

MINUTES

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 8, 2008
555 N. Wabasha Street
4th Floor Boardroom
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55102
4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Members present: John Adams, Jim Boyle, Janna Caywood, John DeSantis, Linda Ewen, Robert Freeman, Paul Gilje, Scott Halstead, Dave Hutcheson, Paul Taylor, Barbara VanDrasek, Donna Zimmerman

Staff present: Bob DeBoer, Victoria Ford, Jim Horan, Casey Hudek, Annie Levenson-Falk, Rebecca McDonald

Outcomes:

- Discuss and prioritize study proposals.
- Send recommendations on top proposals to the Board of Directors.

1. Introductions

2. Review and approve agenda and outcomes

- Today's meeting will primarily focus on reviewing study proposals. Updates will happen at the end of the meeting if time permits.

3. Study proposal discussion

Preliminary discussion

- The study proposal packets have a summary of all reviewers' comments, the average score, what ideas seem best suited to each proposal.
- The discussion should look further than the scores, because they were scored considering many factors. The proposal may be a great idea, so don't feel swayed to not choose the lower scored proposals. Encouragement was provided to have discussion about *all* proposals. If it is an obvious "No," we can just move on.
- Recommendations will be made to the Board. A specific number of recommended proposals have not been pre-determined. Prioritization is the objective today.

- It was decided that the committee will go through and review proposal by proposal, stating with 7.01, and that decisions will not necessarily be reached by motion, but through discussion and consensus.
- It was suggested to consider the calendar year and staging. Prioritize next meeting after review and run through conclusions again. Respond by email first.

Proposal discussion

1. 07.01- Abuse of Social Security Benefits

Conclusion: Pass. Not a Citizens League issue.

2. 07.02- Long Term Care Follow Up (1999 report and 2006 Minnesota Journal) & 07.05- Long Term Care Impact on Government, Communities and Individuals

- We are doing work in this area already and we must figure out the scope of the topic focus within the past CL work. A significant body of work and interest in this topic, to be reflecting on where should the CL go from here
- There already is ample amount of work on this topic, and Bob DeBoer met with the MN Leadership Council on Aging to give them our notes, and have them identify where a partnership can happen. Maybe a study committee isn't appropriate
- Did our aging services workshop in June come up with any conclusion? Small groups proposed some policy solutions. Experts came in and got proposals bounced off of them. The Citizens League is still working on getting the best points out of the workshops. Expect that the work will be completed this month. Four or five good options that will come out of the workshops. Maybe explore the topics at the Regional Policy Conference
- There is a possible connection with 07.05, but committee reviews the proposal, and concludes that there is more about aging than long term care. There are different mixed concepts in 07.05 that aren't present in 07.02

Conclusion: The committee is interested in readdressing the two proposals at the end of discussion.

3. 07.03- University of Minnesota Regents Selection Process

- It was suggested that the legislature isn't going to give up its authority, and it's not a solvable problem
- Paul Taylor was the author of this proposal, and suggested that we "bag it" because he wrote this proposal in '07 in the heat of the moment

Conclusion: Move on.

4. 07.04- Poverty in Minnesota

- This proposal was written when the Citizens League was thinking about the Poverty Project, which is now up and running
- As a brief update to this proposal and current Citizens League poverty policy project, the project will start off with some public conversations, similar to Regional Policy initial discussions. Semi-public planning meetings will take place, as well as many more public conversations hosted by other people, churches, non-profits where poverty in MN is discussed, and depending on funding, might have a study group

Conclusion: This proposal is in the pipeline, approved by board and is in place.

5. 07.06- Energy Efficiency and CO2 Emissions Control for Minnesota & 08.02- Ethanol

- It was stated in the proposal that in order to achieve energy efficiency, we need to control CO2 and the issues seems disconnected
- We had a study committee that recommended cap and trade approach, which was part of what is under consideration by the Governor and the legislature. A model must be developed on how do you do cap and trade on the state level, otherwise it is a regional issue. Don't know if there is a role for us.
- Not quite high enough for us to choose. Focusing on energy efficiency codes, and where MN is now, what a state could do?
- This proposal and issue should not be a question of State vs. Federal, but urban vs. rural
- The 07.06 proposal did have commonalities with 08.02. Reorganization of the proposals would be helpful- into a more streamlined proposal about how we approach these alternative energy solutions as a state, addressing what is the process, and what are the principles that shape our action on energy in the future. The ethanol topic could serve as a case study of how to invest in alternative energy sources, and be an example of how *not* to do things in the future. And answer the

questions: Is there a better approach? A better title: Alternative Energy or Alternative Energy Dependence

- Ethanol got a higher score, and is more focused. In this particular case, the submitter insists that we need to be addressing the issue, but it is much more politically-charged
- Reminder that the current evaluation of ethanol in Minnesota is really about corn-based ethanol – much narrower than ethanol in general which can be produced from other sources.
- It would be useful to look at the state's role, and whether the state government is consulting with the industry and creating clarity about how the public can get involved

Conclusion: Combine with 08.02 and convene a short-term working group to build on the work of the early 2000's, review the recent report on energy, and suggest a direction for the proposal. Perhaps focus on the role of state government.

6. 08.01- Access to Government Information and Informed Citizen Participation

- This proposal represents the work we are doing on engagement
- The proposal was more about developing awareness, and better suited for an event rather than a study committee. Great opportunity to try with Policy and a Pint if we can.

Conclusion: Agreed to keep on as an event option.

7. 08.03 Health Care Reform Principles & 08.11- Beyond Market Reform in Health Care

- The 08.03 proposal duplicates work that has already been done.
- As part of our policy advancement work, we will be working on this issue, but there is no need to revisit in a formal way. The last Policy Advisory Committee meeting was on advancement of this issue, and we will continue the discussion. We are concerned that the governing body that was created by this year's reform is mainly providers, and we had proposed a consumer council.
- Make more sense for a larger study, or fold into the long term care work or 08.11, which may be too big but is more focused on market reform and in 2006, they said that there is a large part of the health care system that isn't a part of the market. The Citizens League's history goes further than market reform of health care. We are advancing market reform now, but it is just part of the bigger picture.

- It would be helpful to stick principles together. Market reform has so many other components that come into the long term care niche, but what's our next step in health care?

Conclusion: We should keep 08.11 and possibly integrate a civic engagement opportunity such as how do we create consumer engagement and have conversations with government.

8. 08.04- War on Drugs

- The proposal came with an agenda and conflicting information, but if you take out the agenda and frame it as a truth-telling campaign, presenting the facts in an objective, non-partisan project, it could work, but what would we do with this long-term?

Conclusion: If we can't affect policy, then is it worth putting our resources into? No. Move on

9. 08.05- Youth During Non-School Hours & 08.06- Comprehensive Policy on Youth

- U of M is doing this work on youth, and Mayor Coleman is doing work on this with SPEAK. So the best role may be to do 08.05 as a supplement to that work
- 08.05 is more focused on the era of two working parents. We could look at this as a student engagement in combination with 08.05, which was better thought out than 08.06
- The four day school week is an anomaly, and what does this discussion really mean? Lengthening the days and eliminating the problem of "non-school hours," we then must look at addressing the year-round school year
- If it can even more specific about civic engagement, there could be an opportunity to build with the community and the U of M

Conclusion: Use Students Speak Out to engage young people in addressing these questions. Consider partnering with youth-serving organizations.

10. 08.07- Judicial Selection

- The proposal got high scores, but a short term study group already convened. More thinking must go into how we can be active with our position that the Board just approved.
- Our small group recommended doing away with judicial elections, but many believe that is not politically realistic. The short term policy group did good work and put us in

a position to support retention election even if we think it won't solve the whole problem. We are quite clear that doing nothing is not an option.

Conclusion: We shouldn't move forward unless the previous work in the short term group isn't good enough. We could do an event to push the work already done. Committee members had problems with overruling what has already been done.

11. 08.08- Mental Health and Disability of Eastern European Religious Refugees in MN

- The proposal had a lot of information and was too specific. It read like a grant proposal

Conclusion: Move on

12. 08.09- K-14 Plan

- The author of the proposal wanted to extend the educational system to a 14 year program with more technical skills in the extra two years, which implied they were irritated with schools purpose about developing citizens rather than workers.
- The proposal proposed a pre-determined solution rather than provide a forum to explore the issue openly

Conclusion: Possibly tie in to work on Higher Education and keep on table for final deliberation

13. 08.15- Financial Aid

- We haven't looked at the state scholarship program, which has not been reviewed in over 30 years. Discussions have to take place on endowments. The private college council would say that there are more disadvantaged in private than public because of scholarships.

Conclusion: The road has been paved, and the immigration committee will have a call for this committee

14. 08.10- HIV/AIDS

- This proposal had high scores because of its framing the issue in terms of partnership. So then what would the partnership entail?
- We can frame this as more of an awareness issue an revisit the article in the MN Journal from '88, and look at report and talk with relevant partners and links to health care disparities.

Conclusion: Article in the Journal or possible event, in partnership with Minnesota Aids Project.

15. 8.12- Sales Tax Reform

- Bob DeBoer submitted it, when the Legislature was talking about reform; MN has a very narrow sales tax base. A shift to a service-based economy and may get more narrow. Reform needs to be about building a stable tax base, than raising taxes. Resonates because it states there are sectors that are not generating any tax revenue.
- Legislature said we might be helpful if we do work on this issue. This proposal would need to have a study committee to be effective
- One of the subject areas that Citizens League *can* do work where it can be useful- Taxpayers association is partisan, and no one else has the history and credibility like us.

Conclusion: Convene a study committee.

16. 08.13- Judicial Transparency

Conclusion: Pass. Short-term working group developed a policy position on judicial selection that was approved by the Executive Committee earlier this year.

16. 08.14- Charter Schools

Conclusion: Convene a short-term working group, potentially a study committee.

16. 08.15- Minnesota's Higher Education Funding Systems

Conclusion: Convene a study committee.

4. Evaluate whether outcomes were achieved

Mostly 5's.

The amount of proposals and tone suggests that people are crying out for the Citizens League to provide information. Group would like to continue discussion at next meeting before making recommendations.