

## MINUTES

### Human Services Department Advisory Committee

July 20, 2011

2:00-3:00 PM

### Conference Room B

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair E. Mantzaris called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. In the absence of the Secretary K. Grunwald agreed to take minutes for the meeting.

PRESENT: K. Grunwald (staff), Sandy Baxter (staff), E. Mantzaris (Chair, Youth Service Advisory), D. Eddy (Mansfield Housing Authority), V. Nimirowski (WAIM), J. Terry (Commission on Aging), Chuck Boster (guest), F. Perrotti (Member at Large), Bev Korba (guest/prospective member).

REGRETS: J. Blanshard (Advisory Committee on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities), J. Quarto (Mansfield Senior Center Association), S. Anderson (Mansfield Advocates for Children)

- II. **Approval of minutes:** June 15, 2011: Under "call to order" clarify the typo. Minutes approved unanimously with that correction.

III. **Staff Presentations:**

Sandy Baxter: Early Childhood Services: Members introduced themselves and the groups they represent. Sandy works with Mansfield Advocates for Children and also coordinates the State School Readiness grant, which subsidizes 16 children in 4 nationally accredited Centers in Mansfield. The grant was started in 1998 with the stipulation that the Town establish a School Readiness Council with specific requirements for membership including representation from the Town and the school system, and the four centers participating in the grant. Centers are accredited by NAEYC. This grant is for 3 & 4 year old children. Sandy is responsible for the application, the six-month program evaluation of the Centers, and the annual evaluation. She also meets with all families who apply for the program. Referrals sometimes come through other departmental programs. Requirements are that participants are Mansfield residents, and there is a requirement that 60% of the participants are at or below the State Median Income. There is a minimum family share that must be paid to the program. The grant and the family share may not cover the total cost of services. Services provided meet the standards of

Early Care and Education. Early Childhood services cover the ages birth-8. Through the School Readiness grant the Town puts out a number of publications that Sandy distributed copies of. This included a directory of licensed early care providers in the Town of Mansfield and the publication Family Fun in Mansfield. The State Department of Education also expects the School Readiness Council to participate in policy development at the local level.

The other grant that Sandy is responsible for is the Graustein Memorial Fund Discovery Grant, which has been in operation since 2002. The goal is to improve the quality of life for children birth-8 through policy initiatives and parent engagement, along with collaboration with existing entities and providers. The plan was developed by a 27-member work group, and is being implemented by Mansfield Advocates for Children. The first task for this group was to develop a results statement: "All Mansfield children ages birth-8 are healthy, successful learners, connected to the community." The plan utilizes a Results Based Accountability model. The group has randomly surveyed 590 residents around the issue of Community Connectedness and is in the process of analyzing this data to determine where and how residents tend to feel connected to the community and each other. The Library has been identified as a significant institution where families connect with each other. There are 3 teams working on this plan, and each team has developed indicators within their area of interest. The plan continues to be revised over time as the group works on it. The Community Connectedness group has utilized the survey to develop a baseline measure for connectedness. The question was asked whether or not the program is evaluated, and it was explained that the funding is intended to influence policy and to develop capacity and infrastructure within the community. The example of the work that was done around Full-Day Kindergarten was given.

#### **IV. Membership**

- Representative from the Mansfield Senior Center Association: Bev Korba has expressed an interest in serving in this capacity; K. Grunwald explained that the Executive Council of MSCA needs to recommend Bev to the Committee on Committees, who would then recommend her appointment to the Town Council
- Member-At-Large: There is a second committee opening that is still vacant.
- Committee Secretary: J. Quarto has announced that she will be resigning from the Committee, and J.

Blanshard was nominated as the Secretary. She was not present to accept or decline.

**V. Departmental Update** (K. Grunwald) provided a brief update on the following departmental programs:

Adult Services:

- Masonicare has finalized purchase of property on Maple Rd. for an Independent/Assisted Living facility. A presentation was made to residents of Glen Ridge Cooperative.
- Staff worked with Storrs Congregational Church to provide summer food baskets to 15 families.
- Referrals to the summer meals program operated by Windham Public Schools are being made.

Youth Services:

- Completed Mansfield Challenge 35; recognition event tonight.
- Camperships have been provided through the Noah Farland Fund and the Youth Services Special Needs Fund.
- Camperships have also been provided at the Rectory School day camp through the Episcopal Bishop's Fund.

Senior Services:

- Grant application was awarded for purchase of a wheelchair accessible van for seniors and residents with disabilities.
- A matching grant was awarded from DOT for elderly/disabled transport with a 25% reduction due to a reduction in the State budget.
- Thursday evening program started June 30 and will continue through September 1.

Early Childhood Services:

- Staff attended a recognition event for participants in the Community Conversation. Mansfield was recognized for our success in involving Chinese and Korean community members in our conversation.
- Playground committee has formed and is looking at playground developers to assist with a community design process.
- Program Assistant Jillene Woodmansee has begun work; 10 hours/week.

**VI. Future Advisory Committee Initiatives (discussion):**

- Impact of undocumented aliens: D. Eddy had brought this up, and E. Mantzaris questioned whether or not

this is an issue? What would these problems be?  
Committee members came to agreement that people should receive services regardless of whether or not they are undocumented.

- Bev Korba talked about the possibility of starting a grief group, but decided that the group should just focus on the issues of people who are living alone. This would not be limited to seniors, but can be for people who are living alone for a variety of reasons. K. Grunwald will follow-up with her on this.
- Goals: E. Mantzaris would like to look at departmental statistics re: the potential overlap of services resulting from referrals within the department. She would also like to look at referral numbers that are made to outside agencies, and where are they going? K. Grunwald will provide report data for the next meeting to see if it answers these questions.

**VII. Other** (can be added by 2/3 vote):

Chuck Boster announced that the Attorney General has proposed banning outdoor wood furnances, which are currently permitted in the Town. E. Mantzaris questioned whether or not this is in the purview of the Committee.

**VIII. Future Agenda Items/ Adjournment:**

- Barbara Lavoie will present on the social work services that she offers at the Senior Center
- Committee Goals (is there an overlap of services?)
- Meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Grunwald