

**Harney County Commission on Children and Families**  
**Annual Retreat Minutes**  
**1/9/06**

Attending: Chair: Dan Nichols; Ann Vloedman; Joyce Moser; Ramona Hofman; Sonni Svejcar; Debbie Ausmus; Kristen Johnson; Lou Davies; Patty Dorroh, Director  
Absent: Michelle Bradach

The Donation Selection Committee, comprised of Dan, Ann, Joyce, Sonni and Patty, met at 9:35am. Five donation applications had been received by December 31<sup>st</sup> and these were reviewed and discussed. The committee unanimously approved recommending to the full commission that all five applications be approved in the amounts requested. It was suggested that Patty tailor the award letter to CASA to request updates on how the funds were used and on the progress of the National CASA certification process. It was also suggested that the award letter to the Rimrock Pony Club frame our donation as seed money to help them grow their program to a larger membership and indicate that matching funds from other sources would be a requirement to be eligible to receive future donations from the commission.

Donation Selection  
Committee  
Deliberations

Dan called the full meeting to order at 10:18am. It was noted that there was a quorum present. The agenda was reviewed and it was noted that the location of the meeting had changed. The agenda, with the location corrected, was approved. The minutes of the November 10, 2005 meeting were approved.

Call to Order  
Approval of Agenda  
and Minutes

Dan reported the donation selection committee's recommendation that all five donation application requests be approved in the amounts requested, and that recipients be required to report their outcomes. He told the commissioners that they also recommend encouraging CASA to develop ways to recognize the CASA volunteers and try to offset some of their expenses, and to encourage the Rimrock Pony Club to grow their program in order to serve more members. Ann moved, Joyce seconded and it was unanimously approved that the Harney County Commission on Children and Families donate \$5,040.00 from our county local flexible funds as follows: Little Angels Preschool (\$540); Community Action Team – Reinforcing Positive Youth (\$1,000); Teen Court (\$1,000); Rimrock Pony Club (\$500); and Grant-Harney CASA (\$2,000).

Donation  
Applications  
Approval

Patty mentioned that the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (CCF) has changed their 2006 meeting dates to the second Thursdays of the month, which is when the Harney County CCF (HCCCF) meetings are held. She asked if the commission members would consider changing the local commission meeting dates so she can attend the state meetings. After a short discussion it was decided that HCCCF meetings will move to the second Tuesday of the month at 1:30pm.

New HCCCF  
Meeting Dates

Ramona played the 15-minute DVD entitled, "This Place," which portrays dangerous underage drinking scenarios and how some people have made positive changes on this matter in their communities. The commission board members discussed this topic in the context of Harney County. Several commissioners said that boredom is a factor, although kids from cities also cite boredom as an issue for them. Ann commented that efforts should make underage drinking less acceptable and focus messages to the parents. Debbie expressed frustration on the drinking and driving issue and that we often see repeat offenders reported in the news of record. She mentioned that tougher law enforcement is needed and that we do have an alcohol problem locally. Lou said that as a cultural issue, underage drinking won't ever go away completely but that education and law enforcement are essential. Dan mentioned that lives and livelihoods can be stopped when driving licenses are revoked. He said the binge drinking trend is one more indicator of how our society and its youth have crossed yet another line into excess (such as kids having way too many toys, too much time playing video games, etc.) The question about why some cultures, where alcohol is offered and available, don't seem to have such a big problem with underage drinking was posed. It's hard to know if the more casual approach keeps underage drinking from being a big issue for those cultures.

"This Place" DVD on Underage Drinking

Discussion of Underage Drinking Issue

Dan then asked if the HCCCF wants to get involved in a bigger way with this issue. After discussion, it was recommended that we stay informed on the efforts of the Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking and that we ensure the DVD "This Place" is available to Harney Partners for viewing at their Spring Conference.

Recommend "This Place" be shown at Spring Conference

The commission moved into its review and discussion of the Harney County Biennial Update to the Comprehensive Plan for Children and Families. Patty shared data from the Oregon Progress Board Benchmark ratings and the Community Needs Survey. Between 2003 and 2005, our juvenile crime prevention efforts have kept Harney County's juvenile arrest rates low, our teen pregnancy numbers dropped by 57 percent, and other local programs funded through CCF have helped us reduce our high school dropout rate by 53 percent. Our child abuse numbers went up during the period, but a large part of that increase is believed to reflect a spike in referrals and services that attempted to catch up from an earlier period when the local DHS child protective services office was not performing well. Since then, the situation has been rectified and we are optimistic that those numbers will decrease during this biennium.

Comprehensive Plan Update Discussion

Patty then shared a list of issues and topics she prepared from a review of the past two years of HCCCF minutes. The commissioners discussed all these matters, reviewed the draft plan update, and made some minor revisions. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to recommend to the Harney County Court that the plan be approved as revised. Patty is scheduled to present the plan for County Court approval on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

Commission Approves Biennial Update to Comprehensive Plan

The commission discussed the topic of the new step-down/transition facility, the Steens Mountain Academy, that is in the process of being established in Burns. Recent newspaper coverage highlighted some community members who are opposed to its location in Burns. Patty had spoken about the project with Dr. Smith and Kerry Opie of the Kirkland Institute. They are moving forward with their plans, but would welcome support from the commission as appropriate. During discussion, commissioners voiced their support for the concept of a step-down program in our community. Dan said that other residential programs, such as Liberty House and Independence Place have proved to be very successful and easy to incorporate into our community, as well as providing an economic base of jobs. The commissioners asked Patty to get more information on the specifics of the program, and once any further questions are answered, to draft a letter of support. Rather than sending the letter to the editor of the newspaper, it may be more helpful to provide the letter to the Dr. Smith as part of her Steens Mountain Academy package. If time is an issue, Patty will email the information and the draft letter to the commissioners before the next commission meeting.

Discussion of  
Steens Mountain  
Academy

The Director mentioned that she has a potential candidate in mind to hire as an assistant and passed the resume around to the commissioners. The consensus was that the candidate seemed qualified and that Patty is authorized to hire an assistant on contract as long as the compensation stays within the approved budget. Patty said she will consult with Dan before any hiring action is taken.

Potential Candidate  
for Commission  
Staff Assistant

Since the commission is not planning to meet in February, Patty asked if she should proceed with the Request for Proposal announcements and Bidders' Workshops for provider contract awards. The consensus was for Patty to proceed. She plans to hold the Bidders' Workshops in February.

February - Begin  
Request for  
Proposals

Dan thanked Ramona for arranging such a nice retreat, and everyone involved for the food and refreshments.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:10pm. The next HCCCF meeting will be Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm in the State Office Building, if it's available.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Dorroh – Director