

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

Regular Meeting  
Friday, September 27, 2024  
9:15 a.m.  
Mt. Shasta Resort, Mt Shasta, CA  
Zoom option available

1. **Call to Order:** 9:16 by Chair Cali McKinzie

## 2. Roll Call

- a. Present: Cali McKinzie; Deborah Anderson; Lori Childres; Joseph Cullis; Terria M; Christina Johnson; Patricia McCarthy; William Moore; Selene Mercado; Andreas Economopoulos; Jamie Murray; Haylie Torres; Kim Leeseman; Daniel Strauss
- b. Absent: Timothy Howard; Edna Winkle; Araceli Garcia; Adrian Hugo
- c. Visitors: Cindi Freshour, We Care A Lot Foundation; James Ford, DDS; Lee Cha, DDS
- d. Staff: Audra Feedback, Chief Financial Officer; Keith French, IT Manager; Tracy Duarte, Associate Director Community Services; Dr. Christine Austin, Medical Director; Wayne Doering, Associate Director of Client Services North; Melinda Roberts, HR Director

3. **Public Input/Open** Forum (*This section is for members of the public only; and is to provide the public an opportunity to comment and/or present information to the Board on any matter. **Each member of the public will be afforded up to five minutes to speak. If you have additional information you are encouraged to submit it in writing.***)

No public comment

## 4. Approval of Agenda for September 27, 2024.

- a. Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and William Moore  
no discussion, Motion passed

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

## **5. Approval of Minutes from June 14, 2024**

- a. Motion and second Terria M. and Patricia McCarthy, no discussion, Motion passed

## **6. Report from Chairperson, Joe Cullis**

- a. Action Item #1: 2025 Board Meeting Schedule  
Action requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors approve the 2025 Board Meeting schedule as submitted.  
Motion and second William Moore and Cali McKinzie, no discussion, Motion passed
  
- b. Other: None

## **7. Management Reports**

- a. Financial Report: Audra Feedback, Chief Financial Officer
  - i. Fiscal Year 2023/24
    - The Regional Center's contract allocation is expected to exceed expenses by \$12.1 million which will be returned to the state as reported in June 2024.  
This has been the trend for both FNRC and regional centers state wide.
  - ii. Operations Report, FY 24-25
    - Contract Amendment A-1 allocates approximately \$33.6 million for operations.
    - Management is confident that the current year allocation will be sufficient to fund operations at current levels and growth.
  
- b. Community Services Report: Tracy Duarte, Associate Director of Community Service
  - i. Community Service Report
    - Vendorization Report
      - August shows an increase in closed vendorizations  
This was due to the completion of our bi-annual audit and we closed those vendors that have not been utilized in the past two years.

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

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Report
  - A need for an audiologist has been identified to complete early intervention evaluations.
  - One vendor found in South Lake Tahoe and is willing to do some of our evaluations.
  - We will continue to reach out in all nine counties along with collaborating with other regional centers to meet this need.
  
- Paid Internship and Integrated Employment Report
  - Exploring options to provide/expand job development services:
  - Participating in local job developers meeting and collaboration monthly. These meetings give an opportunity to discuss where they may need additional support etc.
  
- HCBS- We did get 100% of our providers in compliance by the deadline. Providers are continuing to want and need support. We are offering continued training through Northern California Learning Institute discussing such things as how these rules can be put into practice. Attendees share ideas on what is working and what is not working.
  
- The Department (DDS) has launched the first phase of the online provider directory. Once complete there will be an online portal with information about services and resources.
  - Step 1-Gathering information- Needing providers to supply vendor information and vendor numbers for each vendorization. Completion date is October 4, 2024.
  - Step 2- Register this information online for each of their vendor numbers. If this is completed by November 8, 2024, they will be eligible for incentives

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

- The one-time lump sum payment amounts can be found on the DDS website under the vendor tab.
- Rate Reform-January 1, 2025
  - Those that are in the rate reform will receive a base rate = to 90% of the current rate. Additional incentives can be found on the DDS website under “Rate Implementation.
  - Working with vendors on service design helping to align the service provided to the service they are currently vendorized to provide.
  - Rates are going into effect on January 1, 2025, but not all codes will be affected at that time. It will be in steps by directives from the Department.
- c. Human Resources Report: Melinda Roberts, Human Resources Director
  - i. Formal training for service coordinators has been launched.
    - Case management supervisors training launched in July. Consistent training particularly important for all the new staff.
    - Many of our service coordinators only have one to two years of experience. We are working to provide training that will help them work more effectively.
  - ii. Separations:
    - Mostly employees with less than a year with the agency.
    - Looking at different ways to prevent this in the future
    - Screening has changed helping to screen out those who may not make it through the training.
    - iRecruit screening. Looking at every resume for information that may lead to why they may not be the right person for that particular job.

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

- iii. New Employees/Recruitments:
  - June-September 11,2024 – 21 individuals have been hired.
  - Currently 18 active recruitments in process some are in the final stages of hiring. Those positions should be filled in the next 4-6 weeks.
- iv. Other:
  - Current number of staff 291  
Projected to be over 300 employees by the end of 2024.
  - Researching ideas to help the retention of employees
    - a. One page description of each position
    - b. Possibly a video “Life in the day of a service coordinator etc.
    - c. Probation periods have increased to nine months from six months helping to give managers more time to train at a deeper level. Making it possible to implement supports.
- d. Emergency Data and Impacts: Wayne Doerning, Associate Director of Client Services, North presented  
Data provided by Travis Mclvor, Emergency Response Coordinator
  - i. Emergency Data by County:
    - Chart presented showing how many major emergency events occurred during 2024 so far.
    - These emergencies cover categories such as Fires, Blizzards, Floods, Tornadoes, and any other emergency
      - ✓ Shasta County 22
      - ✓ Glenn County 12
      - ✓ Lassen County 14
      - ✓ Trinity County 9
      - ✓ Plumas County 16
      - ✓ Siskiyou County 14
      - ✓ Modoc County 11
      - ✓ Butte County 24
      - ✓ Tehama County 18

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

### ii. Emergency by Type

- Fire -52
- PSPS conducted-5
- Floods-9
- Earthquake-2
- Snow-11
- Wind-12
- Avalanche/slide-3
- Drought-9
- Tornado-2
  - ✓ Fires remain the most likely threat
  - ✓ Tornadoes/earthquakes within our regional center catchment area
  - ✓ Strong winds and winter storms have been on the rise within our area. We may want to conduct more awareness training on those two events.

### iii. Land Mass Impacted by Fires

- Butte County was hit the hardest this year with a total of 435,152 acres lost.
- Siskiyou County came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place at 3,008 acres lost.
- For the first time in several years Trinity County received no major fire event in 2024.
- Overall a total of 461,960 acres of land have burned within the FNRC catchment area.

### iv. FNRC Residents by type impacted by emergencies

- Resident type 11 (Living with parent) were most impacted at 656 individuals.
- There was a total of 806 FNRC Consumers impacted by an emergency event this year.

### v. Statistics of local fires was presented:

- Thompson Fire- Oroville Community-3,789 acres
- Shelly Fire-Siskiyou County- 15,520 acres
- Park Fire-Butte, Tehama and Shasta County impacted. Listed as 429,460 acres

### vi. Conclusion:

- This year has been full of emergency events, but we have responded to each event with perseverance.

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

- As technology advances we are able to respond quickly and more efficiently to assist those in need.
- Staying pro-active in emergency response will continue to save lives.

### **8. FNRC Board Committee Reports and Action Items**

#### **a. Consumer Committee: William Moore presented**

##### **i. Newsletter: presented by Simonne Robidoux, Training and Communication Supervisor**

- Introduced Tre' Keys as the new Public Information Officer
- Newsletter- Theme will be the "Holiday's" with a distribution date of November.
  - Feature article will be the "Holidays are For Caring Program"
  - Article assignments:
    1. Kim Leeseman-Self-Care
    2. Terria M.- Holiday events in Tehama County
    3. Adrian Hugo-Holiday events in Plumas County
    4. William Moore-People First and Holiday events in Butte Count

The deadline for articles will be: October 11, 2024.

##### **ii. Consumer Advisory Counsel (CAC) meeting dates discussed.**

- The schedule will be as follows:
  - October 3, 2024 – Lassen County, Susanville
  - February 9, 2025 – Glenn County
  - April 16, 2025 – Plumas County
  - July 16, 2025 – Trinity County

##### **iii. Review of the Board Packet and Action items: Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director**

- Agenda and Action items discussed
- Reports reviewed including:
  - Finance reports
  - Community Service reports
  - Human Resources report
  - Dashboard

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

- iv. Nomination of Committee Chair: Nomination of Adrian Hugo for chair by William Moore, second by Terria M., no discussion, Motion passed.
- v. Board member concerns and announcements:
  - Andreas spoke about the SDP Program thanking Morgan for her help.
  - Andreas shared a picture of himself on stage at the Farmers Market playing his accordion.
  - William-People First BBQ is October 19 at Bidwell Park
  - Adrian-Tomorrow is California Indian Day
  - Adrian-requested a CAC meeting be held in Oroville
- b. Finance Committee: Joe Cullis, presented
  - i. Fiscal reports presented by Audra Feedback, Chief Financial Officer
    - Allocations from The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) just received. Currently working on the spreadsheets.
    - Highlights of the budget discussed.
  - ii. POS reports discussed
    - Late Billing: Billing can be done two years in the arrears. Audra would like to work with the vendors in getting the billing more up to date.
    - Rate Reform discussed
  - iii. Operations reports discussed
    - Comfortable with the allocations.
    - Salary/wages will be increasing due to growth
    - Insurance rates a slight increase
    - Other big items IT equipment and licensing. Per person it costs approximately \$1400 a year.
    - Facilities- the lease for the Redding office expires June 2025.
    - Hiring going well we are receiving an increase in applications which may be due to the wage adjustments.
- iv. Audra requested feedback on what the committee would like to see in her reports. Any requests please forward to Audra or Shelly.

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

- c. Membership Committee: Joe Cullis, presented
  - i. Board Training Schedule for 2024-2025 discussed.  
The 2025 Training Schedule will be presented at the November Board Meeting.
- d. Executive Committee: Joe Cullis, presented
  - i. 2024-2025 Committee assignments were discussed
  - ii. Action Item #2 Strategic Plan discussed not able to make a motion as we did not have a quorum during the committee meeting.
    - The Strategic Plan is a five-year process
    - Our Mission
    - Our Values
      - Relationships
      - Creativity
      - Respect
      - Advocacy
    - Goals, Objectives, and Metrics
      - Goal 1: Build and improve relationships with all persons we support
      - Goal 2: Strengthen person-centered planning and service delivery for persons we support
      - Goal 3: Deepen and expand relationships with the community to improve access to and experience with all services in the community
      - Goal 4: Strengthen our organizational infrastructure to better serve persons we support
      - Goal 5: Build an exceptional team of staff who are supported in their work and have increased opportunities for professional development
    - In addition, the next step if approved is to look at our metrics. Where do we start the process in measuring where we are and where do we need to go?
    - The Management team will be meeting October 22, 2024 to discuss these goals and where to start. Conclusions from this meeting will be reported back at the Board in November.

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

Action requested: The board to approve the Strategic Plan presented by Leading Resources, Inc.

Motion and second Christina Johnson and Andreas Economopoulos, no discussion, Motion passed.

- iii. Other: Mentoring Committee presented by Melissa Gruhler was discussed. Melissa will report back on this at the November board meeting in hopes of having this committee in place by January 2025.
- e. Health and Wellness Committee: Cali McKinzie, presented
  - i. Overview: Approved Mission statement and pilot program
    - Working on implementing this program starting with two mini conferences in October. One will be in Chico and the other in Redding.
      - 17 providers have been invited
      - Committee members will be presenting at the conference
      - Providers will then be submitting proposals to participate in this program
      - Once proposals are received the committee will review
      - “The Best Life” program applies to staff as well. More details to come.
- f. SPAC Committee: Jamie Murray, SPAC representative
  - i. Melissa Gruhler gave a report on the Health and Wellness Committee. The vendors in attendance are very excited about this project.  
Most of the providers are already doing some aspect of this project already.
  - ii. DDS leadership changes were announced
  - iii. Tracy Duarte reported that Far Northern Regional Center completed the HCBS requirements at 100%.
  - iv. Update on the “Rate Implementation” was given and discussed

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

- v. The SPAC meeting in November will be in person at the Tehama County Visitors Center. Jamie spoke about the value of in-person meetings.

### **9. Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA): Dan Strauss, ARCA Representative**

- a. DDS, Department of Developmental Services (DDS) transitions
  - Nancy Bargmann Director retired. The Acting Director is Pete Cervinka. We may see some changes in the future.
  - Master Plan for Developmental Services. Have a common understanding of what a particular service is. This clarifies expectations.
  - ARCA Academy, Sept 6-7. History or laws or court decisions, service innovations, equity, and advocacy and communications.  
FNRC was represented well at the Academy  
This academy provided a good basis on why we have regional centers.
  - Service Access and Equity. Six regional centers with Chief Equity Officers. Equity what would it look like for each person to reach the goals of the Lanterman Act?
  - Videos: Mark Wolfe has produced videos regional centers can put on their websites. Such as HCBS, "What are the California Regional Centers?", Regional Center Board videos.

### **10. Report from Executive Director, Melissa Gruhler**

- i. Department of Developmental Services (DDS) changes:
  - Leadership:
    - Nancy Bargmann is retiring after 8 years with The Department. She will be missed. She always had the person's best interest in mind.  
Pete Cervinka will be the Acting Director.

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

- Brian Winfield Chief Director will be shifting his duties in stepping down. He will continue to work on special projects at The Department.  
Announced by the Governor's office Dr. Michi Gates has been appointed as Chief Deputy Director of Program Services.  
Michi is someone that understands Northern California with a heart and passion for the individuals we support.
- ii. Far Northern Regional Center changes:
  - Retirements:
    - Wayne Doerning, Associate Director of Client Services North will be retiring effective February 2025.
    - Renee Meagher, Trust Supervisors will be retiring effective February 2025 as well. Cassandra Mikesell has been hired as her replacement and is already in place.
    - Sharon Rhodes, Office Manager has been with the regional center 30+ years she will be missed.  
Recruitment for her replaced has started
- iii. Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Master Plan for Developmental Services.
  - Five Focused Areas
  - Six different meetings already in place for Spring 2025.
    - Equity and the commitment to equality
    - Lanterman Act-
      - ✓ Individuals and families person-centered systems they trust
      - ✓ Individuals to receive timely inclusive services from high quality and person-centered providers
  - Next meeting October 9, 2024 will be in person in San Diego
  - November 6, 2024 will be virtual
  - December 11, 2024 will be in person in Sacramento
- iv. New IPP changes:
  - FNRC had a voice in the changes such as "Long-Term Planning".
- v. AB1147:
  - Currently no updates

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

- Several legislative bills were approved and some veto; however, AB1147 is still standing. Hoping to hear next week where this stands.
- vi. Self-Determination Program
  - The local SDP film will be showing on PBS October 2, 2024.
    - Postcards are available announcing the showing
    - SSDAC-State Self-Determination Advisory Committee has recognized FNRC as a best and promising practices in improving the SDP program.
    - Two new SDP specialist will be hired in the near future. These two individuals will provide a more hands on approach supporting those individuals already enrolled in SDP and those who are also coming on board.
- v. Update on “Intake”- presented by Dr. Austin, Medical Director
  - Four new intake assistants have been hired
  - Continuing to respond to phone calls within 24 hours
  - Added an online application making it possible to apply online
    - Over the past month we have had 77 applications submitted. Seven of those applications were for Early Intervention
    - The majority are coming from Butte and Shasta County.
    - The majority of the applications received are for ages 5-11
    - Overall the additions are proving to be successful
    - We will continue to meet regularly with Plumas County on ways to make improvements

### **11. Announcements, Reports, Questions and Answers, Summary Comments: All Board Members**

- i. Terria M. reported on People First of Red Bluff meeting held September 10, 2024. Treasurer is working on ordering a gavel. TC report meeting held August 20, 2024. Topics covered emergency preparedness, Lighthouse holding an open house and FNRC events. Emergency Fair meeting September 17 was cancelled.
- ii. William Moore reported on the People First Region 2 meeting speaker spoke on giving back to the community. BBQ will take place

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

in October. \$732.92 currently in the bank account. The committee is working on bringing in guest speakers to the meetings. The conference committee is working on the conference for next year.

Motion and second to move into closed session Andreas Economopoulos and Cali McKinzie, no discussion, Motion passed

**12. 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 leave closed session Cali McKinzie and William Moore, no discussion, Motion pass

**13. Next Meeting:** November 14 and 15, 2024, Sheraton Redding Hotel

**14. Adjournment:** Motion and second Patricia McCarthy and Andreas Economopoulos, no discussion, Motion passed

Meeting adjourned 1:08 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

*Shelly Nickle*

*Administrative Assistant*