

Far Northern Coordinating Council on Developmental Disabilities dba Far Northern Regional Center Minutes

Minutes of Regular Meeting
Friday, June 25, 2021
9:15 a.m.
ZOOM and Gaia Hotel
4125 Riverside Place, Anderson, CA 96007

1. Call to Order: 9:15 a.m. by Chairperson Deborah Anderson
2. Roll Call:
 - a. Present: Deborah Anderson, William Battles, Adam Beals, Daniel Strauss, Terry Morton, Lori Childres, Andreas Economopoulos, Kim Leeseman, Cali McKinzie, Adrian Hugo, Selene Mercado, Araceli Garcia, Timothy Howard
 - b. Absent: Leslie Corletto, Anne Silcher, Christina Johnson
3. Public Input/Open Forum: Introduction of guests: FNRC staff: Mike Mintline, Tracy Duarte, Keith French, Schuyler Wilson, and Geneva Haines-Carmickle. Josh Flom (COMPASS), Mary Agnes Nolan (SCDD), Phil Perez (DDS), Julia Blair (Interpreter), and Lynn Presidio.
 - a. Schuyler Wilson, Union 1021 steward spoke to the board regarding issues pertaining to the return of the FNRC staff post-COVID and the safety concerns surrounding the return.
4. Approval of Agenda for June 25, 2021: Motion to approve agenda and second by Daniel Strauss and Andreas Economopoulos. No discussion, motion passed.
5. Approval of Minutes from May 21, 2021: Motion to approve and second by Adrian Hugo and Araceli Garcia. Corrections to be made are as follows:

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Page 11: Correct July 2021 to July 2020

Page 16: Correct tie to time.

No further discussion, motion passed.

6. Report from the Chairperson, Deborah Anderson:
 - a. Conflicts of Interest: If you have not sent them to Cindy Presidio, please do as soon as possible.
 - b. Committee Assignment requests will be sent out during the summer to be finalized by September 1, 2021.
 - c. During a conversation with Melissa Gruhler, Lisa Lauderdale (Modoc County) has resigned from the board.

7. Management Reports
 - a. Financial Report: Mike Mintline, Chief Financial Officer
 - i. Purchase of Service Report FY 20-21: Non-CPP (Community Placement Plan) expenses: The May 2021 report projected expenses that will be \$13.8 million less than the contract allocation amount. This estimate is now \$17.3 million because expense estimates decreased \$1.1 million and the contract allocation amount increased by \$2.4 million in June 2021. Prior fiscal year expenses paid to date are \$165.6 million, so current year expenses may increase by as much as \$12.6 million, or 7.6%. Out of Home respite, Supported Living, and Personal Assistance expenses are projected to increase by as much as \$13.7 million, while other expense categories are flat to declining due primarily to decreased demand for services resulting from COVID-19. The number of Early Start clients served decreased by 6.4% during this period, though the number of Early Start clients served increased by thirty-five (35) from March 30, 2021 to April 30, 2021. The Regional Center is conducting more Early Start outreach efforts to encourage families to apply for services.
Community Placement Plan (CPP) expenses: Program and start-up cost expenses exceed allocation amount by \$61 thousand. However, DDS will fund this in a future contract amendment.

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- ii. Operations Report, FY 20-21:
 - Salaries and benefits from prior year: +\$1,139,693 (6.8%). Increases will result from the full year cost of negotiated \$100 per month salary increase effective April 1, 2020, additional \$100 per month increase in the current fiscal year effective November 1, 2020. Additional expenses due to new Service Coordinator positions hired to cover caseload growth, hiring current open positions that have been vacant due to COVID-19 and negotiated Remote Work pay of \$25.00 per month, retroactive to April 2020. Savings in medical insurance costs offset increases.
 - Facilities Rent: +\$59,219 (5.0%). Reflects increase of \$28k due on Red Bluff lease, COLA on leased facilities as required and full year or increase on Chico and Redding leases.
 - Facilities Maintenance/Improvement: +\$36,778 (34.0%). Includes one-time expenses for Redding reception area remodel and Chico office remodel. Prior year included Chico security system and Red Bluff office improvements.
 - Communications: +\$40,554 (25.4%). Expense for increased bandwidth to accommodate continued remote work and increased remote meetings. Overage fees for data usage. IT has updated plans to reduce overage going forward.
 - Travel: -\$260,039 (-89.3%). Travel decreased due to COVID-19 restrictions. Training and daily travel not back to levels pre-COVID.
 - Interest revenue: -\$210,324 (-93.1%). Due to decreased interest rates, earnings on excess cash will decrease in current year.
 - Miscellaneous Revenue: -\$248,171 (-n/a%). CARES Act revenue – restricted use – COVID expense.
- iii. IT Report, Keith French, Manager of Information Technology: Keith reported to the board the results of the

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External Penetration Test, which is an audit on FNRC's IT security. Dell Secure Works performed this test. After many tests, they were unable to break into FNRC's network. However, in order to strengthen the network further, Keith French will be developing a training for staff and clients regarding password security.

- iv. Other: The DDS audit information will be shared in September, showing no findings.
- b. Client Services Report: Larry Withers Associate Director, Client Services, South
 - i. Protocols have been developed for the return of face-to-face visits between Service Coordinators and clients. This situation continues to be fluid and the team at FNRC continues to meet regularly to review what is happening in the various counties we serve and amend the plan as needed based on the current situation.

A few employees will continue to work remotely due to health concerns or childcare issues created by the pandemic.

FNRC is working closely with the day program and transportation providers. However, it will take some time to get clients back into programs due to the many regulations, licensing, OSHA, etc., that need to be addressed and followed.

- c. Human Resources Report: Kathy Jennings, Director
 - i. Action Item #1: Retired Annuitant, Diana Anderson: It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Diana Anderson to be re-employed by FNRC effective June 1, 2021, for a period of no more than 12 months, pursuant to the Government Code requirements. Motion and second by Adrian Hugo and Andreas Economopoulos. No discussion, motion passed.
 - ii. It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Cynthia Presidio to be re-employed by FNRC effective September 1, 2021, for a period or no more than 12 months, pursuant to the Government code requirements. Motions and second

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by Andreas Economopoulos and Daniel Strauss. No discussion, motion passed.

8. State Council on Developmental Disabilities, North State Office Report, Mary Agnes Nolan: State Councils have the responsibility to provide input on the service systems in each state, in the five territories, and Washington DC. Each Council must have a 5-year state plan to address what goal areas they will address during the 5-year plan period. In California, these areas are Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination; Employment; Housing; Health & Safety; Education; and also other Community Supports. Work is provided on both a statewide level and a regional level.
 - Regionally we continue to a variety of activities addressing each of the state plan goals by focusing efforts on educating the community and this includes participating in a variety of collaborative events to focus on activities that will have an impact in what we refer to as “system change.”
 - Pages 23 and 24 of the blue packet include flyers on **California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) trainings for smart phone trainings** – just email or call them for information as indicated on the flyer. They also have “**lunch and learn**” trainings every 3rd Thursday of the month from 12:00 pm – 12:40 pm. On page 25, we provided information on **Anthem Health Education Workshops** hosted by SCDD. This is a series of health related workshops presented by Anthem with Spanish translation available and closed captioning. The next training is on July 12, 2021 and will be on Managing Diabetes. These trainings unfortunately are not recorded, so they are only available during the time they are presented. They are very well done in regards to plain language and easy to understand.
 - On page 26, we have a flyer on a **Fraud and Scam Training** that will be held on July 14, 2021. Other things of interest include: the Disability Thrive Initiative free online webinars available on the SCDD website; and the SCDD Statewide Self-Advocacy Chats every 3rd Wednesday of the month. We

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continue our Emergency Preparedness efforts with upcoming trainings for individuals living independently or receiving Supported Living Services using power point presentation and providing Red Cross To Go Bags upon completion.

- Statewide work includes the **Employment Report was approved by Executive Committee this week and will be forwarded to the legislature as required by statute.**
 - **SB 639 - SCDD a co-sponsor of the bill which will stop California employers from paying workers with disabilities less than the California minimum wage.** The bill also appoints SCDD to develop and implement a plan to phase-out the subminimum wage certificate program by January 1, 2023. The bill prohibits an employer from paying an employee with a physical or mental disability less than the legal minimum wage beginning on January 1, 2025. More information about the bill and disability employment in California can be found at scdd.ca.gov/sb639.
9. FNRC Board Committee Reports and Action Items:
- a. Consumer Committee, Andreas Economopoulos, Committee Chair: Mike Mintline reviewed the budget and finance reports with the committee. The Board Packet and Action Items were reviewed.
 - b. Service Provider Advisory Committee: Anne Silcher, Committee Chair: This meeting was held June 23, 2021 with 19 people attending and the following topics discussed:
 - i. Melissa Gruhler, FNRC Executive Director spoke with the committee regarding the five categories of the HCBS spending plan that included the following:
 1. Director care work force: looking in investing in the workforce \$500 sign on and retention, training increases, statewide recruitment
 2. Navigation: Bias training for providers and staff of the regional center
 3. Transition: Help transition to living situations, community based living environments, affordable

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housing, recreation community services for kids, bilingual and multi-cultural report

4. Enhancing the model: access is easier to underserved individuals, community liaison
5. Reimagine one time for paid internship competitive community integration.

However, no additional guidance on how HCBS will relate to the proposed budget. In addition, the state has requested additional time to create better implementation of the plan.

- ii. FNRC CFO, Mike Mintline informed the committee that providers may be required to repay funds received during the pandemic if PPP loan were also received during that time and that loan was forgiven.
 - iii. Melissa Gruhler and Todd Clarkson (FNRC) spoke regarding program updates and HCBS funding.
 - iv. Self Determination is continuing with orientations provided for anyone interested. A workshop will be presented in the fall.
 - v. Several projects are in the works including N95 mask fit testing, COVID-19 education and PPE distribution, Emergency Preparedness, and Celebration of Heroes.
 - vi. Other topics included Success Stories, SCDD 5-year plan, and the OCRA move to Amber Grove.
10. Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA): Adam Beals, Representative: The ARCA meeting was held via zoom. Several topics were discussed including: utilization of health and safety measures during the pandemic, Advocacy Methodology, Caseload Ratio Relief, and models that have the potential to enhance the service system. Also discussed was the continuing issue of subminimum wage, housing opportunities for those supported by Regional Centers, the development of a training module regarding Person-Centered Planning and how to improve enrollment in the Self-Determination Program.

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11. Report from Executive Director, Melissa Gruhler: Melissa spoke to the board regarding the following topics:

COVID-19 update: Monday June 21, staff returned to the offices. I would like to express my gratitude to all of the Management that kept Operations running smoothly over the last year. They have worked endlessly to ensure employees were able to work safely and continue to provide much needed services to the community.

June 15 Governor Newsom lifted restrictions for businesses to open. This allowed for fewer restrictions but not No restrictions

As mentioned previously majority of our staff have returned to the office with safety precautions in place. We have had a few requests to continue to work remote due to elevated health concern and childcare needs related to the pandemic. By requesting staff to return to the office, we hope to increase the communication and be more productive to meet consumer needs. Although we were able to coordinate, adapting to unusual conditions, and advocate through remote work it was not the ideal circumstance for all employees.

Covid Positive results continue to decline, despite the variants, as vaccines have increased. 335 individuals tested positive and 2437, 16 years and older have received the vaccine. We are closely monitoring an individual that has been hospitalized. Unfortunately, we have had 16 deaths related to the pandemic. We continue to offer PPEs but this has slowed down as well. We continue to provide education in collaboration with United Way and our Prevention training offered

The Pandemic was rough for individuals with IDD and the service providers. It left people confused, anxious and isolated with the loss of their daily routines. Many of there world's were turned upside down due to limited services being delivered. Services providers shut down. Service Providers that were already struggling with staffing shortages continued to loose staff.

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Day Programs are slowly opening their doors as was reported in May. Public Health and Community Care Licensing continue to monitor and provide guidance however providers are navigating through layers of restrictions to provide services safely.

Self-Determination: SDP roll out is complete. Open enrollment has started. Out of the 60 slots received 40 individuals chose to remain in SDP and 26 individuals chose to opt out. 37 out of 40 individuals have a spending plan and are implementing SDP.

Budget: Lawmakers passed a budget over what stakeholders are describing as a “placeholder” budget. The over \$260 billion budget.

HCBS (Home and Community Based Services): DHCS released its proposed spending plan for state Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) earlier this month, laying out approximately \$3 billion in enhanced federal funding for 35 different initiatives. **Home- and Community-Based Services** (HCBS) are types of person-centered care delivered in the home and community. The spending plan covers five broad areas of funding – direct care workforce support, HCBS navigation initiatives, HCBS transitions, enhanced capacity and models of care, and infrastructure and support.

Increasing HCBS direct care workforce

The plan focuses on addressing workforce shortages resulting from pandemic

Improving HCBS navigation

Making HCBS access easier for underserved individuals is a central goal of the spending plan

Helping HCBS transitions

DHCS plans to help transition individuals in institutional living arrangements or homeless shelters to places like assisted living environments

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Enhancing HCBS capacity and models of care

DHCS aims to innovate and improve existing HCBS models of care to better meet the needs of underserved populations. Funds will go toward the coordinated family support service.

Web academies: The next Academy event is coming soon! On **Saturday, July 10, from 1-2:30pm**, the topic is learning the art of *Decoding Regional Center Purchase of Service Data*. Information will be provided on regional centers' expenditures for services, how that data sorts out to different groups, and the real-world factors behind the information, and what it means for board members, boards, and communities. A re-broadcast like before. That will be **Wednesday the 14, from 6-7:30pm**.

ARCA is re-evaluating what works and what does not; to match the changing needs of your fellow regional center board members. You will receive an email with a link to provide feedback. Please complete this survey by July 15.

Shasta Inclusion Taskforce: As the Shasta County community continues to have specific needs addressed, the Shasta County Coordinating Council has morphed in the Shasta Inclusion Taskforce. This taskforce will develop transition planning for families and will be advocating for students.

12. Announcements, Reports, Questions and Answers, Summary
Comments: All Board members

Andreas: Siskiyou County is receiving a new bus for the transportation fleet.

13. Transition to Executive (Closed) Session, W & I 4663, (a):
a. The post-COVID health and safety concerns brought forth during the public forum were discussed.
Motion to return to Open Session and second by Daniel Strauss and Araceli Garcia. No discussion, motion passed.

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14. Next meeting: September 23 and 24. Motion to adjourn and second by Andreas Economopoulos and Adrian Hugo. No discussion, motion passed. Adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Cynthia R. Presidio
Executive Assistant/Board Secretary