

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

Regular Meeting
Friday, November 15, 2024
9:15 a.m.
Sheraton Hotel-Redding, CA
Minutes

1. **Call to Order:** 9:16 by Chair Joe Cullis

2. Roll Call

- a. Present: Cali McKinzie; Tim Howard; Deborah Anderson; Lori Childres; Edna Winkle; Joe Cullis; Araceli Garcia; Terria M.; Christina Johnson; Patricia McCarthy; William Moore; Adrian Hugo; Selene Mercado; Andreas Economopoulos; Haylie Torres; Jamie Murray
- b. Absent: Kim Leeseman; Dan Strauss
- c. Visitors: Cindi Freshour, We Care A Lot Foundation; James Ford, DDS; Pamela Becwar, Director of Plumas First Five; Renee Bauer, SCDD North State Office; Taylor Berry, 24 Hour Home Care;
- 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; Tamra Panther, Case Management Supervisor; Simonne Robidoux, Training and Communication Supervisor

3. **Public Meeting- Far Northern Regional Center's NCI Child & Family Survey-** Presented by Simonne Robidoux, Training and Communication Supervisor.

Note: The full survey with all the details is available for viewing on our website's transparency page.

Topics covered:

- What is National Core Indicators?
- Trailer Bill Language
- NCI Survey Types
- NCI Survey Schedule

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- Survey Demographics
- Fiscal Year 2022-2023 NCI Survey Results
 - ✓ Employment
 - ✓ Community Inclusion & Belonging
 - ✓ Community Participation
 - ✓ Community Participation
 - ✓ Choice & Decision Making
 - ✓ Relationships
 - ✓ Satisfaction
 - ✓ Service Coordination
 - ✓ Workforce
 - ✓ Access & Technology
 - ✓ Safety
 - ✓ Health
 - ✓ Medication
 - ✓ Wellness
 - ✓ Rights & Respect

4. 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

5. Approval of Agenda for November 15, 2024.

- a. Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and Lori Childres
no discussion, Motion passed

6. Approval of Minutes from September 27, 2024

- a. Correction: Call to order chair should be Joe Cullis not Cali McKinzie
- b. Motion and second Cali McKinzie and Patricia McCarthy, no discussion, Motion passed

7. Report from Chairperson, Joe Cullis

- a. Other – No Report

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8. Management Reports

a. Financial Report: Audra Feedback, Chief Financial Officer

i. Fiscal Year 2024-2025

- Summary of Allocations for the Regional Center
 - ✓ Estimated Contract Allocations:
 - ✓ Total Operations \$33,454,515
 - ✓ Total POS \$308,541,087
 - ✓ Projected Annual Expenses
 - ✓ Operations -33,218,086
 - ✓ POS 283,541,087

These are early numbers still compiling information.

- ✓ Trainings
- ✓ Consultants
- ✓ Investing excess funds
- ✓ General office growth requires more equipment and licenses

Further detail will be available as the year progresses

ii. New Controller announced: Tristan Cauntay

- Support for the Chief Financial Officer
- Tristan will remain on the State mandated rate implementation project until it is complete.
- With Tristan being promoted it leaves the Rate Analyst position vacant. We will be posting to fill the vacated position.

iii. The state is mandating a section in the state contract be added to address "Ai" and the use of "Ai" within the Regional Center.

- IT department – working on this. Waiting on direction from DDS. We must submit how GenAi will be used by July 2025.
- The State is not saying avoid GenAi. They are actually encouraging it, but they want it done safely so guidelines are being created.

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b. Human Resources Report: Melinda Roberts, Human Resources Director

i. Action Item #2 Retired Annuitant Mike Mintline

Action Requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Mike Mintline to continue employment as a retired annuitant by FNRC effective January 2, 2025, for a period of no more than 12 months, in compliance with Government Code requirements.

Motion and second Christina Johnson and Araceli Garcia, no discussion, Motion passed.

ii. Report:

o Recruitment:

- ✓ Ten hired since our last meeting
- ✓ Year-to-date 66 new staff have been hired
- ✓ HR attending job fairs at the colleges and universities in our catchment area. Successful connections have been made.
- ✓ We will continue to expand our recruitment sources.
- ✓ By the end of November we will be over 300 employees.

o Separations:

- ✓ Five separations since our last meeting
- ✓ Year-to-date 33 separations
- ✓ Turn over rate running at 11%

c. Case Management Report: Larry Withers, Associate Director of Client Services South

i. Action Item #3 Conservatorship

Section 416.19 of the Health and Safety Code was amended to require the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to develop guidelines to address potential conflicts of interest that may arise when a regional center serves as the DDS Director's designee for conservatorship matters, while also being responsible for service coordination

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FNRC has only four (4) clients conserved by the Director of DDS.

The new policy prohibits the designee from being the Service Coordinator, their supervisor, or anyone else within the same case management unit.

Action Requested: We respectfully request that the document, Far Northern Regional Center Delegated Conservatorship Policy dated November 4, 2024 be approved by the FNRC Board of Directors.

Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and Edna Winkle, no discussion, Motion passed.

ii. Case Management Report:

- With Growth comes a lot of changes
- 66 individuals have been hired this year alone
- Tamra Panther the new Associate Director of Case Management, North. Wayne Doerning retiring after 33 years with the agency.
- The Chico office recently went to hoteling. This allows staff to sign up for office space allowing optimum utilization of our current space. The Redding office will be adding hoteling in the near future as well.
- New Standardized IPP- The Department has mandated that all Regional Centers utilize the same format for all IPP's. The new IPP will need to be in place as of January 2025. Trainings will be scheduled.
- The Family Wellness Program began as a pilot program funded by a grant; however, we are planning on continuing this program. Families need this opportunity to make connections within the community.

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- 9. State Council on Developmental Disabilities: Renee Bauer, Regional Manager, North State Office**
- a. The North State Regional Office is in the process of hiring one staff member who will work 100% in quality assurance. This staff member will facilitate the National Core Indicator (NCI) project, for the Far Northern Regional Center catchment area.
 - b. The North State Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) has three newly appointed members. Two Family-Advocates for Modoc County and one Family-Advocate for Plumas County. The first official meeting for the new members will be on December 13, 2024.
 - c. The North State Office is keeping busy with Emergency Preparedness trainings offered in both English and Spanish. Lanterman Act Trainings and ongoing trainings linked to the Healthy U series. In addition, attendance at as many community events as staff capacity will allow.
 - d. The North State Office has seen an increase in engagement by Self-Advocates related to becoming peer trainers and community leaders. These partnerships are critical in the work that we do.
 - e. Statewide, the North State Office is assisting with annual training for Community Care Licensing, Licensed Program Analysts (LPS's). This contract is with UC Davis and the trainings consist of a Self-Advocate panel where individuals can share lived experiences and accept questions from LPS's related to living in an institution or licensed home setting. In February Andreas as a Self-advocate through UC Davis will be speaking telling his story about his life, growth and struggles.
 - f. The State Council will meet on November 19, 2024. At the November Council meeting, members will vote in their next Chair and Vice-Chair. Materials for this meeting can be found online.

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10. FNRC Board Committee Reports and Action Items:

- a. Bylaws Committee: Presented by Adrian Hugo, Chair
 - Ad hoc/standing committees discussed
 - *Health and Wellness Committee
 - *New Mentoring CommitteeDecided to table this discussion
 - Changes to the Bylaws
 - *Executive Directors evaluation timeline
 - *Standing Nominating Committee
 - *Meeting locations & members joining via teleconference/ZoomTabled to January meeting
- b. Consumer Committee: Presented by Adrian Hugo, Chair
 - Newsletter presented by Tre Keys, Public Information Officer and Simonne Robidoux, Training and Communications, Supervisor
 - *Newsletter approved and will be posted on the website
 - *Next newsletter will be going out in March 2025.Articles will be discussed at the January committee meeting.
 - Review of Board packet, Action items and Dashboard: Presented by Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director
 - Long Term supports: Presented by Tamra Panther, Case Management Supervisor
 - *On our website we have placed a link to resources
 - *Discussed the financial portion of the form looking for recommendations from this committee. The committee recommended only basic information is needed such as:
 - ✓ Where do you have a bank accounts
 - ✓ Do you have a contact at the bank

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- Board Member concerns and announcements
 - ✓ Adrian announced the Northern California Neurodiversity & Disability Symposium February 7, 2025.
 - ✓ William reported on People First news and activities.
- c. Finance Committee: Presented by Tim Howard, Chair
 - Financial Reports presented by Audra Feedback, Chief Financial Officer
 - Action Item #1 Merakey Allos presented by Tracy Duarte, Associate Director of Community Service
Action requested: The Board approve contract PST-2750 with Merakey Allos (HF0733) for Transportation Services effective January 1, 2025 through March 31, 2028 for a total maximum contract amount of \$1,483,422.72.
Motion and second Finance Committee and Cali McKinzie, no discussion, Motion passed
- d. Nominating Committee: Presented by Joe Cullis, Chair
 - Nomination of new ARCA Representative to replace Dan Strauss who will term out in January 2025.
 - ✓ Discussion on the best candidate
 - ✓ Motion and second to nominate Cali McKinzie as the new ARCA Representative by Joe Cullis and Edna Winkle, no discussion, Motion passed
 - ✓ Motion and second to elect Cali McKinzie as the new ARCA Representative Nominating Committee and Andreas Economopoulos, no discussion, Motion passed.

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e. Health and Wellness Committee: Presented by Cali McKinzie, Co-Chair

- Bidders Chat – November 13, 2024
 - ✓ Two vendors were in attendance presenting three proposals each.
All the proposals seem to have a social aspect included.
 - ✓ Another Bidders chat is scheduled for November 19
- Proposals are due December 31, 2024
- Training will continue to be worked on along with an assessment tool.
- Nine vendors are expected to submit proposals

f. Service Provider Advisory Committee; Presented by Jamie Murray, Chair

- The meeting held 11/13/2024 was the lowest attendance but had wonderful conversation
 - ✓ Housekeeping for 2025 discussed
Meetings will be a mixture of in-person and Zoom
 - ✓ Tracy Duarte, Associate Director of Community Service updated the group on the “Rate Reform” and the “Provider Directory”
 - ✓ Looking at adding SPAC member Gail Puckett and Jennifer Baughman to the Health and Wellness Committee to help advise and review the proposals

11. Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA): Presented by Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director

- Master Plan for Development Services
Dan will bring some of these topics back in January
 - ✓ Workgroups are ongoing collecting data in order to compile a draft report to submit by March 2025
 - ✓ Service Provider Directory-In progress
- Outreach Efforts
 - ✓ Provide Early Start eligibility, intake, and services.

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- All brochures: English and threshold languages.
- ✓ Provide Early Start check-off list and
- ✓ Obtain as much contact information as possible from the family such as alternate phone numbers, email etc.
- ✓ Follow up with families after referral has been completed.
- ✓ Provide flyers to put up at community events and shelters indicating dates for on-site developmental questionnaires.
- Child Find Activities
 - ✓ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Part C New initiative developed by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) for targeted outreach to families experiencing homelessness and immigration issues.
- Overcoming Barriers
 - ✓ Barriers
 - Connecting with families
 - Language barrier
 - Cancellations, reschedules, and no shows
 - Transportation
 - ✓ Overcoming Barriers
 - Communication with Service Coordinator is key
 - Provide flexibility for the families
 - Communicate important details to the assessment team
- Provider Directory – available now
- Home and Community based services-HCBS
 - ✓ 100% in compliance
 - ✓ Next going after subminimum wage
- Problems with Social Security-Dan will report back on this in January.

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12. Report from Executive Director, Melissa Gruhler

i. Outreach Committee

- In one month, seven outreach opportunities were held in Butte, Trinity, Glenn and Shasta Counties
Part of our Strategic Plan is getting to know our communities. Child Find is part of this as well.
- Far Northern Regional Center was presented with a plaque at the Acorns to Oak trees outreach event: California American Indian Symposium on Intellectual and Developmental disabilities held October 9 & 10, 2024. The plaque was presented to acknowledge the collaborative work between FNRC and Acorns to Oak Trees. Clinics are being held monthly.
- Far Northern Regional Center was invited to participate in the first-time event “The Guardian Games” held in Davis. This event was in collaboration with the Special Olympics. The event was a group competition with each group having a law enforcement torch holder. A very positive and rejuvenating event.
- Rate Reform: Moving forward crossing over several departments. We have been working on this for over a year and the Directives are beginning to come in now. Our Fiscal Department is making adjustments to meet the deadlines by January 2025. We will have one year to update the IPP and IFSP.
- Strategic Plan: Goals have been established and we have teams working on the goals to build and improve relationships with those we support.
 - ✓ Goal 1: Build and improve relationships with all persons we support

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- Outreach: Working on a targeted effort. Our Public Information Officer is providing information on Facebook and on our website as well.

- ✓ Goal 2: Strengthen person-centered planning and service delivery for persons we support
 - Working on developing our work force to ensure calls are being returned and that we are continuing to provide “Person Centered” services. Positions have been added in order to address HCBS rules as we provide support our service providers.

- ✓ Goal 3: Deepen and expand relationships with the community to improve access and experience with all services in the community.
 - We recognize we do a good job in responding to providers but we also recognize that we need a liaison point of contact person to field questions.

- ✓ Goal 4: Strengthen our organizational infrastructure to better serve the persons we support.
 - There has been a focused effort internally and externally to streamline training resulting in improved efficiency.
 - Strong IT support in expanding on our infrastructure

- ✓ Goal 5: Build an exceptional team of staff who are supported in their work and have increased opportunities for professional development.
 - Making improvements to our recruiting and onboarding processes.
 - Looking at training plans for all departments
 - Highlight and focus on our employee benefits to help in the retention of staff

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- ✓ Interviewing for a potential consultant to help in branding.
 - We are looking at keeping what we have but enhancing it.

- AB1147 – Disability Equity, Transparency, and Accountability Act of 2024.
 - ✓ Bill passed-September 28, 2024
 - ✓ Regional Center's with which the department maintains a contract pursuant to Section 4629 shall be subject to the California Public Records Act. This will become effective on January 1, 2026
 - ✓ Conflict of Interest policy addition prohibits regional center employees to accept a gift over \$15 per year. We will be doing some training on what this will look like. Sometimes giving gifts is part of the culture. A policy will be established that prohibits regional center senior staff from hiring relatives. This policy shall be included in the regional center contract and shall be included in training of the governing board

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

- i. Adrian Hugo announced the 7th annual Chico Indian Market will be held November 30th in Chico.
- ii. Teri M. gave a report of the Tehama County Coordinating Counsel. The next meeting will be November 19th @ 12 PM via Zoom. Teri also reported on the People First Red Bluff Chapter meeting the next meeting will be the 2nd Tuesday of each month.
- iii. William Moore report on People First Region 2 Chapter
All chapters are planning Christmas celebrations
The January meeting will be held by Zoom
Working on the conference that will be held in May of next year

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Motion and second to move into closed session Cali McKinzie and William Moore, 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 Lori Childres and Tim Howard, no discussion, Motion pass

13. Next Meeting: January 24, 2025 @ The Sheraton Redding Hotel

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

Meeting adjourned 12:54 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Shelly Nickle
Administrative Assistant