

**District IV Citizen Review Panel  
707 N. Armstrong Pl, Boise, ID 83704  
Bluebird Room  
Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021  
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

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Meeting ID: 874 4911 0153

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## **Meeting Minutes**

### **In attendance**

Members:

Darcie Bobrowski, Kym Nilsen, Nicole Noltensmeyer, Allison Berkson, Brian McCauley, Shannon McCarthy, and Britney Journee. Darcie Bobrowski excused from meeting at 4:35pm.

Staff: Laura Smith and Courtney Boyce (CDH), Misty Myatt (IDHW) joined at 4:02pm. Nicky Flock (IDHW) attended at 5:10pm.

### **Call to Order**

Brian McCauley, the District IV Citizen Review Panel Chair, called the Meeting to Order at 4:00pm.

**Motion:** Nicole made a motion to consent to the agenda, as written. Kym seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

**Motion:** Britney made a motion to confirm the January Meeting Minutes as written. Nicole seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

### **Valley County Update**

In this portion of the meeting, Kym Nilsen provided an update of her investigative interviews and findings. Kym provided a report of informal recommendations for the IDHW to consider.

The first was that H&W to re-establish a full time caseworker position dedicated to serving the growing communities of Valley County. Kym reported that looking back over the successes and availability of services to children that were created and supported when a full time worker was in McCall, and tracing the unmistakable connection to the loss of that position and the dismal situation Valley County is in presently, the need is self-illuminating. Also, could this position be of even greater service if this individual served New Meadows and Council (Adams County, in a different region, but 20 minutes and 45 minutes from McCall respectively, which are also communities of great need)? Kym continued that in this region, they have a tremendous problem with homelessness, poverty and there is a lot of need there.

Kym continued for a second recommendation where if that were not possible, to hire an area individual for a part time position. This position would be tasked to establish relationships within the local communities, coordinate available services to meet the needs of at-risk children and families in crisis, and (critically important if H&W is to have ANY legitimate and effective presence in Valley County) rebuild trust between the residents of Valley County and H&W. Kym emphasized, that with the H&W history in Valley County, and the unique makeup of rural communities, relational work is critical to rebuild trust.

Kym's third information recommendation was to respectfully partner with existing resources and organizations. They work around IDHW rather than collaborating or collaborating for the community's success. Kym shared that there is pattern where in local support services offered through churches (very strong and positive outreach) , community partnerships, family relatives and concerned neighbors, and other community networks have become the primary source depended upon to address needs of families and children at risk.

Kym's forth recommendation was to immediately address the need for coordinated education and training of all individuals who would partner to identify and coordinate care for at-risk children. This recommendation would be of educators as Kym reported there is a strong confusion, and lack of clarity from educators not knowing next steps about the protocol and practices of reporting.

Kym also strongly suggested finding a way to offer consistent feedback to those reporting. It was discussed that sometimes there is a letter of reporting, but individuals in Valley County indicate that they not receiving documentation. They don't receive feedback, they don't know if there are any organizational structures in place to change the circumstances. One teacher reported that they have reported on one child anywhere from 6 to 8 times, without seeing any definitive solutions or changes. Educators and the community need to have trust that the system is intact and working.

A Panel member asked, what is the Department's approach to reach rural communities, where there are large geographic areas without resources? It was shared that once 2020 census data for Valley County is through, they hope to use that information to strengthen the requests for more FTE from IDHW for resources and staffing. Misty shared that they have seen a lot more referrals for Valley County, and that they had a worker up there two days last week and this week. Misty emphasized that changes are not going to happen overnight, but change was occurring. Misty continued that they had a few cases in the last couple of weeks with an imminent danger situation, but the judge essentially said it isn't their fault that we don't have enough resources in this community, and that it is a responsibility of the Department to meet the needs of the family, including housing and counseling. Which if they could do, they would do. In another situation, they collaborated with law enforcement to get to the home, and they went once with the caseworker, however the family did not answer. The agency they worked with said that it was not within their capacity to continue to respond to these circumstances, but repetitively attempting to contact the family. There was a discussion about interviewing the child at school, or elsewhere. The Department did create brochure around parents' rights based on a legislative proposal. It clearly states that you as a parent have the right to refuse on behalf of your child, the ability for them to be interviewed. If it is clearly stated by the family that they cannot interview their child at school, the Department is not able to do coordinate interviewing with the child in question.

Allison discussed a part-time position in Boise County schools, and how this could be replicated through McCall-Donnelly School District. In this hypothetical proposal, there could be a Department of Health and Welfare position in the school district. This worker would be more grounded in the community, rather than in Valley County as needed and able to coordinate resources such as food and clothing. It was discussed that they need a reinforced network and to rebuild that framework of accountability that was present previously, when they had ongoing Department engagement.

The conversation turned to Shepard's Home, in Valley County. Misty shared that they had an MOU previously. At one point in time they were a licensed, therapeutic foster home, they went through

organizational changes with different owners. This time they chose to go a different route in licensing. The house parents are licensed, but not the agency as a whole is not licensed as a “foster home,” but the individuals that run it are licensed as foster parents. Misty shared that taking placements from Department of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) that contract is very different, as they have to be mindful of who, how long, and the therapeutic approach of treatment to children in foster care when placed there. There have been discussions on a higher-level about the appropriateness of placing children there, at a higher level through IDHW. There are concerns about vulnerable, at-risk children as foster placements and correctional placements. A Panel member expressed concern that this facility may be presenting themselves as a residential treatment facility to the community at large, but they are not, and only in the system as a general foster home.

Kym focused on the themes of her investigations, including communication, resource issue, frustration at the dysfunction of the system. She proposed that some additional solutions may include volunteers, caseworkers, guardian ad litem, and school counselors or the ability to develop contracts with different agencies/individuals to meet the needs of Valley County.

The conversation continued highlighting the need to facilitate communication, utilize community-based driven decisions, provide synopsis of services and then acknowledge gaps back to Valley County. This solution allows them to decide for themselves, with a ‘What do you need to improve?’ approach.

### **Boise County Recommendations**

At 4:41pm, Brian transitioned to the next meeting item. Brian shared that Officer Gomez at the last meeting provided an eye-opening conversation to the Panel and indicating significant needs in the community. Brian asked if the Panel had any ideas, and said that he would like to volunteer to ride along with Officer Gomez to see the needs of Boise County first-hand. Brian said that this experience will provide him insight and evaluate the community further.

**Action Item:** Brian will reach out to Officer Gomez to arrange attending a ride-along.

The Panel discussed themes from the previous meeting including the need for warm clothes, role models, activities, and food security. They also discussed the Community School Model. The Institute for Educational Learning defines a Community School as, “[...] both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Community schools offer a personalized curriculum that emphasizes real-world learning and community problem-solving.” Laura shared that community schools in our area are often supported by United Way of Treasure Valley. Laura said she is not sure what funding looks like, but they usually do the training and technical assistance. Misty shared that Boise County also holds a regular MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team) and attends every other Wednesday, with a representative from Childs Mental Health. Valley County does not.

The Panel highlighted that there are systemic issues, with work need to have limited resources be more effective, and elevating community’s capacity to address these issues.

**Action Item:** Courtney will send Officer Gomez’s contact information to Brian.  
This action item was completed after the CRP meeting.

### **Bylaws/Membership Terms**

The Panel discussed amending the bylaws. The bylaw amendments have been submitted several times by the Panel since September 2020, with most recent submissions occurring in January in preparation for this meeting. Courtney identified that there is one needed change that was previously addressed, that “Central District Health Department” is no longer accurate as an organizational title and will be changed to “Central

District Health.” The amendments to the bylaws include re-formatting, better definitions and the development of an Appointing Committee to address interviewing and recruiting Panel member vacancies.

**Motion:** Brian moved to approve the bylaws amendments as proposed by Shannon McCarthy. Nicole seconded. The motion carries.

### **Idaho Foster Care Awareness Day 2021**

The Panel discussed previous Idaho Foster Care Awareness Day events and the virtual programming that will be occurring. It was discussed that it would be beneficial to have a Panel member represent the Panel in an official capacity, and if anyone was planning on attending. Nicole shared that she has already registered as a community member and will be coming in and out as needed. It was encouraged for Nicole to reach out to the organizers, to leverage that relationship with representation being present if there was any way to have time to share what the Panel does.

**Motion:** Brian motioned to approve Nicole as an authorized representative for District IV’s CRP at Idaho Foster Care Awareness Day. Britney seconded.

### **CDH Liaison Role Proposal**

Courtney provided a list of proposals for the Panel to consider regarding her role as a public health district liaison to the Panel. This list included unanimous consent from the Panel to:

- Attend and represent D4 CRP at the Capacity Building Center for States’ Citizen Review Panel Meetings
- Attend the National Citizen Review Panel Conference to represent the District IV Citizen Review Panel, if timing/funding is permitted by the Panel
- Learn national best-practices that may inform policy work and/or evidence-based recommendations utilizing proven strategies from other states
- Invite local/national subject-matter expertise to attend meetings and inform the Panel’s work
- Coordinate with subject-matter legal expertise identifying and addressing legislative changes in child welfare

The Panel gave blanket approval for all non-binding attendance to represent the interests of the District IV Citizen Review Panel.

**Action Item:** Courtney will reach out to Christine Tiddens from Idaho Voices for Children, to invite her to the April Meeting.

### **Formal Judges’ Recommendations**

From the January meeting, Alison shared that she would like to learn more about the judge's reasoning behind the court's decision, as there is no formal record as to why the judge decided in a favor of a decision or to move towards termination (for example). This documentation could indicate the judge’s decision, including what considerations or factors they had in their final decision. Allison also shared that the Panel is not receiving documentation from foster parents and caseworkers, as they conduct case reviews. It was shared that documentation from the judges is verbally shared or listed by case workers, but who would be best to document that formally. Shannon said there may be court minutes by clerk, but they might not be as comprehensive as we like, and this would require requesting copies of the minutes or

transcribed copy of the hearing. Other than that, it is just a summary of the process and orders or subsequent orders.

Brian stated that they could propose a legislative mandate to have meeting minutes or court transcriptions added to the case reviews. It could also be a formal recommendation for the case worker that when they write up their notes if they could add if/why/when details in cases when a judge ruled against their or a guardians recommendation. This could be a required narrative after a court hearing on the judge's recommendations. It was shared that recommendations are made based on a subject-matter expertise, and it would be helpful to know why those recommendations were not followed. Data would be valuable, and would show significant differences between child protective rulings across the state.

Misty said that she could add it onto the list of enhancements as those are reviewed on a weekly basis and prioritized. Misty said that Roxanne is aware of issues in documents in e-cab, made a plan regionally for narratives to be pulled and uploaded.

Foster parent formal documentation should already be in e-Cabinet, and the Panel states they are not seeing it or not as frequently as they would have predicted. The official letters of the court are e-Cabinet. It was asked is there ability to pull narratives between foster parents or therapists? This was asked as they can be referred to in documentation but text messages and e-mails are not pulled into e-Cabinet. If I share something with a caseworker as a foster parents, it didn't happen per documentation as it is not directly reported in the reviews. It was shared that if there are concerns as a foster parent that are reported but it does not make it to the final report, my voice (as a foster parent) was not accurately documented anywhere. It was shared that the narrative in the cases would be through the caseworkers and synopsised to include concerns, texts, and e-mails. Allison said that she was struggling with idea that foster parents are providing documentation that is not being formally documented in e-Cabinet and the caseworkers are not accountable to that documentation in their narratives, as it is through their lens. It was asked if in other states, do they have foster parents fill out an official form including, how is the child, what activities are they doing, what concerns do you have etc.? Is that a possibility to formalize that documentation to enter into e-Cabinet? The discussion continued on the formation of a Universal Foster Parent Feedback Form, and if this could be written and programed into the system to make that happen, for that form to be utilized and implemented statewide.

Shannon said that she is seeing that foster parents are showing up more often to court appointments to directly address and discuss the issues that they are experiencing with the Department. Foster parents submit documentation directly to the Guardian, which is submitted to the lawyer and then provided to the court. Through that avenue, foster parents are making themselves heard. A form through the portal would be convenient in order to have a formal documentation and getting information into the hands of the decision-makers. In Allison's capacity as a liaison to the IDHW Administration, was encouraged to reach out to Administration about the possibility of integrating a formal foster parent feedback form into the new Foster Parent Portal.

**Motion:** Brian made a motion to reorder agenda where "Case Reviews" are after "Idaho CRP Leadership Meeting Update" and "CRP Independent Branding" given the interest of time. Nicole seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

### **Idaho CRP Leadership Meeting Update**

Nicole attended part of the last Idaho CRP Leadership Meeting, where it was shared children in some regions are not being removed from homes due to no foster parents. It was also shared that they received elected official support for the treatment center proposal. At the meeting it was also discussed that the District IV Panel was exploring cases where children were in protective custody and placed into treatment homes or residential facilities. There was not unanimous support from the statewide panels represented on that call, to continue this endeavor. Nicole and Courtney had to leave the call before its completion.

## **CRP Independent Branding**

Brian discussed that he was not able to coordinate with his contacts for a pro bono logo. Courtney presented the three creative inspiration projects that were submitted to the Panel. These ideas were not intended to be the formal logos for the CRP, but rather an opportunity for the Panel to discuss what they liked about the drafts, what they didn't like, and what color schemes and images do they feel represent our region. This was an opportunity to share what elements or symbols do they feel represent them as Panel members, the role of the Panel, and the counties under the Panel's jurisdiction.

Regarding creative direction, it was recommended to stay away from traditional red, white, and royal blue, and to focus on neutral colors like blues and greens. Courtney will pursue this request. It was discussed that if possible, this will be shared with Idaho CRP Leadership with the ability to have the logo be adopted into different regions.

**Motion:** Nicole motioned that Courtney uses CDH Graphic Design Contractors, to draft and propose three different logos and stylized titles at the next meeting. Shannon seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

## **Case Reviews**

The Panel discussed case reviews, without going into Executive Session and providing neutral, un-identifying information regarding cases. There was also a discussion on fixing errors in the documentation that the Panel reviews, for accuracy.

**Action Item:** Courtney will send out a survey for the Panel to complete that highlights their top three priorities to discuss at the March meeting with IDHW.

### *Potential March Agenda Items:*

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Administration

- Safety concern about visitations
- Valley County updates
- Idaho Citizen Review Panel Report titled "Recommendations & Responses October 2019 – September 2020"

## **Adjourn**

Brian McCauley, the District IV Citizen Review Panel Chair, adjourned the District IV Citizen Review Panel meeting at 6:00pm.

*Meeting Minutes prepared by Courtney Boyce.*