

Wyoming State Advisory Council Meeting
1/6/2009 12:00pm

Meeting began at 12:03pm

Special meetings need to be called by the majority. Role called as well as a vote to have this special meeting via telephone. All members in favor.

Members present/voted:

Steve Aaron, Lynne Davies, Melinda Dennington, Charlene Edwards, lori Fertig, Adrienne Freng, Gary Gilmore, Judge Gary Hartman (Ret.), Marc Homer, Lori Hutchinson, Ronn Jeffrey, Matt Keating, Rene Kemper, Anne LaPlante, Les Pozsgo, Donna Sheen, Kristina Smith, Brandon Snyder, Judge Bruce Waters, Catherine Wilking, Sean Brazzale (ICJ member), Diane Lozano (ex-officio),

Others present:

Beth Evans, DeAnn Roll, Jeff Herb (DFS), Lindee Wiltjer (Juvenile Justice Specialist), Meade Gruber (AP)

Reason for calling meeting is because of the letter received by Pat Arthur. She felt that it is urgent that something be done ASAP regarding the Casper JDC. (sent out via email to members) The council is able to vote and decide whether or not to take formal action regarding this matter at this meeting.

Judge Hartman report on the letter regarding the issues listed within the letter.

Matt reported that he agrees with much of what is reported in this letter. He believes the issues with the programming have been addressed. Report was given on Dr. Rouch's report on the facility from December 2007. He asks what we are planning to do with the juveniles if we are not going to use the facility.

Donna Sheen read aloud the letter drafted in response to Pat Arthur's letter. (sent out via email to members)

Members responses to the letter.

Diane Lozano- doesn't seem like we answered questions on what Pat Arthur wanted done.

Adrienne Freng- Our role is to raise awareness with legislatures regarding the issues in Pat Arthur's letter. This is an opportunity to push to affect change.

Brandon Snyder- We say we agree in the letter but we need to have a plan of action. Maybe we should not specifically say what we are going to do, but advise that we are looking into it.

Donna Sheen- Agrees with what has been said. We need to communicate to right people. Maybe amend our report to the governor to include this issue. We could be more specific in our letter to response and state what actions as a SAG will take.

Anne LaPlante- Agrees with what others have said. Like the idea of contacting legislatures.

Catherine Wilking- Appreciates that DFS was included in drafting the letter. Need answers as to what to do with children in the facility if the board recommends to close the facility. Helpful to ask the prosecutors and judges what they think we should do if the facility is closed. We need to have those answers before making a decision. Maybe invite those folks into the discussion. Also need to know if there are less restrictive places some of the youth can be placed in.

Lori Hutchinson- Agree with what has been said.

Mark Homer- When will we shut it down with human rights being violated? What can the governor do? He agrees with Pat Arthur and thinks if we need to shut it down we should shut it down. Maybe transfer to Cheyenne. He thinks there needs to be urgent action.

Gary Gilmore- Asked whether or not Cornerstone got to read Pat's letter. He'd like to see if some of the issues can be addressed now. Maybe coming up with a creative alternative to recreation- one hour large muscle exercise. Changes can be made with cameras not being operational. Increase staffing patterns for safety. How can be creative with what we have making it safer for kids. Basically recommendation to discuss this letter with Cornerstone.

Lynne Davies- She toured the facility and questions whether or not there is an alternative to placing some of these kids. She agrees with Gary that Cornerstone needs to be given the chance to come up with alternatives

Sean Brizzale- We need to be more specific with our response.

Rene Kemper- Agrees with what was said. Was there 10 years ago and these issues are continuing.

Judge Hartman- How can we use the letter to reach our goal. Concerned that we might harm our efforts. Issue a press release to close facility because of the issues in the letter. He thinks that is all this group can do. He is not sure the governor has authority to close the facility.

Ronn Jeffrey- What can the SAG actually do? He wants to know if a formal investigation was done or if this information was just gathered through an informal visit to the facility. If we put ourselves out there based on a visit we may want to rethink that. We may want to ask for a response to the letter from Cornerstone and DFS and state that we are

concerned and ask for more information on where we are with this issue and what is being done to currently. We need to do our homework. We need clarification of what is being done by DFS, Cornerstone and Natrona County.

Les Pozgi- Agrees with Ronn Jeffrey. We do have the mandate to make recommendations and have those sent to legislatures. He doesn't feel that we have enough information to recommend the facility be shut down. We should ask DFS and Natrona County for information on what we should do and more information on the issue as well as a plan to meet the deficiencies. We don't have the authority to close the facility. Recommendations should be made based on more information.

Lori Fertig- Concurs with Les.

Matt Ketting- Need to get a response from the County Commissioners, Natrona County and DFS. Discussed changes that have currently been made. Senator Jennings has a bill that he has contacted Matt about. He isn't very optimistic. Although he does agree that we need to provide a letter of support from the committee. More conversations need to be had.

Rhea Parsons- first meeting- just listening.

Charlene Edwards- Raise the awareness regarding the issues this is the role of the SAG. Ask for a response from other parties and then be a voice to the legislature. Get the prosecutors and judges involved.

Kristina Smith- Pat concerns are well founded. Even though we do not have the authority to shut it down we need to have some response. Maybe ask for an outside inspection. Question regarding 20 vs. 30 bed facility that was discussed at our October meeting.

Matt Ketting- 20 vs 30 bed facility response. The reason for building larger facility is so that it gives opportunity to surrounding counties to place kids there. This might lessen the monetary burden on Natrona County. They are not looking to make money on the larger facility.

Melinda Dennington- Her recommendation is to ask for request on what has been addressed from Cornerstone to include timelines.

Steve Aaron- Response is necessary but give notice to everyone that the facility is not in compliance and important for Tony to answer what is required as far as licensing. Also have Tony look into other options. Separate high and low risk youth. Answer back by next meeting in February. Needs to stop and we need more information on what has been addressed. First send a letter stating the deficiencies.

Judge Waters- Everyone involved knows that the facility is not adequate. So that isn't really the issue. The letter doesn't report really anything new. No problem with the press release. It is easy for us to say that we think the facility should close but we need to do that with our recommendations on what happens next. And that may take time.

Ronn Jeffrey's- Draft in the letter that we would like a response from Cornerstone regarding the issues in Pat's letter. Detention Review Committee- to look into anything that is done with juvenile detention. Ask for specifics. Solicit a response from DFS, Cornerstone and Natrona County. Press release including- the committee's purpose/role and goals, that we appointed a Detention Review Committee and then last report the concerns that we pointed out the Pat Arthurs letter. (more direct response)

Donna Sheen- feels that committee is in place.

Volunteers to work on the letter with Donna Sheen and then circulate the letter. Draft a press release to circulate to members. Forward information to DFS, CC, Cornerstone, Prosecutors, Judges etc. Also a separate letter to Licensing at DFS.

Motion to do the above things- Steve Aaron, 2nd Anne LaPlante
All in favor- motion carries

Donna will appoint members to the committee.

1:02 p.m. Meeting adjourned.