

Children, Seniors & Families Committee
Wednesday, June 4, 2003
Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

The regular meeting of the Children, Seniors and Families Committee is called to order by Chairperson James T. Beall, Jr., at 10:07 a.m. in the Isaac Newton Senter Auditorium, County Government Center, 70 W. Hedding Street, San Jose, with Vice Chairperson Don Gage present.

2. Public Presentations

Joe Coto, Superintendent, East Side Union High School District, expresses appreciation to the Committee for their support and requests ongoing collaboration with East Side Union High School District, Franklin–McKinley School District and Alum Rock Union Elementary School District as budget reductions increase. He speaks of the need to develop a comprehensive strategy to minimize the adverse effects of budget reductions on young people and to ensure that successful programs are not eliminated.

Larry Aceves, Superintendent, Franklin–McKinley School District, expresses appreciation to the County for support through programs provided and advises that truancy has decreased and children are staying in school. He requests that reductions be carefully coordinated to prevent loss of the advances that have been made. He expresses concern that, unless there is collaboration, recovery from the long–term impact of the reductions will be difficult.

Mr. Coto comments that the school districts are willing to invest the "No Child Left Behind" resources, however, a cohesive coordinated strategy is needed to ensure that the resources are maximized.

Chairperson Beall advises that the Board has requested the Administration to review coordination of County school–based services with the school districts. He expresses agreement and support for the comments made by Messrs. Coto and Aceves. Vice Chairperson Gage expresses appreciation to Messrs. Coto and Aceves and notes the importance of establishing communication among the entities.

3. Approve Consent Calendar and changes to the Children, Seniors and Families Agenda.

Chairperson Beall recommends that Item Nos. 4, 7, 8 and 11 be added to the consent calendar, however, there is a request from the public to speak on Item No. 8. On Committee consensus, it is ordered that the consent calendar be approved, as amended including Item Nos. 4, 7 and 11.

(The agenda is taken out of order.)

8. Accept report back from Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) relating to customer walk-ins and appointments.

Bruce Williams, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 715, expresses appreciation to the Board for support and leadership during the negotiations between management and the unions. He advises that agreement has been reached on 13 items on the list of issues regarding the reorganization of DCSS. He further advises that DCSS has committed to collaboration with the unions to resolve the last few issues. Mr. Williams also expresses support for the issues the Government Attorneys Association (GAA) desires to resolve with management.

On recommendation of Peter Dever, Director, DCSS, as noted in memorandum dated June 4, 2003, and on Committee consensus, it is ordered that report back be accepted from the DCSS relating to customer walk-ins and appointments.

12. Accept report from Director, Social Services Agency.

Will Lightbourne, Director, Social Services Agency (SSA), provides an overview of a proposed plan for implementing a task force to study the future role of the Children's Shelter. He suggests that the study include fulfillment of the State requirements to address State failure of the Child Welfare Audit by the Federal Government early in 2003. He further suggests that the Committee maintain control of the project. He recommends that

dialog continue through the summer of 2003 and that a report be presented in October 2003 on a vision for future utilization of resources at the Children's Shelter.

Chairperson Beall comments that Mr. Lightbourne may collaborate with the Committee as needed to further define implementation of the task force. Peter Kutras, Acting County Executive, Office of the County Executive, advises that funding for this project will be included in the budget modification presented at the Budget Hearing to fulfill both the desires of the Committee and the State requirements.

4. Accept report relating to alternative to proposed deletion of School-Linked Services Social Worker assigned to Gilroy Unified School District, and forward recommendation to June 2003 Budget Hearing.

On recommendation of Margo Maida, Director, Community Outreach Services, as noted in memorandum dated May 21, 2003, and on Committee consensus, it is ordered that report be accepted relating to alternative to proposed deletion of School-Linked Services Social Worker assigned to Gilroy Unified School District, and forwarded to June 2003 Budget Hearing as a Budget Inventory item with a favorable recommendation.

5. Accept report back from Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) relating to potential State penalties resulting from non-implementation of statewide-automated child support system.

The Committee considers a report from Mr. Dever, dated June 4, 2003, relating to a report back on the Federal Automation Penalties. Mr. Dever advises that counties are required to pay 25 percent of the Federal Automation Penalty assigned to the State because of failure to implement a Statewide automated child support system. He further advises that the County's share for Fiscal Year 2003-2004 is \$2.4 million. Discussion ensues among Vice Chairperson Gage, Mr. Kutras and Mr. Dever regarding the penalty. At the request of Mr. Kutras, George Doorley, Budget and Public Policy Analyst, Office of Budget and Analysis, Office of the County Executive, clarifies that funds for the \$2.4 million penalty are not allocated in the budget. Mr. Kutras comments that the resources for the \$2.4 million for the

penalty will be determined in the October 2003 budget discussions. Chairperson Beall expresses concern that the Board needs to be aware that the funds for the penalty will be paid from the General Fund and that the funds have not been allocated. He comments that the County must continue to lobby for dismissal of the penalty on the counties.

On Committee consensus, it is ordered that report back be accepted relating to potential State penalties resulting from non-implementation of statewide-automated child support system and that information regarding the status of the \$2.4 million penalty be reported to the Board in the budget report from the Committee. The Administration is requested to provide information on the fiscal impact of the \$2.4 million penalty payment on the General Fund.

6. Accept report back from Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) relating to processing interjurisdictional child support cases.

The Committee considers a report from Mr. Dever, dated June 4, 2003, relating to a report back on processing interjurisdictional child support cases. Mr. Dever advises that there are six teams and that one team distributes cases evenly among the members while the other five teams have specialists for interjurisdictional child support cases. He further advises that the supervisors of the teams desire to retain flexibility for deciding which method to utilize.

Chairperson Beall requests a report back on the issue of interjurisdictional child support cases. Vice Chairperson Gage recommends that the report be presented in approximately six months to allow time for feedback, and that improvements or issues can be reported before that time.

On Committee consensus, it is ordered that report back be accepted from DCSS relating to processing interjurisdictional child support cases.

7. Accept report back from Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) relating to potential threat of State sanctions and takeover.

On recommendation of Mr. Dever, as noted in a memorandum dated June 4, 2003, and on Committee consensus, it is ordered that report back be accepted from the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) relating to potential threat of State sanctions and takeover.

9. Held from May 21, 2003 (Item 7): Review Fiscal Year 2004 Recommended Budget for Department of Child Support Services (DCSS).

The Committee considers a verbal report from Mr. Dever advising that one facet of the DCSS reorganization plan is to consolidate all staff with similar functions into the Operations Division. He states that this will result in 580 cases rather than 570 cases for each FSO; 48.5 positions will be targeted for elimination; and, 55 employees will be affected by "bumping" of positions.

Mr. Dever notes that the economy of the County has not "turned around" yet, however, the impact on collections for child support was not evident until April 2003 when collections became more challenging.

Mr. Dever advises that the other facet of the DCSS reorganization plan is a change in the method of processing cases to a vertical or "cradle-to-grave" approach. Mr. Dever recommends that a pilot project be implemented in January 2004.

Discussion ensues between Chairperson Beall and Mr. Kutras regarding the budget reductions, Board priorities and options to mitigate the reductions in DCSS. Mr. Kutras advises that the budget should be reviewed for one-time funding expenditures to utilize in restoring positions. He recommends that a \$205,000 expenditure held at the June 3, 2003 Board meeting be considered as an alternative to prevent elimination of positions. Mr. Dever advises that the \$205,000 was derived from incentives for enrolling children in health coverage and there is a requirement that it be spent before the end of this fiscal year. Mr.

Kutras recommends further review of the circumstances regarding the \$205,000 proposed expenditure as an option for restoring positions. Chairperson Beall concurs.

Esther Lovato, DCSS employee, expresses concern that DCSS should be proactive in making collections; that many employees of "dot.com" companies are moving out of the State or the country to maintain their jobs; and, that DCSS employees are not allowed to make international or out-of-State calls which prevents tracking down those who move out of the area.

Margaret Triggs Olsen, DCSS employee, inquires regarding several budget items including deletion of the Deputy Director position to avoid elimination of positions. Mr. Kutras states that further information can be provided to the Committee.

Anne Gatts, DCSS employee, comments that the proposed budget reductions are in the collection area of DCSS with two attorneys and three clerical positions targeted for elimination. She states that collections determine future funding and that the positions should not be eliminated.

Janet Cartwright, DCSS Attorney, directs the attention of the Committee to two handouts entitled "GAA Proposal for DCSS Attorney Assignments if Four Full Time Attorneys are Laid Off," dated June 2, 2003, regarding more efficient utilization of the attorneys in DCSS; and a memorandum from Janet Cartwright, Chairperson, GAA Subcommittee for the Attorneys at DCSS, dated June 4, 2003, relating to the California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS) Team. Ms Cartwright expresses disappointment that the deadline for applying for 22 positions recruited by the State for the CCSAS Project had passed before the information was received.

Marie Owens, Family Support Officer Supervisor, DCSS, requests that Family Support Officer Supervisors be included in the next level of negotiations between the union and DCSS management.

Laura Romero, DCSS Attorney, requests elimination of all non-essential costs and freezing of the Deputy Director position to prevent elimination of currently filled positions.

Norina Mooney, DCSS employee, expresses appreciation to the Administration for plans to review the budget expenditures mentioned by Ms Olsen.

Roger Hutcheon, SEIU, Local 715, expresses appreciation for progress made on negotiations relating to the reorganization of DCSS and requests that Supervising Family Support Officers participate in the next level of negotiations. In response to an inquiry by Chairperson Beall, Mr. Hutcheon states that negotiations should resume regarding the Special Tasks and Research (STAR) team. Mr. Dever comments that the intention of management is to integrate the positions of members of the STAR team back into the DCSS budget.

Evalina Barth, DCSS Attorney, states that several attorneys have offered to work reduced hours to save positions, however, management has not indicated an interest in pursuing this opportunity to reduce costs.

Discussion ensues among Mr. Dever, Mr. Kutras, Chairperson Beall and Vice Chairperson Gage regarding Voluntary Reduced Work Hours (VRWH). Mr. Kutras advises that the Office of Budget and Analysis does not consider VRWH as an option to balance the budget as VRWH is not cost effective and is more a convenience for employees. He further advises that the Department head makes the decision regarding VRWH based on workload. Mr. Kutras notes that any VRWH commitment will need to be for 12 months rather than six months to assure that any budget savings last for the entire fiscal year. Vice Chairperson Gage comments that VRWH is not usually cost effective, however, should be considered for DCSS. He requests that Mr. Dever review the situation, in collaboration with Mr. Kutras, and report to the Committee off agenda.

David Phillips, DCSS Attorney, expresses concern regarding the CCSAS packet that was received after the deadline for DCSS employees to apply for the positions recruited by the State.

In response to inquiries by Chairperson Beall and Vice Chairperson Gage, Mr. Dever advises that the State will be contacted to determine whether the deadline for the CCSAS applications can be extended.

On Committee consensus, it is ordered that Review be accepted of Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 Recommended Budget for the Department of Child Support Services.

10. Discuss budget update relating to children, seniors and families services, consider items to add to the Budget Inventory list and forward recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Chairperson Beall comments that the Committee budget review has been difficult because of the severe budget reductions and the large number of employees affected by State reductions. He reviews the Board budget strategy developed in January 2003 and notes that the priorities include maintaining direct services; retaining employees that provide direct services or have direct contact with the community; and, reduction of employees through attrition rather than lay off.

Chairperson Beall recommends that the Deputy Director position for DCSS be frozen until it is evident how much attrition will occur. Vice Chairperson Gage expresses concern regarding freezing the Deputy Director position until information is provided regarding the ratio of management to employees and a list of positions that will be restored if this position is frozen.

Discussion ensues among Chairperson Beall, Vice Chairperson Gage, Mr. Kutras, Mr. Dever and Susan Levenberg, Assistant County Counsel, Office of the County Counsel, regarding scheduling of a special meeting before the Budget Hearing to discuss issues related to the DCSS budget recommendation. Items to be discussed include seven vacant

positions in DCSS; whether the grant proposal due date can be extended; review of circumstances regarding the \$205,000 held at the June 3, 2003 Board meeting; options for utilizing funds from freezing the Deputy Director position; and, contingency plans if funds are made available to reinstate positions targeted for layoff.

On Committee consensus, it is ordered that final review of the DCSS budget items be held to a special CSFC meeting to be scheduled next week and that the Administration provide further information as requested.

11. Approve CSFC minutes of February 18, March 5, March 18, and April 16, 2003.

On Committee consensus, it is ordered that the minutes of the February 18, March 5, March 18 and April 16, 2003 CSFC meetings be approved, as submitted.

13. Accept report from Director, Department of Child Support Services.

There is no report.

14. Announce next meeting of the Children, Seniors and Families Committee on Wednesday, August 6, 2003, 10:00 a.m., in the Isaac Newton Senter Auditorium, First Floor, County Government Center.

Chairperson Beall announces that a special CSFC meeting will be scheduled to discuss the DCSS budget issues.

The next regular CSFC meeting will be held Wednesday, August 6, 2003, at 10:00 a.m., in the Isaac Newton Senter Auditorium.

Adjournment

On order of Chairperson Beall, there being no objection, the Children, Seniors, and Families Committee meeting is adjourned at 11:53 a.m. to a special meeting to be scheduled in the Isaac Newton Senter Auditorium, County Government Center, 70 West Hedding Street, San Jose, California.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice D. Fanara
Deputy Clerk of the Board