

**Portland Children's Investment Fund
Allocation Committee Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2009 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Location: Portland City Council Chambers**

Attending: Alissa Keny-Guyer, Adrienne Livingston, Dan Saltzman (Chair), Ted Wheeler; absent Ron Beltz

Welcome/introduction of Allocation Committee and CHIF staff

Approval of minutes of January 12, 200 Meeting

Livingston: Motion to approve

Wheeler: Second

Vote: All in favor

Panel Presentation on Foster Care

Saltzman: We have with us today a distinguished panel of experts in the foster care area.

The panel members are:

- o **Carolyn Graf** , Assistant Manager, District 2, DHS, Child Welfare
- o **Judge Nan Waller**, Multnomah County Chief Family Court Judge
- o **Kory Murphy**, Child Welfare Equity Coordinator, DHS, Child Welfare
- o **Joshua Griggs**, Former Foster Youth

The purpose of the panel discussion is to provide a broad overview of the foster care system in Multnomah County and hear recommendations regarding priorities for investment.

Carolyn Graf: We who work in child welfare are very pleased that the fund has a new area in foster care. In Multnomah County, we have 1,700 children in foster care. 37% of the children are ages zero to 5. 30% are ages 6 to 12. 32% are ages 13 to 21.

The reasons children enter our system are physical abuse, neglect, sex abuse, threat of harm and a small number because of mental injury.

In Multnomah County, there are 1,227 foster homes. 43% are regularly certified homes who are not related to the children. 57% of foster homes are kith and kin of the foster children. They are specially certified. We have foster care workers who can certify homes within 24 hours. They certify relatives, teachers, day care providers to help to maintain the attachments of the child.

We have a high rate of children in foster care. It is 15.3 children per thousand. That is too high. We want to work on doing a better job of keeping children safe at home.

Once a child is in our system and unable to go home, they wait for adoption on the average for 41.8 months which is pretty unacceptable.

54% of the children coming into our system are returned home in less than 12 months.

If you have specific questions, I am willing to get the answers for this committee.

Children who grow up in foster care are more likely to grow up to be homeless; they are less likely to graduate from high school. They are more likely to be in the mental health system. We have worked with the homeless system in Multnomah County. We have reduced the number of foster children who end up homeless from 33% to 15%. However, it is not acceptable to have even 15% of our children end up homeless. Help with transition planning for these kids would be indicated.

Wheeler: It could be that more than 15% of foster youth move into homelessness. Your data only includes youth connected with the Homeless Youth Continuum.

Graf: It could be.

We are collaborating with the Casey Family Program from Seattle. Some of our goals there are: to keep kids safely at home; make more connections with relatives for our kids including placement and other services that relatives can provide, like help with visits or mentoring; we are working to reduce the disproportionate number of Native American and African American children in foster care.

Some of the other things we have wanted to work on include:

- Improving academic outcomes for foster youth
- Increasing stability for our children

If they are not placed with relatives, our children move an inordinate number of times. Every time a child moves in foster care, they can lose as much as six months academically. We want to do everything we can to keep the children stable.

I brought an article for the Committee indicating that children have better outcomes when they are placed with relatives. I will leave that with you. I will also leave some information on the benefits of contact with relatives after they leave our system. We are trying to work to set up a support system for youth who leave our system with their relatives. We need help finding relatives, engaging relatives and supporting relatives who come forward to work with the youth in foster care.

Judge Nan Waller: My job is to give an overview of the role of courts in the DHS system. The foster care system is really a joint venture between DHS and the courts. Children come into care based on the recommendations of the Department of Human Services. They only get into care if a judge approves that they are in care. They stay in care until a judge says they no longer need to be in care.

If a child is in care, then DHS is usually the guardian of that child and has responsibility to be sure the needs of the child are being addressed.

We know that children who are in care for too long and not in a relative placement move very frequently.

We know from the research what children need to do well.

- They need connection with a caring adult.
- They need success in school and a caring school environment.
- They need involvement in pro-social activities.
- They need to be valued by the community.

When our foster care system doesn't work, it undermines all of those building blocks of well-being.

DHS and the court host a monthly dependency meeting where we discuss the systems issues. How do we do our work better along with all of our community partners? We have all come to the agreement that we need to reduce the number of children coming into care. We need to do a better job of sorting who comes into care for this very intrusive intervention. For those children who need to come into care, we need to make sure that all of the indicators of well-being are being addressed.

For a child who is in care, the court reviews the case every 60 to 90 days. At the end of a year we have a permanency hearing at which we look at have we made progress in our primary plan, which is usually

reunification with a parent. Or if not, are we ready to move on our concurrent plan? And what progress have we made to that end. In order to do our job well, we need children to be kept safe in their time in our care. We also need to attend to their well-being needs.

As a system, we have identified the things that really need attention:

- We need to increase the family contact the children have. The sooner we can begin visitation and the more visitation we have, it is good for the child and is a motivation to parents and leads to quicker reunification. For many families, an hour a week of visitation is all that is available in the foster care system. An hour a week is not sufficient. This is a primary need that the agency is not able to address at this time, in terms of transportation, supervisors and making arrangements.
- We know children need to be involved in pro-social activities. DHS does not have the ability to pay for soccer uniforms and entrance fees and the dance classes. Children in foster care need those types of activities. Sometimes those activities are the link to their success.

We know that children placed with relatives do better. Until recently, foster care payments have not been available to relatives providing foster care. They are often unable to afford costs associated with providing the care, such as child care. They are often left with the choice of working outside the home or taking the responsibility of caring for the children.

We are responsible for helping long term foster children transition into adulthood safely. They need the opportunity for a good education. We need to work with the schools to do assessment and provide the extras that they need. They need health insurance. They need an attachment to somebody in the community who can help them in young adulthood.

For kids who cannot return to home, we need to identify and help them transition into an adoptive placement. When we have difficulty finding adoptive placements for children, it is because they have oftentimes had way too much trauma before and sometimes during our watch. It then becomes difficult to find a placement.

Wheeler: I am not clear on how health insurance is an issue for foster children.

Waller: We are seeking health care for children aging out of the system.

Murphy: I will be giving an overview of the issue of disproportionality in foster care in Oregon. This issue is a national issue getting great attention at this time. The Governor has recently signed an executive order to convene a task force to examine this issue. Disproportionality is a difference in representation of an ethnic group in the system versus their representation in the general population. I am hesitant to give statistics because they can be misconstrued. In Oregon around 3% of children are African American; they make up 6 to 7% of the foster care population. Native Americans appear to be worse. There are some definition issues. Native Americans are about 1.5% of children in the state; they make up about 7 to 9% of foster care population.

In Portland (Multnomah County), 10% of children are Native American and African American. In Multnomah County 30 to 40% of children in foster care identify themselves as NA or AA.. According to a 2007 study by the Government Accountability Office, there are three factors that contribute to overrepresentation of African Americans in foster care. They are: 1.) poverty and related issues, 2.) access to services that are culturally competent, 3.) biases of decision makers in child welfare system.

What has worked in other states? Other states are moving forward on these issues. Michigan, Texas and Washington are moving forward. Some successful strategies are: beefing up the in home, up front services that prevent children from coming in to care in the first place – family counseling, family decision meetings, work with relatives. We need to work to focus these services on children of color.

Joshua Griggs: I am going to share about my experience in the system and some of the things that have worked. I was in care about 11 years, in and out, in Oregon and Washington. I was in 11 different homes. I attended 9 different schools. It was a journey. I had great school advocates – teachers and counselors.

Moving from place to place was difficult. It was difficult to keep up in school. I have been able to talk to other young people who also were in the system. At the college level, one of the challenges for former foster children is where to go on holidays or school breaks. There is no place to go.

When I was first placed in care, the intervention was traumatic. I was treated like a criminal, and I was not. It was not my fault I was placed into care. People did not listen to me. They thought I was lying. The child welfare intervention was difficult. How those folks interact with children is important

The independent living program has really worked to teach life skills. Mentoring is also very helpful. Worrying about how to be an adult while you are still a child. School advocates are helpful. Kinship care support. When I first came into care, my kin were overlooked. I had kin who were willing to take me in, but because of the lack of resources that could not happen. The ASPIRE program is a mentoring and college counseling program. It is important to invest funds in that type of program.

As foster youth move on and transition, they need resources to help them. They need to know who to call for support. A fit and willing adult to care for us as we transition is important.

Keny-Guyer: Do you have a sense of how many youth tend to get bounced around versus how many return to family within a month or so?

Graf: I can get you that information. 28% have 3 or more placements in a 12 month period. If children go to relatives, they are less likely to move. We have a concentrated number of children who have way too many placements.

Waller: We do not have data on cross over from foster care into the delinquency system. We know that kids in foster care have a greater likelihood of delinquency. We are interested in greater focus on this issue.

Livingston: Do Native American and African American youth get moved around more than others?

Murphy: There is a 9 month longer stay for African American youth. We project that more placements for children of color is likely. That research is not complete yet.

Wheeler: You said that finding, engaging and supporting relatives is an important strategy. What are some of the low hanging fruit for engaging in those strategies?

Graf: We would like a higher level of training for workers in the system. We need help engaging the relatives once they are located. It can be hard for relatives to engage with the bureaucracy. Relatives tend not to know the system as well as some other foster parents. Relatives need extra help in engaging the system.

Our funding is about 60% federal funding. We get federal funds and Medicaid match funds. I do not know all the details of the funding.

Murphy: About 9% of children in Multnomah County are African American; they make up about 19% of the foster care population. Native American data is more difficult to capture because it is about self reporting. I am hesitant to nail down the data on Native Americans. 1% of the child population in Multnomah County is Native American. They are 13% of the population of foster care in Multnomah County.

There is not disagreement that there is significant overrepresentation of African American and Native American children in the foster care system.

Livingston: You mentioned three factors that result in the disparity. What is being addressed in the biases in the DHS system? How can our funds address this factor?

Murphy: It is not only workers in DHS. Data shows that disparities begin at referral. The community has some responsibility. There is an opportunity to educate the community on these issues. Casey Family Programs is doing a great job right now. They are in the process of studying the issues in the current system. They will be focusing on the disparity issue throughout the system.

We need to train our system and engage in dialogue with our community on these issues. We need partnership with the community. True, honest and hopeful dialogue with our community is critical.

Waller: There will be a mapping of decision points in the child welfare system. We will be able to go back to our partners and address these points.

Keny-Guyer: This is a timing question. Casey Family Program doing this mapping program will help you over the next year to identify where the gaps are. Do you think we should leave any funds aside to wait for the recommendations?

Waller: I think that some of the gaps are so basic, that you would be safe in going ahead. We know that family and parent contact is insufficient. It is an enormous gap. We know that the inability to provide children with the opportunity for pro-social activities is enormous. We know that relatives are lacking in support.

Graf: Improving academic outcomes for our children is critical. It can't wait.

Saltzman: Are there resources to pay grandparents to serve as foster parents?

Graf: We are paying all relatives the same rate as unrelated foster parents. The rate they get does not cover basic needs according to the USDA. Many of the grandparents and other relatives need to pay day care; the rate they get does not cover day care.

Waller: Lack of day care payment is enormous. It limits our foster care pool.

Saltzman: I was struck by your point about college students having no place to go at the holidays.

Griggs: I met someone who was interested in setting up homes for that group. It is not common. I think this is a call to action to our community. The community needs to treat foster kids as their own. Foster kids don't want to be in the system.

Waller: Others have talked about a college buddy system. Kids in foster care do not have good support. In some other states, there is a pairing with buddies from a nonprofit agency.

Saltzman: Thanks so much to our panel. Mister Griggs, I wish you all success. There is a growing sense of ownership in the community of our foster youth.

Foster Care Request for Investment Information and Staff Recommendations

Lisa Hansell presented the following:

Numbers in Foster Care – Multnomah County

At a previous Allocation Committee meeting, specific data requests were made regarding the number of children in foster care, by age, in Multnomah County. Staff obtained the following data from the DHS Child Welfare, District 2 administrative office.

- Number of children experiencing at least one day in foster care in Multnomah County, (Oct 1, 2006 – Sept 30, 2007) = 3440
- Ages 0-5 = 1,135 (33%)
- Ages 6-12 = 1,021 (30%)

- Ages 13+ = 1,284 (37%)
- Number of youth who aged out of foster care in Multnomah County, (January 2008 – December 2008) = 113

"Aged out" was defined as any youth 18 years or older who were in substitute care at one time during 2007 and did not receive any services or plans in 2008.

The age breakdown for youth who aged out:

- 18 years old = 60
- 19 years old = 28
- 20 years old = 25

Overlap between the Homeless Youth and Foster Care Youth Populations – Multnomah County

The Committee requested data on homeless youth who had been in the foster care system in Multnomah County. The Multnomah County Homeless Youth Continuum (HYC) Coordinator provided the following information:

- Estimated homeless youth population, Multnomah County (does not include those served in the Homeless Youth Continuum) = 2,000
- Approximate homeless youth population served by the HYC = 1,000
- During the period July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008, 15% of youth served by the HYC had past DHS involvement). In prior years, the number of youth with past DHS involvement was between 30 and 40%.
- Homeless youth engaged in HYC services who had been in the foster care system had experienced multiple placements and often cite homelessness as a more positive option for them. A common theme is the lack of transition support for youth leaving foster care, a lack of culturally appropriate foster care placements, and a reluctance on the part of the State to open services to adolescents.

Overlap between the Detention and Foster Care Youth Populations Multnomah County

The Committee also requested staff to obtain data from the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ) regarding the number of youth in detention who were also in the foster care system. Data for the overlap between foster care cases and detention cases was not available. Data was available for the overlap between *dependency cases* and *delinquency cases*.

Foster youth cases are a subset of *dependency cases*. Dependency cases are those with an open petition alleging abuse and/or neglect requiring DHS services; the court remains actively involved in the matter.

Delinquency cases are a mix of pre-adjudicated (pre-trial) and post-adjudicated (probation) youth. In delinquency cases, the youth has a criminal referral to the juvenile department. If the youth has been adjudicated, s/he is on probation. The Juvenile Department has the authority to handle some criminal referrals informally, which means the court is not involved. Instead, the matter is handled administratively by the juvenile department. In these situations, typically the youth is required to pay restitution (shoplifting, graffiti, and criminal mischief) and perform unpaid (voluntary) community service. Not all youth in the delinquency system wind up in detention. Only those youth who pose a risk to public safety, are likely to fail to appear in court, or are being sanctioned for violating a probation condition are in detention.

Youth with dual dependency and delinquency cases total approximately 112, which represents about 4% of the active dependency cases (112/2900). Of the youth with dual dependency and delinquency cases, 42% (47/112) are currently in foster care.

Research

Building upon earlier research, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Children's Administration Research, conducted a study to examine the relationship between child abuse and neglect and delinquency, criminality and violent behavior. In this study, they examined the time period of the 1980's in the Northwest (previous study examined the late 1960's to early 1970's in the Midwest). The report replicates earlier findings that the effects of childhood victimization last into adulthood. Children who are physically abused and neglected have increased risk of arrest for violence.

"As a whole, the abused and neglected children were 11 times more likely to be arrested for a violent crime as a juvenile, 2.7 time more likely to be arrested for a violent crime as an adult and 3.1 time more likely to be arrested for any violent crime (juvenile or adult) compared to the matched control group."

Source: [Another Look at the Effects of Child Abuse](#) English, Widom, & Brandford, *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 251, 2004.

Revised Staff Recommendation

In December and January, staff presented the original recommendations for the range of services for the Foster Care Request for Investment (RFI) to the DHS Child Welfare Managers, Foster Parent Advisory Committee, Foster Youth Advisory Committee, and the Child Welfare Advisory Committee. Staff asked each of the groups for feedback on the recommendations (e.g. Is there anything missing from the list? Is there anything on the list that does not belong there? Are there things that should be prioritized?)

Overall, the feedback received supported the original recommendations. Per the written request to the Committee by Michael Balter, Executive Director, Boys and Girls Aid, staff has added "approaches that move children out of foster care sooner" to the list of highlighted service priorities.

The primary change to the recommendations is that staff no longer recommends dedicating portions of the funding by age groups (previous recommendation was that 50% of funding be directed for children under the age of 6 and 50% for children and youth ages 6-24). Staff rescinds this recommendation for the following reasons:

- 1) Programs that serve children across the age range would be forced to submit two applications for one program;
- 2) The Committee did not support subdividing funding streams by age categories in other funding areas; and
- 3) Data indicates that 33% of the foster care population in Multnomah County is under the age of 6.

Staff recommends that the RFI highlight our interest in funding services for foster care children and youth (ages 0 through 24) that address the priorities identified through the extensive public input process, and strategies identified in best practice research, as follows:

- o Culturally specific services, especially for Native American and African American children, to address over-representation in the child welfare system
- o Educational support networks for children and youth in foster care; especially during all major school transitions (Kindergarten, move to new schools, 5th to 6th, 8th to 9th and 12th grade to post-high school education/training/work)
- o Services that help maintain placement stability (e.g. relative search services, supports for relative foster care, skilled respite care for regular foster care parents, emergency shelter, communication between foster and biological families, health and mental health screening)
- o Mental health services for all ages of children and youth (high quality, flexible, address trauma and accessible when needed).

- Services for youth aging out of foster care and former foster youth including programs providing educational support, job skills, and independent living skills
- Quality visitation services for children in foster care with their biological parents and siblings to support successful reunification
- Approaches that move children out of foster care sooner
- Mentoring for children and youth
- Therapeutic daycare centers, preschools or both - Children may receive social skills training, modeling, individual therapy, nutrition, and medical referrals. Parents may receive parent training, social support and child development education
- Foster care therapeutic interventions - Services delivered through a team approach, in which foster parents receive training and on-going support and consultation from program staff, children receive individual skills training and birth parents (or other permanent placement resources) receive family therapy
- Infant-focused interventions with a primary focus on improving the infant-parent relationship
- Education for foster care youth on addiction and substance abuse and domestic violence prevention
- Enrichment activities for children and youth in foster care

Wheeler: Our panel mentioned other states focusing on prevention – in home family services and family counseling. Prevention is specifically excluded in your recommendation. Why is that? Could such a proposal be funded by us?

Hansell: Prevention strategies are funded in the Child Abuse Prevention Program Area.

Wheeler: I want to be sure we are keeping the door open for programs using best practices to prevent children from entering foster care.

Hansell: I think we are keeping the door open for programs such as that.

Keny-Guyer: These are excellent proposals. I am convinced by the testimony today that we need to serve the whole age range. We need to help find the right placement for youth in the system. The key is as much prevention upstream as we can. I hope that we work early on with at risk families in the child abuse prevention program area.

Unique Aspects of Foster Care RFI

(Lisa Hansell presented:

The Foster Care RFI will utilize the same template that was used in the other funding areas. The ballot language for this funding area states that funding will be for services that “help foster children succeed”. However, this general statement leaves some key questions regarding the eligible service population and eligible applicants in need of clarification here are some unique aspects that need to be considered in this area.

Age Range

As was discussed at the November 20 Allocation Committee meeting, staff recommends extending the age range of the eligible service population to age 24. Services for children aging out of the foster care system were highly prioritized in the public input process. Foster youth face unique challenges for making a successful transition into adulthood in employment, higher education, marriage, and parenthood. A large number of these youth have special needs including mental health issues and disabilities, both learning and physical.

Eligible Service Recipients

In all other of CHIF’s funding categories, the eligible service recipients are described as children within a specified age range and their parents or guardians. Staff recommends that the language in the Foster Care RFI specifically include both the biological and foster families of foster children because services

that include both biological and foster families were highly prioritized in public input and are included in the parameters of the RFI.

Use of CHIF Funds in this Funding Category

Staff recommends that CHIF restrict use of our funding in this category to benefit current foster children and their families, or those who have recently aged out of the foster system. While there are programs that serve both foster children and children not in the foster system (e.g. the Boys and Girls Aid Society mentoring program that we currently fund), staff recommends that if we fund programs that serve a mixed population, that our funds be used to increase the capacity to serve foster youth (and their families) or youth that have recently aged out of the foster system, rather than funding the program generally. The rationale for this recommendation is to hold true to the intent in the recent ballot language that created a separate category of funding for this population. Programs can seek funding for services for the general population in other categories. This restriction will also assure that we fund programs that are intentionally designed to serve foster youth who often have unique needs.

Staff also recommends that we restrict funding to applicant programs that include at least some direct services for foster youth or youth who have recently aged out of the foster system. The rationale for this recommendation is again based on the intent of the ballot language which was to create a funding stream to directly benefit foster youth. While there are programs designed to serve only biological parents of foster children, and which will hopefully indirectly help foster children, staff is concerned that the benefits may be too attenuated or conditional depending upon the level of contact between the biological parent(s) and the foster child.

Specialized RFI Questions

In CHIF's other funding areas, referrals to programs are made from a variety of sources and parents are generally the consenting party. In the case of foster children, we anticipate that the majority of referrals and consent will come directly from child welfare case workers. Specific questions will be included in the RFI relating to referrals, current and past working relationship with DHS Child Welfare, process for getting consent, methods for on-going communication with case workers and how the proposed program will enhance or complement the services offered through DHS Child Welfare.

Application Submission Date

Assuming the Committee makes final decisions regarding the Foster Care funding area on January 26, staff expects to publish the RFI on January 28. That is one week later than the date the RFI's for the other funding areas were published. The due date for the Foster Care RFI's will be March 9, 2009; one week later than the other program areas.

Public Testimony on Foster Care Request for Investment

I am **Andy Olshin**, a member of the **Crime Commission Child Protection Task Force**. The Crime Commission worked for the past year on state wide issues in the foster care system. We talked with many significant figures involved with foster youth. Four things emerged from the study. The first is ensuring that children placed in foster care are safe and thriving. The second one is providing permanency for children placed in foster care. The third one is identifying strategies for dealing with overrepresentation in the child welfare system. The fourth one is preventing foster care placement. This is a state system, not as much a community based agency system. There are issues around who can do what work. I encourage CHIF to support programs that work directly and collaboratively with the DHS branch offices. Connecting with the branch office and finding out what is not working. Branches may have different answers to questions of effectiveness based on their geography and on the demographics in the branches.

I am **Mike Balter**, member of the **Crime Commission and Director of Boys and Girls Aid**. The connection with DHS is essential. I have two simple suggestions. I suggest you attempt to narrow the activities you will fund to the outcomes that are most valuable to you. Are you focusing on keeping kids

healthy and thriving while they are in care, moving them out of care more quickly, preparing foster parents. I would like to see targeted training in support of foster parents. The most important thing: Young people in foster care have a particular challenge around attachment. I propose you select a few high quality activities rather than a lot of light touch. They don't need a light touches. If anything that could be very damaging. If you are going to fund mentoring, make sure you have a high quality deep program that has a clear ratio of mentor support and support to the biological and foster family. It is a much more complex child to mentor. A light touch can increase the attachment issues. Those young people will find more adults who don't connect with them. I encourage you to ask how this activity affects one of these big strategies.

[Commissioner Saltzman left the meeting. Chair Wheeler took over as Chair.]

I am **Rob Milesnick** Executive Director of the Citizens Crime Commission. Our goal for the future is to do something specifically with foster care parents – promote foster parents and train them – finding a way for volunteers to make a difference. Our goal is to help foster parents to stay committed to that work – to make it as long, impactful, and meaningful as possible.

I am **Gerald Deloney**, with Self Enhancement, but speaking today as a **foster parent**. I work with older foster kids – 16 and older. Age out means the state stops paying resources. Transition is very rare. Older kids have been through many placements. At risk kids come from at risk homes. It is very rare that a relative participates in the foster care system. In my six years, I have met only two relatives. We need to start putting some care and some consistency in it. Best evidence says that foster children should be served with other children. The most important thing is consistency – an anchor in the community. The anchor in the community can be there even when children are moved. I don't believe we will be able to shorten placements. Once a child is in the system, they are systematized. Kids in foster care are conditioned. They need consistency in their lives. I like the idea of expanding funding to age 24. We need to start looking at other things we can do to provide the safety net as kids age out of the system.

My name is **Deborah Murray** and I am the Executive Director of **Peninsula Children's Center**. I want to think about working only with programs that deal only with foster children. Housing children in community organizations provides many of the benefits that the panel mentioned. At Peninsula, part of our childcare settings, we try to keep foster children in our care if possible while the child transitions; that provides some continuity for the child. We also have the opportunity for pro social activities for the child with other children. This avoids segregating. We do need child care support for foster families. We have lost children because foster parents did not have resources to keep the child in our care. I support extending the age range to 24. We have had young people aging out of foster care approach us for employment. Those young people needed support in knowing how to appropriately apply for work.

Tony Sanchez, Native American Youth and Family Center. I support funding for children aging out of the foster care system. They need supports after age 18. I have had children in my home when I was the 14th or 15th placement. I want to identify the issue of Native placements in foster care. Those numbers are very difficult to get. What DHS recognizes as Native as only ICWA eligible children. Self-identification is not enough for the state. We have had cases where the system did not recognize children as Native and they were not allowed to attend NAYA. Education in the community is needed. We want to talk with foster parents to help them support the children. There are so many Native kids out there who are not being recognized by the system. We have a long history of mistrust in the social welfare system. Poverty is a major issue in children entering foster care. That is my concern about putting prevention in the child abuse area. If I cannot afford to pay my rent and am homeless, living in my car, the children may end up in foster care. That is not about child abuse; it is about not having money.

I am **Liz Burns** and I work for **CARES Northwest**. We are looking at your definition of kids in foster care which is kids who are currently in foster care or have aged out. What we see at CARES Northwest is a spectrum; their legal custody may be DHS, but they are in their parent's custody. You may want to expand the definition to include children trying to be put back with the family. They can go through a period where they are moving in and out of foster care. It is important they have access to the same

service throughout that time. Cutting off services can undermine the work of reuniting families. Perhaps being within a year of a foster home referral is acceptable.

Hansell: I want to clarify a few items. Our intent is not to segregate foster children from other children. Our intent is along the lines of what Mr. Balter was discussing, to fund this category to really encompass the needs of foster youth. It depends on the program being presented. We can pay for child care in a general setting as part of a program that is covering the needs of foster children. We are not seeking to limit the settings where services for foster children are served.

Pellegrino: We are looking to use these funds to focus funds on foster youth. This has nothing to do with segregating children. We have other funds for generalized programs that serve only a small percentage of foster youth.

Livingston: Is the definition broad enough to cover the transition?

Hansell: There are two pools of funding. It depends on what the focus of the program is. If the program continues to provide services during reunification, we are open to funding that type of program.

Keny-Guyer: That seems clear on the back end. On the front end, it seems less clear. When a family is looking for a placement for a child. Would that be eligible for this funding?

Pellegrino: The program would need to determine what their focus is and what funds they would apply for. Programs that are seeking specifically to serve foster children should apply in this area. If the program is more generalized, they should apply to child abuse prevention. The language is quite broad.

Keny-Guyer: I move that we approve the RFI on foster care.

Livingston: I second.

Vote: All in favor. (Keny-Guyer, Livingston, Wheeler)

Wheeler: The RFI is adopted.

Lisa Pellegrino presented the following:

Schedule for Funding Decision Meetings

Now that we have the publication dates for all of the RFI's, staff's next task is to recruit volunteers to review applications in all five funding areas. As we accumulate enough volunteers to compose an individual review group, we then need to set meetings of each individual review group to discuss the applications they have scored and to finalize all scores. In order to prioritize reviewer recruitment and reviewer meeting schedules by funding category, we need to set the order in which the Committee will make funding decisions by funding category.

In staff's estimation, decisions for early childhood programs will take a full meeting because this category has most total funding available and will likely generate the highest number of applications to consider. Staff believes that the Committee could make funding decisions in Foster Care and Child Abuse in one meeting, and After-School and Mentoring decisions in one meeting, for a total of three funding meetings. In our draft calendar, we have set the first funding meeting for the week of May 18, the second for the week of June 1, and the third for the week of June 15. Staff does not necessarily have a preference for the order, but would prefer that we try to keep it to three meetings broken up as described above to avoid having to schedule a fourth funding meeting. We would like the Committee to decide how many meetings to schedule and the order in which they will make decisions so that we can prioritize reviewer recruitment and meeting schedules, and get dates/times on Committee members' calendars as soon as possible.

Keny-Guyer: I propose we look at Foster Care and Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention before we look at Early Childhood. I propose we do After School and Mentoring first.

Wheeler: I think it makes sense.

Keny-Guyer: I move that the order of our funding decision-making meetings go: After School and Mentoring first, Foster Care and Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention second, and Early Childhood third.

Livingston: Second

Vote: All in Favor. (Keny-Guyer, Livingston, Wheeler)

Overview of Funding Decision-Making Process

When staff receives applications in early March, we will provide you with a CD that includes all application in each funding area. We anticipate that you may use the full applications as a reference in the event you want to further investigate details on a particular program. Staff will summarize all applications in a narrative format and provide summaries to Committee members as soon as they are completed.

Once staff has final scores from reviewers, these scores are entered into a spread sheet that also contains other information about the application including the total grant request, the number of children served, the geographic location or target area for the service, whether the service is culturally specific etc. Staff has attached a spread sheet generated from a previous round of funding for your reference. We will provide these spread sheets as soon as all review committees finalize their scores in a funding area, and plan to have them to you at least a week in advance of the funding meeting for a particular funding area. Staff will also provide a memo with other application specific comments and audit tool results as warranted. Organizations with annual revenues greater than \$1 million in the last closed fiscal year are required to submit an audit, to which staff applies an analysis tool developed by our accountants to alert us to potential financial issues with prospective grantees.

Armed with access to the original applications, staff summaries of the applications, and the data sheet that includes the scores, you will need to complete a recommended "slate" for funding in the given area. Staff has attached the form we used in the last funding round for your reference. You will need to list the applicants you want to fund, the amount you recommend for funding, and your rationale for the recommendation, particularly if you are recommending that the application be funded at a lesser amount than requested. These slates are submitted to staff the day before, or the morning of (depending upon meeting timing), the funding meeting.

Staff will then prepare a tally sheet that shows where committee members are in agreement with each other. We will begin the funding meeting starting from the points of agreement. Where all committee members agree on funding an application, we will count this as a preliminary funding decision, and keep working our way down the lists to finish all preliminary funding decisions until all funding is accounted for, or until there are no more applications that a majority of members can agree to fund. At that point, we will take public comment on these preliminary funding decisions. The Committee will have a chance to further discuss and possibly change their preliminary decisions and then vote on final decisions.

Keny-Guyer: Do we get the detail on scores?

Pellegrino: We have it available. You can have it if you request it.

Fiscal Report

John Kelly delivered a fiscal report. The report is Appendix A.

[Commissioner Saltzman returned to the meeting during the fiscal report.]

Wheeler: On the revenue side, where are we vulnerable?

Kelly: Delinquent property tax is the most difficult to project.

Wheeler: Given the volatility in the economy, how confident are we in the revenue projections.

Kelly: The projections are provided by Drew Barden, the city economist.

Wheeler: I just want to flag that the revenues are out of our control and are dependent on the state of the economy. So far you have done a great job and the team has been relentless about making sure the administrative costs remain as low as possible. I want to put the cautionary note out here that it is a percentage of revenues and revenues are volatile both up and down. We need to be aware of that as a board.

Pellegrino: Property taxes are more stable than other types of revenues.

Kelly: The City Economist tends to be quite conservative.

Keny-Guyer: I want to point out that the increase in administrative percentage between last year and this year is due to this being the year without much additional property tax revenue. Going into next year, that will not be the case.

Hearing that there is a million dollars in fund balance, I feel comfortable that we have some funds available to help if there is a downturn in revenues.

Keny-Guyer: Congratulations to Mary Gay on the beautiful annual report.

Our next meeting is **not currently scheduled**

Adjourned at 3:30 p.m.