

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA

THURSDAY 5:30 P.M. FEBRUARY 27, 1997

PRESENT:

Grant Sims, Chairman
Jim Galloway, Commissioner
Mike Mouliot, Commissioner
Jim Shaw, Commissioner

Betty Lewis, Chief Deputy County Clerk
Katy Simon, Assistant County Manager
Madelyn Shipman, Legal Counsel

ABSENT:

Joanne Bond, Vice Chairman

The Board met in special session in the Vista Room (B206) at the Truckee Meadows Community College, 7000 Dandini Boulevard, Reno, Nevada. Following the pledge of allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

97-200 AGENDA

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Commissioner Mouliot, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion duly carried, Chairman Sims ordered that the agenda for the February 27, 1997, meeting be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There was no response to the call for public comments.

97-201 OVERVIEW - REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF CHILD ABUSE/CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

John Sherman, Management Analyst, presented a brief overview of the reviews, studies and evaluations that have been conducted concerning child abuse and child protective services in Washoe County in response to a grand jury investigation after the death of a child. He stated that the National Child Welfare Leadership Center (NCWLC) was engaged to do a comprehensive study of the current child protective services system to identify problems and make recommendations to improve the system and that that report was presented to the Board in November, 1996. Mr. Sherman further explained that a citizen task force and a technical working group were established to also review and evaluate the current system, as well as the report from the NCWLC, and report back to the Board with their findings and recommendations. He stated that those groups are ready to present their reports to the Board and suggested a procedure to be followed.

97-202 REPORT FROM THE CHILD PROTECTION CITIZEN TASK FORCE

Several members of the Washoe County Child Protection Citizen Task Force were present. Richard Mullins, Vice Chairman of the task force, presented the report from the citizen task force on community-based child abuse prevention and education which included 33 recommendations for improving the child protection systems and reviewed in detail the recommendations the committee identified as high priority.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Sims thanked the citizen task force for their efforts and the many hours they spent on this. On motion by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Commissioner Galloway, which motion duly carried, Chairman Sims ordered that the report be accepted.

97-203 REPORT FROM THE CHILD PROTECTION TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Several members of the Washoe County Child Protection Technical Working Group were in attendance. Krista Johns and Nancy Petersen, Co-Chairs, presented the report and recommendations from their group on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the child protection systems. Using charts and diagrams displayed on the overhead projector, they outlined their recommendations, noting that many of them will require legislative action. Ms. Petersen also drew the Board's attention to the flowchart at the back of the report showing how complicated the system is and the overlapping responsibilities of various agencies. Other committee members including Deborah Schumacher, Washoe County Family Court, Dave Stanton, Washoe County Deputy District Attorney, and Nile Carson, Reno Police Department, also spoke.

Chairman Sims expressed the Board's gratitude to the members of the technical working group for the time and effort they put into this. On motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Mouliot, which motion duly carried, Chairman Sims ordered that the report be accepted.

97-204 REPORT - CHILD PROTECTION CITIZEN TASK FORCE - FEEDBACK ON NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE LEADERSHIP CENTER REPORT

The Board asked numerous questions concerning feedback from the citizen task force on the review and recommendations contained in the National Child Welfare Leadership Center report. Mr. Mullins, Katherine Cesario, Susan Rose, and Janet Serial-Onosigho responded. The topics discussed were the many resources and services available to assist families and the need to consolidate those and make everyone aware of that availability, the confidentiality regulations, etc.

On motion by Commissioner Mouliot, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion duly carried, Chairman Sims ordered that the feedback report presented by the Washoe County Child Protection Citizen Task Force be accepted.

97-205 REPORT - CHILD PROTECTION TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP - FEEDBACK ON NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE LEADERSHIP CENTER REPORT

The Board asked numerous questions concerning feedback from the technical working group on the review and recommendations contained in the National Child Welfare Leadership Center report. Tammy Tovey-Stephenson, Attorney General's Office, Deputy District Attorney Dave Stanton, May Shelton and Mike Capello, Washoe County Social Services, Deborah Schumacher, Nancy Peterson, Meredith Mayeroff of the State Division of Child and Family Services, and Krista Johns responded. Topics discussed were legislative changes that would be necessary to implement some of the recommendations, pros/cons of reuniting families versus keeping children in protective care, socio-economic problems and the high incidence of drug usage in the community, both of which are significant contributing factors in child abuse and neglect cases.

On motion by Commissioner Mouliot, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion duly carried, Chairman Sims ordered that the feedback report presented by the Washoe County Technical Working Group be accepted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES IN WASHOE COUNTY

Chairman Sims then called on anyone in the audience who wished to speak regarding this issue. Carter King, Attorney, spoke at length urging the Board to remember the grand jury report, to follow the recommendation to do away with the bifurcated system, to consolidate and continue services to families including education concerning when and how to punish and discipline their children, etc. He stressed that when a decision needs to be made concerning taking a child out of its home or returning a child to its family, that decision needs to be made by a team, not just one person.

97-206 SPECIAL RECOGNITION - CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION TO VOLUNTEERS

Chairman Sims again expressed the Board's gratitude to all the volunteer members who served on the Citizen Task Force and the Technical Working Group and presented each member in attendance with a Certificate of Appreciation.

97-207 STAFF DIRECTION FOR IMPLEMENTING CHANGES - CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Upon recommendation of John Sherman, Management Analyst, on motion by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Commissioner Mouliot, which

motion duly carried, Chairman Sims ordered that staff be directed to categorize the evaluations, comments, feedback and final recommendations of all of the reports according to whether they require legislative, budgetary, policy, agency or coordinating action, and bring them back to the Board in "decision packets" for final review and action beginning with the recommendations that require legislative action to be considered at the March 11th meeting, recommendations that require budgetary considerations to be deliberated during the annual budget meetings, etc.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

GRANT D. SIMS, Chairman
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST: JUDI BAILEY, County Clerk