



**Region IV Citizen Review Panel  
707 N. Armstrong Pl, Boise, ID 83704  
Bluebird**

**Monday, April 8, 2024  
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members:** Nicole Noltensmeyer, Carlos Galindo, Alisha Merrill, Merritt Dublin, Jessica Ivancic, Brian McCauley, Shannon McCarthy

**Absent:**

**Staff:** Jason Shaw (CDH)

**Guest:** Dean Cameron (DHW)

**Call Meeting to Order**

Merritt Dublin, the Region IV Citizen Review Panel Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

**Motion:** Merritt made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes as written. Nicole seconded. None opposed. The motion carried.

**Motion:** Merritt made a motion to amend the April agenda to move the DHW Q&A section to the beginning of the meeting, and to remove the section on media campaign. Shannon seconded. None opposed. The motion carried.

**DHW Question & Answer**

Director Cameron introduced himself to the Panel and discussed initiatives and changes that are being introduced at DHW as he settles into his new role. He also discussed personnel changes that are being made within DHW. The Department is currently reducing the number of short-term rentals that are being used. The Panel discussed the number of referrals that had been seen on cases during reviews with no action being taken. The Director discussed the issue based on what he knows at this time, and gathered more information so he could do further research into the situation. The Panel also raised concerns about Idaho's condition relative to other states on policies regarding priority levels and definitions, what evidence hotline staffers require, and what is required for action to be taken.

The Panel shared information on the townhall meeting they held with members of the public and what they had heard from current and former foster parents. The Director discussed actions DHW is currently, and will be in the future, taking to address the concerns of foster parents to boost retention going forward. The Panel discussed their impression of the lack of a child-first perspective in DHW at this time, and that certain factors aren't being taken into account that should have been. Concerns were also raised around disregarding expert opinion, and people not being allowed to testify in court who should have been. The Director shared concerns he shares with the Panel regarding the use of confidentiality requirements and the possibility of utilizing additional training to prevent that issue arising in the future.

The Panel shared personal stories of attempting to submit evidence to the Department, but were not allowed to. The Director confirmed that they should have been allowed to submit their evidence, and he would ensure that issue wouldn't arise going forward. The Panel discussed concerns regarding communication coming from the Department in the past that appeared less than professional, and the presence of illicit substances in homes with young children. The Panel also discussed issues with the current suite of software that is being used. The Director echoed concerns regarding software that is out-of-date and not optimal for what it is being required to do, and shared his interest in seeing how other states are solving that problem and what systems they're using.

### **May Meeting Agenda**

The Panel chose to shift their townhall meeting to later in the year so that they could partner with DHW to make the meeting more effective. The Panel discussed the status of the background checks for new members. The Director shared his interest in having DHW employees at the townhall to hear concerns and be able to discuss them in-person. The Panel brainstormed ways to ensure the townhall is structured to encourage candid conversation, while also protecting confidentiality. The Panel currently plans to invite one or two families to speak at a Panel meeting in June, and continue planning for a larger meeting with DHW involvement later in the year.

### **Legislative Update**

SB 1379 and SB 1380 passed during this legislative session. SB 1379 restricts the use of short-term rentals unless authorized by the Director, and SB 1380 establishes an ombudsman office effective 01JUL24.

### **Executive Session**

The Panel did not go into Executive Session at this meeting.

### **Adjourn**

Nicole Noltensmeyer adjourned the meeting at 6:06pm.

*Meeting minutes prepared by Jason Shaw*