

**Oswego County Community Health and Poverty Reduction Task Force**  
**Meeting Minutes of March 25, 2015**  
**County Office Building, Oswego, NY, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room “A”**

**Members present:** Roy Reehil (Chair), Marie Schadt (Vice Chair), Jacob Mulcahey, Daniel LeClair, Anita Murphy, John Shelmidine, Lisa Roman.

**Advisors and Guests:** Kevin Gardner, Philip Church, Gregg Heffner, Shane Broadwell, Jiancheng Huang, Christopher Todd, Karen Goetz, Richard Mitchell, Charles Buki (via conference call.)

**Excused:** Stewart Amell

Committee Chair Reehil called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM. Minutes were distributed and approved.

Committee Chair Reehil welcomed first time attendees Lisa Roman and Anita Murphy and announced that the Shineman Foundation had approved funding for one third of the Task Force study. Foundation Representative Karen Goetz was introduced and spoke about her excitement to become part of our unique partnership.

Chairman Reehil presented the actions taken on tasks assigned during the last Task Force meeting:

- County Attorney Mitchell will assist in drafting a request for data from the State.
- Data acquisition from the schools will be underway ASAP.
- Leg Mulcahey brought an application form that can be used to request an intern from Oswego State. He mentioned that a job description was most important and Roy said that he would work with Andrea from CZB to complete that.
- Chairman Reehil described a proposed web site for the Task Force. The purpose would be as a repository for the documents and research that the members are collecting so that information can all be organized by topic for everyone's reference. It will also serve as a place for CZB to present documents, graphs, and drafts reports for review. Chairman Reehil also recommended a shorter name. Oswego2030.org was one recommendation and NextGenerationOswego.org was another. There was agreement that the domain name should coincide with a name change for the Task Force itself and members agreed to submit ideas to discuss at our next meeting.

Chairman Reehil described additional actions taken since the last meeting:

- CZB has created an online survey for County and non-County human services providers: <http://questionpro.com/t/ALCNSZSQtM> Charles Buki asked that everyone promote the survey and encourage staff to participate in a robust way so we can learn as much as possible about things that are working when it comes to tackling poverty. He encouraged participants to share advice, expertise, and experience. CZB would like to complete the survey by April 17. It was suggested by Phil Church that a letter be sent to certain parties requesting they fill out the survey and that a data base of appropriate people and agencies to send it to was available through the Youth Bureau. A press release was also suggested, but it was agreed that it would be better to develop one more generally about importance of the coming together of our three organizations than to ask for direct input to the survey.
- CZB has begun phone interviews with County Dept. Heads and non-profit agencies. Based on those discussions, they recommended several focus groups be held between April 29, and May 1, when Rob Krupika from CZB will be coming to Oswego. The following groups will attempt to be scheduled: Principals, Superintendents, Faith leaders, Rural Health Network members, elected officials and School Board members, Workforce Development Board, Front line services providers. Christopher Todd offered the Mexico Campus of CiTi as a central location to hold focus group meetings. Lisa Roman and John Shelmidine offered to help assemble the group of guidance counselors and superintendents and board members respectively.
- Leg. LeClair reported on a survey he already sent out to the ecumenical community and he would like to schedule a faith community focus group on April 30, 2015 at 7:00PM in Central Square. He mentioned that there seemed to be a great interest in our efforts and that he was working to define the “five greatest needs.” Transportation issues were high on the list of needs.

Anita Murphy jumped in and questioned whether data alone would be enough to produce systematic change and that sparked a lively discussion. She asserted that systematic change would require thinking “outside the box” and cited a backpack food distribution program that uses students who are already on buses to bring backpacks full of food home. It was agreed that the data would have to be combined with that sort of “outside the box” thinking by Task Force members & advisors to effect real cultural & systematic change going forward.

- Chairman Reehil offered that CZB had recommended developing a Technical Advisory Committee of senior county staff and will work with Gregg Heffner to create it when deemed necessary.

New Business:

- Chairman Reehil asked Karen Goetz to speak with Shineman Foundation Board members to see how they would like to be represented on the Task Force. He stated that he wanted to make sure that each of our three partner organizations feel properly represented and that it was appropriate for each organization to have slightly different goals. He suggested that it would be smart to work down “parallel paths” doing research and developing ideas that could converge at the end. He cited Dan’s ecumenical work, his own interest in multi-disciplinary intervention teams and adult and childhood literacy programs as examples of parallel paths that members could be working on concurrently with our data acquisition. He encouraged reaching out to other groups and individuals that would be interested in helping us generate a powerful wave of momentum that will help us to implement the solutions we will propose at the end of the study.

Roy began a discussion of some of the categories of need in the County and Charles Buki elaborated: Group 1 consists of the chronically poor. That’s a very big group that is currently serviced through State and federally mandated services. Group 2 is the situationally poor, a smaller group, but one that may be easier for us to address as a Task Force because there are many in this group that are most able and desirous of taking advantage of the assistance that we can provide. Group 3 is to focusing on kids, on character, literacy and the future. This is a place where great rewards will be reaped. 4th was to think about the idea of “reinvestment in ourselves,” reinvestment in Oswego. This would include finding ways to position the County to attract a larger middle class.

During closing comments Marie Schadt offered that she would like to invite Dr. Jackie Reihman, a distinguished teaching professor from SUNY Oswego to join us as a guest at our next meeting. She has recently done a Teen pregnancy study and had great success getting “voluntary data” by offering food cards as a reward for participation. Marie also offered that the loss of “23 manufacturers” has led to economic decline and that a decline in “family values” has followed in that wake.

Gregg Heffner offered the idea that someone from the Workforce Development Board or OC-IDA would also make good additions to our advisory group and he will speak to them about offering a volunteer to join us.

Jake Mulcahey added three things. 1) That we should enlist the help of our State Representatives to help us with State data. 2) That we should talk to the Child Advocacy Counsel and 3) that we should DEFFINATELY change the Task Force name.

Jiancheng Huang suggested that enlisting staff or professors from SUNY Oswego in the discussion of what can help get professionals to locate in the County permanently, instead of choosing adjoining counties.

Legislature Chairman Kevin Gardner thanked everyone for their participation and Task Force Chairman Reehil brought the meeting to a close.

The next meeting will be held Wed., April 22, 2014, 12:00 Noon in Room “E”  
Meeting adjourned at 1:30PM