

District IV Citizen Review Panel
707 N. Armstrong PI, Boise, ID 83704
Tuesday, May 5th, 2020
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/91319387109?pwd=MDgzazFETFJzbUNvdXQzbkhLc1NNQT09>

Meeting ID: 913 1938 7109

Password: 800721

Meeting was called to order at 4:03pm.

Panel Members: Brian McCauley, Darcie Bobrowski, Nicole Noltensmeyer, Teri Murrison, Shannon Pearson, Kym Nilsen, Melissa Mezo joined at 4:06pm

Staff: Courtney Boyce, Laura Smith (CDH), Misty Myatt (IDHW)

Motion: Shannon Pearson motioned to approve the agenda. Nicole seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

Motion: Shannon moved to approve the meeting minutes from March's CRP meeting. Kym seconded. Brian, Darcie, and Nicole in favor. Teri and Melissa abstained as they were not present for the March meeting.

COVID-19 Response

Brian discussed the limitations of CRP outreach and event planning at this time. Brian discussed with the panel their opinions and reviewed the basic structure. At the previous meeting, it was decided in the June meeting to have foster care parents and families be invited to participate in an open-mic session for 3-5 minutes, to discuss their observations and experiences of the child welfare system in Idaho. This would give individuals the opportunity to share their stories, in an open atmosphere where additional trends could be identified outside of department narrative in case files. To do this successfully, there would need to be guidelines for public testimony to be provided to participants, with the privacy practices implemented. The panel discussed if this was still feasible and decided to postpone planning.

Brian discussed the need for the panel to address a sustainability plan within the citizen review panels, and statewide wide organization. Brian discussed the political environment of Idaho and the panel's advocates. The panel needs to work together to determine which political leaders are advocates of the panels work, and gather bipartisan support. Teri identified that advice and help from Senator Lee and Moyle may be beneficial to determine who can be cultivated as panel champions.

The panel discussed the implementations of COVID-19 on foster care families, the procedures of the department, and the disruption of plans, services, and court dates. It was discussed that foster care parents are being requested to do functions that are typically not their primary responsibility, and how this can impact the family unit. An example was given of the practice of other states, where foster parents are facilitating Zoom calls and supervising online visits with biological parents.

Misty discussed that the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare started addressing earlier in 2020 how the pandemic could impact Idaho and planning accordingly. Misty addressed that while the department did pull back on face-to-face visits, they started supervising visits through Webex, Zoom or FaceTime. Those services are still being scheduled by client services for supervision and facilitated by IDHW staff. Misty discussed how the department is providing constant communication with foster parents, changing mental health services to telehealth appointments, working remotely through school districts, and working with staff to touch base every other week. Misty discussed that case workers are working with families that may need additional support, including vouchers for groceries, essentials, diapers and working with community partners to identify resources and support services. An additional example was at-home kits with games, activities, and snacks for foster care children and families.

A panel member requested additional information on how this is affecting the courts, and whether or not parents are receiving normal, scheduled appointments. Misty discussed how most court hearings being vacated, but that shelter care hearings, pre-trial and adjudicatory hearing (30 mark) are still being held. Misty discussed that case plan hearings were vacated and now they are being conducted through tele-conferencing services, in addition to 6-month and permanency reviews. Misty discussed that the judge will not take up termination of parental rights without going in front of the judge. Misty discussed that hearings are being held in WebEx. Misty identified that there was a 2-3-week delay with suspended court appointments due to the pandemic. Misty stated that this was in compliance from an order from the Idaho Supreme Court to cease hearings. Misty stated they have been working on services to ensure hearings and continue moving forwards with court appointments. A question was asked regarding foster children

Misty stated that there are investigations being still being completed by the department including safety assessments. Additional assessments include signs and symptoms indicative of COVID-19, and assessing COVID-19 exposure. Misty stated that there tentatively, may be families in the region that has been positively confirmed with COVID-19 or exposed, however that situation has not occurred yet. Misty stated that it is a requested practice that all foster care families maintain physical/social distancing and self-quarantine responsibility. Misty stated that the direction has been to quarantine as a family and not remove children from foster families, and then place them into a

different situation. Misty indicated that this practice would limit displacements, disruptions to the family unit, and exposures.

Questions for Foster Care Families

Brian asked the panel if they wanted to put together a form that would address questions. This data would include quantitative and qualitative data. The panel discussed that since they were delaying the meeting face-to-face with foster parents, these questions would be for case reviews over the phone to guide the discussion. Previous questions were assessed during the meeting.

A panel member asked what kinds of issues are being generated due to COVID-19. Shannon discussed that GAL work has slowed down, the department has issued recommendations for visitations, and that emergency hearings are taking weeks to schedule. Returning to the questions for foster-care families, additional questions were discussed such as – what considerations or complications occurred in COVID-19, what steps could have been taken to better prepare foster care parents, how has the placement been, do you see yourself fostering in 1 year, 5 years?

These questions would need to be adjusted to specify on the form of placement, including kinship specification questions. These questions will be modified based on the ongoing evaluations and assessments of panel members as they conduct case review interviews.

Youth Advisory Board

The panel reviewed the purpose of the Youth Advisory Board collaboration. The intent was to include YAB in the agenda and encourage them to share their perspectives, thoughts, stories, and experiences. Misty said that she did reach out to the program specialist that leads YAB, but given COVID-19 this ongoing communication fell off radar. Shannon recommended that this discussion be a set part of that meeting. Given that members of the board are geographically dispersed; it may be best to occur via Zoom.

Motion: Nicole moved to invited members of the Youth Advisory Board to attend the June District IV Citizen Review Panel meeting. Shannon seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

Action Item: Misty Myatt, IDHW liaison, will coordinate with Youth Advisory Board to extend invitation. The next month's agenda will dedicate one-hour to the Youth Advisory Board, including 15 to 20 minutes for Q & A from the panel.

Family Advocates Meeting

Shannon discussed the value of coordinating with Family Advocates, to assess the needs of child welfare, the current efforts and the need to coordinate work. Shannon

discussed the role of Family Advocates including coordinating all the guardian ad litem (GALs). Family Advocates assigns, trains, assists, and coordinates community resources for families such as backpack drives, Christmas presents. Shannon wondered what talking points or questions the panel might have for Family Advocates. The panel discussed that coordination could address GAL concerns, and changes – such as inquiring if they feel heard, if their recommendations are taken seriously, if they have hesitations to speak up or provide recommendations differently than what the department may be advocating for. It was requested to be informed if they have a paid lobbyist for the legislature. Shannon discussed that she was planning on providing information on the panel, including the efforts and difficulties of the panel. This meeting was framed as a fact-finding mission to include communication from each entity. Another question was posed, including what they would like the panel to know regarding their work. Shannon received unanimous support from panel members to represent the panel during this meeting. It was requested that an outline or additional information be shared with the panel.

Action Item: Courtney will send Rebecca, liaison to Family Advocates, meeting information including agenda, and previous meeting minutes. Shannon will share e-mail with Courtney to facilitate communication.

Outreach/Event Planning

This item was already addressed as the panel will suspend planning on the June event to include foster-care families sharing their experience and stories. The panel presented that this conversation could include education needs, the number of children that they have in care and the work that is requested of them to meet the needs of foster care children. Misty discussed meeting with the Boise School Districts, on how to support the kids in care. Some families are working online, completing packets, or informally educating children. Misty identified that the department is allowing families to do what works best for them in their family units. Misty discussed the Boise School District is working with families on WiFi, hotspots, laptops and the barriers that can be present with online school. They are hoping to facilitate with rural communities to complete packets and working with the individual school districts. Nicole discussed the needs of her family and that the Boise School District supplied Chrome books and provided additional resources to meet capacity and the needs of the community.

The panel also discussed substance abuse treatment services. Misty said that individuals were still being asked to do random urine analysis tests, engaged in treatment services, AA classes or other outpatient services. Misty responded to a question from a panel member stating that relapses are not necessarily increasing, but on a case-by-case basis, a similar sentiment shared regarding individuals being released from jail. Misty stated that all appropriate safety concerns are being assessed, addressed and mitigated. Misty said that there are staff resources to address this and in the case of children with extended home visits, still need to be seen face-to-face with more frequent contact and to continuously assess safety. There were discussions

regarding how the court system has slowed down, barriers with parents receiving services, and the staff itself is actively assessing safety and progress in plans. They are working on establishing services in a changing environment, so that those waiting to engage in counseling/parent education with the change to tele-health services. A panel member inquired if there was a predicted increase in referrals. Misty identified that there is a decrease in referrals, but that it is very concerning given previous years' data where March would typically have an uptick around spring break and continue until summer break. Misty discussed that they are typically busy in April with Child Abuse Prevention Month, and this April did not have the same experience. Misty said that they are seeing increasing numbers in the last two weeks, but nothing like what has been seen in previous years. Panel members wondered if it is because schools are not in session. This was identified in addition to individuals not getting behind closed doors with therapists/private professionals. Misty addressed that teachers conducting online school and packets, to assess surroundings when doing schooling. That this is an informal processes and case-by-case on how often to individually check-in with students/parents, as not everyone has online capabilities.

Misty discussed the value of educational partners assessing home environment. Misty identified that statewide about 47% of school teachers, counselors, nurses and other healthcare partners, and then private professionals such as CBRS workers. Misty addressed that at all levels the department is addressing the possible influx of possible referrals, and the conversation has been started regarding plans.

The panel transitioned into discussing the standardization of sustainability for the panel, and the need to advocate for statewide structure. It was discussed that the lack of standardization can be led by someone who has vision in order to keep everyone on course. The panels as a whole need to focus on action items, not general recommendations. The panel discussed the need for regional feedback with direct connection to the legislature, where if a panel member reaches out for questions, thoughts, or reflections to engage legislatures. Brian discussed that it may be appropriate to discuss a subgroup committee to address the framework for sustainability plan, with Teri and Brian.

Action Item: Add Sustainability Plan for 30 – 45 minutes to the June agenda.

Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, & Meeting Open Law

During this portion of the meeting, Courtney reviewed the bylaws, including the code of conduct forms, conflict of interest and open meeting law. All of these documents were provided to the panel prior to the meeting, and reviewed via PowerPoint during the meeting. The process for identifying conflicts, in addition to the process for managing reported conduct violations of panel members were discussed. Any violation of MOUs

would include the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, otherwise would be assisted through private investigations through panel members. Panel members are responsible for signing electronically the code of conduct and conflict of interest forms, by the next meeting.

District IV Executive Committee General Election

The Executive Committee positions are the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The duties and responsibilities of these roles were reviewed from the bylaws. It was requested that if any current Chairs feel they are not able to do the roles and responsibilities as written, to communicate that.

Motion: Teri motioned Brian McCauley for the nomination of position of Chair. Shannon seconded. Brian accepted nomination.

Motion: Melissa motioned Darcie Bobrowski for the nomination of position of Vice Chair. Shannon seconded. Darcie accepted nomination.

Motion: Teri motioned Nicole Noltensmeyer for the position of Secretary. Kym seconded. Nicole accepted nomination.

The vote for nominee Brian McCauley for the Chair of District IV Citizen Review Panel was conducted. Bobrowski, Aye; Noltensmeyer, Aye; Murrison, Aye; Pearson, Aye; Nilsen, Aye; Mezo, Aye. All in favor. The vote passed. Brian McCauley is the Chair of the District IV Citizen Review Panel.

The vote for nominee Darcie Bobrowski for the position of Vice Chair of the District IV Citizen Review Panel was conducted. McCauley Aye; Noltensmeyer, Aye; Murrison, Aye; Pearson, Aye; Nilsen, Aye; Mezo, Aye. All in favor. The vote passed. Darcie Brobrowski is the Chair of the District IV Citizen Review Panel.

The vote for nominee Nicole Noltensmeyer for the position of Secretary of the District IV Citizen Review Panel was conducted. McCauley Aye; Bobrowski, Aye; Murrison, Aye; Pearson, Aye; Nilsen, Aye; Mezo, Aye. All in favor. The vote passed. Nicole Noltensmeyer is the Secretary of the District IV Citizen Review Panel.

The District IV Citizen Review Panel is comprised of Chair, Brian McCauley, Vice Chair, Darcie Bobrowski, Secretary Nicole Noltensmeyer, and panel members Teri Murrison, Shannon Pearson, Kym Nilsen, and Melissa Mezo. The panel is full with seven members of diverse backgrounds. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare liaison is Misty Myatt. The public health district liaison is Courtney Boyce, from Central District Health, supervised by Health Policy and Promotion Manager, Laura Smith.

Adjournment

The panel discussed case reviews. Case reviews were formally postponed from last month, and panel members did not want to move forward with previous assignments.

Panel members will be assigned cases this month, if they are able to complete case reviews. Misty will provide case assignments and Darcie will provide that information to the appropriate panel members, and follow up with foster care family permissions once requesting contact. Teri Murrison discussed that she will not be able to attend the next CRP meeting in June. This was excused and received permission for absence through Chair. Teri's work is supported by the panel and additional collaboration for the sustainability plan will occur at a later date. The next meeting will be held via Zoom, June 2nd, 2020 from 4:00pm – 6:00pm. The meeting invite information is the same as the link for the May meeting. The meeting adjourned by 5:50pm.