

Community Relations Commission Meeting Minutes
May 27, 2004

Present: Matt Shaheen, Chair
Victoria Hoyos-Arango
Stella Vea
Jane Stephenson
Christy Doering
Shaheen Salam

Absent: Carol Moss
John Harris

Staff: Bob Buffington, Terrie Monroe, Jerry Bradley, Jr.

The hearing was opened at 6:01 P.M. by Chair, Matt Shaheen. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Matt explained that the total funds received this year would be \$244,786, and the total requests for funds were \$557,661. He informed the presenters that they would have ten minutes to make their presentations, and then time for questions and answers.

Matt also explained that the current guidelines for the Community Services Grants, which had been established by former Community Relations Commissions, specifically state that no more than 50% of funds granted to an agency can be used for salaries. He said that Family Services of Plano, CASA, and Legal Aid of North Texas all exceeded this limitation. He invited each agency to explain why they should be allowed to receive funds that exceed this 50% guideline. Matt announced also that the Commission would deliberate on this same issue after the hearings.

Public Hearing - Community Services Grants

The first presenter of the evening was Christina Blanchard, Chief Executive Officer of Boys & Girls Club. She requested \$20,000 for their SMART Moves Program. This program is a prevention and education program that addresses the problems and consequences of alcohol, drug use, and premature sexual activity. \$10,000 of the grant would be used for salary for a part time Program Coordinator, and \$4,500 would purchase SMART Moves Program Materials. The additional funds would be used for travel and training, Professional Program Materials, and awards for those teens completing the program. Stella Vea asked about parental involvement in the program. Ms. Blanchard explained that parents were more difficult to reach, but they were hoping for 50 parents this year. Jane Stephenson asked what the full salary for the part-time worker would be, and was told \$24,000.

Presenting second was Patricia Randall of The Turning Point (Rape Crisis Center of Collin County). This organization provides counseling, education, and advocacy for those impacted by sexual assault. Ms. Randall asked for \$26,000: \$8,000 for a portion of the salary for the Community Educator, \$4,000 for a portion of a salary for crisis intervention and counseling services, \$2,000 for printing and supply costs, and \$12,000 for occupancy costs, including rent and utilities. Christy Doering asked why there was such an increase in need for services. She was told the increase was due to increased

population, increased media coverage, and higher risks of more assault due to drugs and alcohol, especially in the over 50 category. Jane Stephenson asked how they recruited volunteers, and was told mostly through word of mouth, newspaper, church groups and school groups. Stella Vea asked what the full salary of the Educator is, and was told \$26,000.

Mr. Paul Hoffman, Executive Director of Dental Health Programs, Inc., presented next. He requested \$9,000, all of which was for direct dental care of children and seniors of Plano. \$5,607 of the grant would be used for salary, \$2,603 for supplies and uniforms, and \$790 for other expenses. Mr. Hoffman explained that funding from the state had been eliminated. Christy Doering asked if the organization took Medicaid, and she was told yes. Stella inquired about uniforms. Jane asked about getting local dentists to volunteer. Mr. Hoffman explained that this is hard to do, but they do use Baylor Dental School students as volunteers. Stella asked for and was given the names of three participating dentists. She also asked if they planned fund-raisers. Mr. Hoffman said they had discussed fund-raisers with Presbyterian Hospital, but had no plans yet. Matt Shaheen asked if their office was totally dedicated to this program or shared with for-profit groups. It is totally for this program, and open from 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

The next agency was Journey of Hope – Grief Support Center, Inc. Sandra Aikins, Board President, requested funding in the amount of \$10,000. These funds would be used for program materials (\$5,000) and Executive Director Salary (\$5,000). Sandra announced that they had hired a new director, Donna Pope, and she would be starting on July 6, 2004. Jane Stephenson asked for an explanation of the “Professional fees” item in their budget. As Sandra was not sure, the Commission requested a follow-up e-mail to explain this expense. Stella Vea asked for clarification that the services were for the entire family. She was told yes, for children 3 to 18 and caregivers.

Dan Powers, Clinical Director of Collin County Children’s Advocacy Center, was heard next. He requested funds totaling \$15,480. The funds would be used as follows: \$7,740 for a portion of salary for a full time therapist with bilingual capability, \$4,000 for a therapy room and office area, and \$1,500 for therapy supplies. Victoria Hoyos-Arango asked if the center had bilingual interviewers. Yes, they do. Mr. Powers explained the difference between an interviewer and a therapist, and the difference in their salary scale. Stella Vea asked if they had requested funding from McKinney since the center serves all Collin County. They have requested funding from McKinney CDBG. Shaheen Salam asked for the percent of Spanish clients. Dan said he did not have that figure, but stated they will see 218 this year. Christy asked if they pay rent on the therapy room. They pay rent to the center, which in turn pays part of the mortgage on the building. Matt asked if the “on going training” request was for the therapist. Yes, it is. Matt also asked if the \$4,000 paid for rent is “real dollars”, and he was told yes.

The next presenter was Lucy Long of Practical Parent Education. She brought along one of the bilingual program teachers, who related several success stories. Ms. Long requested \$14,000 to be used as follows: \$7,000 for salaries of parental educators, and \$7,000 for emergency needs (shelter, clothing, food, medical, dental, and safety). She also explained two new services to be introduced this year, Financial Services and Adult Literacy. Jane Stephenson asked the difference in Social Service intervention and referral services. Social Services is short-term assistance from the agency itself, and Referral Services is connecting parents with appropriate resources in the community.

Jane also asked about their library, which is a 300-book library that includes videos, toys, and awareness materials as well as books. Stella Vea asked how many parents attended classes last year. She was told 17,000. Jane asked how often home visits are made and how often. The parental teachers make the visits, and each makes four visits per week. Matt asked how many people's emergency needs are served. The answer was 91 last year.

Next on the agenda was Cathy Barker of Family Services of Plano. Ms. Barker requested \$14,533, which was all to be used for the salary of a full-time response team coordinator. This request was in violation of the guidelines of the program. Victoria asked which clients pay fees. The court-referred youth pay a fee to attend the programs. Stella Vea asked if the Mentoring Network works in shared space. She was told there was office space for this and rent was \$3,500. Christy Doering asked why the new position required only a bachelor's degree. She was told that salary prohibited requiring a master's degree. Matt raised the issue that the grant was 100% for salaries. He asked for her to email a list of other items that could be substituted in her grant if only 50% went to salaries.

Ms. Vicki Magee presented the next agency request, for CASA of Collin County, Inc. This organization strives to train community volunteers to advocate the best interests of abused and neglected children in the court system. The request was for \$18,830, which was for more than 50% of salary, and was broken down as follows: \$18,000 for salary, \$330 for office supplies, and \$500 for printing of recruitment brochures. Due to 147% growth in the last 5 years, they need to add another staff position. Jane Stephenson asked for an explanation of professional fees vs. organization dues listed on the budget. Professional fees are for auditing and accounting fees. She also asked about the conference and conventions expense. This is an expense for staff, and \$4,500 is for sending staff to training. Victoria asked if the state organizations provide funding. Yes, the Victims of Crimes Act and the Criminal Justice Funds do provide funding.

The next agency to present was the Collin County Regional Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. The request was for \$5,000 and would be used to offset the cost of providing City of Plano Public Works/Street personnel and Police personnel needed for signage, street closings, traffic, and security for their Race for the Cure. Jane Stephenson asked the amount of their grant for last year, which was also \$5,000.

The last agency to present was Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas. Chris Parks, Managing Attorney, and Sam Prince made the presentation. They requested \$30,000, of which \$21,000 would be used for salary of a part time lawyer. This is more than 50% of the request. Funds would also be used for benefits, \$5,766.50; training and travel, \$764.50; and other expenses, \$2,469. They explained that they had lost United Way funding. They pointed out that they provide only civil cases, no criminal. Stella Vea noted that part of their services last year were Domestic Violence cases. She asked if that wasn't criminal. She was told no, because they handle divorce and protective orders as opposed to criminal charges; the district attorney handles those. Christy Doering asked if the Volunteer Attorney Program helped them. They do use volunteer attorneys, but usually only in brief service cases that require only letters or forms. Most attorneys don't want to spend too many billable hours doing pro bono work. Stella asked if they have a list of those attorneys. They do. She asked for an email of that list. Victoria asked if there were incentives for the volunteer attorneys. Sam Prince explained that every

attorney by oath has a moral obligation to do pro bono work. Only 10% of licensed attorneys do so. Jane Stephenson asked if they take advantage of pro bono mediation persons. They did not know of any in this area, but they do in Denton County. She suggested checking with Professor Picchioni, Director of Programs for SMU, Legacy office. She also recommended the Dispute Mediation Service, Inc. in Dallas.

The public hearing was closed at 8:05 by Chair, Matt Shaheen. After a ten-minute break, the Commission reconvened.

Discussion of 50% Salary Cap Rule

The Commission discussed the guideline that states that no more than 50% of a grant can be for salaries. Matt explained that this rule was imposed by the Commission when the grants were first awarded. Because more and more agencies want to use the funding for salaries, and the rule only makes them manipulate their budgets, the question is whether the rule should be modified or eliminated. After discussion about the original intent of the grant to be for emergency food, clothing, and shelter, and the concern that the grant would end up being only for salaries, the Commission decided to leave the 50% rule in effect. Variances to the rule would be on a case-by-case basis.

Transition and Revitalization Committee Report

Stella Vea, liaison to the Transition and Revitalization Committee, reported to the Commission about the purpose and progress of the Committee. She explained that they began with ten ideas which are of most concern to Plano citizens. They are charged with determining ways of transitioning Plano from a developing city to a developed city. They want to look for ways to make Plano unique. For example, one suggestion is painting water towers to look like hot air balloons. The Commission was very interested in the progress of the Committee, and will be anxious to hear about affordable housing concerns when Transition and Revitalization addresses that component of the plan.

Matt reminded everyone that the deliberation meeting would be held on Thursday, June 10, at 6:00 P.M. The meeting was closed at 8:40 P.M.

Matt Shaheen, Chair