

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

Regular Meeting
Friday, September 23, 2022
9:15 a.m.
Gaia Hotel / Zoom
Minutes

1. **Call to Order:** 9:17 a.m. by Chair Cali McKinzie
2. **Roll Call:**
 - a. Present: Cali McKinzie, William Battles, Lori Childres, Daniel Strauss, Terri M., Andreas Economopoulos, Araceli Garcia, Kim Leeseman, Josh Flom, Selene Mercado, Joseph Cullis
 - b. Absent: Timothy Howard, Christina Johnson, Deborah Anderson, Adrian Hugo
3. **Public Input/Open Forum:** Introduction of guests: FNRC Staff Mike Mintline, Todd Clarkson, Keith French, Dr. Christine Austin, Larry Withers, Cristal Diaz, Julie Eby-McKenzie (SCDD), Cindi Freshour, Tammy Torum (WCAL), James Ford (DDS)
4. **Approval of Agenda** September 23, 2022
Motion to approve agenda and Second Terri M. and William Battles discussion addition under Community Services Report add discussion of the draft performance contract 2023. no further discussion Motion passed.
5. **Approval of Minutes** from June 24, 2022
Daniel Strauss requested clarification on page 24 – add in “A 25% increase equal to the difference between the study’s benchmark rate and the provider’s rate will be effective April 2022, a 50% increase will be implemented January 2023, and the remaining 25% is scheduled for implementation in January 2024. Remove “and April 2023; with a 50% increase awarded in 2024.

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Motion to approve and Second by Terri M. and Andreas Economopoulos, no further discussion, Motion passed.

6. Report from Chairperson, Cali McKinzie:

a. Action Item #1 – Requesting that the Board of Directors approve the 2023 Board Meeting Schedule
Motion to approve and Second William Battles and Kim Leeseman, no discussion, Motion passed

b. Other – Attended the Emergency Preparedness Meeting in Red Bluff - information is available to pick up if interested.
Cali recognized William did the presentation and did very well.

Cali also attended the ARCA Meeting – Far Northern Regional Center seems to be the pioneer in many of the new ideas. A lot of good things were said about FNRC.

7. Management Reports

a. **Financial Report:** Mike Mintline, Chief Financial Officer

i. Monthly Financial Report for August 2022
Purchase of Service (POS)-Reported by Mike Mintline-
Chief Financial Officer
Allocation is \$251,361,674 which is a very generous amount; Year to Date \$12,510,611.

Went over the Open POS Contract Summary Report:
Mike stated there is enough money in this allocation to meet the needs of our clients.
Increases in Community Care Facilities – increase to cover quality of care.

Home Care Programs had a large increase during the pandemic now that the pandemic appears to be over we should see a decrease in these services.

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Keeping watch on transportation costs-this is a challenging year to estimate these costs.

Reminded everyone that the fiscal year runs from July 1 of current year to June 30 of the following year.

- ii. Operations Report-Fiscal year 2022/2023-reported by Audra Feedback-Controller

Monthly Financial Report 2022/2023-
Estimated contract Allocation is 27,097,333 Projected Annual Expenses \$27,021,337 projected surplus \$75,996. Currently keeping the projected expenses conservative to allow for changes that may take place.

Salaries and benefits

Increase primarily due to the addition of new service coordinators, supervisors and support to comply with new caseload ratio requirements. 2% annual increases given to all employees during Union negotiations.

Facility Rent

Full year impact of new space in Chico and Redding.

Facility maintenance/improvements

Decrease due to prior year leasehold improvements to office space in Chico and Redding. New space to accommodate increased staffing levels. The new space expected to have some unassigned offices for persons who may spend some of their time working remotely.

Non-IT Equipment

Prior year included new office space furnishings in Chico and Redding.

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Consulting

Includes 2 LCSW temporary positions funded by the American Rescue Act (ARPA)

Travel

Post pandemic travel not coming back as fast as expected. We will be monitoring this each pay period.

Interest Revenue

We have been successful in investing advanced funds from DDS to support new projects. These funds are invested in short-term Treasury Bills.

- iii. Other: DDS Audit-Clean Audit very successful. Some internal changes will take place but nothing found by the auditors.
Auditors Lindquist, von Husen & Joyce LLP to begin in October; not expecting any huge change in standards.

b. **Client Services Report:** Larry Withers Associate Director, Client Services South Reporting:

- i. Seeing a lot of growth both in clients and staff positions. Interviews seem to be happening weekly as we begin the preliminary stages of the 1-40 caseload ratios.

Growth is taking place as the state has allocated enough money to fund the reduction in caseload ratios.

With this type of growth other issues come to the surface such as office space. In the Chico office 20 offices were added and currently the office is full. We are going to need to look at alternative ways to use the space. Some ideas include double occupancy of offices and/or cubicles being utilized for those working part time remote.

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With provisional eligibility recently passed; 60-70% of those being evaluated are being found eligible. Making it challenging to meet the caseload ratios.

Things are beginning to turn back to normal post-COVID. We are currently conducting hybrid meetings using Zoom and in person options. Most people are excited about the return to face to face meetings; however we still have those who prefer to meet via Zoom.

The Self Determination Program is growing and is a new way of thinking for case management. Instead of thinking service based programs this program helps to identify the needs then the services are developed around those needs. This requires creative thinking on the part of the service coordinator. SDP allows for unique ways to meet the needs of the individuals. SDP also makes it possible to purchase items and attend activities that would not have been possible previously.

HCBS deadline is March 17, 2023. We are currently working with our providers to get this accomplished. The Community Services department along with our case management supervisor's are working with the providers to give assistance in meeting these requirements.

PEERS-The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills. Designed to teach socialization skills to those on the autism spectrum. Usually a classroom setting learning such things as how to enter and exit a group conversation. Jackie Johnson has been working the PEERS program for several years and has been quite successful. Many clients have been thru this program with success.

UCLA will be sending up trainers to train instructors (15 people) to create PEER Programs in their areas.

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Due to COVID there have been some positive changes including: Clients getting jobs; trips are being taken out of the area; home modifications and vacations.

We currently have more Spanish speaking service coordinators than we have ever had before giving us the ability to meet the needs of this community.

c. Community Services: Todd Clarkson, Associate Director

i. Community Services Division Board Report
September 2022

Contracts: Far Northern Regional Center paid a total of \$2,666,158.30 for June, \$2,642,145.99 for July, and \$2,724,784.49 for August.

ii. Community Services Vendorization:

June 2022 (14) packets were sent out to prospective vendors; vendorization was completed for (7) new service providers; and (11) vendor files were closed.

July 2022 (10) packets were sent out to prospective vendors; vendorization was completed for (6) new service providers; and (12) vendor files were closed.

August 2022 (15) packets were sent out to prospective vendors; vendorization was completed for (10) new service providers; and (7) vendor files were closed.

iii. Paid internship & Competitive Integrated Employment
Todd Clarkson Associate Director of Community Services gave an overview of this program:

105 Internships year to date

YTD-PIP Bonuses since July 1, 2021

(53*)- 30-day

(47*)- 60-day

YTD-EMP Bonuses since July 1, 2021

(18*)- 30-day

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(9*) – 6-month

(8*) – 12 month

Educational Activities: Continue to hold informational meetings regarding transition services for those transitioning from school age to adulthood

General updates: Working on a dedicated employment section on the FNRC website.

Putting together informational packets to send to families with transition age youth.

Continuing to network with the community.

Putting together a “Yellow Napkin” awareness event for the month of October (National Employees with Disabilities Awareness Month) along with other employer engagement activities and highlighting the excellent work our interns and employees are doing throughout the region.

Specialty Staff have been hired to assist families: Cultural Specialist; Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist as well as a New Supervisor to work with the specialist. Our current Employment Specialist was promoted to be the supervisor. So a new Employment Specialist will be hired soon.

iv. Other

2023 Performance Contract Draft

Each Regional Center is required to maintain a Performance Contract following the calendar year.

This is located on the transparency portal of the Far Northern Regional Center Website under section entitled “Performance Contract”

Under this section you are able to view previous year’s performance contracts along with the draft for the current year. This is also on the Homepage of the website under

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Featured News-Public Input. You can click on the link and take the survey. The Public Meeting will be held October 5, 2022 5:00-6:30 PM During our monthly Dialogue with the Director's Team meeting. A survey can also be requested by mail.

Highlights: Clinical Director participating in discussion's and verifying customer service satisfaction is being met.

Growth of the Children's Unit-staff recruitment is taking place to help meet the intake time lines. This should improve overall customer satisfaction.

We currently have not received the guidelines from the state so we may see some changes once those guidelines are received. This draft primarily is last year's measures.

Once the final Performance Contract is finalized it will be brought back to the Board of Directors for approval.

d. Clinical Report –Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director reported for Dr Christine Austin, Medical Director

- i. COVID report- Just finishing the 4th round of surges. Some areas had a higher outbreak but much less severe symptoms.

Dr. Austin reported on the Health and Wellness Course given by the FNRC nursing staff. This courses is continuing with a focus on supports.

Outreach has been very successful over the last quarter. Getting out into the community and the success is reflective in our increased number of intake referrals and inquiries.

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- e. **Human Resources Report:** Kelly Jensen Human Resource Specialists
 - i. Update on Human Resources
 - a) Separations: 5
 - b) Promotions: 6
 - c) Transfer: 1
 - d) New Employees: 13
 - e) Open Positions: 1
 - f) Active Recruitment: 7
 - e) Total number of employees September 9, 2022: 229

- 8. **State Council on Developmental Disabilities-** North State Office Report- Julie Eby-McKenzie
 - i. Project SAFEE Disaster Preparedness Workshop Series: Floods and Landslides, Friday, October 14 9:00-10:30 AM

 - ii. 2022 Collaborative Deaf Awareness Month Panel Event: During the 2022 Deaf Awareness Month panel event, they will explore unique challenges and issues each panelist has experienced during their public service careers; their perspective on what it means to be deaf; and how we can all support, advocate, empower, and implement equity for our deaf colleagues and the many deaf Californians served through government programs. Tuesday September 27, 2022 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM Register in advance.

 - iii. SCDD is holding its second annual “There Should Be a Law” Contest. We are soliciting ideas from the community on ideas for laws that would improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families. Submit ideas here: <https://bit.ly/billIdeas> Due date is September 30.

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- iv. The North State office expects to have a new permanent manager starting in October.

- v. NCI Project-Mary Agnes Nolan, QA Coordinator for the National Core Indicators (NCI) Project would like to advise you that the Family Survey Cycle has ended, and we are now moving to the In-Person Surveys (IPS). Training has started for the Independent Contractors who will be conducting the survey interviews starting in October 2022 through June 2023. We need 400 completed surveys for each Regional Center. It's very helpful when people help spread the word and encourage individuals to participate in the project if they are selected to be interviewed. Any questions regarding the project can be directed to MaryAgnes at MaryAgnes.Nolan@scdd.ca.gov.

9. FNRC Board Committee Reports and Action Items

- a) Finance Committee- Lori Childres, Chair
 - i. Todd Clarkson, Associate Director of Community Services presented: Action Item #2 Christian Church Homes (CCH)
Action requested: The Board approve contract PS-2601 with Christian Church Homes for CRDP start-up funding to develop a multi-family housing project effective October 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023 for a total maximum contract amount of up to \$739,130.00
Motion and second Finance Committee and William Battles, no discussion Motion passed

 - ii. Todd Clarkson, Associate Director of Community Services presented: Action Item #3 Contract renewal for Service Provider (PF5237) NVDS.

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Action requested: The Board approve contract PS-2600 with NVDS (PF5237) for continued operation of the ARFPSHN at 4220 Vista Oaks Court, Redding, CA Effective November 1, 2022 through October 31, 2024. The monthly rate of reimbursement per resident is \$24,486.74, with a maximum of five residents in the home for a maximum monthly reimbursement of \$122,433.70. The total maximum contract shall not exceed \$2,938,408.80 for the life of the contract. Motion and second Finance committee and Cali McKinzie, no discussion Motion passed.

b) Membership Committee, Cali McKinzie, Reporting

- i. Nomination of a new committee Chair: Andreas Economopoulos nominated Terri M. and Teri accepted the appointment of Committee Chair and will begin her duties at the November meeting.
- ii. Reappointed Board Member Selene Mercado to another two year term beginning September 25, 2022 and ending September 24, 2024.
Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and Terri M., No discussion Motion passed
- iii. Interview with Board Applicant Patricia McCarthy who applied for the Member at Large Family Member position. The membership committee feels Patricia would be a positive addition to the FNRC Board of Directors and will submit for Board approval at the November meeting.

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c) Consumer Committee-Kim Leeseman, Chair

- i. Audra Feeback, Controller gave an overview of the official allocation received from DDS which is our budget for this next fiscal year.

Audra gave an overview of the Operation side of the financial section of the Board Packet.

Mike Mintline-Chief Financial Officer gave an overview of the POS section of the financial documents in the Board Packet

Mike reported DDS recently completed an audit and this went very well-Clean Audit. Also mentioned interest rates have recently come to a level that we are able to invest.

Melissa Gruhler-Executive Director-Went over the Action Items, the Dash Board on Client demographics and the Director's packet.

d) Service Provider Advisory Committee, Josh Flom, Chair

- i. HCBS Compliance-Presented by Tracy Duarte

HCBS is compliant with the 10 federal rulings. Agencies are getting calls and should be encouraged to push for validation, which is seeking documentation. Providers can get support from Far Northern Regional Center. Calls are going out offering help to vendors so they may become compliant. Reach out if you have questions.

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ii. Self Determination-Presented by Melissa Gruhler

Additional guidelines were added July of 2022 which address areas the regional center needs to adjust in the spending plan.

FMS fee no longer comes out of the individual budget. It is now paid through Far Northern Regional Center by way of a separate authorization.

Adjustments are available for viewing on the DDS Website.

FNRC contact for Chico-Morgan Curtiz and Redding-Lai Saelee. Eighty-one individuals are currently enrolled in the Self Determination Program.

iii. Nor-Cal Learning Institute-Presented by Melissa Gruhler
First session October 6th at Rolling Hills Casino
presenters Kirk Hinkleman and Beth Gallagher
Providers have been contacted. If you would like to be added please reach out to Melissa. 1st session devoted to introduction, what it will look like, commitment and expectations. FNRC staff will be calling to follow-up.

iv. Success Stories-Presented by Josh Flom

Shasta Opportunity Center reported 1 million sq feet, 37 tons of recycling processed.

Bravo Program reported Hordes & Boards will open up for clients and employment opportunities in December.

New Beginnings-reported 12 homes with consumers under the Butte County Community Action received

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energy audits and financial resources for light bulbs, appliance replacements, warped doors, no cost to tenant. Compass was able to get a new washer and dryer under this program.

- v. State Council on Developmental Disabilities-Tina Reszler Cycle 45 Grant awarded based on education, employment, health/safety, and housing. For individuals with ID and families.

- vi. Provider updates
Shasta County Opportunity Center holding open
Staff available to answer questions

Arc of Butte County Addressing supports for families again. Community carnival to be held in November again
Flyer should be available soon.

- vii. Melissa Gruhler announced FNRC still hosting Health and Wellness events for CEU's Topics covered include, not limited to: Mental Health, behavioral supports, health advocacy, nutrition, and care planning. New topic next year includes networking and maintaining connections once established.
- viii. Mayra Hernandez reaching out to Service Coordinators who are serving in all nine counties.
Focus to resolve issues before it happens
Reaching out as a resource
- ix. SPAC Meeting Schedule
 - a. Next meeting November 16, 2022
 - b. Next year's dates pending Board approval

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10. **Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA):** Daniel Strauss Representative
- i. Thank you to Cali McKinzie for covering the ARCA meeting.
 - ii. Understanding the HCBS Final Rule
 - *Federal government helps pay for most regional center services.
 - *2014-Final Rule Enacted
 - *Deadline for providers to meet Final Rule is March 17, 2023.
 - *HCBS Final Rule make sure these services are community-based for the people who receive them.Two Main Parts: In many ways we are leading this as FNRC is already very person centered.
 - 1) Plans are about the person
 - *Service plans include all supports and help needed based on the individual's choices and goals.
 - *The Final Rule wants individuals to choose where they live, what they do, and how they work-this is called person-centered planning.
 - 2) Homes and Programs
 - *People should receive services in the community and not in places with only people with disabilities.
 - *People receiving services have the right to make their own choices about how, where, and with whom they spend their time.
 - *Services include: Day and work programs, Homes paid for by regional centers, and respite care.
 - *Meeting the Final Rule
 - *Protect your rights;
 - *Make sure services take place in the community with people who don't have disabilities

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*Help you with ways to participate in your community; focusing on your goals

iii. Meeting the Final Rule

*The Final Rule says homes for people with disabilities must also:

- *Give Choices
- *Have Privacy
- *Keep people from being bullied
- *Help people control their own schedules and activities
- *Provide food at any time
- *Right to privacy
- *Furnish and decorate their room
- *Ability to choose your own activities
- *Visitors at any time

iv. California is Getting Ready

- *Service providers self-review
- *Visits to providers by the State
- *Interviews with people receiving services
- *Regional centers are working with providers

11. Report from Executive Director, Melissa Gruhler

- i. HCBS- Far Northern Regional Center working with providers to meet the March 17, 2023 deadline. Identifying ways to offer person centered choices and ideas to help develop a welcoming home that includes respect.
- ii. Nor Cal Learning Institute- We are excited that we are finally able to offer this once again. Beth Gallagher and Kirk Hinkleman from the Learning Institute will be joining us. Invitations for this training have gone out to the providers.

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Our first session will be October 6, 2022 focusing on recognizing the struggles and what type of commitment does it require to make sure this program is successful.

- iii. Far Northern Regional Center has worked with two provider's regarding "Network Facilitation". This facilitation helps clients to develop relationships outside of their person connection-expanding to the community. Planning to provide more training on "Network Facilitating"

Both of these training are to help and guide providers to be HCBS compliant and meet that March 23, 2023 deadline.

- iv. Far Northern Regional Center is growing. We are thankful for the allocations to address our caseload reductions as well as for those children under 6/1-40 caseload ratio. With our current growth rate these numbers are going to be difficult to achieve.

We will continue to recruit to reduce these caseload ratios. As of August 31, 2022 FNRC was serving 9,151 individuals. We contribute this growth to getting back to pre pandemic referral rate. People are becoming more comfortable and less fearful of participating in the intake process. Over the last few month's we have participated in many outreach projects in the community. Making us proud that we are able to identify the individuals that need these services. Service Coordinators are not seeing a relief yet; however our HR department is very busy as well keeping the recruitment efforts going.

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- v. Self Determination directives are currently being implemented. We currently have 81 individuals using this program. In July there was a significant change in that the FMS fee is no longer paid out of the budget but now paid by the Regional Center through an authorization.
- vi. Family Wellness Kickoff will be in October. This additional funding will provide therapeutic services for families upon finding out their child has a disability. Counseling services will be provided to parents and care givers as well as group sessions will be available on a weekly basis.
Currently two locations for these services Shasta County and Butte County. Shasta County will have the ability to serve Tehama County as well.

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

- i. Andreas Economopoulos-CAC Report
Housing is a big need Andreas reported he is working on following up with the City Counsel in getting information that he can give to the ARCA Board
- ii. William Battles-People First Shasta
People first had their 2nd meeting and the attendance was low so they are looking for ways to get the word out about these meetings.
- iii. Terri M.-People First Red Bluff
Mercy Fair was at the Community Center on September 9th. People First had a booth that was very successful and they are looking forward to doing this again next year. The nomination of officers will take place at the next meeting

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- iv. Kim Leeseman-People First Chico
Chico will begin meeting in person
Corning is still meeting via Zoom

Motion to move into close session Cali McKinzie and Joe Cullis, no discussion, Motion passed

13. Transition to Executive (Closed) Session, W & I 4663 (a)

- (1) Real estate negotiations
- (2) The appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of a regional center employee
- (3) Employee salaries and benefits
- (4) Labor contract negotiations
- (5) Pending litigation

Motion to return to open session Andreas Economopoulos and Josh Flom, no discussion Motion passed

14. Success Story-Recognition of Sunrise Mountain Wellness Center & Ethan Hyatt as a Community Intern – Cathy Tillman-Community Services Supervisor

- i. Ethan Hyatt received the Outstanding Achievement Award for September 2022. Cathy Tillman read the steps Ethan took to achieve his goals and accomplishments. Pointing out Ethan is flexible, dependable and always willing to help out where needed. Ethan is willing to talk about his challenges which resonates with the other members.

Jullie Calkins with Sunrise Mountain Wellness Center was presented with the Work Force Award for September 2022.

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Cathy Tillman pointed out how this program is person centered and has resources available throughout Shasta County.

- ii. Yellow Napkin Project –Cathy Tillman
A big thank you to Tri-Counties Bank for sponsoring this program. The napkins will be delivered to local restaurants for distribution to their customers. The messages on the napkins state the value of employing individuals with disabilities. The goal is to spark conversation and bring awareness.
All board members were encouraged to sign up to distribute these napkins in hopes of having the napkins in all our counties.

15. **Next Meeting:** November 17th and 18th, 2022, Gaia Hotel-Anderson, Ca with a Zoom option available.

16. **Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn and second William Battles and Araceli Garcia, no discussion, Motion passed

Meeting adjourned 12:35 PM