



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday, November 13, 2019**

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 2019, at City Hall.

Board Members in Attendance: Chair Alvarez, Members Gordon, Worthington, Wren, Huston, McHorse, Burson, Conlin

Austin Public Health staff in attendance: Rachel Farley, Cindy Gamez, Mary Jamsek, Estella Kirscht, Donna Sundstrom

Chair Alvarez called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

- 1. INTRODUCTIONS-** ECC members and Austin Public Health staff introduced themselves
- 2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST-**None
- 3. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL**
  - Jackie Goodman, Go Austin! Vamos Austin! (GAVA) Deputy Policy Director, and Laura Olsen, GAVA Early Childhood & Coordinated School Specialist, provided communication regarding item 6bi. Ms. Goodman urged ECC to have a representative on the planning committee for the Dove Springs Public Health Center. She asked ECC to encourage APH to engage stakeholders for input during design, construction, and beyond.
  - Ms. Olsen supports engaging in the process for the new health center and urged ECC to stay engaged both with the health center and the community. Ms. Olson said that the community engaged with the City about the health center but has not received updates from the City. She said she spoke with Mayor Pro Tem Garza's staff who expressed interest in having community engagement on the project.
- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** October 16, 2019, regular meeting minutes were approved with no changes by a unanimous vote (7-0, Member Worthington not present for vote.)
- 5. PRESENTATIONS**
  - a. **Austin Police Chief Brian Manley**, presented on Austin Police Department's priorities, programs and initiatives related to families with young children – Lt. Gizette Gaslin (APD outreach SPOC), Lt. Courtney Daniel, Executive Lt Robin Henderson were present as well
  - APD initiatives focused on children, youth, and families include: summer camp focused on leadership development; parent-focused partnership with Austin ISD and Northeast Vertical Team in Rundberg; backpack drive; participation in No Place for Hate Program about bullying; sporting events hosted by the Police Athletic League (PAL); Explorer Program (police academy for youth); sponsorship of the Waterloo District Boy Scout Troup, aimed at minority boys
  - APD offers Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) training to City staff and to external partners such as businesses and schools that request it.
  - Since passage of Texas Senate Bill (SB) 4 relating to police and immigration, APD has conducted community meetings to explain what APD does, what SB4 does, how APD interacts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the importance of victims coming forward, and that community safety is APD's priority; APD attends regular meetings at Casa Marianella to talk to new immigrants about laws, ordinances, services, and safe interaction with police

- Questions / comments from members
  - Cathy McHorse asked if APD has or needs information on community resources and support services for families with young children. APD uses resource guide but would like to connect with her to learn more about her list; may be able to put in on APD web site.
  - What family friendly supports are in place for staff with young children? New officers typically work night shifts. Robust peer support program for staff dealing with challenges like abuse, stress, substance use, divorce, etc. Improvements have been made to the department's health and wellness program. Employees experiencing a hardship can file for a hardship to request a different assignment if one is available. APD tries to meet employee needs when possible (ex- location or a shift). Confidentiality is kept unless it is a dangerous situation. APD does not provide child care subsidies beyond the City's income-eligible child care assistance.
  - What is the process for supporting young children when officers come to a home for a crisis call? Victim services and crisis counselors are available 24/7 and can be brought to the scene to support children 13 years and older; initially but can escalate to other resources if needed. APD partners with the Center for Child Protection if ongoing services are needed. CPS can provide resources if they become involved.
  - Updates on community policing from last assessment? APD implemented the vast majority of the recommendations. APD can't be successful in a city of one million people without community partnerships. APD can provide a report on the implementation progress of the report recommendations if ECC requests.
  - Update on working with people experiencing homelessness? APD is following the current homeless ordinance; worked with ARCH to guide citizens to services before enforcing ordinances; are working with other departments and entities to get non-sheltered folks into housing. APD rarely comes across homes families. The City is working to increase emergency shelter services. The Rathgeber Center will open soon.
  - Chief Manley agrees that early childhood development is critical, sets youth up to be more successful and have positive educational outcomes, and minimizes interactions with police. APD worked with Appleaseed to assess the juvenile curfew ordinance and when Council did away with it, there was no significant increase in youth committing crimes or being victims of crime.

**b. Nicole Robinson, Director, Child Care Contracts, and Michelle Crawford, Quality Initiatives Program Manager from Workforce Solutions Capital Area (WFS) presented on Child Care Subsidies and Continuity of Care**

- WFS oversees subsidy program for Travis County; Funding = \$24 million, majority to direct care, remainder to child care quality; Target- serve 3,009 children per day, birth to age 13 or up to 19 if have special need/disability
- Eligibility- Travis County resident, children are citizens or legal immigrants; parent(s) meet minimum hourly requirements for work, school, training; household income  $\leq$ 85% state median income;
- WFS uses local funding from City of Austin and others as a match to draw down additional federal funds for subsidy program
- Continuity of Care (CoC) funded locally by City of Austin, Travis County; CoC served 552 last year; additional CoC funding would allow more children to be served; finding enough quality rated seats is a limitation
- WFS administers child care quality Texas Rising Star program; 28.5% of eligible centers are quality rated; the most in the state; plan to exceed the state goal of 30%; state does not currently have a goal for percent of children receiving subsidies who are enrolled in quality rated care
- Rates of reimbursement to providers- increases by quality rating; Travis County has highest rates in state; about 85% of market rates; increased rates caused target number of children in care to decrease by 200
- Very small percentage of families are disqualified due to wage increases
- Open to talking about potential of including children of staff at TRS centers in subsidy priority group 3
- Exploring whether/how contracted slots would work
- Anna Lisa will provide WFS updates to ECC monthly
- Thank you for your work and community collaboration

## **6. NEW BUSINESS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS:**

- a. Chair Updates, Chair Raul Alvarez
  - i. Vote on 2020 Calendar of ECC meetings- Chair Raul Alvarez led discussion on finalizing 2020 meeting schedule. Members voted to meet according to schedule Rachel Farley submitted, with all meetings starting at 9:00 a.m. except for April 1, September 9 which would start at 6:30 pm. The vote passed 7-1 with Gordon opposed. Member Gordon proposed considering an earlier start time for the morning meetings. A vote to change the start time of the morning meetings from 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. passed unanimously by a vote of 8-0.
- b. Policy work group updates
  - i. ECC representative to participate in Dove Springs Public Health Center stakeholder meetings- Rachel Farley told members that the City held 2 community meetings for input on the health center and child care center. The City has issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) proposals from design/build firms for the health center and the City is not pursuing community input while RFQ is open. The City will re-engage with the community for input in spring 2020. Matt Worthington will follow up with MPT Garza's office. The ECC policy work group will discuss this and the ECC will revisit this in January.
  - ii. Possible recommendation to Council regarding proposed Land Development Code (LDC)- City staff will attend the Early Childhood Council January meeting to provide briefing on LDC; City Council will vote on first reading of LDC in December 2019 and is set to finalize details in February 2020. Members decided to postpone action regarding LDC until January.
- c. Community Partnership and Engagement work group updates- No update given
- d. Success by 6 Coalition Leadership Team update - Dec 3 - 5 Undoing Racism training for leadership team and stakeholders followed by a strategy session in early 2020; the community, with United Way as the fiscal agent, has been invited to apply for a Pritzker innovation grant for up to \$425,000 over 3 years for work to advance the prenatal to 3 agenda

## **7. STAFF BRIEFING**

- a. Rachel Farley, Austin Public Health
  - i. APH Portable Crib Program - this month APH launching program through WIC and Neighborhood Centers in partnership with Seton, St. David's, Community Care and People's Community Clinic; portable cribs provided along with education on safe sleep and crib set-up
  - ii. Family Connects update – nurses continue seeing more families each month; staff completed 67 home visits in September, 84 in October, reaching 61% of eligible births from St. David's South Austin Hospital; must reach 60% for 6 months to attain certification; staff working on reducing no-shows, cancelations, rescheduled visits

**8. RELATED GROUPS-** No groups provided updates.

## **9. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL**

## **10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- a. No meeting in December
- b. Possible presentations to schedule:
  - Family Connects
  - Head Start/Early Head Start providers
  - AISD teen parent program and child care centers
- c. February- Success By 6 leadership team presentation on policy agenda

**ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m.