

Nebraska Children's Commission

Twenty-third Meeting
 May 20, 2014
 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 Country Inn & Suites, Omaha Room
 5353 North 27th Street, Lincoln, NE

Call to Order

Karen Authier called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and noted that the Open Meetings Act information was posted in the room as required by state law.

Roll Call

Commission Members present: Pam Allen, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Kim Hawekotte, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, Becky Sorensen, and Susan Staab (9:30am).

Commission Members absent: Nancy Forney, Candy Kennedy-Goergen, Janteice Holston, Norman Langemach, Jennifer Nelson, and John Northrup.

Ex Officio Members present: Hon. Linda Porter, Thomas Pristow, Julie Rogers, Vicky Weisz, and Kerry Winterer.

Ex Officio Members absent: Ellen Brokofsky, Senator Kathy Campbell, Senator Colby Coash, and Senator Jeremy Nordquist.

Also in attendance: Bethany Connor and Leesa Sorensen from the Nebraska Children's Commission.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Pam Allen to approve the agenda, as written. The motion was seconded by Kim Hawekotte. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Kim Hawekotte, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, and Becky Sorensen. Voting no: none. Nancy Forney, Candy Kennedy-Goergen, Janteice Holston, Norman Langemach, Jennifer Nelson, John Northrup and Susan Staab were absent for the vote. Motion carried.

Approval of April 15, 2014, Minutes

A motion was made by Beth Baxter to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2014, meeting as written. The motion to approve the minutes as written was seconded by Gene Klein. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Kim Hawekotte, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, and Becky Sorensen. Voting no: none. Nancy

Forney, Candy Kennedy-Goergen, Janteice Holston, Norman Langemach, Jennifer Nelson, John Northrup and Susan Staab were absent for the vote. Motion carried.

Chairperson's Report

Karen Authier provided a brief chair's report including noting that all Commission members who had applied for re-appointment to the Commission had been reappointed by the Governor. Karen also noted that there are several positions that are open due to Commission members who will not re-apply. Karen noted that the following representative positions are open: county attorney; local foster care review board member; court-appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteer; community representatives from the southeast, central, and western service areas; and a young adult previously in foster care. Karen asked Commission members to think about people who would be good candidates to fill the open positions and able to make the time commitment necessary.

Karen concluded her remarks by providing an update on the June meeting and the Phase II planning. Karen noted that Deb Burnight would be coming to the meeting to facilitate the Phase II discussion and review with the Commission the progress that has been made. She encouraged Commission members to start thinking about items that needed to be included in the Phase II planning.

Public Policy Updates

Bethany Connor provided the group with a list of legislation that was passed in the 103rd Legislature, 2nd session. Bethany noted that the list of legislation was arranged under the four goal statements from each of the Commission workgroups. Bethany also provided a list of Legislative Resolutions organized under the goals of the Commission workgroups. She noted that interim study LR535 to conduct a comprehensive review of the structure of health and human services functions currently administered by the Department of Health and Human Services would impact the work on the strategic plan.

Bethany also provided a copy of the *Monthly Glance at Nebraska's Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice System* data sheet. Bethany noted that the data sheet had been updated to show trend lines based on the requests made during the April meeting. A suggestion was made that the data needed to include information from Probation. A question was also asked to clarify which placements are reflected in the data and if the numbers included informal living arrangements. Bethany noted that the numbers were taken from numbers publicly available from DHHS and that numbers from Probation were not readily available. Thomas Pristow noted that DHHS issues a comprehensive monthly report and that DHHS could provide an update on the monthly data at a future Commission meeting. Thomas also invited Bethany to attend the monthly DHHS meeting so that she could be involved in the monthly data discussions with DHHS staff.

Public Comment

Gregg Nicklas from Christian Heritage provided comments on behalf of CAFCON. Gregg noted that he wanted to thank Senator Dubas, the Health and Human Services Committee, the legislature, the media, and the Nebraska Children's Commission for the part each group played in coming to a positive resolution on the foster care reimbursement rates. He noted that he especially wanted to thank Thomas Pristow and the DHHS staff on working with providers to arrive at the revised rates. He also urged DHHS to provide adequate funding to NFC as a part of the contract negotiations to cover the cost of the rate increases.

Ashley Brown from KVC also shared her appreciation on behalf of the Nebraska Chapter of Foster Family Based Treatment Association (FFTA) for all the work that the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate committee had put into the recommendations that were approved at the May meeting. She also noted that KVC appreciated the work that DHHS did to revise the rates.

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee Report

Peg Harriott provided Commission members with a cover letter, final recommendations document, Nebraska Caregiver Responsibilities tool document, and Nebraska Caregiver Responsibilities Summary and Level of Parenting score sheet, and asked that the Commission approve and advance the documents to DHHS and the Health and Human Services Committee. Peg noted to Commission members that the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate committee was made up of a good mix of foster parents, foster care providers, and DHHS staff and that the final recommendations included work by not only the committee but also the Level of Care workgroup. Peg noted that the workgroup met several times to finalize the Nebraska Caregiver Responsibilities (NCR) tool and score sheet. Peg then walked Commission members through the recommendations and NCR tool.

During the discussion period, suggestions were made by Commission members to modify the recommendations document, as follows:

On Item F, it was suggested that "2014" be inserted after "July 1st" so that it was clear that the recommendation only applied to the 2014 version of the NFC contract between DHS and NFC.

On Item L.b. and Item O. it was suggested that the reference to "\$0.56/mile" be changed to refer to the "current federal mileage rate" so that the recommendation reflects the annual adjustment that is made to mileage rates.

On Item P. that a letter d. be added that would require an analysis and reporting out of data on NCR/LOC tool overrides that are done by DHHS and NFC to further inform the lessons learned, trends identified and recommendations for future consideration as noted in letter c.

Add an Item Q to require that by July 1, 2014 a written report be submitted by Probation that summarizes foster parent rates paid and provides an analysis of outcomes of any tool used to establish foster parent rates that would be consistent with the report provided by DHHS and NFC in Item P.

At the end of the discussion of the report, Beth Baxter made a motion to approve and advance the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee recommendations and report as presented, with the friendly amendments to Items F, L, O, P and Q as offered above, and to send the final version of the recommendations to DHHS and the Health and Human Services Committee. The motion was seconded by Gene Klein. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Kim Hawekotte, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, Becky Sorensen, and Susan Staab. Voting no: none. Nancy Forney, Candy Kennedy-Goergen, Janteice Holston, Norman Langemach, Jennifer Nelson, and John Northrup were absent for the vote. Motion carried.

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee Membership

Peg Harriott provided a list of three nominees to consider for membership on the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee. The nominees are:

Gregg Nicklas – Co-CEO of Christian Heritage to fill the position of “A child welfare agency that contracts directly with foster parents – SESA”.

Sarah Forrest – Policy Coordinator – Voices for Children in Nebraska to fill the position of “An advocacy organization, the singular focus of which is issues impacting children”.

Jodi Hitchler – Program Manager – CEDARS to fill the position of “A foster parent who contracts with a child welfare agency”.

A motion was made by Gene Klein to approve the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee Nominations as presented. The motion was seconded by Mary Jo Pankoke. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Kim Hawekotte, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, Becky Sorensen, and Susan Staab. Voting no: none. Nancy Forney, Candy Kennedy-Goergen, Janteice Holston, Norman Langemach, Jennifer Nelson, and John Northrup were absent for the vote. Motion carried.

Bridge to Independence Membership and Report

Mary Jo Pankoke provided a list of two nominees to consider for membership on the Bridges to Independence Committee. The nominees are:

Betsy Vidlak – Director of Youth Programs, Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska to fill the position of a “child welfare service agency”.

Andrew Paul – to fill the position of a “young adult currently/previously in foster care”.

A motion was made by Mary Jo Pankoke to approve the Bridges to Independence Nominations as presented. The motion was seconded by Becky Sorensen. Voting yes: Pam Allen, Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Kim Hawekotte, Gene Klein, Andrea Miller, David Newell, Mary Jo Pankoke, Dale Shotkoski, Becky Sorensen, and Susan Staab. Voting no: none. Nancy Forney, Candy Kennedy-Goergen, Janteice Holston, Norman Langemach, Jennifer Nelson, and John Northrup were absent for the vote. Motion carried.

Mary Jo Pankoke then provided an update on the Bridges to Independence program. She noted that the Governor had officially signed the Bridges to Independence regulations. Although the draft regulations had been sent to the regional office, DHHS will be sending the official copy of the regulations for Federal approval. The regulations that were signed by the Governor are effective May 17, 2014. It was noted that DHHS has 60 days after the Federal approval to fully implement the Bridges to Independence program. Mary Jo noted that DHHS has hired two supervisors that are very committed to the program and have done a lot of work to develop the program. She indicated that DHHS therefore believes that they do not necessarily need the full 60 days to formally implement the program. It was noted that a private donor will continue to fund the program until the official DHHS implementation of the program.

DHHS Update

Thomas noted that he appreciated everyone's hard work on the programs that were discussed previously in the agenda. He noted that he had provided his comments as a part of the previous presentations and did not have anything further to add in the way of a formal DHHS update.

IT Work Group Report

David Newell gave a brief update on the work the IT work group has been doing. David noted that the whole population discussion on May 2, like the previous discussion in December, had been very productive. David noted that the group had built on the previous work and was working with other stakeholders to get a more comprehensive view of existing tracking mechanisms. The meeting minutes from the May 2 meeting were distributed for the Commission member's consideration.

Out-of-Home Placements (OHP) Committee

Kim Hawekotte provided Commission members with a copy of a *Historical Summary of Nebraska Department of Education's Initiative on Education of Students in Out-of-Home Placements: 1997-2013*. The list provides information on cross-system initiatives including cross-system information sharing. Kim also provided information on a state ward statistical snapshot from 2010-2011. This information included education related data that is available for Commission members to consider as Commission members think about Phase II strategic planning.

Juvenile Services (OJS) Committee

Kim Hawekotte provided the Juvenile Services (OJS) Committee written report along with a presentation and data that the committee looked at during the committee's May 13, 2014 meeting. The *State Wide Juvenile Diversion Survey Data* presentation was developed and presented by Dr. Anne Hobbs.

Juvenile Justice In-home Interventions (MST/FFT) Update

Vicky Weisz provided an update and flyer on upcoming regional introduction and planning meetings that are being hosted by Nebraska Juvenile Probation and the Juvenile Justice Court Improvement Project/Through the Eyes of the Child Initiative. The group has been working with a private foundation to provide the funds for infrastructure development, training, and accreditation to implement Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), and Boys Town's Intensive Family Preservation Services across the state. Meetings will be held regionally during the month of June.

System of Care Planning Grant Update

Beth Baxter and Sheri Dawson presented information on the final draft of the System of Care Strategic Plan that was created based on input that was received at meetings that were held on May 14, 2014. Beth and Sheri then led the group in a discussion time related to the strategic plan and asked for input on the final draft Strategic Plan and Plan Overview.

New Business

None.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Tuesday, June 17, 2014, 9:00am-3:00pm. Country Inns & Suites – Lighthouse Room, 5353 N. 27th Street, Lincoln, NE

Adjourn

A motion was made by Mary Jo Pankoke to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Andrea Miller. The meeting adjourned at 11:53 am.