

Nebraska Children's Commission Meeting

November 14, 2018

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

CEDARS Northbridge

1533 N. 27th Street, Lincoln, NE 68503

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Dave Newell called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Commission Members Present (14)

Beth Baxter	Kim Hawekotte	Lisa Story
Jim Blue	Terri Knutson	Susan Thomas
Holly Brandt	Felicia Nelsen	Kelli Wacker
Vernon Davis	Dave Newell	Bill Williams (9:23)
Misty Frazier (9:11)	Deb O'Brien	

Commission Members Absent (2)

Teresa Anderson	Janine Uchino
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Commission Ex-Officio Members Present (7)

Michele Borg (9:25)	Judge Linda Porter	Matthew Wallen
Jeanne Brandner	Julie Rogers (9:15)	
Senator Patty Pansing Brooks (9:33)	Deb VanDyke-Ries	

Commission Ex-Officio Members Absent (2)

Senator Kate Bolz	Senator Merv Riepe
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A quorum was established.

Guests in Attendance (7)

Kathy Campbell	Former Nebraska State Senator
Amanda Felton	.....	Nebraska Children's Commission
Peg Harriott	.....	Child Saving Institute
Chris Jones	.....	Nebraska Children's Commission
Tami Soper	.....	Office of Sen. Kate Bolz
Chris Triebsch	.....	Office of Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks
Mikayla Wicks	.....	DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services

a. Notice of Publication

Recorder for the meeting, Amanda Felton, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar and Nebraska Children's Commission websites in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The publication would be kept as a permanent attachment with the meeting minutes.

b. Announcement of the placement of Open Meetings Act information

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection and was located on the sign in table near the entrance of the room.

3. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Lisa Story and seconded by Jim Blue to approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Beth Baxter
Jim Blue
Holly Brandt
Vernon Davis

Kim Hawekotte
Terri Knutson
Felicia Nelsen
Dave Newell

Deb O'Brien
Lisa Story
Susan Thomas
Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (4):

Teresa Anderson
Misty Frazier

Janine Uchino
Bill Williams

MOTION CARRIED

4. Approval of Minutes

Susan Thomas moved to approve the September 18, 2018 retreat minutes as presented. Deb O'Brien seconded the motion. No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (11):

Beth Baxter
Jim Blue
Vernon Davis
Kim Hawekotte

Terri Knutson
Felicia Nelsen
Dave Newell
Deb O'Brien

Lisa Story
Susan Thomas
Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (1):

Holly Brandt

ABSENT (4):

Teresa Anderson
Misty Frazier

Janine Uchino
Bill Williams

MOTION CARRIED

5. Approval of Committee Member Nominations

It was moved by Kim Hawekotte and seconded by Felicia Nelsen to appoint the following member:

Juvenile Services Committee

- *Representative of the Entity Administering Title II Funds:*
 - o A'Jamal Byndon (Voting) – DMC Coordinator, Douglas County

There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Beth Baxter
Jim Blue
Holly Brandt
Vernon Davis

Kim Hawekotte
Terri Knutson
Felicia Nelsen
Dave Newell

Deb O'Brien
Lisa Story
Susan Thomas
Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (4):

Teresa Anderson
Misty Frazier

Janine Uchino
Bill Williams

MOTION CARRIED

6. Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee Update

- a. Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility (NCR) Tool
Co-Chair of the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee (FCRRC), Peg Harriott directed members to the NCR tool form included in their handouts. After a brief review, **it was moved by Holly Brandt and seconded by Felicia Nelsen to approve the NCR tool revisions as presented.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (11):

Beth Baxter
Jim Blue
Holly Brandt
Vernon Davis

Terri Knutson
Felicia Nelsen
Dave Newell
Deb O'Brien

Lisa Story
Susan Thomas
Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (2):

Misty Frazier

Kim Hawekotte

ABSENT (3):

Teresa Anderson

Janine Uchino

Bill Williams

MOTION CARRIED

Harriott continued by providing a brief update on the other work of the group. She noted that the Treatment Family Care workgroup had been collaborating with several divisions within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) including the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Medicaid and Long-term Care, and Developmental Disabilities. An update on the group's recommendations for the Treatment Family Care would be presented at the January Commission meeting.

Harriott also touched on the discussion of the adoption subsidy pilot that occurred at the last FCRRC meeting. The pilot, which was happening in the southeast service area, had come to the attention of the Committee members who had concerns that the pilot rates being proposed. Members of the Level of Responsibility Workgroup, from where the NCR tool originated, had begun work to collaborate with DHHS in the creation of a Nebraska Adoptive Parent Responsibility tool. Information on those efforts would be shared with the Commission as they progressed.

7. Discussion of Commission Structure

Chair Newell began the discussion of Commission structure by reviewing the structure of the Commission and its many subgroups. He noted that discussion at the last meeting had, in general, been supportive of the continuation of the Commission contingent on a significant shift in structure. The Chair welcomed guest speaker, former Senator Kathy Campbell, to participate in discussion and provide historical knowledge of the Commission.

Discussion continued as members reviewed the [Summary and Findings](#) document. Campbell expressed the desire to see the Commission utilize the annual reports of the Foster Care Review Office (FCRO) and the Office of the Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare (OIG) as tools to lead problem solving efforts among the stakeholder members. Members discussed on how this could be accomplished through the proposed Coordination and Planning subgroup.

While reviewing the proposed structure, members agreed that a steering committee comprised of Senators would ensure that the Commission was best utilized by the Legislature. They also stressed the need to include the voice of the Nebraska communities with a diverse membership base. It was agreed that the statutory Committees allow opportunity for statewide input on relevant issues and indicated that their extension should run parallel that of the Commission. Interest was also expressed in exploring alternate appointment methods for membership.

8. Lunch

Members recessed for lunch from 12:03 – 12:25 p.m.

9. Resolution on Commission Structure

After lengthy discussion, there was general agreement that the summary and findings document was representative of the overall direction the group hoped to see the Commission move. It was understood that ultimately the scope of the group would be at the discretion of the proposing senator and could be influenced by restrictions that may come about should the Commission be moved under the Legislative branch.

It was moved by Jim Blue to support and recommend the continuation of the Nebraska Children’s Commission. Vernon Davis seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (13):

Beth Baxter	Terri Knutson	Susan Thomas
Jim Blue	Felicia Nelsen	Kelli Wacker
Holly Brandt	Dave Newell	Bill Williams
Vernon Davis	Deb O’Brien	
Misty Frazier	Lisa Story	

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (1):

Kim Hawekotte

ABSENT (2):

Teresa Anderson
Janine Uchino

MOTION CARRIED

10. Legal Parties Taskforce Update

Kim Hawekotte, Chair of the Legal Parties Taskforce, provided a brief update on the work of the group. She explained that the group had been discussing several issues including potential cleanup of guardianship language, examination of language in the termination of parental rights statute, and reviewing the role of foster parents within the juvenile court setting. She noted that the taskforce had also discussed the potential for defining the term “best interest,” but determined that current practice of referring to case law was most appropriate at that time.

Kim Hawekotte motioned to dissolve the Legal Parties Taskforce with Vernon Davis seconding the motion.

Hawekotte noted that under the proposed structure, most of the work previously done by this group would fall to the Legislative subcommittee. Judge Porter took an opportunity to thank the taskforce for their past work on bridge order language, voicing that youth were spending less time lingering within the court system because of the statutory revisions.

Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Beth Baxter	Kim Hawekotte	Deb O’Brien
Holly Brandt	Terri Knutson	Lisa Story
Vernon Davis	Felicia Nelsen	Susan Thomas
Misty Frazier	Dave Newell	Kelli Wacker

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (4):

Teresa Anderson
Janine Uchino
Jim Blue
Bill Williams

MOTION CARRIED

11. Department of Health and Human Services Update

Director of the Division of Children and Family Services, Matthew Wallen, shared information on their recent efforts. He noted continued efforts to work on the Program Improvement Plan regarding the Child and Family Service Reviews as well as statewide training and education for the Safety Organized Practice model. He also updated members on the progress on the Quality Improvement Center – Workforce Development (QIC-WD) grant sharing that they had selected secondary traumatic stress for staff as their chosen intervention.

a. Alternative Response Presentation

Mikayla Wicks, Program Specialist with DHHS, DCFS, provided the Commission with a [presentation](#) on the Alternative Response (AR) efforts. She reviewed the data collected since implementation of the pilot in October of 2014. Members inquired as to what recommendations were being proposed regarding the modification of exclusionary criteria. The example provided was the removal of domestic violence as an exclusionary criteria. Members expressed concern in the changes to exclusionary criteria and asked for additional information on recommendations. Wicks noted that the [required statutory report](#) that included data and all DHHS recommendations for change would be available the following day, January 15, 2018.

12. Public Comment

Chairperson Newell opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was given.

13. New Business

Commission Policy Analyst, Chris Jones, provided a summary of the work happening in the various subgroups. Highlights included the Juvenile Services Committee's efforts to examine the potential of hosting a suicide prevention conference for stakeholders and work of the Strengthening Families Act Committee to create a survey for current and former system involved youth on their opportunities for normalcy while in care.

14. Upcoming Meeting Planning

Chair Newell directed members to the proposed meeting dates on the agenda. Members discussed the difficulty of attendance while the Legislature was in session. In an effort to accommodate the schedules of members and the potential need for expedited action and response from the Commission, it was proposed to have shortened meetings occurring later in the day. Members selected the date of January 23, 2019 from 3:00 – 6:00pm as the date of their first meeting with additional meeting times to be sent out at a later date.

15. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.