

**Benton County Empowerment Board**  
**Minutes of Meeting: May 11, 2010**  
**Kirkwood Vinton Center, 8:00 a.m.**

**Present:** Ron Buch, Nancy Farmer, Bev Riege, Sue Gates, Kathy Koehn, Alberta Reifenhahl, Bethany Clemenson, Dara Lee Schnor, Tim Sanderson and Heidi Schminke. **Absent:** Joyce Livermore and Jodie Betterton.  
**Special Guests:** Lori Johnson and Larry Vest.

1. **Call To Order:** Ron Buch called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
2. **Review Meeting Minutes:** The group reviewed the minutes of the March Board Meeting which was mailed in advance. Nancy Farmer moved and Tim Sanderson seconded that the minutes be approved as mailed. Motion carried unanimously.
3. **Financial Report:** *Review of Expenses* – Nancy reviewed the financial report. Spending for the year is on track and we should be well below the 20% carryover we are allowed. All quarterly payments have been received from the state. Kathy Koehn moved and Sue Gates seconded that the financial report be approved. Motion carried unanimously. *FY 2011 Budget Planning* – Nancy noted that our area received extensive cuts again this year. School Ready funds were cut 12% and Early Childhood was cut 32%. A breakdown of our budget cuts the past two years was presented to the group. The reason for the large cut in Early Childhood was because FIP numbers for the state of Iowa went up while FIP cases in Benton County have gone down. Over the past two years Benton County Empowerment has experienced cuts totaling over \$152,000. Heidi will begin the process of determining a budget in the next few weeks. A complete copy of the report is attached to the minutes.
4. **Child Care Coordinator's Activity Report:** Heidi reviewed the coordinator's report. There are currently 522 parent contacts receiving a copy of the newsletter. In an effort to save money, the newsletter is no longer being mailed to providers but is posted on the web site and e-mailed to those providers that request it. The parent newsletter will no longer be mailed after June and will also just be posted on the web site. Copies will be made and delivered to Alberta with the Volunteer program. Her volunteers will deliver the newsletters to doctors offices, libraries etc. throughout the county so that families will still have access to the information. Several provider classes have been held on a variety of different topics. Most were provided by Kirkwood with a couple instructed by our Nurse Consultant. Attendance at these classes has been holding steady with anywhere from 9 to nearly 20 participants. We have three more classes planned for this fiscal year. There were 42 requests for preschool tuition, 37 of which were funded for a total of \$22,045 this year. Heidi noted that the Child Development Fair showed an increase on attendance over last year. Heidi presented the figures for those programs participating in the QECE program. There are only two classrooms left to be evaluated. All programs participating have increased their scores significantly. Heidi reported to the group that after more attempts to contact Jerry Michael at the Sheriff's office, she still has not been able to find out the status of the scholarship funds. Ron promised to look into the matter and report back. A complete copy of the coordinator's report was provided at the meeting and is attached to the minutes.
5. **Program Reports:** *Healthy Families America Report* – Lori Hagg presented the report and mentioned that the program continues to receive referrals. The program is full and has tried a waiting list in the past but felt that these at risk families can't wait for services. Staff has adjusted their caseloads to allow additional families into the program. Lori also noted that the program has the necessary accreditation required by the state. *HACAP Nurse Consultant Report* – Heidi provided an update of the program. The nurse consultant has been communicating with providers via e-mail and phone calls to check on the progress on QRS. She has also provided two training to providers this quarter. Copies of both reports are attached to the minutes.
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7. **Other Business:** The group discussed the potential merger with Tama County. A copy of the proposed letter of intent was presented to the board. After a brief discussion Tim Sanderson moved and Bev Riege seconded that Benton County Empowerment merge with Tama County. Motion carried unanimously. The executive

committee will work with Tama County to develop a new community plan as well as considering new by-laws, who to contract with for fiscal agent services and the 501C3 status. Heidi presented a request for funding proposal she had completed to provide ECERS evaluation services in Tama County. This would be a great opportunity to begin a partnership with Tama County. All expenses would be absorbed by Tama County. Tim Sanderson moved and Kathy Koehn seconded that the RFP be approved. Motion carried unanimously. By-laws were reviewed at the meeting with no changes submitted. The by-laws will be approved at the next board meeting.

8. **Public Comments:** There was no public comment.

9. **Adjourn:** Tim Sanderson moved and Sue Gates seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m. The next meeting will be held at 8:00 a.m. on June 29, 2010 at the Kirkwood Vinton Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Schminke  
Empowerment Coordinator