

**Nebraska Children's Commission**

Twenty-fifth Meeting

July 15, 2014

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Country Inn & Suites, Omaha Room  
5353 North 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE

**Call to Order**

Karen Authier called the meeting to order at 9:05 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: Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Kim Hawekotte, Gene Klein, David Newell, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, and Dale Shotkoski.

Commission Members absent: Pam Allen, Teresa Anderson, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Norman Langemach, Andrea Miller, Susan Staab, and Diana Tedrow.

Ex Officio Members present: Ellen Brokofsky, Senator Kathy Campbell, Senator Colby Coash, Hon. Linda Porter, Thomas Pristow, Julie Rogers, and Vicky Weisz (10:40am).

Ex Officio Members absent: Senator Jeremy Nordquist and Kerry Winterer.

Also in attendance: Bethany Connor and Leesa Sorensen from the Nebraska Children's Commission; and Cris Copeland, Southeast Community College practicum student.

**Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made by Gene Klein to approve the agenda, as written. The motion was seconded by Mary Jo Pankoke . Voting yes: Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Kim Hawekotte, Gene Klein, David Newell, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, and Dale Shotkoski. Voting no: none. Pam Allen, Teresa Anderson, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Norman Langemach, Andrea Miller, Susan Staab, and Diana Tedrow were absent. Motion carried.

**Approval of June 17, 2014, Minutes**

A motion was made by Beth Baxter to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2014, meeting as written. The motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Kim Hawekotte. Voting yes: Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, Holly Brandt, Kim Hawekotte, Deb O'Brien, Mary Jo Pankoke, and Dale Shotkoski. Voting no: none. Gene Klein and David Newell abstained. Pam Allen, Teresa Anderson, Jennifer Clark, Candy Kennedy Goergen, Norman Langemach, Andrea Miller, Susan Staab, and Diana Tedrow were absent. Motion carried.

### **Chairperson's Report**

Karen Authier provided a brief chair's report. Karen asked commission members to introduce themselves and give a brief description of job titles and their involvement in the community. Two new members were present for this meeting: Deb O'Brien and Holly Brandt.

Karen then reviewed the items that would be covered for the day including the quarterly report from the Foster Care Review Office and reports on the Continuous Quality Improvement process used by DHHS, NFC and Probation. Karen noted the importance of these reports as the Commission prepares for the future work to be done on the Strategic Plan. Karen also reviewed the opportunities for new members to be a part of workgroups and invited workgroup chairs to provide information about their respective groups.

### **Legislative Update**

Senator Kathy Campbell provided Commission members with a list of 2014 Bills Referenced to the HHS Committee of the Legislature. Senator Campbell also provided an overview of some of the health and human services related issues that would be covered by the legislature in interim studies. She noted that not many hearings had been scheduled yet for upcoming issues. She noted that Hornby Zeller was currently in the process of creating an updated review of the lead agency report that was issued in November 2012. She noted that other work prior to the legislative session would include work on the Alternative Response Pilot, Implementation of the Bridge to Independence program, and evaluation of the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) process. Senator Campbell noted that the Children's Commission would be asked to provide input on these issues as the legislative hearing process moved forward.

Senator Colby Coash provided some additional clarification on Alternative Response. He noted that plans for the implementation pilot phase that will begin on October 1<sup>st</sup> are going well. Senator Coash stated that data that will be collected during the pilot phase will be important for decision making moving forward. Senator Coash asked the commission to look at the GAL Report that will be discussed in a joint Judiciary and HHS Committee hearing.

### **Foster Care Review Office Quarterly Report**

Kim Hawekotte provided an overview of the key findings from the Foster Care Review Office quarterly report. The report focused on two main issues: 1) an analysis of DHHS wards who re-entered out-of-home care after having previously been in foster care and then returned to the parental home; and 2) an analysis of data related to all DHHS wards in out-of-home care at a point in time (April 20, 2014), with some trend data. Commissioners were provided with a copy of the report in advance of the meeting. During discussion it was noted that a statutory language clarification may be needed to provide the FCRO with the express authority to look at children in trial home visits. Thomas Pristow noted that other states foster care review offices have this authority and that he would support such a change in Nebraska. It was also noted that there are some system limitations that make obtaining data challenging. Kim also noted statistics regarding the number of children in placements outside of the state of Nebraska. Senator Campbell and Senator Coash both asked if the FCRO could review and provide some insight on

why out-of-state placements are being used so that this information could be used to inform future discussions about needed services in Nebraska.

### **Continuous Quality Improvement**

Vicki Maca, Doug Beran, and Thomas Pristow gave a detailed description of statewide and local DHHS process used for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Commission members were provided copies of the DHHS Vision, Commitments and Operation's Plan for 2015-2019 and the DHHS website link to the June 2014 CQI report. It was noted that the Plan is updated as CQI data are used to inform the process.

Doug and Vicki provided examples from previous CQI reports on how data was used to inform the DHHS workforce on their efforts with children and families. Vicki emphasized that the CQI process is especially important as DHHS strives to improve performance on meeting the federal measures that will be reviewed by federal DHHS reviewers in 2017.

Jeanne Brandner from Probation then provided information on the Probation Continuous Quality Improvement process. Jeanne noted that Probation is involved in a variety of initiatives including the Georgetown Cross-over Youth project, enhancing intensive in-home services, and looking at out-of-state placements.

### **Strategic Plan Document Review and Discussion**

Karen Authier noted that Commission members were provided with a copy of the Phase II Strategic Planning notes from the June 2014 Commission meeting. Karen provided an overview for the new Commission members. Karen informed Commission members that the notes were distributed exactly as they were received from Deb Burnight. Julie Rogers, Thomas Pristow, and Vicky Weisz then provided a brief update on the initial meeting of the structure taskforce as noted in the Phase II notes. Karen Authier, Beth Baxter, and Julie Rogers gave a brief update on the initial meeting of the statutory taskforce.

Commission members indicated that it would be helpful to have more time to digest the notes. Karen noted that it would also be better to continue the discussion after new members had a chance for orientation. Beth Baxter stated that it is good to reaffirm where we have been, what has been accomplished, and the number of positive changes in the system. The Commission will review the strategic plan documents again at an upcoming meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Peg Harriott provided public comment. Peg noted that the strategic planning session on June 17 was very positive and that the Commission had completed a lot of positive work. Peg provided comments regarding children in out-of-state placements, the need to consider bringing Medicaid to the table related to funding of programs and concern over behavior and mental health needs for children.

**New Business**

None.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is Tuesday, August 19, 2014, 9:00am-12:00pm. Country Inns & Suites, 5353 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE

**Adjourn**

A motion was made by Mary Jo Pankoke to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Gene Klein. The meeting adjourned at 11:59 am.

DRAFT