

STATE FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD
Saturday, March 7, 2020

MINUTES

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Valerie VanAuker at 10:52 a.m.

Attendees:

Present: Carol Bigos, Bruce Brannan, Jim Deitz, Art Endres, Julie Gasaway, Sharon Mayes, Tom McAlpin, Sylvia Pender, Gordon Pike, Grant Smith, Valerie VanAuker, Lina Wallen, Pam Warren, Dick Westby.

Excused/Absent: Jakki Kolzow, Kevin Ruegg

Staff Present: Adia Askew, Shantelle Bagnall, Amy Brite, Lori Dennison, Sandy Guizzetti, Caroline Lutt-Owens, Esma Murrieta, Victoria Stevens

- **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion: To approve minutes from the November 2, 2019 meeting.

Moved by: Grant Smith; **Seconded by:** Julie Gasaway.

No discussion.

Action: Motion passed unanimously.

- **Introductions/Announcements:**

Speaker: Lori Dennison, *FCRB Program Manager*

Summary of Discussion:

Introduction of Shantelle Bagnall as the new Administrative Assistant to Caroline Lutt-Owens and of Amy Brite as a new Program Specialist III.

Executive Committee Elections

Speaker: Lori Dennison, *FCRB Program Manager*

Action Item 1.1: Vote on Slate as Presented for a 1-year term

In the packet, is the slate of nominated officers for the Executive Committee along with their bios.

- **Vote on Slate for Executive Committee:**

Motion: Vote on the slate as presented to form the Executive Committee.

Moved by: Dick Westby; **Seconded by:** Gordon Pike.

No discussion.

Action: Motion passed unanimously.

Action Item 1.2: Elect Vice-Chair for a 1-year term

Art Endres nominates Julie Gasaway for Vice Chair and Lina Wallen seconds the nomination.

- **Vote for Vice Chair:**

Motion: Vote for Julie Gasaway as Vice Chair for a 1-year term.

Moved by: Lina Wallen; **Seconded by:** Grant Smith.

No discussion.

Action: Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

- **Executive Committee**

Speaker: Lori Dennison, *FCRB Program Manager*

The Executive Committee met this morning. There were several items that were brought before them that will be addressed later in this meeting.

- **Best Practices Committee**

Speaker: Julie Gasaway

The Best Practices Committee has been working the last several months to update the Finding and Elements Book. It went to staff to review in October, November, and December. All of the comments are back and the committee will be reviewing the comments this afternoon and will move the book forward.

- **Community Outreach Committee**

Speaker: Tom McAlpin

The Outreach Committee has been continuing its efforts to raise awareness about the FCRB program and fill the vacancies on its Boards.

Presentation:

About 4 years ago the committee recognized State Board member Art Endres for his amazing outreach efforts during the Blanket the State recruitment campaign. Today, the committee would like to take a moment and recognize State Board member Carol Bigos who resides in Bullhead City. Carol is a long-standing champion of children who are in foster care. She is also a consistent supporter and problem solver as a volunteer for the FCRB. A couple of weeks ago Carol, who talks about the FCRB wherever she is and to whomever she can, stood up during her homeowner's association meeting and talked about our need for volunteers. Carol received 11 requests for applications of which 2 people are already scheduled to observe a board next week and a third will be scheduled to observe by the end of next week. Hats off to Carol Bigos!

Articles:

We continued to outreach to local newspapers in rural areas with immediate recruitment needs. Most notably, Coconino, Mohave, Yuma and Pinal counties. We are pleased to report that just recently we were successful in having articles published in all four of these counties. Articles were published in the local Yuma, Kingman, Flagstaff newspapers as well as the Tri Valley newspaper that serves several cities within Pinal county. It should also be noted that our valued State

Board member Lina Wallen was interviewed for the article in Flagstaff and did a tremendous job of describing our program. We have received a steady stream of application requests which we anticipate will fill or come close to filling all our vacancies in these counties. In addition to this an ad was published in a magazine that serves the Pima county area. It is hoped that this will help fill vacancies as well.

SharePoint:

A recruitment flyer has been posted to SharePoint to assist us in filling our vacancies in Maricopa and Pima Counties. Board members are encouraged to assist us with filling vacancies by referring people who they know that may be interested in joining the FCRB.

Vacancies:

The Phoenix Region vacancy rate at the end of February was approximately 17%. The Tucson Region vacancy rate at the end of February was approximately 26%. We continue to be pleased that both offices continue to have a number of observations and appointments pending that will either maintain or drive their respective vacancy rates down.

Projects:

We are continuing to pursue the diversity plan for the FCRB program.

- **Continuing Education Committee**

Speaker: Art Endres

Present at the November meeting of the Continuing Education Committee was Art, Sylvia, Jim, Dick, Grant, Esma, Victoria, and Sharon.

The committee discussed the importance for FCRB volunteers to obtain their 6-hour training requirements each year. Esma stated that the hours would now be posted on SharePoint throughout the year.

Beginning January 1, 2020, volunteer hours will be monitored by the Project Specialist (PS) and every 3 months he/she will inform each board chairperson of training hours needed/obtained by respective board members. This process will start in March and the PS will report to the Chairperson by June. It will be the responsibility of the PS to inform the board member of their hours.

Starting in July, the PS will provide half hour training to his/her board members each month at their regular monthly board. Time of the training, be it before the board/after/during will be at the discretion of the members. Members may also recommend topics for training.

It was suggested the State board should reinstitute newspaper articles for training hours. The articles should be an in-depth reporting series, not op-ed. It was also suggested that the training form itself needs to be updated and more user friendly.

Program Manager's Report:

Speaker: Lori Dennison, *FCRB Program Manager*
Sandy Guizzetti, *FCRB Regional Manager*

November 2019
Cases: 6,890
Children: 11,838

December 2019
Cases: 6,903
Children: 11,894

January 2020
Cases: 6,957
Children: 11, 954

February 2020
Cases: 6,960
Children: 11,954

SharePoint:

Still working on issues on the staff side of SharePoint. There are long upload times and it can be very glitchy. On the volunteer side, you should no longer be seeing cases that do not belong to your board. If you are seeing cases that do not belong to your board, we have found, over the last month, that there has been some error on the staff side. If this is seen, please let the program know right away so it can be fixed. Our ITD is working with Microsoft to continue to improve the program.

DARP:

In the last few meetings we have spoken about an initiative where we have been working to retrieve dependency information from the local courts. This would streamline the process of receiving the dependency petitions as well as having access to other dependency information. We launched our pilot counties on February 26th. There are three counties out of the Phoenix region and one county out of the Tucson region. We hope to roll out the rest of the counties in calendar year 2020. There will be an update at the June meeting.

We have lost our Mohave/Bullhead City meeting room. Lori and two supervisors are going to travel to Bullhead City this week to find another room. There are three options available.

We have two members that have passed in the last couple of weeks.

- Dale Copeland from Yavapai 04
Dale passed away on March 3rd. He served on the Yavapai board for nine years. He was a valued and respected board member. He brought a wealth of experience to his board and used his experience to make informed recommendations. He actively engaged in each case, always assisted his fellow board members, and was thoroughly prepared. Throughout his appointment Dale truly believed in the FCRB program and continued to sub on other Yavapai boards when needed.

- Ralph Young from Pima 02
Has served with the FCRB since June 2008. He was also previously a CASA. Ralph passed away at the beginning of February. He attended his February 4th review board meeting. It was a normal day, down to his staff compliments. “Your staff do such a good job.” “I love my Program Specialist.” “When we have substitutes, they’re all good too.” As well as complimenting Sandy on her new hair color. It was a normal day when his daughter, Amy, called to let us know he had passed. She wanted to make sure the FCRB Program knew how important Ralph felt about the work he did as a volunteer. While Ralph did not serve as a State Board member, you would probably recognize him from some pictures. He was one of those volunteers who helped at outreach events and connected with all staff. We are thankful for Ralph’s dedication and commitment to the program and he will be greatly missed.

Staffing:

There are vacancies in the Phoenix office. An offer for a PSIII should be made in the next week. For the PSI position, interviews are being conducted. While conducting PSIII interviews, two people were found that would fit well into the PSI positions.

There are a couple of new employees; Amy Brite who is a PSIII, Florence James who is a PSI and Daisy Santacruz who is an admin.

Tucson has had several people out sick and on FMLA. Permission was given to bring back Juana who was a PSI in Tucson previously. She came back in a temporary status and has helped the Tucson office catch up on some of the duties they got behind on. Juana helped the office out for 12 weeks. Juana is also coming back on March 16th to help the Phoenix staff do notices for any vacant boards.

The Phoenix office has a PSIII that will be going on FMLA this month and will be out until June.

Lori has been sitting in the Best Practices Committee and will move over to Continuing Education starting today. Esma will be taking Lori's place in Best Practices. Best Practices will be in the very experienced hands of Sandy, Esma, and Adia.

Comments:

Statistics look stable; however, the state is not stable. There are approximately 240 people moving into Arizona every day and the kids in care stay in the same number range. When we get the 2020 Census results, can we put a factor on there to show that we are declining with kids in care?

Lina has tried to recruit volunteers. If a person was previously a volunteer and wants to come back to the program but want to see how the processes changed, how can they do that without filling out the packet to start the volunteer process?

- The process is set up as it is so that the prospective volunteer has signed a confidentiality waiver. If we wanted to bring in someone to observe who has not done that, we would need to change our process. We would need to make sure we had confidentiality waivers signed ahead of time and we would also need an Administrative Order from the judges saying they are giving authorization for someone to sit in on the reviews, because the reviews are confidential.

- If someone is concerned about coming into the program because they are worried about the dynamic of the board, it is worrisome as it is about the good work that the volunteers do.

Information Item 1.3 Training Report:

The training report will be posted on the SharePoint site. Everyone will be able to check their credits.

There is still concern that the report is not 100% correct. Lori will go through it and bring up concerns to the IT department.

Division/AOC Report

Speaker: Caroline Lantt-Owens, *Director, Dependent Children's Services Division*

Summary of Discussion:

DAP/Dependency Alternative Program

This program started in Pima County and has been in process for about four and a half years. They bring together a multi-disciplinary group pre-petition filing for certain types of cases where the judge can make orders to help the family receive services, so a dependency petition is not filed. There have not been a lot of cases put through this program yet, but the ones that have gone through have been very successful.

Maricopa has also tried something similar. They are looking at kids that are in the delinquency system and are trying to prevent dependency petitions being filed on them.

The Chief Justice's Strategic Plan calls for an expansion of the DAP program across the state. There is a meeting mid-May in the southern part of the state. We just reached out to judges and court administrators to put together a team of people to join us in Tucson to talk about what a DAP program might look like in their county.

Action Item 1.4: Proposed Revisions to FCRB rules

Currently the FCRB is governed by Arizona Statute and Court Rules. There are two sets of Court Rules; the Rule of Procedure for the FCRB and the Supplemental Rules for the State FCRB. The Supplemental Rules talk about voting for the State Board. In these rules the counties are referred to as districts. Now that things have changed, we are updating the rules to reflect counties, not districts. State statute requires that state board member terms be coterminous with the term as a local board member. The changes were started at the end of 2019. As the rules were being looked over it was determined that they could be tightened up and/or clarified. The rules had to be filed by January 10, 2020, the Supreme Court will review them at the end of July or into August. There is a forum open for comment. The rules have received over 370 views and there are currently no comments. The Executive Committee approved the rules in their meeting. If the State Board approves the rules, then we will file a comment on behalf of the State Board showing approval.

- **Approval of Revisions to FCRB rules:**

Motion: Vote to approve Revisions to FCRB rules.

Moved by: Bruce Brannan; **Seconded by:** Grant Smith.

Comment that what has been done is a positive move. There were limitations and confusion over interested parties attending a review. It is clear now that people, like grandparents, are welcome to the reviews.

Action: Motion passed unanimously.

Action Item 1.5: Proposed Comment to the Proposed revisions to FCRB rules

Striking Action Item 1.5 from the agenda.

Title IVE Partial Reimbursement for Parent and Child Representation in Dependency Cases

There was a change in policy in January 2019 that now allows partial reimbursement for attorney representation of parents and children in dependency cases. Our goal is to reunify children with their families when we can. If there are parents that are not well represented, they don't get the right opportunity to reunify. They need someone who is qualified and vested in the system. The children need the same type of representation.

The AOC has been working with DCS since January 2019 to come up with a program and/or agreement. DCS is the Title IVE agency that the federal government is working with for reimbursement. The AOC is now the "middleman" for the disbursement of the monies to the counties. The counties will send the AOC their reimbursement forms, the AOC will compile those forms into one form and send to DCS, when the money comes back it will go to the AOC and the AOC will distribute the monies to each county. Due to this policy change happening in 2019 the counties can go back and claim money for that year. The counties have until March 31st to get their claims turned in.

Yuma county has already turned in their claim. Yuma county's total expenses were \$463,000, they are only allowed to claim for the percentage of children and parents who are Title IVE eligible. In our state that is roughly forty-five percent and it's

roughly a partial reimbursement of fifty percent. So, after these modifications Yuma county will get roughly \$105,000 for 2019.

We have received an agreement from almost every county. There is a county that needs to bring the agreement in front of their board of supervisors, another county's agreement is in the mail, and there is one county that still has some concerns. The counties don't have to opt in now to get their reimbursement for 2019. The county can send their agreement in at any time and it will be a quarterly reimbursement. According to the agreement, 75% of the reimbursement must go back to support and enhance representation in dependency cases and 25% of the reimbursement is there for the county to spend as it sees fit.

Legislative Session

There have been more bills this session than have been seen in some time. Caroline started with 22 bills on her tracking list, now the bills have moved from their house of origin to the other house. There are now 10 left on her tracking list.

SB1487 was concerning. It had good intent but took away from some of the work the FCRB does. It gave a lot of right to foster placements. While that can be nice, it took away from the work of trying to reunify children with families. For example, if the foster parents disagreed with a removal of a child from their home, there was a list of requirements that the agency now had to accomplish including, providing them services, when we don't have enough services to provide the children and parents. At this time the bill has been gutted a little bit and the new version needs to be looked over. Of the ten bills that are being tracked most didn't have impact on the work that the FCRB does.

Old Business:

N/A

New Business:

Speaker: Caroline Lantt-Owens, *Director, Dependent Children's Services Division*

On one of the boards that Caroline sits on implemented something called their "Mission Moment". At the meeting one of the board members talks about how the

work they do has an impact, that they saw. If everyone likes the idea, we could add a “Mission Moment” to the agenda and open it up to everyone or have it prearranged. Topics could include; a case that was seen where there was a positive impact, good work that the board is doing, good work that a case worker is doing, etc.

Art presents his list of Foster Care charitable organizations.

Comments:

There is a comment that Caroline’s idea is fantastic, and the board does some wonderful things, but the board doesn’t know the impact of their recommendations.

Another comment is made that they attend a lot of activities in a small community and it’s possible that someone might figure out who the person is the “Mission Moment” is being spoken about. Afraid of breach of confidentiality.

Adjournment:

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved by: Grant Smith; **Seconded by:** Lina Wallen.

No discussion.

Action: Motion passed unanimously at 11:57 a.m.

Future meeting dates:

↪ *Saturday, June 6, 2020 State Board Meeting via Teams.*

↪ *Saturday, September 5, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting (telephonic)*

↪ *Saturday, November 7, 2020 State Board Meeting (in person)*

LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS

You have been provided this State Board information for the following reasons:

- 1) As a mechanism to inform you of State Board meetings and activities. Local board members are always welcome to attend. As a local board member, you only need to R.S.V.P. if you wish to attend (reimbursement for miles, meals, and lodging no provided).
- 2) Local board members are encouraged to participate in State Board meetings; however, local board members do not have voting privileges.
- 3) If you are interested in a committee project, please contact Lori Dennison at (602) 452-3409.