

## Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative

[www.otfsc.org](http://www.otfsc.org)

Working Together...

Serving Families

... Improving Lives

## Minutes of the CEO Group Meeting

December 5, 2011 Noon – 1:30 PM

Thumper Pond, Ottertail City

### **Non-Profit Agency, County Departmental and Education Representatives of Member**

**Organizations:** Shannon Erickson (Fergus Falls Area Special Ed Coop – 61); Bill Klein, Ellen Palmer & Clair Prody (Lakeland Mental Health Center – 89); Beth Achter, Norm Kolstad & Jeremy Kovash (Lakes Country Service Cooperative – 170); David Hauser (OTC Attorney's Office-65); Diane Thorson (OTC Public Health-66); Chuck Kitzman (OTC Probation-60); Davis Leino-Mills (OTWCAC-32); Mitch Anderson (Perham ISD#549-24); Mary Phillipe (United Way of OTC-66); Kyle Mack & Melissa Walter (Prairie St. Johns-290); Jeff Drake (Battle Lake School-30); Judy Moeller (Parkers Prairie Public School-60); Lisa Carlson (Underwood Public School-32); Todd Cameron (New York Mills Public School-50); Sheila Korby (Someplace Safe-60); Jerry Nesland (Freshwater Education District-140); Jerry Ness (Fergus Falls Public Schools-66); Gene Benson (Lutheran Social Services-70); and **Contracted staff:** Jane Patrick (Collaborative Coordinator) Special guests: State Representative Bud Nornes; Sharon Josephson (Representative Collin Peterson's Office); and Andrew Martin (Sen. Amy Klobuchar's Office).

1. Chair Davis Leino-Mills began the meeting. A round of introductions was made. The group welcomed local legislator representatives to the meeting. Sen. Gretchen Hoffman attended a separate informational meeting with a small group of CEO members on December 1. Representative Mark Murdock was not able to attend either meeting.
2. Davis Leino-Mills presented a brief overview of the Collaborative, its partnerships, its Mission, Vision and Goals. A handout was provided to each of the guests sharing information about our Collaborative programs and projects. Davis asked our state's representatives to share their perspective on current legislative issues, the state's budget situation and how it might impact local agencies, families and programs. Comments from legislators included:
  - With regard to the \$876 million dollar state budget surplus, these funds have already been dedicated to "backfilling" depleted reserve funds as well as aiding with the school funding shift.
  - Otter Tail County has requested funding for roadway improvements which were previously funded and then unfunded.
  - Local collaboratives must be sure to be direct and forthcoming with communication with local representatives about what they need to be sustainable and how legislation can help aid this.
  - "Everyone is running from compromise" – there seems to be an attitude that compromise means concession and it is difficult to reach agreements.
  - No Child Left Behind isn't working....

- Medical Assistance funding cuts at the federal level could have the potential for impacting LCTS earnings. We may need to explore this and find out more as a collaborative.
  - Employment – there have been businesses that want to expand and relocate to Otter Tail County but there is a shortage of workers; many young people don't realize the opportunities available in their own "home town"; 80% of local jobs require a 2-year degree or less; an example is that there are 75 CNA jobs available right now in Otter Tail County but no workers to fill them. State/local education entities should potentially focus on more on promoting vocations and trades than 4-year degrees.
3. Jerry Ness facilitated a discussion with guests including:
- Top issue committee(s) will address which affect children and families? Budgets, funding and program cuts was the primary answer. There simply isn't enough to go around and agencies need to continue to collaborate and do a better job of identifying "core needs" and combining resources to meet these needs. Agencies, programs, etc., cannot continue to rely on state and federal dollars to cover all the needs that are out there.
  - How can the Collaborative work with legislators on issues that are important to the community including combining resources, sharing/blending revenue and stretching limited resources? Continue collaboration, share and blend revenue to help stretch limited resources; continue co-located services to reduce overhead and enable us to target more funds to services and less to administration; development of cross-sector policies (e.g., Truancy) to steam line administrative processes; and continue to improve communication among agencies, legislators, consumers and constituents. Help families and individuals become self-supportive and less dependent on governmental support. Keep our state representatives informed on "collaboration" and what we need to keep it functioning – what is the "core" component that is needed?
  - What do legislators need from us to help make tough decisions that will still best suit the needs of Otter Tail County children and families? Communication with legislators is key. Let them know of "issues coming down the road" so they can be informed and prepared to deal with them. Let them know how various proposals will impact programs, services and families directly. Keep them informed via email, phone calls and other communication. Direct emails are best. Legislators need to know what the "top" priorities are, how do we identify them, and recognize this may mean scaling back on "priority areas" to meeting very basic needs only.
4. Jane Patrick shared the written Coordinator's Report which provided program and project updates.
5. The meeting was adjourned by consensus. The next CEO Group meeting has been set for Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at Noon in the Rush Lake-Walker Room at Thumper Pond.