

Citizen Review Panel
Tuesday, July 2, 2013
3:00 to 4:30 p.m.
Teleconference

Present: Diwakar, Stella, Margie, Kristin, Dana

Absent: No one

Minutes

1. Decide what to do with Christy's comments on the annual report

Stella: In Texas, when I was a worker down there, there was a specific incident that set everything off. An open in-home, the Department had custody of one kid, the others were in home being visited. The oldest was in foster care in an RTC. That kid always said she was being sexually abused. The girl called in reports because she thought the next oldest would be abused. The worker was going out there monthly, but the 11 year old was sleeping with the step-father while everyone else in the family slept in another room. When they indicated this man, the grand jury looked at how neglectful the state had been in allowing this to happen and wanted to indicate the state, but couldn't. However, lots of people were fired. They pulled a team and had workers go through reports, looked at every single report to see if—then the supervisor had the ability to close out intake, screen out a case—there was little about what you could do to close a case. The team found a lot of cases that never should have been closed that were, kids chained up in the yard. They tried to investigate things that had been closed.

As I told Travis, there were different levels of things that had to be reviewed. I've been part of mass clean-ups. And then a child dies, and people go out to see what happened. Those types of cases are a lot of work to get cleaned up. It is time consuming, but it has to get done. My issue with Christy is we get that response too often—there's nothing we can do. So we leave everything the way it is. When is the next clean up going to happen. Because it will. This supervisor (Shelia) is gone. The fact that Christy wants us to drop it makes me nervous. This is giving me flash backs. It shouldn't happen here; there aren't enough people here.

Diwakar: Suzanna Caldwell from Alaska Dispatch called me. They wanted to know about the turnover rate and what the reasons were. I mentioned the housing issue. I tried to be moderate about it and not blame OCS. The case, the guy was arrested based on a four year old, and he confessed. Then a forty-something women who was his step-daughter said she and her siblings were abused. And made reports, but nothing happened.

Stella: We talked about case reading. That's what we did in Texas. That's what they did in Kentucky. In my region in Texas we read only child deaths. We didn't have to read only child deaths. There I was the facilitator; the Sylvan. It wasn't as neutral because I worked for the department. I picked the cases and we tried to pick cases with a lot of

media attention and one without. We tried to be random. We had a template. We basically looked at whether policy and procedure was followed. If not, why? If so, did they need changes? A high profile case we definitely would have reviewed to see what we did right and wrong.

Dana: Do we want to include this recommendation in our report? And if so, how do we proceed with Christy's concern.

Margie: This is a continuing concern. For her to say this is old news, isn't true. It's a chronic problem.

Dana: My radar goes up with the vehemence to this. Quoted Christy's response. If that was really the case, why is she being defensive.

Diwakar: I don't see any reason to take it out. I think we're all in agreement.

Dana: Then how do we talk about this with Christy and Travis? Might be interesting to look at Bethel case.

Diwakar: I agree that we need to look at some of the cases that have been closed in these clean ups. The guy in Bethel hasn't had a foster care license since 1998. OCS hasn't been involved in 15 years.

Stella: That's a good point. How about if we ask to review cases or a case on a foster home with multiple reports?

Kristin: Because we've heard that a lot.

Margie: The Kotzebue issue, was it intakes that were old?

Diwakar: Sheila China was the supervisor there. She filled in in Bethel trying to clean up this back long gap.

Kristin: Margie, it was intakes. I think we are mixing issues. They did it in Kotzebue and Bethel.

Dana: It was intakes that were screened in and then the ball got dropped. I agree that the Bethel issue and the Kotzebue issue are two different issues. I was grabbing off Stella's Texas issue. Maybe that's biting off too much.

Diwakar: Was intake a problem in Kotzebue?

Sylvan: Yes, they did a clean-up there too.

Dana: Shelia was thought to be wonderful, but no one in Kotzebue liked her. We thought maybe they liked her because she was good at clearing cases.

Margie: I know in Juneau there was a social worker who was doing 400 intakes, they burned him out. I'd like to know numbers. This is one of the hardest jobs OCS does—they don't make any relationships. I bet this is the highest turnover in OCS.

Dana: That's a good point. Do we have any region specific data?

Diwakar: It's not available from OCS. We should ask for those numbers by region and job classification.

Dana: How to proceed on this? How do we find out the process? I'm with Stella, I hear this stuff from Christy, let's baffled them with BS and see what the process is for processing these files before she talks to us. I don't trust her to not spin it. I was to get accurate info.

Diwakar: I agree with that. My sense is that there was about 4,000 cases closed. Let's say there's 1,000 cases resolved this way. If we get this number, we randomly pick ten cases for the year. We can review and see what process was followed and then ask Travis and Christy what they thought was done.

Margie: PSRs screened in in May was 3,721.

Dana: Can we request and receive written instructions on how this was to be done? Where would we get written instructions on this? Sheila must have gotten written instructions on how to proceed. If we listened to Christy describe to us...it should match.

Diwakar: The instructions for people reviewing cases and then review some cases that had this done. Do we have any other names that we could interview about how this goes?

Sylvan: Maybe Mary Gray from Kodiak? Do you think they'd be candid? Andrew from Bethel?

Kristin: One person interviewing them would be better?

Sylvan: Kristin will call him once I get his last name to see if he knows who did this work and what they did.

Diwakar: What's the timeline?

Kristin: Before our next meeting with Christy a week from Friday?

Diwakar: I wonder if we get info from someone else and then Christy tells us something different, then what?

Sylvan: Just to clarify, we're not changing the annual report from what we sent to Christy?

Diwakar: I think sending her a note to let her know we discussed it is better. It's strange they don't recall us talking about this.

Dana: If they really don't remember, then what else are they forgetting? If not, I don't want that relationship with them.

Kristin: Maybe Travis heard it loud and clear, but didn't stand up to Christy.

Dana: I think we need to send her an e-mail letting her know. I want to model how we want to have the relationship.

Diwakar: Will call Mary Gray. What we're asking is how cases get closed when there is a backlog of IA cases?

Make the calls, get information, on our next call with Christy get the information. We need to get randomly picked cases. We need to let Christy know we want to do that. We need to know how many were closed and where and by whom.

Dana: I think we should take this as far as we can.

Sylvan: I think Christy might not want us to look at cases.

Stella: The other 49 states are looking at cases.

Dana: I don't think Christy wants us to put in our report that they wouldn't let us see cases.

Stella: In Texas, the Panel could request certain cases.

Kristin: It makes no sense to me that OCS would have control over this.

Margie: Very true, they won't hand over crappy cases. Obviously they thought it was important to deal with.

Diwakar: I don't think they ever go back unless something happened. This was the third time of clean up in ten years.

Margie: That's troubling right there.

Dana: We need to know how many cases are backlogged now? What is there plan to keep this from happening?

Sylvan: Travis has told us about a plan, but it was only triggered when they reached double or triple the deadline.

Dana: OCS needs to make it happen even with staff turnover.

Diwakar: 2,138 IA in July 2008, usually ~400. In 2012-2013 they did another big clean-up. Does ten sound reasonable?

Stella: Ten sounds very ambitious. I'd try one per quarter until you get the hang of it. And everyone should review the same case. It sounds like a lot with everything else you do. We did two per quarter. They got it two weeks ahead of time, then we'd discuss 2-3 cases for 2-3 hours. I printed everything they needed to know...policy sections, narrative, etc.

Sylvan: What I remember is hard is that some was hard copy and some was in ORCA.

Diwakar: They can't provide it all together?

Margie: They could print it off.

Stella: Start with one. We had a worker try to guide us through those cases. We didn't have anyone available who had worked on the case.

Dana: In this case our investigation should be more narrowly focused?

Stella: I'm talking about the random case reading.

Dana: I thought we were talking about reviewing case files from clean up.

Stella: We also talked about reading cases in Bethel related to open investigations in foster homes.

Kristin: That brings up our huge issue with licensing...foster homes with pending IA cases.

2. Recruiting

Diwakar: Each of us was supposed to have a name. Melissa---from DCCED, used to be in Kotzebue for a while. Maniilaq...lives in Anchorage. She is interested... I'm not sure if she has time.

Kristin: I actually contacted Steve Williams at the Trust and gave him more info related to CRP. I'll follow up on that.

Dana: Were you going to contact Amanda from Facing Foster Care in Alaska?

Diwakar: I was supposed to, but didn't. I will. Bill Hogan was the other person... I saw him at a meeting. I'll follow up with him. So should I call Melissa Taylor?

Sylvan: That's Ralph Taylor's wife who used to be on the Panel.

Dana: How will the information from Mary Gray and Andrew be shared with the Panel?

Diwakar: I will send an e-mail.

Stella: I have a question about recruiting. Is a current foster parent okay?

Diwakar: I don't see a conflict.

Kristin: I don't see a conflict.

Stella: I have someone who is a current foster parent, she's at the U, but is involved with 4-H, and runs operation Military Kids. She's very busy, but I think she'd be a great fit. My only concern would be if she gets away on the trips. If not her, then maybe she can help me find someone who would be a good fit.

Diwakar: Let's convene at 11:45 before Christy's call.

3. Travel for next year

Dana: We're been saying we need to get back to Barrow. I don't know what anyone else is thinking.

Diwakar: What about SE?

Sylvan: We went 4-5 years ago. We went to Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan.

Margie: It's okay. They have had a huge turnover problem, but no horror stories like Bethel.

Sylvan: Now there's Sharon Flemming in CSM who used to be in Bethel.

Diwakar: Now do we need to decide? We wanted Bernita to give us Q&A reports. We need to ask Christy to ask Bertnia to give us a presentation. They will tell us how things are going.

Dana: Ten years ago we got a glowing report on Mat-Su when it was terrible. I don't know if things have changed.

Diwakar: It's just one point of data. And if it's pointless, we should know that the Q&A section is worthless. We can get the 26 reports are read through them on our own. Or she could present.

Dana: I think that'd be a training point. Maybe couple it with our fall trip. Or maybe use it to inform our spring trip.

Sylvan: Maybe ask her for the four best and four worst.

Diwakar: If we gave her metrics she might be willing to do it. IA and home visits. Seems like the consensus is to have her present, but not hang our first field trip on her presentation.

Sylvan: At our strategic planning we talked about having one trip be to a hot spot and one to someone we've neglected. Which one would the fall trip be?

Diwakar: I feel like the fall trip should be the trouble trip because then we have it for Juneau. That seems like we need to know Bernita's finding to find a hot spot.

Dana: There was a sense that Barrow didn't work well.

Diwakar: We need to follow up with Bethel. Maybe not a trip, but somehow follow up.

Stella: I think this month is it. I think just through August.

4. Recruiting (everyone with one name)

5. Next meeting date

- Friday, July 12th Noon to 1:00 p.m. Teleconference with Christy