

June 15, 2023 Committee on Childcare in Minot

Committee on Childcare in Minot – June 15, 2023 AT 1:30 P.M.

Members Present:

Scott Burlingame, Heather Cymbaluk, Rianne Kuhn, Amy Jenkins, Keli Rosselli-Sullivan, Harold Stewart, John Van Dyke

Members Absent:

Becca Oswill, Lisa Olson, Terry Schumalz

Also Present:

Mikayla McWilliams (City Clerk)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Burlingame at 1:31 pm. The committee did a round of quick introductions since there were more people in the audience. This meetings agenda was general discussion. Rianne discussed how she is in contact with a daycare but is waiting on more contact information. Alderman Burlingame mentioned how so far, the committee has been in the information gathering phase.

Alderman Burlingame discussed possible questions for the upcoming survey. He started with the ideas he compiled for providers. The questions included:

1. How many openings do you currently have at your childcare facility?
2. Do you have a waitlist?
3. If you have a waitlist, how many children are on it?
4. Are you currently hiring childcare staff?
5. If you are hiring, how many staff are you looking to hire?
6. What barriers are making it hard to hire childcare staff? Please Rank from most to least important.
 - a. Limited supply of qualified candidates
 - b. Low compensation and benefits
 - c. Educational and certification requirements
 - d. Professional development and training opportunities
7. Would you like to be able to provide services to more children?
8. What conditions would need to be met in order for you to expand the number of children you can serve? Please check all that apply.
 - a. Staffing and licensing needs met
 - b. Expanded childcare facilities
 - c. Financial stability while growing
 - d. Compliance with Regulations
 - e. Partnerships and collaborations with others
 - f. Professional development and training opportunities
 - g. Less administrative burdens
 - h. More information on funding options

Other committee members mentioned adding questions about fee structures, assistance programs, employee pay and employee daycare benefits.

Then, Alderman Burlingame discussed possible questions for the upcoming survey with regards to parents. The questions he thought of included:

1. In the past year, as a result of a lack of available childcare, have you (please check all that apply):
 - a. Reduced productivity and increased absenteeism at work
 - b. Not taken an available job or promotion
 - c. Experienced financial strain
 - d. Experienced stress or mental health issues
 - e. Feared for the safety and health of your children
 - f. Taken extended maturity/paternity leave

2. In the past year, have you faced any of the following barriers while accessing, or trying to access childcare? Please Check all that Apply
 - a. Affordability
 - b. Availability and access
 - c. Limited operating hours
 - d. Location and transportation
 - e. Quality of providers
 - f. Limited information and resources regarding childcare in Minot
 - g. Instability and inconsistent care
3. Would you be more or less likely to choose an employer who offered on sight childcare?
4. Of the above options, which one do you feel is the biggest barrier?
5. Are you aware of the Working Parent Child Care Relief Incentives passed recently by the North Dakota Legislature?

Other committee members mentioned adding questions about maternity leave (if the mother needed longer than normal or couldn't go back at all due to lack of childcare), and awareness for parents on programs/assistance available.

Once the survey is completed, data application of the information is critical for people looking for solutions and/or creating innovative ideas to solve the problems. Things to think of are the priorities, amenities, and affordability. The survey could also identify more issues the committee hasn't even thought of.

Minot State University had representatives Dan and Cole at the meeting to answer any questions about Early Childcare Development/Education. MSU is seeing a decrease in students in this field due to low pay and compensation. They understand the need for more childcare and their can be discussions with providers on student practicum (hours out in the field). If the student is doing the route of not getting licensed, the curriculum does not require practicum.

Magic City Daycare is currently located at MSU in Dakota Hall. They have 60-70 kids but the hall will be getting demolished in the fall of 2023. Dan discussed his ideas of the Red and Green School, which would be a daycare/preschool facility run by MSU. Leslee Thorpe mentioned there are options for providers to get college tuition reimbursement up to \$3,000 every 2 years.

Other discussions/ideas the committee had were:

- The idea of buying down costs on commercial space for centers instead of changing the ordinances on how many kids can be in a home daycare.
- Surveying churches to find out if any are interested in hosting a daycare, along with current churches with daycares stipulations and agreements.
- Promotions of resources. MACEDC is promoting the pilot program for employers to give childcare stipend with state match.
- The idea of setting up a meeting with Minot State University, Trinity Hospital, Minot Public School, any large employers such as Hess, and the committee to discuss ideas.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.