

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**APRIL 29, 2009**  
**JOINT MEETING OF THE COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL, COUNTY COMMISSION AND**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Attending:** Tony St. Romaine, Assistant City Manager; Ken Burton, Chief of Police; Laura Nauser, Councilperson; Skip Elkin, County Commissioner; Karla DeSpain, Board Member; Barbara Hoppe, Councilperson; Michelle Pruitt, Board Member; Inez Segert, Board Member; Darwin Hindman, Mayor; Christine King, Board Member; Karen Miller, County Commissioner; Bill Watkins, City Manager; Ken Pearson, Presiding County Commissioner; Jerry Wade, Councilperson; Jan Mees, Board Member; Jim Ritter, Superintendent of Schools; Tom Rose, Board Member; and Carol Rhodes, Assistant to the City Manager.

Mayor Hindman noted it was the City's turn to host the breakfast meeting. After discussion of the agenda items, Mayor Hindman explained there would be time to discuss other issues.

**JUVENILE TASK FORCE UPDATE:** Dr. Ritter explained they had formed a Juvenile Task Force with representatives from the School District, the City and the County. They have had two meetings thus far which he felt to have been productive. He introduced Dr. Lynn Barnett and Dr. Wanda Brown, facilitators of the meetings, who gave a brief report on the progress of the Task Force.

Dr. Brown explained the meetings had been held on April 2 and April 16. The Task Force is made up of seven members as follows: Stephanie Browning, Health Department; Sergeant Eric White, Police Department; Camren Cross, Columbia Parks & Recreation Department; Carol Rhodes, City Manager's Office, Rick Gaines, Family Court Services Juvenile Division; Andrew Scholz, Prosecuting Attorney's Office; Greg Vandegriffe, Boone County Sheriff's Department; Dr. Lynn Barnett, Columbia Public Schools; and, Dr. Wanda Brown, Columbia Public Schools.

The Task Force identified the following problems: truancy is a major issue; chronic absences; children being left without adult supervision for hours; gangs – more and more students affiliated with them; fighting – no tolerance policy, automatic 10 day suspension; and, drug and alcohol abuse.

The Task Force made the following recommendations:

**Truancy:** before making a referral to the Juvenile Office, the Juvenile Office and Prosecuting Attorney's Office have agreed to sit down with Columbia Public Schools and the parents responsible for getting the students to school. This new procedure will begin in the fall.

**The Task Force is supportive of a curfew, both evening and day time:** Children, seemingly school age, are being seen on the streets by law enforcement during the school day

**Review and refine referral process to the Juvenile Office:** Beginning with the next school year they want to start with basic training on what the Juvenile Office is for, when referrals should be made, by whom should they be made and what should those referrals look like.

**Hickman High School bus stop** should be moved away from the school grounds and away from Dairy Queen.

**Development of a marketing campaign addressing the importance of attendance to alleviate the drop out rate.**

**Continuation of study in an alternative school setting.**

Regarding the drop outs, Commissioner Elkin asked if their reasons for dropping out were known. Dr. Barnett replied they try to find out through a follow up process involving teachers, counselors and principals. Reasons given include mental health, pregnancy, drug or alcohol abuse, and moving out on own and having to work to support self. Dr. Brown pointed out that students as young as middle school make the conscious decision that they are not going to make it. By age fifteen, she said they will drop out of school. One program, she noted as being very successful, was the Missouri Options Program. The Program involves study for obtaining a G.E.D. so students are allowed to walk across the stage to graduate. Those students are also counted as graduates for the school district.

Mayor Hindman asked if the Task Force recommendations would be made in the form of a report. Dr. Barnett said they would work on a report.

Dr. Rose felt the bus stop recommendation would be a simple thing. Mayor Hindman said it could be looked into.

Commissioner Miller complimented the work of the Task Force and added that the alternative school and the bus stop were the only two issues that weren't strictly up to the school district. She said the City could take care of the bus stop issue if possible and then the alternative school was something they all needed to work on together.

Ms. DeSpain felt they also needed to focus on truancy. She said it was something the community needs to get behind.

Dr. Brown pointed out that curfew would be a helpful tool for parents.

**JUVENILE CURFEW ORDINANCE**

Ms. Nauser said that she and Commissioner. Miller, after having gotten into the juvenile curfew issue, have found it to be more complicated than they had first thought. After a curfew is set, she said there was the question of what to do with the kids when they are brought in on a curfew violation. She found that the key to be some type of youth diversion program. Ms. Nauser reported to have received overwhelming support for a day time curfew but the idea of an evening curfew has not been quite so widely accepted. In order for a curfew to work, Ms. Nauser said it would have to be accepted by the entire community. In 2007 she said over 3,000 youth referrals to the juvenile system (multiple children with multiple referrals). There were also 132 juveniles brought in between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. for violating various laws and ordinances. Another thing needed in order to make a curfew successful is a marketing campaign so the kids and parents know about it. She passed out a policy paper with 20 plus recommendations on youth and crime with updated outcomes.

Commissioner Miller explained that presently the County has no authority to impose a curfew so they are working legislatively to get that authority. She said they have mostly been working on research and with individuals getting their feedback. She said they take crime statistics where they are

happening and get a crime rate. She said it is a targeted effort but it is not targeted by race, it is targeted by crime.

Ms. Hoppe asked if they had researched other university communities that have curfews. Ms. Nauser said she had not specifically targeted university communities but had tried to research communities and the programs they offer to keep kids out of trouble.

## **ADULT TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

Mr. Wade passed out a listing of the group members and their organizational affiliation. He noted these people had been present at the meeting because of personal interests. He said they tried to get participation from all of the key stake holders in the Columbia/ Boone County area. Regularly participating members include Bernie Andrews, REDI; Terry Barnes, University of Missouri; Zak Birchmeier, Stephens College; Bob Black, REDI; Arden Boyer-Stephens, CPS Career Center Adult Education; Scott Christianson, interested citizen; Tom Henderson, University of Missouri; Sally Beth Lyon, Columbia School District, Jan Mees, Columbia School District; Larry Moore, Columbia Chamber of Commerce; Ken Pearson, Boone County Commissioner; Ray Kristi, Columbia Chamber of Commerce; Terry Smith, Columbia College; Greg Steinhoff, Boone County Bank; Jerry Wade, Columbia City Council and DeAnna Walkenback, interested citizen.

Mr. Wade described the history of the group and passed around a handout of the model for adult technical training. He described their three basic functions as serving the existing employment structure, serving the underemployed and unskilled and where they want Columbia to be. He said everyone involved felt Columbia has a huge void in adult technical education. If not for the Columbia Public School System, he said we would have had nothing but even that is inadequate now for our needs. He noted that Columbia is the largest unexploited market for adult technical training and community college in the state. Mr. Wade said they talked about how to move the issue forward and they decided this meeting was the best place to make their first public announcement. He explained there is a sub group of the Task Force working on a proposal for a pre-proposal project which is almost finished. He thought the Task Force would make the decision to go ahead with it at their meeting on May 27. He suspected that project would be done with Missouri Enterprise. He said they would do a full assessment of the education needs of Columbia/Boone County. He thought funding for the first project was pretty much in place. A second proposal will be submitted to the WIB (Workforce Investment Board). This has to do with federal funding that goes through the Missouri Department of Economic Development. The purpose of the project is the development of a model of an operational organization.

Ms. Mees commented that the cooperation from everyone has created a real give and take situation. She said this would be a long process.

Mr. Wade pointed out that they were not only talking about an addition to Columbia's educational structure but also about finance issues. He said there was real sensitivity about not creating a new organization that challenges the School District in terms of funding. The groups feels they may have some avenues to address that concern.

Mr. Pearson commented on the diversity of the group. The Columbia Chamber of Commerce has asked the County to look at the possibility of adopting a fairly large sales tax. The requests would be evaluated by a seven member board.

Mr. Elkin liked the idea and asked how they would explain it to the voters when we already have a Career Center.

Ms. Mees responded by saying when the economics started going down the Career Center had received numerous calls from people desperate for training or retraining opportunities to make them more work force ready. She said the need has been shown to be very apparent.

Ms. Lyon noted that the Career Center is only available for adult training in the evening.

Ken Pearson reported on Warsaw efforts -- working together to ensure that they had an educated work force that met the needs of those businesses. They had high school training in school, technical training, junior college and university training - a whole spectrum which encourages businesses to stay there and also encourage other start up businesses to the community.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

Mayor Hindman brought up the issue of health in the schools which he said was an overlooked issue. He urged everyone to pay attention to kids getting exercise and proper nutrition.

Ms. Hoppe pointed out that Shepard Elementary School has a regular walk to school program. She herself has committed to walking with the children every Friday.

It was suggested that at the next meeting someone from Pednet and the Health Department be asked to talk about the issue.

Ms. Segert noted that many of the school are cutting back on recess periods.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.