

APPROVED ON 4-6-06

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CAC MEETING**

MARCH 21, 2006

PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL

6:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Bob Layton, Vice Chairman Cicero Lewis, Jean Pecunies, Lynne Langley, Nancy Emerson, Algene Bailey, Dani Rooney, Stephen Lichtenstein,

Absent: William Thorpe (called)

Staff: David Moore, Program Manager, Cindy Hayden, Deputy City Manager

Chairman Layton opened the meeting and recognized David Moore to introduce the evening's first presenter for the FY 2006-2007 Public Service Agency Grant Program.

Chris Sterndale spoke on behalf of the Emergency and Transitional Shelter Program at Cross Roads House. Mr. Sterndale informed the committee that the number of persons served at the agency has been steady but the number of bed nights has increased. He explained that more and more clients need the services of the agency for longer periods of time due to difficulties in finding permanent housing at affordable rents. Mr. Sterndale said that a new fundraising staff person had helped the agency expand its private funding for the agency. Mr. Moore asked how the COAST Trolley service assists the agency in serving clients. Mr. Sterndale said that the COAST Trolley service is a valuable asset to the agency and clients, because it provides access to medical services, other social services and jobs throughout the City and region. Ms. Rooney asked if the after school program was still operating at Cross Roads House. Mr. Sterndale said that a homework club continues to be offered at the shelter and is operated by the Portsmouth School System. Chairman Layton thanked Mr. Sterndale for his presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Kristie Conrad who spoke on behalf of Portsmouth Adult Basic Education, a program of Rockingham Community Action. Ms. Conrad told the committee that the agency provides basic literacy, pre-GED (General Education Diploma), GED, and ESL (English as a Second Language) courses to 140-145 clients per year. She said many clients have lower level skills and abilities. For example, she said many clients have a 4th or 5th grade reading level. Ms. Conrad said the program's location at the Community Campus allows them to provide child care services and to assist clients to access other services through the use of the program's counselor. Ms. Conrad said the program is highly reliant on State and Federal funds from the NH Department of Education. In addition, Ms. Conrad appeals to private groups for funding. Ms. Hayden asked about the decrease in the CSBG (Community Service Block Grant) funding of \$10,719 in FY 2006 to \$2,029 in FY 2007. Ms. Conrad explained that new CDBG funding for administrative expenses for the Adult Basic Education program would essentially free up the CSBG funding in the agency as a whole and would be reallocated to other RCA programs. Ms. Emerson asked at what time the program holds classes. Ms. Conrad explained that classes are held during the day on Tuesday, Wednesday, and

Thursday and during the evening hours on Tuesday and Thursday. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Conrad for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Phyllis Eldridge who spoke on behalf of Lamprey Health Care's Info-Link Prescription Assistance Program. Ms. Eldridge explained that the program operates a short-term and a long-term prescription assistance program. In particular, she noted that the number of clients served in the long-term prescription assistance program had decreased due to the new Medicare Prescription Drug coverage program at the federal level. She explained that the agency is providing fewer medications to eligible clients, but is providing counseling to people who are eligible for the federal program. She said there is some uncertainty about the future of the federal program and the most effective way that the agency will assist uninsured and underinsured clients to access prescription drugs. Ms. Eldridge also explained the information and referral services the agency provides to individuals, which include a variety of community-based programs and support groups. Ms. Hayden asked what percentage of clients participating in the agency's programs fell under the long-term prescription assistance program, which is most impacted by the federal program. Ms. Eldridge said that the majority of clients served had accessed this program for their long-term prescription drug needs. Mr. Moore asked if the agency kept track of the number of clients receiving counseling about the prescription drug benefit. Ms. Eldridge said they were. Ms. Emerson asked what value of prescription drugs has been leveraged for clients through the agency's services. Ms. Eldridge said the agency had helped clients receive a total of \$2.4 million in prescription drugs. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Eldridge for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Helen Taft of Families First of the Greater Seacoast who spoke on behalf of the Dental Center Program. She said that the Dental Center had continued to grow forcing the agency to periodically limit access to new patients. She said the program had expanded services to include service on Saturdays and that it is working on protocols with Portsmouth Hospital to refer Emergency Room patients to the Dental Center. Ms. Taft explained that the number of uninsured clients had risen by 45% and that these patients access services via a sliding fee scale, which means fewer dollars for the agency putting a strain on services. Ms. Rooney asked how the agency determines need for services in the Dental Program's Healthy Grins program. Ms. Taft explained that every child in the school system is offered to be screened by Dental Program staff through a letter home to parents. Mr. Bailey asked if the agency had its own dental staff on payroll. Ms. Taft said that the agency has 2 part-time dentists, 5 volunteer dentists, two part-time dental assistants and two part-time dental hygienists. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Taft for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Keryn Kriegl of Families First of the Greater Seacoast Family Support Program. Ms. Kriegl said that in 2005 the program had served a total of 200 more clients than the previous year in its various counseling programs for families. Ms. Kriegl also explained that the agency is participating in a statewide outcome measurement program where program clients are surveyed to assess progress in increasing their Protective Factors. Protective Factors are sustainable skills that families

and individuals build to deal with a variety of challenges. Ms. Kriegl noted that the agency's location at the Community Campus was a benefit to their clients. Ms. Rooney asked if the agency utilized both paid staff and volunteers. Ms. Kriegl said that a combination of paid and volunteer staff are used. She said three former program clients had accessed the necessary training to become facilitators in some of the programs. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Kriegl for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Kathy Beebe of Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS). Ms. Beebe explained that her agency's services are focused on support for victims and prevention of sexual assault. She said the agency concentrate on prevention and gave presentations to 10,000 students in Rockingham and Strafford counties; 900 of them were Portsmouth students. She said her agency is expanding its services to include victims of stalkers. The agency has also worked with a fundraising consultant and this study has resulted in the addition of a new staff member who will be responsible for fundraising. Mr. Bailey asked if the number of sexual assaults is increasing. Ms. Beebe said that she thought the rate of assaults has stayed steady but that more victims are accessing services because the stigma of sexual abuse is decreasing due to education and outreach. Ms. Hayden asked if the agency is working with the police and schools in the development of their work with victims of stalkers. Ms. Beebe said that these relationships are evolving. Ms. Rooney asked if police and the hospital routinely call SASS. Ms. Beebe said that Portsmouth Police call SASS routinely when they have new victims and victim advocates respond at the time of the call. In addition, she said the hospitals are required to call a victim services organization such as SASS. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Beebe for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Gordon McCollester who spoke on behalf of the Homemaker Program of Area Home Care and Family Services. Mr. McCollester said that his agency has been forced to cut services to seniors because of lack of funding. He explained that the agency does not turn anyone away for services, but that the number of hours per client per week has decreased as a result of a lack of funding. Mr. McCollester explained that the agency is aggressive about receiving funding from the towns that it serves. Vice Chairman Lewis asked what the agency plans to use the Portsmouth CDBG funds for. Mr. McCollester said that the funding is used to fund a part-time individual who serves Portsmouth clients. Mr. Moore asked if the agency was still operating its air conditioner program. Mr. McCollester said that the agency continues to operate this program with the assistance of one of the board members. Chairman Layton thanked Mr. McCollester for his presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Ms. Sonja Solberg and Ms. Caren Kachoris of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE). Ms. Solberg explained that the agency was requesting funding for its Portsmouth Health Center. She said the Portsmouth Health Center provides reproductive health care to men, women and teens who earn low incomes. Those services include gynecological exams with screenings for cervical, breast, uterine, and colo-rectal cancers as well as birth control education. She said they have expanded their services to include follow-ups for abnormal Pap tests. She reported that the agency saw an increase of 9% in its clients served from 2004 to 2005. She said

69% of clients have no insurance and a sliding fee scale is used for the services. Ms. Kachoris said that soon the site would have a new site manager. Ms. Emerson inquired when teen walk-in hours were. Ms. Kachoris explained that teens are welcome to come in at any time but hours are advertised for Wednesday afternoons. Ms. Rooney asked in what ways the agency networks with other health care agencies. Ms. Kachoris said the agency provides referrals to local specialty medical practices and refers clients to Women Infants and Children as well as Health and Human Services. Ms. Hayden asked if the agency leased the space they utilize on High Street. Ms. Kachoris said that she thought that was true. Chairman Layton thanked both Ms. Solberg and Ms. Kachoris for their presentation.

After the presentations the committee generally discussed the variety and quality of the social service offerings in Portsmouth.

Vice Chairman Lewis stated that he did not think the CAC should fund two programs from the same agency. He said that Families First would be able to operate both programs if the CAC approved one grant to the entire agency. The CAC generally discussed the Dental Program and how it has grown.. It was generally believed that this is an important health care issue because the disease (dental disease) can be prevented and cured with the assistance of non-profit agencies and schools working together. Some CAC members discussed the possibility that some efforts in the schools could be cut back because all students in the schools do not necessarily need free screenings from the Healthy Grins program.

The committee also discussed the application from Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE). Ms. Emerson pointed out that the services offered at PPNNE's Portsmouth Health Center are specialized and particularly accessible to teenagers who would otherwise not access services at another location in town such as one that serves families. Ms. Rooney pointed out that the Health Center does not offer obstetrics whereas Families First does, and this is one aspect of services offered which distinguishes the two agencies. Vice Chairman Lewis encouraged the committee to consider what the City actually requires in terms of social services.

At the end of the meeting, the committee agreed that on Thursday March 23rd the staff would be ready with some scenarios for funding but that Mr. Moore would bring a laptop so that the group could make changes in real time during the meeting.

Chairman Layton adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.