

**Illinois Children and Family Services Advisory Council**

July 14, 2022, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM

Via WebEx / Conference line only

**MINUTES**

**Attendance**

**Members:** Jennifer Hansen (Chair), Marge Berglind (*Ex Officio*) Kim King, and Anita Weinberg

**DCFS :** Kara Hamilton (Liaison) and Lorena Hernandez

**Public:** Colleen Conolly (Legal Aid Chicago), Nicholas Martin (pending member), Lauren Beard/Student, and Arnold Dennis/TCS Consultancy Service

**AGENDA**

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Jennifer called meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

**II. Approval of Minutes** from May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting

MOTION: Marge Berglind moved to approve May 12, 2022, Minutes; seconded by Kim King; Minutes unanimously approved.

**III. Membership Discussion**

**a. Member Terms Inconsistencies.** Nick and Joshua are still pending therefore cannot vote yet. Lanetta Turner has resigned, and Sheri Crabb expires this year (has not reapply) therefore down 2 members. The statute does not indicate but the Bylaws created as a council indicate members are all subject 2 terms, each term 4 years. Jennifer confirmed Anita and herself can stay for an additional 4 years after the 1<sup>st</sup> term expires January 2023.

Anita asked why is the committee not getting more members? Part of the problem is getting interest in the committee. Second, the Governor's Office takes time to move applications forward. The council informs themselves but what are they able to do with that information? Hope the people who want to be on this committee would do something with that information and have impact which is not happening. Kim shared the DCFS Director does comes to their " Death Review" quarterly meetings. The Jenn recalls different directors attended their meetings too like BJ Walker. Have already planned to have a dialog with Director Smith by extending an invitation to September's meeting. The question is how DCFS is hold accountable or what does it mean for an advisory council? Also, The Governor's Office has really implemented a diversity in terms of experience, expertise, and knowledge members.

The council reviewed the Statue of what the council can do. Marge recalls when Bob was the Chair did work on some of the topics, but then decided to work on front end services versus the highest of the specialty residential. Decided to look at the impact of the new federal legislation, how it

would change the DCFS system and all those points in the statute. Like the quality of care provided by DCFS when Family First was implemented.

Chair proposed to Amend the bylaws that executive committee positions terms do not count toward *Ex Officio* term limits. Kara added there is nothing limiting the serving terms in the statute; therefore, a person can reapply in the future. However, it is not clear how long a person has to wait to reapply.

**b. Required Trainings.** Annual training for most DCFS employee and boards member *are Ethics and Harassment/Discrimination Prevention Training*. This year the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training* was added. Are reset in June and due at end of the year. Everyone should have access to One Net and complete all three trainings.

#### IV. Licensing

Foster Family Licensing Standards. Due to no DCFS staff representative Jenn confirmed will keep item on agenda even though it has been on previous meetings agenda. Kara will make sure it's indicated as a high priority for a representative to be available.

#### V. COVID Concerns- Follow Up to November Questions

Daycare and early school age guidance vaccinations and test requirement are still in place, but the universal indoor masking was removed. Youth vaccination will be updated next week. Children between the ages of 5 and 17 can get the vaccine under DCFS guardianship. Rate updates between DCFS and POS are still pending. What is the status of Children under 5? Kara will follow up too. Also, in person visits have resumed. Are daycare centers requiring it? Also, the point here is how it's being interpreted and implemented, discussion going on with case workers and administration when someone want to vary from the expectations.

#### VI. Direction of the Council

The council is still struggling to get DCFS Staff to address the foster care piece. The challenge is the council does not get a response with the kind of expert that would need to undertake a discussion. Recently have not seen any particular interest from the department administration for many of the advisory councils not just this one. Will plan a Special Meeting in August to determine focus points and invite Director Smith for September's meeting.

#### VII. Review New Legislation Impacting DCFS & Identify Areas for Future Discussion/ Kara Hamilton

1. HB 2914 Racial Disparities DCFS Report due December 31, 2022
2. HB 3267 Reducing the Disproportionate Representation of African American Children in Foster Care. DCFS Scheduling 1<sup>st</sup> kick-off meeting before end of July.
3. HB 3720 Bias-Free Child Removal Pilot Program Act.
4. HB 3821 Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare Task Force within DFS. First meeting schedule for September working with Latonya Wilson/Shriver Center.
5. HR 13 Commission on the Social Status of Black Males and Alexa Koziol/ DCFS Administrative Support
6. SB 1599 Human Trafficking Task Force Act. Governor makes the appointments and DCFS assists in 2 candidates.

7. HB 4306 Holistic Mental Health Care for Youth in Care Task Force. One of the requirements was a former youth and care, Brittani Kindle will participate on this one.
8. HB 5525 Commission of Children of Incarcerated Parents within DHS. DCFS position is waiting to be fill and will be effective in January 2023. Anita added this commission came out of a Task Force.
9. HR 549 Task Force on Foster Youth Transitioning Out of Care. DCFS will improved transitioning out youth.
10. SB 1486 Pepper Spray Legislation. Approved and effective May 27<sup>th</sup>
11. SRJ 47 Task Force on Children Advocacy Centers and Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children Funding. Adequate funding for the agencies in their respective jurisdictions. DCFS provide Admin. Support.
12. HB 4304 Exit Interview for every child aged 5 and over who leaves a foster home. Marge who in DCFS is working on it to get useful information out of this new requirement?

Marge reiterated how is DCFS going to monitor all these new laws, and can someone talk more about the implementation? These are legislative laws issued by the General Assembly and DCFS must respond how they are going to be implemented.

**VIII. Identify Agenda for September Meeting**

Jenn requested to reconvene in August as a Special Meeting. Kara will email the statute to all members, review it to think of topics to focus on. Once agreed on focus topics will extend an invitation to DCFS Director for discussion with the administration for September’s meeting. Kara will send a doodle to determine meeting date. Council will discuss the following: getting rid of term limits in the bylaws, *Ex Officio* can stay one extra year with no term limits and review executive committee.

**IX. Public Comments**

Colleen Connolly(guest) thanked, and meeting was very informative. Anita appreciated Kara for organizing and gathering information for the council.

**X. New Business**

Meeting Adjourned – MOTION: By: Anita Weinberg; second by Kim King.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM via WebEx