

FCRO Advisory Committee Minutes
October 23, 2012
Hruska Law Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room
635 S. 14th Lincoln NE

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

NO. 3

- Call to Order A meeting of the Foster Care Review Office (FCRO) Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2012. Notice of the meeting, pursuant to statute, was published. Craig Timm, the Advisory Committee Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.
- Roll Advisory Committee Members present were: Michelle Hynes, Sandy Kruback, Elizabeth Neeley, and Craig Timm. Sheree Keely joined the meeting later.
- Staff present were Linda M. Cox and Heidi Ore.
- Guest Present: Vicki Logan, DAS State Personnel
- Open Mtgs Law Chairperson Craig Timm stated that the Open Meetings Law and Agenda for the meeting were posted per law.
- Minutes Elizabeth Neeley moved to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2012, meeting. Sandy Kruback seconded the motion. Seeing no further discussion, a roll call vote was taken. Sandy Kruback, Michelle Hynes, Elizabeth Neeley and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against.
- Agenda Craig Timm asked the Advisory Committee members to review the agenda. Seeing no changes, the meeting continued.
- Interim Dir. Report Linda M. Cox stated that Elizabeth Neeley had attended an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Hearing held in Macy Nebraska on behalf of the FCRO.
- Ms. Neeley stated that she submitted FCRO data and testimony at this hearing. Ms. Neeley shared that she was impressed that Mr. Tom Pristow, the Director of Children and Family Services, acknowledged DHHS' shortcomings and stated that many things needed to be fixed. Ms. Neeley related to the Committee that a Tribal Court Judge shared that although the

FCRO carries influence with the courts, local boards have little to no native representation.

Ms. Neeley asked staff to look at ways to recruit diverse local board members and look at ways to provide high quality ICWA training to local board members and staff.

Advisory Committee members discussed ICWA, reviewing native children in foster care, how DHHS documents notices to the tribes, and the poor statistical outcomes for native children in care.

Ms. Cox stated she had provided orientation on the FCRO to Judge Tami Schendt, a newly appointed 8th Judicial District County Court judge, contacted the Department of Education regarding Special Education training for the FCRO staff and local board members, discussed the possibility of accessing the Department of Education's video conference network for FCRO trainings, and met with DHHS and Voices for Children on data definitions.

The Advisory Committee discussed data definitions, how Nebraska and other states count wards of the state, how DHHS and the FCRO define data elements differently, and federal requirements for data reporting. Ms. Cox stated that further discussions would occur.

Ms. Cox reported she attended the Legislative hearing on October 5, 2012, before the Health and Human Services Committee where LR 37 bills were discussed.

Ms. Cox stated she had individual meetings with the Director of Probation, the Inspector General from the Ombudsman's office and Tom Pristow regarding FCRO matters including collaboration, reporting and updates.

Ms. Cox reported that one outcome from these meetings was that DHHS would begin the programming necessary to electronically transfer data on N-FOCUS to the FCRO's data system, an initiative that had been stalled prior to this meeting, and DHHS agreed to fund this process.

Ms. Cox stated that a two day all staff meeting had been held and that Craig Timm and Sandy Kruback attended. Ms. Cox stated the evaluations from the staff were very positive.

Mr. Timm reported staff members attending the meeting also requested and encouraged consistent and open communication from the top down and that he learned there had been 600 workers in Omaha since privatization began in 2009.

The Advisory Committee discussed the impact of worker turnover on children's cases and how case numbers are being counted and enacted.

Ms. Cox stated that some staff attended a legal training at Creighton and that DHHS had invited her to attend a Differential Response meeting.

The Advisory Committee discussed DHHS' Differential Response how implementation has increased voluntary cases, decreased abuse neglect filings by 50% in Lancaster County, and caused courts to be concerned with a lack of oversight to voluntary cases. The Committee asked staff to report on which voluntary cases the FCRO reviews and what data is being collected and/or reported on those cases.

Ms. Cox reported that drafting the Annual Report was underway and that the FCRO's Rules and Regulations hearing would be held on December 4, 2012, at 9:00 am in the State Capitol hearing room 1524.

The Advisory Committee asked that the draft of the Annual Report be sent to them before November 20th, 2012, to review.

Exec. Dir Search

Linda M. Cox recused herself from the meeting due to her applying for the position.

Vicki Logan stated that State Personnel was assisting the Advisory Committee with the Director's research, reported that the position had been posted on the State Job's website on October 9th, 2012, and that additional notices in publications/websites identified by the Committee had also been submitted.

The Advisory Committee discussed the condensed FCRO Executive Director's job description posted on the State Job's website. To communicate the full extent of the position, the Advisory Committee asked that the full job description be posted on the FCRO website and linked to the application and job description listed on the State Jobs website, and asked that persons who had applied already be given the link to the full job description so they would be aware of all the job duties.

The Advisory Committee asked that Ms. Logan e-mail materials submitted by the applicants each Friday to each of them and asked her help to develop scoring criteria for applications and interview questions.

Executive Session Sandy Kruback moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Personnel issues including the Committee's hiring process for the Executive Director, scoring criteria for applications received and interview questions. Michelle Hynes seconded the motion. Seeing no further discussion, a roll call vote was taken. Sandy Kruback, Michelle Hynes, Elizabeth Neeley, Sheree Keely, and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against. The Advisory Committee went into Executive Session at 2:13 p.m.

Michele Hynes moved to come out of Executive Session at 4:40 p.m. and Sheree Keely seconded the motion. Seeing no further discussion, a roll call vote was taken. Sheree Keely, Michelle Hynes, Elizabeth Neeley, Sandy Kruback, and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against. No motions were made during Executive Session.

Next Meeting The Advisory Committee's next meeting was set for November 20th, 2012, from 1-5 p.m.

Adjourn Elizabeth Neeley moved to adjourn and Sheree Keely seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Sandy Kruback, Michelle Hynes, Elizabeth Neeley, Sheree Keely, and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against. The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.