

Hancock County Youth Court Task Force

Meeting Date: February 6, 2015 | Time: 4pm -6 pm | Chairman: State Representative David Baria

Introduction

The meeting was called to order by the chairman at 4 pm introduction of the new Task Force members: Lora Medros and Mike Benvenuti appointed by Judge Steckler. Last of the town hall meetings, 30 minutes allowed for Public Comments, continue to welcome comments from the public in the continued vehicle of the website; email vs town hall.

Announcement: Comment by Brehm Bell; include suggestions on what can be done to help the system.

Task force members: Representative Baria, Lisa Cowand, Mark Smith, Tonya Blair, Chere Hayward, Brehm Bell, Ricky Adams, Judge Deano, Chris Daniel, Shawna Pankonin, Vickie Taylor, Candy Murphy, Cynthia Chauvin, Les Fillingame, Tony Ladner, and Mike Benevnuti.

Action I: Public Comments

1. Would like to see DHS held accountable for their actions. Investigate before DHS
2. Reasonable efforts to reunify children not followed.
3. Kids in non licensed foster homes; siblings separated.
4. Grandparents not considered before children are adopted out; ICPC takes too long
5. Parents working their service agreement and still not having visitation.
6. How old do the children have to be before they can go to court and testify and have a voice.
7. Why the Bible is not in the court room
8. Rumors that court personnel (Cindy Burney) paid to have kids put in certain foster homes
9. Parent concern that it has been 17 months since being able to see the children (DHS-TPR-Chancery court-youth Court) which way to go for information.
10. Law on neglect is vague.

Action II: Old Business

Capitol update on DHS and Youth court issues

Committee Reports:

1. Parent Liaison Committee-Brehm Bell- discussed that the position will be appointed. It has been approved and Board of supervisors will match. Reese Hoyt and Diane Bennett joined the committee. Discussed gathering community agencies (7-10), discussed TPR and the Hancock Co Bar Association offering assistance if needed in speeding up the process. Tonya Blair reported a 30 day timeline for AG's office to review TPR packet, with judgement in most cases occurring within 6 months, only 5 of the current cases going over the 6 month mark. (Please refer to information provided by Tonya via email) Discussed Jackson County use of a mediator which is an attorney to assist with moving cases through the court system. Brehm Bell stated he would look into mediator. Also exploring the financial burden on parents to complete drug tests etc.
2. Coordination of Services-Candy Murphy-discussed Shelly Foreman (Director of Family and Children's Services at GCMH) attending the last meeting. Shared list of resources and given to Diane for parent Liaison Rep. Shelly discussed the youth court in Harrison County, having a campus with Mental Health, CASA, GED etc on the youth court grounds. Mediation can be referred to there through interagency agreement. Candy discussed getting with Rhonda Rhodes to get a list of her resources and the need to look into having a full time mental health therapist on site at the youth court like Harrison CO.

3. Stats- mark Smith reported for Cindy Burney- DHS working with peer groups to get coding of areas to get data points (geographic location of where the majority of the children in custody are coming from) Mark smith discussed where the funding for the children is coming from 38% receive federal vs state.. Will Stats committee show drug involved vs pending charges.
4. Systems-developed a series of questions to be answered. Could Hancock CO benefit from a full time county court system?

Action III: New Business

No new business

Action IV: Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm motion by Chris Daniels 2nd by Candy Murphy
