



Child Care Taskforce Meeting

October 21st, 2021

Taskforce Members Present:

- Commissioner Clarence Carter (DHS)
- Commissioner Jeff McCord (DLWD)
- Jamie Stitt: Designee for Commissioner Bob Rolfe (DECD)
- Misty Moody: Designee for Commissioner Penny Schwinn (Education)
- Dr. Tobi Amosun: Designee for Commissioner Lisa Piercey (TDH)
- Phil Accord
- Pat Sheehy
- Chloe Moore
- Blair Taylor
- Ryan Hughes
- Jeremy Biggs

Staff Present:

- Trevor Lauri
- Cherrell Campbell-Street
- Jude White
- Gwen Laaser
- Eric Dunn
- Krisann Hodges
- Melisa Hucks
- Michelle Joyner
- Dakota Simpson
- Suzanne Carr

Taskforce Members

Absent:

- Senator Becky Massey
- Representative Patsy Hazelwood

1:30 p.m. Welcome and Commissioner's Updates

Commissioner Carter gave an update on the group's action items: selecting first and second vice chairs and selecting two members of the Taskforce to join a three-person DHS team to work together to determine who will be awarded the RFP.

1:43 p.m. Procurement Update

Deputy Commissioner Hucks gave an update on the procurement process. The process is being expedited so there is a reduced timeline for bids to be turned in. RFP review is with Central Procurement Office and Comptroller's approval should come today (10/21/2021). Within 30 days, the RFP should go out (by Thanksgiving). There has been a rule exception made for non-State employees to serve on the evaluation team. Conflicts of interest need to be reviewed to ensure the right people are participating in that process.

Blair Taylor asked about the process for the recommendation from the RFP. Deputy Hucks stated that the Taskforce will vote to select the chosen bidder, and if they do not pass, the second bidder can be selected or the process can restart. Deputy Hucks expects a 3-week turnaround after the Thanksgiving posting, after which the 5-person group will reconvene. Commissioner Carter stated that they hope to have a recommendation before the group at the January 2022 meeting. Outreach needs to wait until the RFP is public.

1:57 p.m. Child Care from the ECD Perspective

Brooxie Carlton updated the Taskforce on how ECD supports Child Care issues. Through their Community Development Block Grant Program, ECD partnered with DHS to find gaps in funding with Child Care. This funding can go to facility improvement. ECD is proposing to use \$10 million: \$9 million would be for development districts, partnering with local government to get the word out on how ECD and DHS can help, targeting facility rehabs, equipment purchases, and acquisition of buildings. The \$1 million remaining would potentially be split into \$500k for 1) an industry (unnamed) that is trying to hire 1,500 people but needs daycare facilities on property, and a community (unnamed) that said they needed daycare to be able to get people back to work. CDBG funding can hopefully make these ongoing programs. Patrick Sheehy asked if she could disclose the parties for the two \$500k grants. She answered that they cannot yet. Chloe Moore asked if they had a sense of the large market demand for this effort and how they would equitably divide these supports when the State has so many needs. Brooxie answered that these funds are Federal, and they are hoping with these pilots to work out the Federal rules and regulations that apply so they can find out how this works and what the demand is.

Gwen Laaser provided information on how DHS supports providers with technical assistance, including a new Pre-Licensure unit that launched in August that focuses on building a strong foundation for early childhood providers. They have assistance for all types of providers at any stage of business development.

Ryan Hughes challenged the group to think broadly about Child Care because some are licensed with DoE while some are licensed with DHS.

Phil Accord asked if Chambers of Commerce were involved. She answered yes, they are involved and know about these efforts. Chloe Moore asked about reducing siloes and how they could go about doing that. Deputy Campbell-Street walked through a lot of recent efforts to reduce those siloes such as the White Paper and P20 data. Commissioner Carter asked if a heat map of potential resources could be made for the next meeting. Pat Sheehy noted that THEC or TBR may be good to have come speak in a future meeting.

Jamie Stitt noted issues around retention of talent and recruiting. They're doing surveys to see the degree to which childcare is a stress on these businesses. Commissioner McCord noted that childcare has become a business need. Patrick Sheehy expressed that multi-party childcare consortiums might be a possible solution.

Phil Accord discussed small childcare centers, "micro-centers," popping up in schools around Tennessee. Chloe Moore noted that the group needs to think about the child's needs in this discussion, not just adults.

2:38 p.m. Selection of Taskforce Members for Evaluation Team and First/Second Vice Chair

Commissioner Carter nominated Phil Accord to serve on the 5-member evaluation team. Blair Taylor motioned and Commissioner McCord seconded. Commissioner Carter nominated Chloe Moore. Pat Sheehy motioned and Blair Taylor seconded. Both were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Ryan Hughes nominated Blair Taylor as first Vice-Chair, Commissioner Carter motioned, Chloe Moore seconded. Chloe Moore nominated Patrick Sheehy as second Vice-Chair. Commissioner Carter motioned and Blair Taylor seconded. Both were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

2:47 p.m. Concluding Remarks & Next Steps

Blair Taylor asked about putting some definition on the scope for the consultant. She mentioned Pat Sheehy's idea about a resource map, as well as a possible working group around business partnerships. Deputy Campbell-Street answered that it will be a good idea to make sure the State is not duplicating efforts with resources that we already have federally, statewide, or locally. Pat Sheehy emphasized that it would be good to get some materials started that will help the consultant hit the ground running. Commissioner Carter noted that there will be time on the November 2021 meeting agenda to have a broader discussion on this topic.

2:54 p.m. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m. The next Child Care Task Force meeting will take place on November 9th, 2021.