

FCRO Advisory Committee Minutes  
August 30, 2012  
FCRO Main Office, 521 S. 14<sup>th</sup>, Ste. 401, Lincoln NE

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

NO. 1

Call to Order           A meeting of the FCRO Advisory Committee was held on Thursday August 30, 2012. Notice of the meeting, pursuant to statute, was published. Linda M. Cox, Interim Executive Director, called the meeting to order at 9:35 am.

Roll                      Advisory Committee Members present were: Michelle Hynes, Sheree Keely, Sandra Kruback, Elizabeth Neeley, and Craig Timm.

Staff present were, Linda M. Cox, Mary Furnas, Heidi Ore and Pauline Williams.

Open Mtgs Law        Linda M. Cox stated that the Open Meetings Law and Agenda for the meeting were posted per law.

Oath of Office         Secretary of State John Gale administered the Oath of Office to the Advisory Committee members Per Neb. Rev. Stat. §11-101. Secretary Gale signed copies of the oath and presented copies to the agency and Committee members. Pictures of the Advisory Committee were taken.

Agenda                Linda M. Cox asked the Advisory Committee members to review the Agenda. Seeing no changes, the meeting continued.

Introductions         Advisory Committee members and staff introduced themselves to each other.

Elizabeth Neeley, Ph.D. stated she is the Data Representative on the Committee, that she is the founder and director of Objective Advantage, LLC, a policy research firm and that she had conducted research for several entities including the Nebraska Court system.

Sheree Keely stated she is the Public At Large representative on the Advisory Committee, she is the Vice President of Alegent Health Behavioral Services, and that she had been a Clinical Social Worker for 20 years.

Michelle Hynes stated she is the 1<sup>st</sup> District Local Board Member representative on the Committee, that she has been a local board member since 1996, and that she currently served as a Guardian Ad Litem in Sioux City IA.

Sandra Kruback stated she is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District local board member representative on the Committee, that she has been a local board member for 16 years, and that she currently serves on two local foster care review boards in North Platte.

Craig Timm stated he is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District representative on the Committee, that he has been on a local board for six years, and that he is a Chief Pilot for a local Fortune 500 company.

Linda M. Cox, Heidi Ore, Mary Furnas and Pauline Williams stated their names, roles, and their length of time with the agency.

The Advisory Committee discussed how best to work together, how they planned to provide direction and stability to the agency, that they wanted to move forward, to strengthen partnerships, to respond to Senators questions and provide them information, how to support the agency to be successful, and how the staff and Committee could mutually support each other.

Linda M. Cox asked the Advisory Committee Members to review and verify their contact information.

Election of Officers Linda M. Cox stated that an outline of the Advisory Committee Chair person's duties was in the Committee members Orientation Manual and asked if any of the Committee Members were interested in the position.

The Committee discussed the duties, proximity, time constraints, and Craig Timm volunteered to serve as Advisory Committee Chairperson.

Elizabeth Neeley moved to nominate Craig Timm as Advisory Committee Chairperson. Michelle Hynes seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Sandra Kruback, Elizabeth Neeley, Sheree Keely, Michelle Hynes, and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against.

The Committee discussed electing a Vice Chairperson and Sandra Kruback volunteered to serve in that role. Sheree Keely nominated Sandra

Kruback as Advisory Committee Vice Chairperson. Craig Timm seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Sandra Kruback, Elizabeth Neeley, Sheree Keely, Michelle Hynes, and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against.

Interim Dir. Report Linda M. Cox updated the Advisory Committee on the agency's transfer to the Foster Care Review Office, how ongoing staff, supervisory and managerial duties had been completed, and some of the meetings she had attended as Interim Director.

The Advisory Committee discussed the FCRO staff's morale, ideas how the FCRO's data collection and reporting could be streamlined and made more efficient, how FCRO Recommendation documents could be electronically filed with the Court, FCRO Federal funding, and the three sources of FCRO Data: the courts, DHHS and the FCRO Staff.

Linda M. Cox reported that she had been invited to participate in a Legislative Initiative to review DHHS' N-FOCUS system and suggest improvements. Ms. Cox explained the relationship between FCRO's data collection and reporting systems and N-FOCUS. Elizabeth Neeley asked to participate in these meetings as well.

Linda M. Cox reported on FCRO identified statewide and regional child welfare issues which included the inconsistent identification, oversight, and length of DHHS Non-court / Voluntary cases, the instability of the Child Welfare System, the high turnover of caseworkers, the lack of documentation in DHHS's files, the lack of services available to Nebraska's children and families, and the continuing challenges of privatization.

The Advisory Committee discussed issues concerning the care of children in foster care including issues the local board members on the Committee had seen as they reviewed cases, initial training received by DHHS and NFC caseworkers, federal IVE funding and the proposed IVE fund waiver where funds could be utilized for prevention, and caseload size for DHHS Caseworkers and how the FCRO reports concerns to DHHS.

Linda M. Cox reported that several staff members participated in the recent Through the Eyes Summit held in Kearney and reported that Summit attendees identified three areas of needed systemic improvement

which included: additional substance abuse services, better service array and delivery and timely permanency decisions.

Linda M. Cox reported that she met with Senator Campbell who let Ms. Cox know that the FCRO Quarterly report due in September would be issued at a September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Legislative Hearing.

Linda M. Cox reported that she and Heidi Ore were working on the FCRO Biennium Budget request which will be issued to the Governor's Budget Office on September 15, 2012. Ms. Cox stated that along with continuation funding, additional staff would be requested to increase the number of reviews the FCRO was able to complete. Ms. Cox also detailed several additional initiatives such as position upgrades, webinar trainings for local board members, and software enhancements that would be undertaken within current budgetary constraints.

Advisory Committee asked about what training topics are provided to local board members and asked to be informed of upcoming Legislative Hearings.

Linda M. Cox stated that the Agency's Rules and Regulations would be updated to reflect statutory changes and asked the Advisory Committee for feedback by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 so the promulgation process could begin. The Advisory Committee asked that the Rules and Regulations also be issued to FCRO staff for their feedback as well.

The Committee reviewed the July 31, 2011, Budget Status Report and discussed the report and budgeted amounts outlined on the report with the staff.

Lunch

The Advisory Committee adjourned for lunch from 12:15 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Salary Determination

The Advisory Committee discussed the Interim Director's, Linda M. Cox, current concurrent duties as Interim Director and FCRO Data Coordinator, Ms. Cox's current salary, the salaries of other Independent State Agency directors, the salary of the past Interim Director and how that amount was determined, the duties of the FCRO Director as outlined by the former State Board, current Statute, and the duties as outlined by the Department of Administrative Services.

Sandra Kruback moved to increase Linda M. Cox's current salary by 50%, or to \$68,171.70, while she serves as Interim Executive Director and that this increase be implemented retroactively to when she was named to the Interim position, July 1, 2012. Michelle Haynes seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Sandra Kruback, Elizabeth Neeley, Sheree Keely, Michelle Hynes, and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against.

Hiring Exec Director The Advisory Committee discussed the process and procedures they would follow to hire a permanent Executive Director for the FCRO.

Heidi Ore recommended that the Committee work with State Personnel to facilitate listing the position on the State of Nebraska job website. Ms. Ore stated that a staff person at State Personnel would be assigned to assist the Committee gather applications, cover letters and resumes, and disseminate these documents to the Committee. Advisory Committee members agreed to contact State Personnel to facilitate this process.

The Advisory Committee discussed the Executive Director's job qualifications including educational background, issuing a press release to announce the position opening, means to advertise the position, how staff and stakeholders could be involved in the process, the timeframes for hiring, the salary for the position, and the primary location for the position.

Linda M. Cox reported that the former Interim Director and State Board Chairperson had left documents for the Advisory Committee to review. Ms. Cox described the nature of the documents and Advisory Committee members determined the materials did not include strategies for employing a new Executive Director. Committee members opted to not review the documents and asked that the documents be retained and/or destroyed per State of Nebraska Record Retention policies.

Elizabeth Neeley moved to develop a questionnaire asking staff for input on the skills and qualifications of an Executive Director, to disseminate the questionnaire to Committee members for input, send the survey to staff, and bring the results of the confidential survey to the Committee's next meeting. Sheree Keely seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Sandra Kruback, Elizabeth Neeley, Sheree Keely, Michelle Hynes, and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against.

**Next Meeting**           The next Advisory Committee meeting was set for September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Advisory Committee members determined next steps for members to complete prior to the next meeting.

**Adjourn**               Elizabeth Neeley moved to adjourn. Michelle Hynes seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Sandra Kruback, Elizabeth Neeley, Sheree Keely, Michelle Hynes, and Craig Timm voted for the motion. There were no votes against.

Following the meeting, the Advisory Committee members toured the FCRO Main office.