

The Child Care Advisory Committee held its monthly meeting on March 2, 2015. Committee members present included Mike Connelly, Greta Shackelford, Elisabeth Lawrence, Jennifer McAtamney, Lucinda Burns, and Laurie Blackwell. Kelly Keith from ECO also attended. Carla Koch and Peter Grosshuesch were absent. The following agenda items were covered:

In preparation for the March 10th Council worksession the following Tuition Assistance Program Changes were discussed:

- Staffing
 - The search for a program manager/administrator and for an enrollment specialist to process tuition assistance applications is on-going. RFPs were issued February 13th. The manager/administrator is a new FTE approved by Council and the enrollment specialist is a ½ FTE to replace ECO. As of the meeting, the Town had received 3 proposals for the manager/admin services and one for the enrollment services. Deadline for proposals is the 2nd and Town staff will vet the proposals and brief the BCCC.
- Sliding Scale
 - BCCC has reviewed the sliding scale option and believes the family co-pays under a sliding scale model can be crafted to closely match the current family-specific tuition assistance awards. Because sliding scales are potentially more efficient, easier to use, and more transparent, this change to the model should still be on the table to be implemented by the new program manager/administrator.
- Program Guideline Changes
 - BCCC has evaluated the impact of several program changes and believes that overall there is no overall cost increase as a result of the changes and that the impact to individual families is acceptable:
 - Resident/Non-resident rate-BCCC initially recommended a 6% resident/non-resident rate adjustment for out of Town residents, with residents receiving full tuition assistance and non-residents receiving 6% less than a full award. However, we received a recommendation from the Housing Child Care Committee that there should be a bigger differential between residents and non-residents. BCCC discussed this request and found that that an increase from 6% to 10% would result in only 7 families paying more than 16% of their income on child care. Of those 7 only 2 would be paying a higher overall percentage with all of the program changes considered. Therefore BCCC was OK revising the differential from 6% to 10% to comply with the Housing/Child Care Committee's recommendation. This change will also result in some cost savings that would enable the program to cover other changes, specifically the elimination of the per child cap, without driving the cost of the program up.
 - Elimination of current cap of \$650/child-The current cap impacts about 23% of the participants and most of those families are significantly cost-burdened due to the cap. The \$650 cap was set when the program was initially launched with no information available at that time to set a cap based on family demographics or income. It was a random number to be adjusted when more information became available in regard to the users. BCCC is recommending the cap be eliminated. This change will increase the cost of the program by about 12.8% but will help 22 families/participants who are severely cost-burdened (paying 16-40% of their income on childcare with the existing level of award).
 - Change the affordability standard/calculations to use 13-14% of family income as the acceptable, affordable range. The current calculator assumed 12-13% in determining awards which is low compared to other programs. This change will decrease the cost of the program by about 10%.
 - Add an asset cap, similar to utilized in the Aspen Housing Program-no other child care programs incorporate asset testing but the Council and the Housing/Child Care Committee have both indicated this is an important element. The Committee discussed using the cap established by Aspen which is \$150,000 of the AMI cap (\$225,000). BCCC is recommending that the cap be used as a trigger for additional review as opposed to an eligibility restriction. Any family with more than \$225,000 in assets

would require special review to determine what circumstances impact the family's cash flow and ability to pay the true cost of care. BCCC recommends that certain assets be excluded including primary residence equity, retirement, education, and health accounts that are not liquid. BCCC believes there will significant benefit to identifying each family's assets so there is better information about the recipients of the program.

- Daily Rate-Use daily rates to insure that all families pay something for each day to eliminate the perception of free days. Since the program is needs-based, when a family reaches their maximum out of pocket (based on their income), additional days do not cost the family more. But, using a daily rate (as opposed to a monthly award) based on the families schedule at the time of enrollment, may help minimize the appearance of 'free days'. In conjunction a penalty for schedule changes will be implemented to streamline the process and discourage families from enrolling for more care than they need.
- Outreach/Education-The Committee discussed the need for web site but also the need for on-going education program and outreach to the community, the users of the program, and the beneficiaries of the program (i.e. business community)
- Long Term Funding-The Committee also discussed that a significant responsibility of the new manager/administrator will be long term funding and that this goal needs to be included from the beginning.

The next Committee meeting will be March 23 at 3pm.