

**District IV Citizen Review Panel
707 N. Armstrong Pl, Boise, ID 83704
Star Garnet
Tuesday, May 4th, 2021
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

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Meeting Minutes

Members: Allison Berkson, Brian McCauley, Nicole Noltensmeyer, Kym Nilsen, Britney Journee. Darcie Bobrowski. Quorum established.

Shannon McCarthy entered at 4:03pm. Nicole Noltensmeyer entered at 4:06pm.

Staff: Chris Freeburne (IDHW) Laura Smith and Courtney Boyce (CDH)

Call Meeting to Order

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

Call Meeting to Order

Motion: Brian made a motion to add a brief discussion and to approve someone from the District IV CRP to attend the IDHW Listening Session for the CRPs in an official capacity. Darcie seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

Motion: Brian motioned to approve the agenda as written with amendments. Britney seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

Motion: Brian made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. Britney seconded. Shannon McCarthy abstains. None opposed. The motion carries.

The District IV Citizen Review Panel spent a few minutes completing the April Monthly Evaluation Form. The Panel will come prepared to each meeting to submit this form electronically with the in-kind hours they conducted, the number of case reviews they completed and the counties in which they occurred.

Guest Speaker: Kate Wilson

Allison provided an introduction to Kate.

Panel Discussion: Guest Speaker: Kate Wilson

Kate Wilson described how she was a foster parent starting three years ago with a sibling group of five, that she adopted in 2020. She decided to open up her home again and is now fostering a teenage girl. Kate discussed the trauma of splitting sibling groups. Last May she spoke with her pastor to discuss how to get more involved. This led to the decision to open up a foster home. They aim to be licensed for 14 days to help children find the right home and making sure to establish their safety until they reach a more permanent situation. She wants to better develop a community for foster parents and foster children. This home is from a member from the church, they currently have tenants in the home so they are unable to start renovations. They will not be able to view the home until July. Kate discussed researching other homes and nonprofits that are similar. She hopes to learn from other community members with experience, including former foster youth. From discussions with foster youth, they discussed wanting decorations and other items that create a home-environment feel. Kate discussed how the community is supporting them including fire fighters, community members, and they have support from IDHW. The Panel discussed anyways that they could be involved. It is a TBD at this point and time as their needs will likely change in the fall. The Panel discussed that this is a great plan and a wonderful step to support children in the foster care system. Kate shared that they are able to set up a meeting with her, walk through the home model upon completion. She wants to work with others to learn from their experience and identify their needs.

Chris discussed that for facilities with new providers; they hope to work with them to understand the continuum of care, the different needs and facilities, and that they have the support they need to identify those needs. Kate said the model that she is looking at is in Region III, Jasper Place is located in Caldwell. They are licensed as a 14-day shelter home, so they cannot stay past that point. They only have one of those facility types so Foster + Heart would be the second home of that licensing. IDHW working with them to understand current and upcoming requirements. They do not have to be individually licensed, but they do have to have individual enhanced background checks including Kate, as well as anyone that they hire. This is fingerprint-based background check, with established clearance then they can work with Foster + Heart. For shifts, there will be a morning shift, dayshift, and night shift. Their needs might change. They hope to have 8 children for 1 worker, depending on the needs of their children they might hire two people for every shift.

Allison asked how Foster + Heart employees will go through training, and what types. Kate shared that she is going through the training and looking at becoming a trainer. She would like to have former foster parents, or those who have previously gone through the training required from IDHW, as employees. Allison said that is developing at this time but she will prioritize extensive, comprehensive training.

Kate said that they are capping the age at 12 because of concerns of predatory behavior from youth. It was shared that the biggest need is for children above 6 years old. The eventual goal would be to open up a home just for teenagers. Kate shared that they will make adjustments to bedroom placements, having same sex children in each room, and will coordinate with the Department to have an awareness of history, if there are predatory sexual behaviors from new and current placements. Brian asked Chris that with the status that the employees will have, will they make that knowledge available to workers? They would hope that the Department would make that full disclosure. Chris said that they will provide them with as much information as possible, and each child will have a file that the care staff can review.

Kate discussed that with renovations and model changes, they are hoping for September. She is feeling optimistic about the timeline.

A Panel member asked if there is any tracking or data regarding Jasper Place. Specifically, do they have a higher success rate for reducing multiple placements or is there more stability in the second placement or higher rates of kinship placements after a two-week placement. Chris said that it is unknown at this time, but he will see about data at IDHW. The information that is shared with them may be anecdotal. Chris followed up by saying that when Miren and Roxanne join in June, that might be a good question for them.

After Kate left, it was asked if they have transportation for Foster + Heart, to make sure that their children are able to get to school. This was undetermined. Courtney sent a thank you email and requested information in this area.

The public can receive more information about Foster + Heart at <https://www.fosterandheart.com/>.

Listening Session

Courtney shared the email that was sent to her regarding IDHW Listening Sessions:

We are conducting listening sessions as part of our needs assessment and are seeking participation from each of the district citizen review panels to gather information based on your expertise and experience within the child welfare system. The listening sessions will be conducted via recorded WebEx and will be approximately 90 minutes in length. The information shared during this interview is confidential and responses will be de-identified. These sessions seek to further understand the needs of families in your community and how to best meet these identified needs. The focus will be on three different groups; families that are at risk of entering the child welfare system, families of children and youth currently in foster care and families finalizing permanency for youth that are not being reunited with their birth family. Inquiry in each of these areas will include availability of services, barriers in accessing services, gaps in services, efficacy of services, evidence-based services available and the most pressing needs of families in your area. Your responses are extremely important as future decisions will be made based on the information you share. Data from this assessment will inform service improvement as well as the development of new services in Idaho.

Motion: Brian motioned for Allison Berkson to represent the District IV Citizen Review Panel to attend the Listening Session. Britney seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

Guest Speaker: Christine Tiddens

Christine is the Director for Idaho Voices for Children. More information on Idaho Voices for Children is found at <https://www.idahovoices.org/>. She identified that through their work they are foster care and child welfare advocates.

Christine said that they are in the final stretch of the legislative session. Idaho Voices for Children are a nonpartisan, nonprofit, advocacy group that champion for policy change to have children and families thrive. We are lobbyists for children, advocate for education, data/research, and work closely with IHDW. Once bills are passed they also work to improve policy. Christine said that they have a robust policy agenda. They have been involved in work around foster childcare, health care policy, early childhood education, food/housing assistance, childcare, and general family financial security. With foster care policy, that stepped into our work in child welfare around 5 years ago. Christine identified that Idaho Voices for Children identified that previously they noticed there was no policy advocacy group working on foster care/children impacted by welfare, even though there were multiple opportunities to improve the system. They fundraised to fund the child welfare work. Their first goal is to prevent child abuse and neglect, and improving the system. We have experienced a lot of success in prevention programs. They work closely with family, legislators, organizations, and concerned organizations. They have built strong relationships with youth, with IFYAB. Most of our efforts because it is what the youth have asked for. We helped secure state and federal dollars, to support children who are aging out of the system, to have the option to extend foster care until 21. We passed that bill unanimously, just signed into law last week. They identified that there are opportunities to improve the child welfare system, but there was no accountability, visibility, accessibility or oversight, so we could not sort out problem areas. Christine said that they wanted to pull the story together about what is happening in Idaho's child welfare system. This was where the original idea of the CRPs would be moved to the public health district. Christine said that the intent of the CRP is to take reports, listen, and come up with solutions to work on policy or to promote areas of success. Christine said that we know that the standing legislative committee does not meet very often, as it is not seen as a

priority. Christine said that they know that PHDs are addressing CRPs differently. They hope to fine tune and work out issues, including sustainable funding. Next up regarding the CRP, they hope to dive further into oversight and accountability including foster youth, GAL and CASA programs. Within these steps they hope to be working more closely with the courts.

It was asked, how we can be good partners between the District Citizen Review Panel and Idaho Voices for Children. It was answered that Idaho Voices for Children works on a macro, systems change level. We are the experts to facilitate those conversations to bridge the gap, to connect people with policy makers. The District IV Citizen Review Panel works on systems change and is aligned with their work.

What do you consider priority area one in the foster care system? Christine answered that there are pressing needs versus long-term investments. They are working to push for change. One of those areas coming up is the court appointed advocate/GAL as there is not consistently good representation. COVID absolutely impacted a voice for children in the courtroom, and they are working to extend the foster system to support this need.

What kinds of solutions are you pointing to on the CASA program? We feel it is a funding problem through the programs, where the statute for representation cannot be fulfilled. The state is not able to expect volunteers to contribute all of that time to ensure representation. They are working to increase funding for the CASA/GAL program to ensure representation. Christine said that they need to figure out who manages CASA, and the money distribution in the CASA programs. Funds are appropriated by Idaho legislators, but are managed by the courts, with two different branches of courts. Christine said that they want to add money, but need to know how the current money is being managed and distributed. She said that they need a plan for growth, which she anticipates will be a 2-3 year campaign initiative. They are working with the Office of Performance Evaluations. There are a lot of ideas and opportunities but we do not have a designated list for expanded funding. Christine emphasized that it is a personal goal to maintain individual and local control is key.

The Panel discussed that being under 12 years old is required to have a GAL, however over 12 years old can be legal representation. Christine said that they need to have clarification on funding. Depending on pro bono lawyers is difficult as foster care law is a unique subset of law. There can be pro bono representation for GAL, but public defenders are typically coordinated with. Attorneys for youth may or may not have a GAL, then there is representation for GAL.

Under 12 is GAL, over 12 can be legal representation. Clarification on funding. Depending on pro bono lawyers is difficult as foster care law is a unique subset of law, pro bono representation for GAL, as far as for kids and up, public defenders are typically coordinated with. There are public defenders available to use, however in other counties that is difficult. Counties say it is not their responsibility to fulfill the public defenders roles. Youth are turning down public defenders which may not be trauma-informed to manage their case. Christine identified that they are having pushback from rural communities regarding the child welfare system, and identifying the roles/jobs/responsibilities of safety assessors, police officers and social workers.

Courtney discussed the Panel conducting research on a state-by-state policy analysis as it pertains to ACEs and trauma informed care in February of 2020. Courtney asked if Idaho Voices for Children has done anything similar or advocated for policy changes to be more trauma-informed. Christine said they had not, but would be interested in learning more.

Brian departed at 5:15pm, allocated Darcie to continue meeting as Vice Chair.

Panel Discussion: Guest Speaker: Christine Tiddens

The Panel continued the discussion about next steps. Courtney will send minutes to Christine, and per the CRP invite to the Statewide CRP Leadership Conference Call. Christine organizes Foster Care Awareness Day and this may be an advantageous connection for Panel members to be more involved in the future.

Case Reviews

Courtney discussed that Mark provides part time administrative support staff at 15 hours a week, to collect CRP case reviews and information for all CRPs. Mark will do a qualitative analysis of the case reviews to clean it up and make sure that the requested information is present.

During case reviews section of the agenda, we will be discussing the case review process. Mark Thomas has been assigned the CRP point-person for case reviews. This is not an expansion of their abilities to address case reviews with the CRPs, mainly just having one person from IDHW be responsible for those duties. Mark would like feedback on several areas to support him in this transition.

Courtney discussed qualifying/disqualifying criteria for case reviews that the Panel would like to see. Some of the criteria that was presented and expanded on:

- Open, longer than 120 days
 - 50% of cases should be between 12 – 15 months old
 - 25% of cases should be around/over 24 months old
 - 25% of cases should be 6 months or less
- Case progression occurred in Region IV
- Where possible, open cases that have not been reviewed that are based out of Elmore, Boise, and Valley County
- When providing case review data, please include the county in addition to the case number, foster parent contact information, etc.

Chris discussed that there is a Project Manager, Susan Dewelo that may be of service to meet the Panel. He recommended that she attend a Panel Meeting before October, possibly August or September. The Panel will need to consent to this invitation to be added to the agenda. At that time, Courtney will extend a meeting invitation to Susan.

CRP Logo: Motion to Approve or Amend

The Panel discussed different logo drafts that were submitted by Thrive Designs. Britney, Nicole, and Darcie liked Design Three. Allison liked design two but with modifications. The Panel discussed the changes they would like to see. These changes will be requested by Thrive Design for a new logo draft to be submitted.

June Agenda Discussion

Courtney discussed the June agenda outline. This will need to be submitted and posted prior to her tiem out of the office.

Call Meeting to Order

- Consent Agenda
- Confirm Meeting Minutes
- Monthly Evaluation Form

Executive Session: Case Reviews – 30 minutes

Motion to record meeting – This was requested as Allison will not be able to attend the June meeting.

IDHW Discussion time total: 1.5 hours

- Family First

- Valley County Update
- Quarterly Report Feedback
- Open Discussion

Adjourn

Motion: At 6:26pm, Darcie Bobrowski the District IV Citizen Review Panel Vice Chair motioned to adjourn the meeting. Nicole seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

Meeting minutes prepared by Courtney Boyce.