

The Child Care Advisory Committee held their monthly meeting on March 2, 2016. Committee members present included Shelly Aleshire, Lucinda Burns, Mike Connelly, Johanna Gibbs, Elisabeth Lawrence, Jennifer McAtamney, Greta Shackelford, and Mark Wimberly. Jonathan Whitfield attended by phone. Anne Marie Chapin was unable to attend the entire meeting via phone due to technological difficulties. Town staff/representatives present were Rick Holman, Jenise Jensen, Laurie Best, and Peter Grosshuesch. Emily Oberheide was absent. Karen Kuffner and Samantha Robinson from the BOD of Breckenridge Montessori and Mollie Fitzpatrick of BBC Research and Consulting attended to present to the Advisory Committee. The following agenda items were covered:

Breckenridge Montessori Presentation

Breckenridge Montessori's goals are 1) to secure a temporary or long-term location for Breckenridge Montessori by August 1, 2016, 2) decrease operating expenses by decreasing their rent amount, and 3) secure a long-term affordable home for Breckenridge Montessori.

Breckenridge Montessori was established in September 2006 and has had its non-profit status since February 2007. They are licensed for 22 children and currently have 21 enrolled. They use the Montessori method of education and have a mixed-age classroom of 2½ through 6 year olds. The school operates M-F 8:00a.m.- 4:30p.m. and follows the Summit School District schedule except that they are open in summer aside from a three week break in August. They have three staff members: Beth Craig, their director, has been there since 2008, Megan O'Malley, full-time teacher since 2013, and a substitute teacher. They hope to decrease rent cost so they can provide salary increases to staff to help retain their quality staff and provide consistency in the care for the children. The school is dedicated to fundraising and grant writing. Families currently served by Montessori hold important jobs in the community- such as emergency nurses, firefighters, independent business owners, attorney, and social workers.

The Montessori Board of Directors has been working with a realtor for the past year looking for commercial rental space and have found that there is limited availability and there are challenges with available spaces in meeting state licensing requirements. They have reached out to the Mayor, Town of Breckenridge staff, Breckenridge Housing and Childcare Committee, Father Dyer Church, Mountain Top Children's Museum, and Breckenridge Christian Ministries. They approached the landlord about purchasing the property but found out it would be \$1.4 million. They were looking into the Bearly Big space at the Recreation Center however Town Council did not support that request. They have started working with a second realtor, but are still seeing limited availability and spaces that do not meet licensing requirements in Breckenridge. The August 1st date is approaching and they need 60 days prior to the August 1st date to be ready with licensing. They were looking for ideas to help find a new location and meet their goals.

The Childcare Advisory Committee inquired about utilizing a residential space and there was discussion about the square footage requirements and high costs (Montessori needs a minimum of 600 square feet to serve 20 children). Committee also mentioned requesting an extended lease at the current location to help the transition. They were asked whether the school has a waitlist (currently, no) and how many kids are moving on to kindergarten in the fall (maybe 5). Other ideas were the French Creek clubhouse or having a conversation with St. John.

Montessori is open to extending the operating hours, but feels it would be difficult to change their overall schedule (which includes 9 weeks off per year) due to their model with smaller staff, wanting to provide benefits to staff while minimizing bringing in substitutes since it is especially challenging to find Montessori trained substitutes. They are open to extending to infant and toddler care as long as they keep it true to Montessori and mentioned that their staff would need to be trained in infant and toddler Montessori care if that were to happen.

Child Care Needs Assessment

Background, Changes, and Demand Analysis. The Town hired BBC Research, an economic and policy research firm in Denver, to conduct an update to the original Childcare Needs Assessment done in the spring of 2007. Mollie Fitzpatrick attended the meeting to share **preliminary** information. The information provided in the final

assessment is intended to help guide policy. The study is looking at projections of need for facility based care in the next 10 years. They looked at two separate forecasts, residents and in-commuters.

About 85% of children in Breckenridge care are residents of the Upper Blue Basin. There is a higher proportion of permanent residents now than in 2007 and in 2000- largely based on policy decisions by the Town to create community programs to keep families here. Looking at households with children, there is a higher proportion now than there was in 2000, and a similar proportion to 2007 although this uses the most recent census data which is from 2010 and may not account for increase since then due to the economic recovery. It is expected that the proportion of households with children is higher now than in 2007. Policy changes have happened since the initial needs assessment in 2007, primarily through the Childcare Program's Tuition Assistance Program. There were facility changes since 2007 in KinderHut closing, Timberline opening, and the school district opening new pre-K at Upper Blue Elementary.

Provider Feedback. BBC met with the four primary centers and heard feedback that operations could not be financially feasible for them without the Breckenridge Tuition Assistance Program, their primary challenges are in staff retention and financial sustainability, there has been an increase in demand in the last few years but waitlists are more reasonable and are not indicating a strong need for a new center.

Survey Results. There was a strong response on the survey, with approximately 350 people beginning the survey and 250 people completing the survey that are year-round Summit County residents with children under the age of 6. In looking at the data, it is skewed to the type of respondents: nearly half of the respondents have lived in Summit County for 10 years, 2/3 of the respondents live in Breckenridge or the Upper Blue Basin, 83% of respondents are home owners, 60% in a single-family homes, and respondents were generally from higher income families.

Families are using more care per week now than in 2007. 72% of respondents use childcare center care. Over half of the respondents stated that they were combining more than one type of care. The most common combination of care was childcare center and spouse/significant other arranging work hours to care for children. The average days/week of care used was highest for "stay at home" (3.9 days/week) and then "childcare center" (3.3 days/week). The average monthly cost per child went up from \$485 in 2007 to \$775 in 2016 which is an increase even accounting for inflation. It was noted that the child care centers were asked a few years ago by the Town to raise their rates to reflect the true cost of operating, as previous to that time, the Town supported the Centers behind the scenes. Mollie was asked by the Committee to look deeper into the data about cost of care as a percentage of income to see how it could be broken out to look at family's cost separate from the Town of Breckenridge tuition assistance, since one goal of the Childcare Program is to help families keep their cost to between 12-16% of their gross income. She will also look into reporting by one child in care versus multiple children in care to see how that affects the % of income spent on childcare. 19% of respondents said they are able to afford childcare "due to the assistance we receive". 22% said "covering the cost of care is a major challenge for our household" and 28% said "The cost of care is difficult for us to cover, but we are able to get by through cutting back in other areas".

60% of respondents said the current situation meets their needs. 63% said if drop-in was available, they would use it and 48% said they would use weekend care if was available. A notable change from 2007 to now, was that the "waitlist too long or days needed not available" dropped to the third highest challenge from the top challenge in 2007. Mollie mentioned that cost is typically the highest challenge so it does not indicate the cost is too high, just that cost is always going to come up. In 2007, the fact that waitlist was the primary challenge showed an immediate need for child care and that has improved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:37 and was followed by an executive session for the purposes of discussion personnel.

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 6th at 3:00