3-8-1951

Juvenile Welfare Board Meeting: 1951: 03: 08: Minutes

Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County.

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.usfsp.edu/jwb_meetings

Recommended Citation

https://digital.usfsp.edu/jwb_meetings/141
Meeting of March 8, 1951

Those present were Mrs. Bartlett, Chairman, Mrs. Strickland, Mr. Christian, Mr. Wick, Judge Marshall, Mrs. Meador, and Mrs. Holland. Also present was Dr. Williams, Director. In addition to the Director, Mr. Tait Trussell of the St. Petersburg Times and Mr. White of the Independent were present during the entire meeting.

Minutes of the meeting of February 22 were read by Judge Marshall and approved by the Board.

Judge Marshall moved that expenditures as represented in the General Fund by Checks Nos. 2001 through 2025 and in the School Counseling Service by Checks Nos. 145 through 148 be approved for payment. This motion was seconded by Mrs. Strickland and passed unanimously.

There was some discussion about mileage for Board members who must make the trip from as far away as Tarpon Springs to attend meetings. After some discussion it was agreed that Dr. Williams would check with the attorney in reference to mileage for Board members in terms of the legal provisions set forth in the Juvenile Welfare Board Act or in the general statutes affecting board members where no specific authorization is given and that a report would be made at the next meeting.

Dr. Williams reported on the meeting with the legislative delegation regarding the licensing of child-care facilities and stated that the persons who own and operate such centers have approved the idea of licensing in order to protect their standards from unfair competition and in order to insure the health, safety, fire protection and moral conditions under which such homes are operated. He stated that the Legislative delegation expressed its approval of licensing but wished to have some minimum standards set forth in the act instead of having the regulations and responsibility for licensing left entirely to the discretion of the Director of the County Health Department. He also reported that acts in effect in other parts of Florida and other parts of the country had been secured for consideration by the Drafting committee in connection with the proposed licensing law. To meet an objection by State Senator Baynard, it was agreed that the licensing law would only apply to facilities where three or more children were cared for in private homes or private establishments operating for a profit.

In connection with the need for expanding facilities for the care of feebleminded children, Dr. Williams gave some statistics as to the gap between the number of children needing such care and the facilities available for their care. He pointed out that the public schools have a number of defective children who are a handicap to the school and who are unable to profit by their presence in the school. Many of these children need institutional care. As an illustration of the kind of cases needing care, Dr. Williams described one case which has received a great deal of newspaper publicity, a spastic child who is suffering from an incurable disease and for whom no room is available at the Feebleminded Colony in Gainesville. He indicated that the social agencies in the community had done everything within their power to meet the needs of this including the expenditure of money, securing needed medical and other services, and that the child had not been ignored as had been charged in the newspaper article. He stated that provisions had been made for the care of the child which were unacceptable to the mother.
Dr. Williams stated that it was a policy of the Board never to duplicate in the county facilities which are provided by the state and for which the state has assumed responsibility.

He mentioned in particular the case of the feebleminded, the insane, and the delinquent and criminal individuals in society. He stated that this was a state responsibility which had long been accepted and county units should not duplicate because of the tremendous cost in caring for small numbers of such children when they can be cared for much more economically in larger units on a state basis.

Mr. Christian pointed out what a great detriment the presence of defective children in a school is and how their presence interferes with the operation of a school program for the normal children who are able to benefit by it.

Judge Marshall reported on the present situation with reference to Forest Hill, an institution built for delinquent Negro girls and stated that the original plan was for a woman and girl institution which would take care of white and negro women and white and negro girls. Up to now only provision had been made for the administration building and a wing for the delinquent negro girls. This has not been activated by the state. He pointed out the tremendous need for a facility for delinquent negro girls and stated that this had been brought to the attention of the Legislative Delegation. He thought that the Legislative Delegation was sympathetic to the suggestions that this wing be activated as soon as possible.

Mr. Christian moved that the attached resolutions be adopted. Mrs. Meador seconded the motion and the motion was passed. It was agreed that the resolution would be sent to the Florida Children's Commission, to the members of the delegation to the Legislature from Pinellas County, to the Speaker of the House, and to the President of the Senate.

Judge Marshall reported on the presentation to the Legislative Delegation of the need for keeping the children out of "jook joints," bars, and grills where alcohol is consumed on the premises. There was some discussion of this by the Board and it was agreed that an effort should be made to have this legislation pushed. In the event that the exclusion of children from such places, when accompanied by their parents could not be made effective, it was suggested that a curfew at nine o'clock or some suitable time be used to prevent their being in such places at unsuitable hours.

Mrs. Strickland moved that the In School Counseling Service pay for the material used to provide rooms in the South Side Junior High School for this service, in the amount of $160.55. The motion was seconded by Mr. Christian and passed unanimously.

The Juvenile Welfare Board and the Board of the Children's Service Bureau of St. Petersburg held a joint meeting for the purpose of discussing the development of adoption placement services for negro and white children in Pinellas County. This matter was discussed by the members of both boards, most of the board members of both agencies being present. The Children's Service Bureau Board told of its continuing interest in meeting this need and expressed its willingness to do so if proper agreements could be worked out to insure that financial responsibility for the occasional child who was not adoptable after having once been accepted could be worked out. Miss Parsons of the Children's Service Bureau, Mrs. Ripper of State Welfare Board, District #4, and Dr. Williams of the Juvenile Welfare Board, explained the present inter-agency operations and agreements between these various services.
It was pointed out that the addition of adoptive services would increase by that much the facilities available for the care of children in the county. It was also pointed out that at the present time the State Welfare Board and the Juvenile Welfare Board have responsibility for the care of dependent children and that the development of adoption services would not change this responsibility but might relieve them of it in those cases where children could be successfully placed for adoption. Mention was also made of the possibility of exchanging older children with the Children's Service Bureau in Miami so that their children could be placed here and Pinellas County children could be placed there, with the legal responsibility remaining with the agency to which the child had been committed regardless of where the child is placed.

Mrs. Ripper gave some statistics regarding the number of children in adoption homes in Pinellas County at the present time. She stated that there were 71 children in adoption homes and that there are probably three unmarried mothers per month who wish to give up their children for adoption. At the present time there is the Catholic Charities Bureau, the Jewish Agency in Atlanta, the Children's Home in Tampa, and the Children's Home Society in Jacksonville who take white children for placement. There are no facilities for negro children. The State Welfare Board has an agreement with an Illinois agency for the adoption of Negro children but the demand has been small because of the requirement that the adoptive parents must spend ten days in Illinois before they are able to get a child for adoption.

It was pointed out that the State Welfare Board now assumes responsibility for the cost of the care of the child for a temporary period up to six months and if not adopted it becomes a responsibility of the Juvenile Welfare Board for cost of maintenance and care. The placement is made by the Child Welfare Unit of the District #1 Welfare Board.

Some question was raised as to the attitude of the doctors and lawyers in regard to such adoption service and it was reported that meetings had been held with them and that they had expressed their satisfaction at the prospect of having some kind of definite place to which they could turn when the need for adoption services came up.

After thorough discussion it was agreed that Mrs. Bartlett, Chairman of the Juvenile Welfare Board and Dr. Williams, its Director together with Judge Marshall of the Juvenile Court would attend the meeting of the Board of the Children's Service Bureau to be held at 1 o'clock on Thursday, March 15, at which time the Children's Service Bureau will make some decision regarding its entry into this field.

Mr. Robert Guthrie, Chairman of the Children's Service Bureau, stated in answer to a question that the Children's Service Bureau is authorized under its present license to engage in adoption services for children.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Meador
WHEREAS the members of the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County recognize certain unmet local and state needs of children, and

WHEREAS they desire that the Legislature be informed of these needs and requested to make provision for meeting them,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that through the Pinellas County delegation to the 1951 Legislature, we request that the Legislature as a whole consider and endeavor to accomplish the following projects in the interest of children in all parts of the State of Florida, to wit:

1. Make provision for activating the completed section of Forest Hill which is designed for a Negro Girls Industrial School so that delinquent negro girls may be given the training they need,

2. Enlarge the present facilities of the Florida Farm Colony at Gainesville, and increase the staff so that present State needs may be adequately met,

3. Approve and pass the Juvenile Court bill which has recently been prepared by a special committee of the Florida Bar headed by Mr. Roger W. Waybright of Jacksonville,

4. Amend the existing liquor laws of Florida so that minors without exception will be excluded from bars or other similar places where intoxicating liquors are sold or consumed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation press for local legislation designed to accomplish the following:

1. An Act providing for the licensing of boarding homes, nurseries, and nursery schools caring for children and setting up suitable standards for the protection of children cared for in them.

2. An Act increasing the salary of the Pinellas County Juvenile Court Judge to $4,800 a year plus travel allowance at 7½¢ per mile, unless, of course, the state wide Juvenile Court Act otherwise fixes the Juvenile Court Judge's compensation.