
 - Periodically encourage networking and cross-discipline. Like groups currently tend to sit together because it gives an opportunity for them for internal networking – but we need to encourage cross networking to learn more about our partners as well. Incorporate the speed networking used at the September Full Collaborative periodically and ongoing.
- 3) *As we look at the great needs of at-risk children and families in the current economic climate, please share your ideas about new areas where the Collaborative could assist partners in serving their constituents.*
 - Working across counties and highlighting prevention services. Identification early is not just in age – it is early in the disease process. We have come a long way in the last 10 – 15 years and have better tools to help diagnose children.
 - Streamlining access to services for families to minimize the run-around. There are good resources out there, but just not enough and in the right places.

Sheehan added that all this discussion fits nicely into our mission. The gaps are that we can't apply for more grants because they are just not out there. Romosz noted we just are not going to get prevention grants anymore because evaluation does not support it – it takes too long to get the evidence in place.

4. FRAMING DISCUSSION WITH LEGISLATORS; REVIEW – PRESENTATION - DISCUSSION

Discussions began with the review of the 2009 Legislative Position Statement from MACSSA on the continuation of collaborative services throughout Minnesota. Sheehan presented information to members on the prohibited and/or restricted use of federal and disclosure of non-federal funds for lobbying efforts. Larson noted to keep our attorney apprised of our lobbying involvement to assure compliance.

Rod Halvorson, Executive Director of the MN Social Services Association, Halvorson is a lobbyist on behalf of the members of MSSA and led discussion on best impacts in approaching legislators and legislative activities. Relaying what the best interests of your constituents with quality information and building personal relationships are important to your success. To build relationships go to open forums and community events your legislators will be at or be hosting. A relationship builds interest in your passions and trust in your word. In general if they know who you are by name and know what you represent, you will have a larger impact. Success stories from clients are powerful testaments to a service or program and stay informed on the activities and positions of other like organizations such as MACSSA (*MN Assoc. of County Social Service Administrators*), MSSA (*MN Social Services Association*), MCCCCA (*MN Council of Child Caring Agencies*) and AMC (*Assoc. of MN Counties*) who have children and families' issues in the main focus. CEO member Larson noted that there are also local policy committees that can bring forward issues that would fit the mission and benefit PACT 4. All statewide boards have lobbying forces and if your efforts align with theirs, the more powerful you are. The clearer you are, the more successful you will be.

There was extensive dialog among members present with the following noted during discussion:

- Personal contact, signed letter, and email are all great ways to connect with legislators, as well as organizing people to tell their stories and making their personal contacts to let legislators and let them know you can help them achieve their goals. When your interests and their interest are parallel, you are more likely to reach your goal. It was noted that *the world is run by those who show up at the table*.
- Invite your elected official's right before legislative session and/or at the end of each legislative session to report on the session. Make them understand the impact they have on your organization and community.
- Make sure your elected officials are clearly informed. If you want them to introduce or support legislation, you need to give them clear definition of the issues and what the financial impacts are to the district. When coming up with a statement make sure your request is clear and understandable. Be specific: "vote for bill #123" or "this is in support of proposal XYZ by MACSSA, MSSA and/or AMC, etc." If a legislator knows there is strong collaboration for an effort the more success you will have.
- If their office was successful in obtaining a goal in the past, it is always good to let them know how the program or funding is impacting the community.
- There is power in numbers... invite all four representing districts and make sure they understand the issues in their respective regions and individual financial effects (and don't hesitate to inform them how many people are receiving paychecks in their district).
- Also educate constituents when talking dollars for programs... what taxpayers often see is more money. What they don't see is where revenue would be saved. Anyway you can document a positive impact on families and wise use of taxpayers' dollars is good.
- We do have stronger restrictions with our federal government due to the funding received, but it is equally important to make those same personal contacts (by going to town hall meetings, fundraisers, etc.). If you feel strongly, give them your support in elections. If you go to Washington DC, stop in at Capitol Hill and try to see them (e.g. Collin Peterson, Amy Klobuchar, and Al Franken) or the Chief of Staff. Again, if they know you by name and who you work for, it is the beginning of a personal and business relationship.

We need to make the conscious decision to move forward and cross the threshold in advocating for our constituents and communities. The following was discussed about moving forward:

- Invite our local elected officials to every Full Collaborative Meeting and ask to present at the annual meeting. Keeping the focus to initiatives impacting kids and families.
- Ask consumers to present their stories (if comfortable). Prepare them in advance.
- Important to know our bill numbers. All in attendance were encouraged to the website and be familiar on how to access bills and rules.
- We need the message the same when we talk about PACT 4. Can we narrow our focus to one or two things? What kinds of materials would be helpful?

In conclusion, Sheehan volunteered to come up with a draft legislative position prior to next meeting for discussion and fine-tuning. The document will focus on the children and families as well as compliment the legislative position of MACSSA. It was further suggested to take advantage of already formed relationships (e.g. local LAC's and other advocacy groups) and joining with them in going to the Hill and making our positions known to legislators.

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,
Jolene Borka, Recorder

The next scheduled meeting for the PACT 4 Executive Board is Tuesday, October 6, 2009; 11:30 a.m. in room 2055 of the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building in Willmar. No Personnel Committee Scheduled.