

**Josiah H. Beeman Commission
Meeting of October 27, 2007
12000 Government Center Parkway
Room 232**

In Attendance:

Mary Ann Beall, Chair, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
Mary Ann Bergeron, Executive Director, VA Association of Community Services Boards
Gary Cyphers, Deputy Executive Director, American Public Human Services Association
David Dangerfield, President/CEO Avalon Health Care, inc., Salt Lake City, UT
Joan Dodge, Senior Policy Associate, National Technical Center for Children's Mental Health, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
Russell Pierce, Regional Coordinator of Recovery and Inclusion Services, Pathway Homes, Fairfax, VA
Sherry Rose, Peer Advocate
Yvette Sangster, Program Director, Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illnesses, Georgia Advocacy Office
James Stewart, Inspector General, Dept. of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, Richmond, VA, and Member of Virginia's Commission on Mental Health Law Reform
Carol Ulrich, President, National Alliance on Mentally Illness - Northern Virginia, and Member of Virginia's Commission on Mental Health Law Reform

Verdia Haywood, Deputy County Executive, Fairfax County
Margo Kiely, Staff Director, Josiah H. Beeman Commission
Kathaleen Karnes, Management Analyst, Fairfax County
Jaclyn Wing, Administrative Support
Gary Axelson, CSB Director Clinical Operations and Staff Liaison to Beeman Commission
Tracey Powell, Research Assistant

Sharon Jones, CSB
Gary Lupton, CSB
Shirley Rupta, Inova

Meeting began at 9:15am

The meeting began with a clarification of the schedule for future meetings. The County's policy on reimbursement for expenses incurred when meetings are cancelled for weather related reasons was noted.

Timeline

The Commission timeline was presented. The Commission meetings are slated to go through April 2008 so that the initial recommendations will be done and shared in April. This will be done so that public meetings regarding the recommendations can be held, and then the final report will be completed and delivered to the Board of Supervisors by the end of the Commission's operative time frame.

November 26th First Interim Report to Board of Supervisors: Day, Time, and Place

Commission staff asked about the availability of Commissioners to be present during the November 26 presentation of the Draft Interim Report. Margo Kiely will be present as the staff director, and the Deputy County Executive would like there to be at least one Commission member to be involved in the presentation as the Board will want to hear from the Commissioners themselves. Merni Fitzgerald notified the Commission members that there will be media at the November 26 meeting as well as many community members due to the highly publicized agenda.

Discussion on having an executive or closed session

There was a request for a closed session of the Commission without staff present. There was a discussion about executive sessions, closed sessions, and the difference between the two in terms of privacy and Freedom of Information. The specific unit that would be excluded during the session would be service delivery personnel, making it a closed public session, but not an executive session.

Some Commission members expressed concern about exclusion of any group. Consideration was given to the idea that members should openly discuss any differences or concerns and that as long as individuals were not named in the discussion exclusion would be unnecessary.

Discussion on Agenda Committee

Some Commission members expressed desire to have more input and to drive the agenda. A proposal was put forth to have an executive committee of the Commission staff members and Commission members work in between meetings on agenda processing. There was an opinion expressed that the Commissioners are asked to cram too much into the meeting time, but are not sufficiently engaged between meetings. Despite the data and information provided, some Commissioners stated that they do not yet feel a depth of knowledge about the system, including how parts of the system work together, the role of leadership, complexities of existing parts, and the politics affecting leadership.

Creation of a Chair for Discussion

A proposal was presented to create a Chair to facilitate group discussion. Gary Cyphers was nominated to chair the Commission. Mr. Cyphers declined as he did not have the time to devote to this in light of his recent promotion. There was a proposal to have the Chair of the Commission, along with two representatives from the Commission, serve as committee with the Staff Director to formulate the agenda and to represent the Commission in public forums. Deputy County Executive Verdia Haywood reminded the group that whatever is created is to be a Commission product and that the final product will not be credible if it appears that the staff drove the product.

Much discussion was had about the function of the Chair. Consideration was given to the idea that a Chair would not be needed if the Commission as a whole was simply more directive with the staff.

The staff had concerns about the message a Chair would send as opposed to utilizing a three member steering committee. Some Commission members also echoed those sentiments along with concern about an imbalance in power with the creation of a Chair, and whether a Chair will actually improve the process at all. Discussion was held about the notion of developing a process committee, with a rotating facilitator, and getting someone to be the spokesperson at the November 26 meeting. Many Commission members felt that the current work structure needed to be changed, not the facilitation of the work.

Gary Cyphers was asked to facilitate the discussion of having a Chair or a Steering Committee. Dr. Dangerfield made a motion to create a Chair, and that motion was seconded. The vote was held and the motion passed by 9 votes to one vote. Deputy County Executive Haywood reminded the Commission that the Board of Supervisors would want to have a voice in the creation of a Chair as for work of this nature the Board normally selects and appoints the Chair.

The decision was made to select a Chair and committee representatives when there are more Commission members present. Attendance notwithstanding, Joan Dodge was asked to be the initial spokesperson to represent the Commission at the November 26 meeting.

Virginia Freedom of Information Act regulations were discussed in regard to informing absent members about what occurred in regards to the election of a Chair and representatives. Ms. Fitzgerald informed the members that no vote can take place, but nominations can.

Discussion on closed Session

There was discussion about the ramifications and necessary elements to hold a closed session. At this time the Deputy County Executive asked staff to pause for a break.

Break

November 26th Interim Report to Board of Supervisors: Commission Vision and Philosophy

There was general concurrence about the Commission Vision. Changes resulting from the discussion on the Philosophy section revolved around expansion of particular terms to be more all-encompassing. "Care" was changed to "service and supports," and "individualized" was added to the last sentence.

November 26th Interim Report to Board of Supervisors: Commission Values and Guiding Principals

Ms. Karnes presented a list of values fashioned out of the rankings given by the Commission members and previous discussion by the Commissioners. There was general accord to provide a list of definitions of these values for the Board of Supervisors, and to make the definitions concise. The Commission wanted to ensure that the definition of a term is the Commission's definition and cannot be misconstrued as someone else's. They would like a refined version of the definitions for the November 26 meeting. The Commission then edited the Values in terms of order and groupings.

The Commission noted the tension between being succinct and inclusive. There was agreement to be sure the value of flexible, responsive, and individualized care is not lost in the shuffle; and that efficiency stands out. There was agreement about including resiliency in the language as well as recovery and to use person first language.

In order to facilitate the creation of a list of definitions and finalize the Commission Values for the meeting with the Board of Supervisors, Mary Ann Beall, Joan Dodge, and Yvette Sangster agreed to review and critique the staff's drafts of the definitions.

Lunch

November 26th Interim Report to Board of Supervisors: Stakeholder input

Ms. Karnes reviewed the methods to be used to collect stakeholder input in the coming months. Ms. Kiely detailed the various means that will be taken to assure that as many people as possible can be surveyed ranging from consumer assistance to language interpretation. Public input on the proposed recommendations is an important part of the process.

Commission members discussed the possibility of a public comment e-board on the Commission's webpage for the general public to leave messages. Ms. Fitzgerald noted that the public comment board has been looked into before, and would be wholly separated from the survey as a matter of County web site policy. There was renewed discussion about providing incentives for people to fill out the survey but it was agreed that this would set an undesirable precedent for the County.

Getting input from people who are non-consumers, have mental illnesses, and do not receive services was discussed. One proposal was to include the flier in the mailing of bills. This option will be assessed. Ms. Fitzgerald also noted that there will be a link to the survey placed on the Fairfax County Government main website, and that the downfall of that would be that no one can guarantee who is clicking on the links to take the survey.

There were questions regarding where the survey would be distributed, and how to reach the homeless consumers who receive services. The answer was that the libraries, consumer-run drop-in centers, and various service sites would have the surveys for distribution. As for the homeless consumers who receive services, the liaison in charge of that department is willing to help get the message to them. Beyond that, there will be fliers.

Consumer and System Outcomes

The order of the outcomes list and inclusion of new keywords was discussed. When noted that Dr. Mary Smith will be providing the Commission with a compendium of tested and utilized outcome measures, the Commission decided to leave the current document as a draft until they have this input. The Commission expressed a desire to have a well crafted set of outcomes and measures which will demonstrate results and achievements.

Commission members would like the conclusion to reaffirm the Vision, Philosophy, and Values.

After some discussion, the idea of compiling a group of "bookmarks" or "placeholders" was introduced. This would constitute a skeleton of what useful things could be implemented into the system. Some "bookmarks" or "placeholders" discussed were a resource center that people can access through the web and at county locations, the ability to access safe and affordable housing, and good case management. The bookmarks will be an inventory to be used as a guide for implementation of various help modules. The Commission also wants to ask the mental health staff what would be help them to fulfill the Commissions goals.

Some Commission members would like to see a map of where in Fairfax County all the service sites are located. Some would like to know more of what the County provides or doesn't, how the system currently works, and how it is structured. Many would also like to participate in getting consumer and family perspectives, following up with what the survey will provide, through focus groups with different questions than the ones asked in the series of conversations held earlier.

They would like to talk to people to make sure that their recommendations are ideal for Fairfax County as opposed to just making an ideal system.

Break

Meeting Planning for Next Commission Meeting

The survey results collected until the December 1 meeting will be analyzed and presented to the Commission to help form an idea for further input.

Some Commission members stated that they would like to have a conversation that will define the population that they as a mental health system serve, as well as who the system intends to serve. There is sentiment that children, trauma victims, and geriatric population groups are groups that need to be more clearly included.

It was noted that the next meeting will be a brainstorm session. Commission members asked for future input from mental health workers discussing what they as staff believes isn't working, and to have mental health staff view the Commission's ideas and inform the Commission as to what will not work. Commission members want to know what's in the system and where it breaks down. They also wanted to hear what would be most helpful to advance the system.

Meeting ended at 2:55pm