

MINUTES

BOARDS OF BENTON AND FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Bi-County Board Meeting
Thursday, June 30, 2016, 9:00 a.m.
Benton County Justice Center
Commissioners Conference Room, 2nd Floor
7122 W. Okanogan Place, Bldg. A
Kennewick, WA 99336

Benton County

Present: Chairman Shon Small
Commissioner Jerome Delvin
Commissioner James Beaver
County Administrator David Sparks
Clerk of the Board Cami McKenzie

Benton County/Bi-County Employees Present: Lexi Wingfield, Personnel Manager; DPA Ryan Lukson; Adam Fyall, Sustainable Development; Deputy Administrator Loretta Smith Kelty; Kyle Sullivan, Human Services Manager; DPA Ryan Brown; Tammy McKeirnan, Human Services; Shyanne Faulconer, Community Programs/PR Coordinator.

Franklin County

Present: Chairman Rick Miller
Commissioner Brad Peck
Commissioner Bob Koch
County Administrator Keith Johnson

Discussion on Future of Human Services

Chair Rick Miller acknowledged the Boards met in a bi-county meeting three months ago and came to an agreement, however, things happened since that time that they needed to review. The Franklin County Board indicated they just saw the contract about two weeks ago and there was no hesitation on their part but they needed to review the contract.

Chair Miller said one of the issues was a potential conflict of interest for Rick Weaver. He said he researched Bexar County Texas as the model for a one stop for a mental/behavioral health system, their consultant was willing to come to Tri-Cities and it would eliminate any conflict if they used him.

Commissioner Beaver asked why the conflict of interest wasn't raised at the bi-county meeting where the agreement was unanimously agreed to. He said the counties were making decisions

together and then separately making other decisions and the constituents were not being served properly. He said it was time to make a decision and move forward.

Commissioner Peck said he shared that sentiment and enough was enough and they needed to serve the people, but not if it was the wrong decision. He then referred back to the minutes from the last meeting where he made an amendment to the motion stating it was conditioned upon review of the contract for services and was immediately after concerns were expressed regarding a conflict of interest. He said he felt they stuck to what they voted on but agreed the entire process took longer than it should have.

Additionally, Commissioner Peck stated he didn't have any relationship with Rick Weaver and everything he had heard indicated he was competent and highly respected. However they had a situation where an individual was CEO and president of an organization and simultaneously wearing four different hats: 1) a proposal to sign a contract to draft a plan for the future of mental health services in this community; 2) he was head of Comprehensive who could bid on those contracts for public money to provide those services; 3) he was sitting as a board member on GCBH as an alternate that influenced or approved contracts for these same services; and 4) he served on the finance committee that reviewed and advised the financial commitments for these contracts. He said it had nothing to do with his competence but it would be smart to avoid these potential conflicts so he could provide these services for our community.

Commissioner Delvin said he felt the Crisis Response issue should be solved now and proposed the counties give a 30 day notice to GCBH to break the contract for Crisis Response and let them know they wanted them to decide on a contractor or provider to provide that service so it became a stable organization. After that issue was solved they could deal with the rest of the systems but he felt the immediate need was to solve that issue. If they could not agree, then they would have to wait until 2017 when the agreement terminated but he would not take responsibility for what happened in the meantime.

Commissioner Peck agreed that was a good idea, the need was urgent and they should move forward but he wanted to hear from the audience on concerns about Crisis since it was a public meeting.

Chairman Miller said he agreed they needed to move forward on something and agreed with hearing from the audience.

The Boards agreed. Chairman Small said they should limit the comments to two minutes.

Public Comments

Tara Nelson spoke about how she was unable to get the help she needed from Crisis in 2012 before her father shot himself; she indicated Crisis was broken.

Ronnie Bachelor, community health worker, said she had a child that committed suicide and felt that people got the run around from Crisis. She said when a family was in a crisis was when the

help was needed; she said they could not do everything but they could do more. She said something needed to happen to support those that were most vulnerable in the community.

Kenneth Taylor said he was working on Claude Oliver's advocacy team. He talked about his own personal issues and said the system needed to be fixed and warned the Commissioners not to just put a contract in place to appease them. He said his son tried to commit suicide two times and Crisis did not help.

Charles Sargent apologized for not speaking sooner on the issue and said his son could not break the cycle of addiction. He asked the Commissioners to sit on the contract once they got it in place to make sure it was working.

Desiree Hall, Pasco, talked about her personal experience and that she spent time in a Lourdes facility. She said the mental health system was strained and broken and needed to be addressed.

Barbara Mead, Lourdes Counseling, said she wanted to thank the Commissioners for the idea of separating Crisis from the rest of the system. She said that Crisis Services was the most challenging service to provide; it was labor intensive and highly educated people must provide that service. She said did not believe the behavioral health system was broken but that it was challenged and mentioned they opened the new Detox Center a week ago; a small but notable progress.

Commissioner Peck said that Lourdes was recognized as one of the highly capable providers in the area and he wanted to know if Lourdes felt disadvantaged in this process.

There was a discussion regarding the appropriateness of that question and whether the Boards were getting off the subject of the special board meeting. DPA Ryan Brown he was going to leave it up to the Board to decide.

Ms. Mead said it was her opinion that if a consultant was brought on to look at the overall behavioral health system that it must be very clearly defined to help the group develop an overall broad vision; then the consultant would step out and the group would work to define specific action plans where the providers were held accountable for those action plans. She said in the ideal world the consultant should be chosen from outside the local providers but also knowledgeable about services in the State of Washington. In response to another question by Commissioner Peck, Ms. Mead said that Lourdes had chosen not to be on the funding committee.

Chairman Small asked Ms. Mead if she had seen any favoritism on the funding board and she said she could not answer that question and she did not attend all those meetings.

Claude Oliver, former Benton County Commissioner, said they were asked by citizens to address this issue in 2004 and they were still at the same place now as they were back then. He said he was in a group that had been meeting for several months and all those members were touched by some tragedy. He said they were looking at finding a fast track to get those services and they believed Bexar County in San Antonio was on a fast track and were nationally recognized for their work on mental health. He said one of their key components was they had community advisory

around their board which was a key factor missing here is this community. He said they also wanted to ask Governor Jay Inslee to send his office of State DHS Mental Health to come and interview this community and meet with all players.

Commissioner Delvin said he reviewed the Commissioner minutes from 2004 but couldn't find a record of what Benton-Franklin CAC came back with. Mr. Oliver said they did talk about a one-stop shop back then and in 2008 six commissioners voted to go forward with CAC.

Commissioner Delvin said it was his recommendation to solve the Crisis issue and let GCBH contract for the services. He said currently the two counties were contracting with them to get the services so either the counties would need to keep it or let GCBH find someone to provide those services.

Claude Oliver said he agreed that sizing up the services that Crisis provided would be the first step in getting the system addressed. He requested the Boards expedite the Bexar County model and that Washington DHS also had a responsibility to review the issue.

Commissioner Beaver said the people were saying the counties were not doing a good job so he was in favor of giving it to GCBH because the longer it stayed with these six guys, the longer it didn't get fixed.

Commissioner Peck asked Mr. Oliver if he felt that going forward with contracting with Crisis would close the door for a one stop. Mr. Oliver said he believed it could preclude it from being part of the system.

Commissioner Koch said he agreed with dealing with the Crisis issue immediately and bringing up Bexar County at the same time.

Chairman Miller said he agreed with the Crisis issue being expedited and also wanted to meet with Bexar County now to discuss planning for this area.

Franklin County discussed the mental health sales tax issue.

Public Comments - Continued

Chris Kennedy said she did not believe they could separate the two issues and would hate to operate Crisis Response because part of the problem was that they had no options. She asked the Boards to look at models that currently worked like the Idaho program and Texas program.

Angi Mantarola said mental health was the same and didn't look different in other areas. She said her concern was that whoever they contracted with for Crisis Response, they should not think that it was fixed; they could do much better but they needed to make sure they were checking up on it.

Aaron Beasley asked the Boards to include in their motion to study other options and put a time limit on it.

Benton County

MOTION: Commissioner Delvin moved to send a joint letter to the GCBH stating they wanted to get out of the contract and request they provide the services in 30 days for the Crisis operations. Commissioner Beaver seconded and upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Franklin County

MOTION: Commissioner Koch said he wanted to have the same motion to have a bi-county letter sent to GCBH. Commissioner Peck seconded.

Discussion

Commissioner Peck wanted clarification that it was a joint letter from the two boards giving notice under the contract of their intent to terminate the contract to provide crisis response services at the first opportunity and the motion was only to send that notice.

Benton County indicated that was correct.

Upon vote the motion carried unanimously.

Benton County

MOTION: Commissioner Delvin moved to appoint the two chairs of the Boards to work with Kyle Sullivan on bringing a consultant to our area as soon as possible to look at designing a model for mental health. Commissioner Beaver seconded and upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Peck said before they moved forward on any motion based on Benton County's action, he wanted to have a discussion. He said Benton County said to appoint the two chairs and he was sure it wasn't the intent of Benton County to tell Franklin County who to appoint.

Commissioner Delvin said he would amend his motion and Commissioner Peck indicated that Benton County's motion was not binding on Franklin County.

Commissioner Peck indicated the motion was for two commissioners to work with Kyle Sullivan and go out and locate a consultant and he wanted to know if there was a recommendation back to the Board whether it was binding to use whomever they found. He said that based on the sense of urgency and the fact they had identified a competent, nationally recognized, independent expert in Bexar County who was available in the next 30 to 40 days, he recommended the Board move for that option instead of having another meeting to study finding someone to come up here.

Chairman Miller agreed.

Franklin County

MOTION: Commissioner Koch moved to work with Kyle Sullivan bringing the consultant (Leon Evans) out of Texas up to give a breakdown of our system at this point. Commissioner Peck seconded.

Discussion

Commissioner Peck noted it was a different motion than passed by Benton County and as such would bind their representative in those discussions to say this was Franklin County’s decision that Leon Evans was the guy and if they wanted to explore other options, they would listen. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Delvin said he didn’t have a problem with that.

Chairman Small said he didn’t have a problem with Bexar County but wanted to have Rick Weaver involved as well.

Chairman Miller said that Leon Evans asked to work with Rick Weaver if we had this conflict and he would reach out to him.

Commissioner Peck said that was not a decision of the Board but he had no opposition to Rick Weaver as long as all other providers and recipients of services in the community had equal and fair access in the process.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:10 a.m.

Clerk of the Board

Chairman