

## Commission Meeting Day 2

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Location: Tennessee Tower Tennessee Room 2  
Date: Friday, 2/21/2020  
Time: 8:30 A.M. CDT

**Present:** Richard Kennedy, Exec. Dir., Craig Hargrow, Dep. Exec. Dir., Sujit Das, Fay Delk, Sherry Isom, Jennifer Jones, Bill Latimer, Rose Naccarato, Russette Sloan, Jonquil Newland, Dana Cobb, Gwendolyn Wright, Jerri Moore, Jill Stott, Kristi Paling, Lindsey Cody, Rosalyn Leavell-Rice, Shaun Noblit, Susan Cope, Gerald Papica, Kylie Burns, Kylan Hadley, Zanira Whitfield, Latasha Mitchell, Vicki Taylor, Laritha Fentress, Cory Bradfield, Jennifer Drake-Croft, Melissa McGee, Sumita Keller, Steve Petty

**Staff Absent:**

**Commission Members:** Brenda Davis, Chair, Ashley Dunkin, , Rob Philyaw, Allan Sterbinsky, Altha Stewart, Steven Neely, Amy Jones, Jennie Harlan, Wendy Shea, Ella Bentley, Glenda Terry, Mackenzie Johnston, Christy Sigler, Sharon Green, Rob Mortensen

**Commission Member Absent:** Petrina Jones-Jesz, Hailey Brooks

**Guests:**

### Reconvene and Welcome

- **Call to Order- Brenda Davis, Chair**

### Tennessee Safe at Home Presentation

- Lauren Topping, Assistant General Counsel
- Topping's presentation is attached via PDF on Tennessee Commission on Children and Youths Website.
- To register for the Tennessee Safe at Home Presentation follow the link below.  
<https://sos.tn.gov/safeathome>

### Department of Human Services Update Presentation

- Commissioner Danielle Barnes, Department of Human Services

Commissioner Barnes informed the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth staff and Commission Members to direct anyone with questions regarding the innovation grant to the website <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices.html>. DHS has launched new modules that explain how and where the \$732 Million Dollar surplus is going. The website

has distinct bullet points on how the funds will be distributed from TANF. Each grant has to line up with the four bullet points listed.

However, there are limitations as to what we can do with the funds. Child support reentry programs are something new that we have added to our list of services. We are now working directly to help people who have been incarcerated back into the workforce. They will receive counselling and support and advice when learning how to transition back into their families. This will allow them to contribute and rejoin with their families in a better way. The Childcare Development Fund is a big pain point for the majority of people. We have learned that over the course of the last year we have been trying really hard to reduce the processes that go into childcare accessing and analysis. We learned that we were not being efficient. We are working hard in changing the paper process into a full electronic process. As of last year, we have increased the weekly reimbursement rate for infant and toddler care. Governor Lee has agreed to provide a bonus above the current subsidy rate to providers who offer care during nontraditional times and in distressed rural areas. DHS is now working with employers to hopefully encourage them to join the team of creating childcare for their workers.

DHS is 22 months away from a complete overhaul of all of our technology. Personally, we have been able to have the world at the tip of our fingertips. We have not been able to provide that same service to the people that we serve. Ultimately, we need to be able to have all of this information for our customers in a “full experience,” a one stop shop technically. We have restored integrity back into our programs, for example the food stamp program. The summer food program application for sponsors is now open! Our goal is to feed more and more people each year. Our strategic plan is going to guide and get us there.

1. Goal 1: Modernize legacy systems;
2. Goal 2: “One HS”-improve divisional collaboration;
3. Goal 3: Enhance child care access and quality;
4. Goal 4: Modernize the Division of Rehabilitation Services; and
5. Goal 5: Improve data, accountability and continuous improvement.

Siegler stated that if the childcare facilities are run out of a school, they do not receive funding from the programs listed above. Barnes replied that this is correct, childcare facilities that are run through a school are regulated by the Department of Education and do not receive DHS funds. Barnes stated that there is incentive funding for daycare facilities that take care of children with special needs.

Stewart asked Barnes to explain more in detail regarding the Family First Wellness Initiative.

Barnes explained that DHS is conducting a pilot around mental health called Individual Placement Services. This program has proved to help people with mental illness. This program is designed to help us wrap services around the communities we serve.

## **Juvenile Justice Reform Act Implementation Council**

- Clark Milner, Deputy Counsel to Governor Bill Lee
- The Juvenile Justice Reform Act Implementation Council Presentation is located on Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth Website.  
<https://www.tn.gov/tccy.html>

## **Questions after presentation**

Bentley asked Milner if minors who have less serious charges are able to stay home with family or have to be placed with DCS?

Milner replied that generally, the child is not removed from the home. We are trying to focus on helping the child with counselling or other services before transferring to DCS too quickly.

Jones asked Milner if there is an effort to help staff in smaller or rural areas/counties? In your rural counties, you typically have one to two people that are dedicated to data collection. We would love to see the smaller counties be able to apply for the \$4 million-dollar grants. It is a real struggle to pull money from local funds to add new people for a new process.

Milner replied that is something that training, and guidance can potentially help. We understand that we are essentially imposing an additional task that was not there before and it is a struggle for existing staff to take on. But training and implementation may help when introducing these new tasks for smaller counties.

## **Media Award Nominations- Fay Delk**

**Dickson County Juvenile Court Judge Michael Meise** was voted for the **Senator Douglas Henry Public Official of the Year Award**. Judge Meise instituted Court Appointed Special Advocate and Safe Baby Courts programs. He also trains his community on how to deal with the effects of adverse childhood experiences.

*Davis moved to approve Judge Michael Meise for the Henry Public Official of the Year Award.*

*Stewart seconded, Unanimously approved.*

**Kathy Benedetto** was voted for the **Jim Pryor Child Advocacy Award**. Kathy has recently retired as Senior Vice President of Tennessee Children's Services for Frontier Health in East Tennessee.

*Davis moved to approve Kathy Benedetto for the Jim Pryor Child Advocacy Award.*

*Siegler seconded, Unanimously approved.*

**Phil Acord**, executive director of Chattanooga's Chambliss Center for Children, which has six off-site centers and 12 school-based programs caring for more than 700 children was voted for the **Linda O'Neal Lifetime Achievement Award**.

*Davis moved to approve Phil Acord for the Linda O'Neal Lifetime Achievement Award.*

*Philyaw seconded, Unanimously approved.*

The **John Seigenthaler Making KIDS COUNT Media Award** was approved for:

- **Mike Osborne** of **WMOT** radio, who received the Broadcast, Small Market award;
- **Mearl Purvis, WHBQ**, Fox 13, who received the Broadcast, Large Market award;
- **Anita Wadhvani, The Tennessean**, Print Media, Large market;
- **Chalkbeat Tennessee**, New Media;
- **Peds Pod, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital**, New Media, Podcast.

*Davis moved to approve Mike Osborne, Mearl Purvis, Anita Wadhvani, Chalkbeat Tennessee and Peds Pod for the John Seigenthaler Making KIDS COUNT Media Award.*

*Siegler seconded, Unanimously approved.*

## **Governors Early Literacy Foundation Presentation**

- Dean Hoskins, Vice President

Dean has been with the foundation since its inception. Dolly Parton grew up in Tennessee with a father that was illiterate until the day he passed. In an effort to support her father Dolly Parton created a foundation where she provided books to people in Sever County, her county, from birth to age 5. From mid-1996, that small idea has now grown to deliver 1.3 million books a month across the US and to other countries. The Imagination Library's

goal is to provide ALL children with rich literacy throughout the state. The books are a catalyst for building positive relationships with their peers.

In 2011, we made an agreement with DCS that every child in state custody should be automatically enrolled in the program. In 2013, we partnered with Welcome Baby. This program provides the enrollment brochure for the books as well. We also work with birthing programs across the state, asking hospitals to ask mothers to enroll into the program before they leave after delivering a baby. If they sign up before they leave the hospital, the family will receive a book before they leave, *The Little Engine That Could*. In 2016, we decided to reach out and partner with DCS to see if there were other avenues that we could enter into that we were not already included. We now have 12 book buses across the state of Tennessee that travel into the rural parts of each county and deliver books. We have also partnered with the Tennessee State Parks to deploy new interactive book viewing while walking on some state park trails. Every quarter of a mile a nature-related, life-sized interactive book is displayed at a kiosk along the trail. We have broadened our scope; we currently have six people on staff. We are still very much a volunteer-based program, so your support is important.

### **Dashboard- Rose Naccarato**

Naccarato handed out copies of the Dashboard to Commission Members and Staff.

### **Commission Member Conversation- Meeting Structure**

Kennedy noted the formatting of the commission meetings has changed drastically due to the innovation/introduction of WebEx. Kennedy asked the commission to provide feedback on what the members would like to hear during commission meetings moving forward. We can continue to bring in speakers to provide you all with updates or we can do a deeper dive with the divisions in the agency or we can ask to bring in others to facilitate a training on how to manage a board. We want to keep time for all of the approvals and business items but wanted to include items that you, the members, benefit from as well.

Kennedy announced that Fay Delk has decided to retire and will be retiring on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Kennedy thanked Delk for all of her work that she has done for TCCY. The other big staff news is that John Rust will be leaving us as well on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. We want to thank John Rust for all of the hard work as well and they both will be missed.

Siegler added that she would like to set aside time for commission members to discuss what is going on nationally and possibly bring in speakers that can discuss or inform us

on those topics during commission meetings.

Jones suggested that TCCY invite people who receive OJJDP grants managed by TCCY, either for face-to-face presentations or via WebEx. We would like to know how they are doing and what they do.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

*Davis moved to adjourn the February 20-21, 2020 Full Commission Meeting.*

*Siegler seconded, Unanimously approved.*

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

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Prepared by: Jennifer Jones