

Ohio Commission on Fatherhood
Minutes from the Meeting of
Tuesday, March 24, 2009

<p>Commissioners Present: Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones, Chairman Mr. David Kontur, Vice Chairman Ms. Rose Handon, Secretary Councilman Kevin Conwell Mr. Robert Boykins Mr. Robert “Bo” Chilton Mr. Cedric Collins Mr. Thomas “Eddie” Joyce Dr. Diane Karther Mr. Steven Killpack Mr. Greg Landsman Mr. Scott Neely</p>	<p>OCF Staff Present: Mr. J. Tracy Robinson, Executive Director Mr. Derrick Bryan Ms. Monica Mahoney Mr. Stanley Upton</p>
<p>Commissioners Represented by Designee: Senator Ray Miller (by Calvin N. Cooper)</p>	<p>Guests: Reverend Eli Williams, Urban Lights Ministry Pastor Eugene Norris, Summit County Fatherhood Initiative Mr. Al Grimes, Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative Mr. Kevin Lottes, Supreme Court of Ohio Mr. Gerald Anderson, Fatherhood House Mr. Winston Gragg, Men Who Are Fathers Ms. Rhonda “RJ” Frazier, The Transformation Place</p>

I. Call to Order & Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 am by Vice Chairman David Kontur. Chairman Peter Lawson Jones was en route from Cleveland and arrived soon thereafter to chair the meeting. A quorum was achieved.

II. Introduction of Commissioner Robert Boykins

Commissioner Robert Boykins was appointed by Deborah S. Delisle, Superintendent of Public Education, as her designated representative to the OCF, effective January 30, 2009. Mr. Boykins stated that he is very committed to the issue of father involvement and is honored to be appointed to serve on the Commission. He also shared that he has been married for 15 years and is the

father of five children. Director Robinson said that he looks forward to collaborating with Commissioner Boykins and the Department of Education.

III. Minutes from January 27, 2009

Commissioner Kontur moved with Commissioner Cedric Collins seconding that the minutes from the meeting of January 27, 2009, be approved as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Robinson provided a written summary of his activities in February and March, minutes from the March 12th grantee conference call and an invoice summary of all ten grantee programs. Those documents are incorporated into these minutes. Director Robinson highlighted the following events from the past two months:

- Meeting on February 27th with Gene Smith, OSU Athletic Director, to discuss the development of a program and curriculum to help athletes succeed as fathers.
- Meeting on February 19th with Read Allen, Columbus Crew Community Outreach Director, to plan a fatherhood event sponsored by the team and to be held at Crew Stadium on September 13, 2009.
- Meeting on March 3rd with Nan Beeler and Dr. Leslie Ahmadi of the Institute for Human Services (“IHS”). IHS has a contract with the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (“OCWTP”). Discussed collaborating to create new curriculum and conferences for OCWTP focused on identifying and engaging fathers.
- Meeting on March 18th with Amy Swanson, Voices of Children Executive Director, to discuss ways to make county government more father-friendly. September OCF retreat identified Voices for Children as a potential collaborating organization.

- OCF requested that every grantee program submit the names of the legislators who represent their district. Director Robinson will continue meeting with legislators to inform them about the work of the OCF.
- The OCF website (www.fatherhood.ohio.gov) was launched and featured on the Ohio government main page. Since the site launch, OCF has received e-mail and telephone inquiries from people and organizations throughout Ohio and Illinois.
- OCF staff set up an intranet site for use by all grantee programs (www.ohiofathers.webexone.com) which includes a calendar of upcoming program events, links to all grantee programs and a forum for discussion. OCF plans to post future Requests for Proposals (“RFPs”) and program evaluation forms on the website so that the information and data gathered will be consistent across programs. Stanley Upton will e-mail all commissioners, inviting them to join the intranet site.

Greg Landsman, Director of the Governor’s Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives (“GOFBCI”) was very impressed with the OCF intranet site and requested that Mr. Upton train GOFBCI staff on establishing a similar site for that office. Mr. Landsman offered to provide the name of contacts with the Cincinnati Reds and Cincinnati Bengals’ executive offices for possible sponsorship of future fatherhood events.

V. “Dadz Breakfast” Presentation

Reverend Eli Williams, Director of Urban Light Ministries (“ULM”), made a presentation. He highlighted the “Dadz Breakfast” held at a public elementary school on February 6th. ULM arranged for Bob Evans® restaurants to sponsor the event and provide a hot breakfast for the fathers and children who attended. Over 300 people participated, and the event was featured in the Dayton Daily News. Since the event, more than ten other school principals have contacted ULM about holding a “Dadz Breakfast” at their schools. Al Grimes noted that Cleveland has a “Donuts for

Dads” program and suggested that ULM contact local PTAs and school superintendents about possible funding for future breakfasts.

Since receiving their OCF grant, Urban Light Ministries has served 185 fathers including sixty incarcerated fathers, forty middle school boys, and eighty-five custodial fathers. The middle schools boys participate in a premature fatherhood prevention class whose motto is “become a man before you become a father.” ULM provides free monthly father-child events in the nine counties throughout their region, including a new Spanish-language “Nurturing Fathers” class.

Mr. Landsman asked whether ULM offers incentives for fathers to participate in its programs. Reverend Williams replied that ULM empowers fathers from the start. When a father commits to participates in ULM’s 12-week fatherhood course, the fathers are paid for sharing their experiences and in effect become the meeting leaders.

Chairman Jones suggests that during the monthly conference calls, Director Robinson ask one grantee to highlight some aspect of its program that was particularly successful, e.g. ULM’s “Dadz Breakfast.”

VI. Discussion and Decision

A. Proposed OCF Statute Revisions

Commissioner Steve Killpack reviewed the proposed revisions to the OCF statute, O.R.C. 5101.34. House Bill 1 proposes the addition of the Director of ODADAS as a commissioner. Although Chairman Jones cautioned that the statute only be amended to add agencies whose mission is to serve fathers, he suggested that we agree to add the Director of ODADAS, Angela Cornelius Dawson, because of her genuine interest in the Commission and her promise to personally attend all OCF meetings if her agency is added as a commission member.

After review of the proposed changes, Commissioner Kontur moved to adopt the statute as revised. Commissioner Diane Karther seconded the motion, and the proposed amendments to the statute were unanimously approved.

As a matter of strategy, Chairman Jones suggested that we seek to have the proposed OCF statutory revisions amended into House Bill 1. Commissioner Collins advised that the deadline for proposed amendments to House Bill 1 is this Thursday. Director Robinson promised to contact Representative Sayre and all OCF commissioners who are also legislators and ask them to champion our proposed changes as part of House Bill 1. Chairman Jones said he would discuss this with Governor Strickland when he met him later that day. Copies of the proposed amendments of the OCF statute were given to Chairman Jones to share with the Governor.

B. Fathers' Month Proclamation

Monica Mahoney drafted proposed language for a Fathers' Month Proclamation. Commissioner Conwell has drafted related legislation that he plans to present to the Cleveland City Council and which he will share with the OCF. Commissioner Conwell suggested that we add language urging President Obama to create a national commission on fatherhood. Ms. Mahoney revised the proclamation to include his suggestion and provided copies to Chairman Jones to share with the Governor. Chairman Jones noted that our motions regarding the OCF statute and fatherhood proclamation both require legislative support yet there were no commissioner-legislators in attendance. He hopes our legislators will be present at our next meeting.

C. Subcommittee Meetings

The Ad Hoc Committee on Grantee Evaluations met by conference call. OCF staff worked with Commissioner Killpack to create program evaluations of the ten grantee programs. Copies of the program summaries were distributed at the meeting, and Mr. Upton will e-mail copies to all commissioners. Four of the programs are exceeding their target goals (Urban Light

Ministries, East Toledo Family Center, ARCA and Forever Dads); however, many of the grantee programs need to increase their levels of participation, capacity building and outreach.

D. Proposed Revision of Section 5.05 of OCF Bylaws

Ms. Mahoney presented a proposed amendment to section 5.05 of the OCF bylaws that was not discussed at the previous OCF meeting at which the Commission unanimously approved the bylaws. Ms. Mahoney recommended that section 5.05 be amended to provide that vacancies in membership “shall not impair the rights of a quorum to perform all the duties of the Commission.” The proposed amendment was adopted without dissent. Chairman Jones then requested that the Commission consider an additional amendment of the bylaws which would provide that, should a member leave a Commission meeting after a quorum has been established, his or her departure would not defeat the quorum. Ms. Mahoney will draft language that embodies the Chairman’s proposal for the Commission to consider at its next meeting.

E. Commissioners’ Expense Reimbursement

Ms. Mahoney reminded commissioners to submit all travel related expenses from 2007 and 2008 OCF meeting to her by the end of March.

F. OCF Funding Discussion

Chairman Jones noted that representatives from a number of state commissions have testified before the Ohio House Finance and Appropriations Committee on the budget bill and inquired whether Director Robinson has been invited to testify. The Executive Director has not been invited to testify, but he would be willing to do so.

Greg Landsman did not think testifying would be the best strategy. He stated that he has spoken with his contacts in the Governors’ office and key legislators to ensure OCF’s funding is included in the budget. Although earmarks have been eliminated in the current budget, GOFBCI will provide funds to OCF as an inter-agency transfer. Mr. Landsman is

confident that OCF will receive the same percentage of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (“TANF”) funds GOFBCI awarded OCF in the previous budget although GOFBCI’s TANF allotment has been reduced from \$13 to \$7 million. He will find out whether the commissions that have testified before the Ohio House are receiving TANF funding and advise Director Robinson and Chairman Jones.

Chairman Jones noted that the Governor’s Transition Report on the OCF and fatherhood-related issues urged that OCF be an autonomous body. He also suggested that OCF enlist our legislator-commissioners to protect OCF funding. Mr. Landsman and Director Robinson will make the reappointment of legislators to the Commission a priority.

G. New RFPs Discussion

Director Robinson has begun work with ODJFS on the new RFPs which will include different grant types, grant amounts and quantitative and qualitative program evaluations. He is also creating a timeline for rolling out the RFPs. They should be drafted by May and funds will be awarded over two years. Director Robinson plans to hold a series of meetings throughout Ohio to present the new RFPs and assist applicants in completing applications so that grants can be awarded by July 1, 2009.

Based on the performance of the current grantees, Director Robinson anticipates awarding new grants to three of the current recipients. Any money not spent by the current grantees will go to ODJFS for welfare cash payments rather than be returned to the federal government.

Commissioner Conwell asked if the new RFPs could include an evaluation question about how much time fathers spent in church before and after participating in fatherhood programming. Mr. Landsman noted that it is well established that the First Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits the use of public funds to support religious activities. Mr. Landsman said he would contact the U.S. Department of Health to learn how they have

handled this potential conflict. He believes that any grantee that is religiously affiliated has to establish a separate 501(c) (3) non-profit in order to qualify for TANF funds.

VII. Announcements & New Business

- Commissioner Conwell announced the Young African-American Male Resource Fair in Cleveland on March 26th. All are invited.
- Commissioner Collins suggested visiting a grantee program as part of a future Commission meeting.
- Mr. Upton will invite all commissioners to join the grantee intranet site which includes a calendar of upcoming grantee program events.

VIII. Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2009
Time: 10:30 am – 12:30 pm
Place: Lazarus Building
Conference Room A601
50 West Town Street
Columbus, Ohio

IX. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm.