

**Citizen Review Panel**  
**Tuesday, August 6, 2013**  
**3:00 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Teleconference**

**Present:** Susie, Diwakar, Dana, Margie

**Absent:** Kristin, Stella

**Minutes**

**Agenda for teleconference with Christy**

Diwakar: Should we just follow up on the issues we didn't get to last time since she didn't respond by e-mail? Like the metrics for results based budgeting?

Susie: What are we doing with Bernita?

Diwakar: Bernita will talk about the Q&A reports for each field office; they are modeled on the CFSR. She will go over them at a regional level. I asked her to give us a description of what the instrument is, the methodology and then a summary by region. We want to know details so we can make informed decisions on where we go. We will see what region is struggling with what issue. This will be one data point to inform our decision on where to go and what to focus on.

Dana: I have reservations about that based on experience with Bernita. She'd done SCRO when it was a mess, but it got glowing assessment.

Susie: I remember that and it was totally off base. But after our most recent site review in Wasilla, and then the Casey Foundation coming, Bernita did the Wasilla office again and they got like zero. It's changed. We can be aware of it. But I was impressed with it [the most recent Wasilla review by Bernita]. They scored it lower than I thought was possible.

Diwakar: Q&A is an essential part of OCS' operation. It's important to review that itself as part of OCS. We can be critical of her work if that's what it deserves.

Sylvan: It'd be good to know if the Q&A reports are off the mark. That's important to know since they inform what OCS does.

Diwakar: I requested Bernita join us from 10:00 a.m. to noon. We can start at 9:00 a.m. and then do 10:00 a.m. to noon with her. We can't spare more time than that. Is two hours too much?

Susie: I don't think so.

Diwakar: Then we can transition into lunch.

Susie: Why not ask about the exit surveys too? Bernita does those too.

Diwakar: Is there enough time? I don't think there's time for her to do both.

Susie: Bernita could do both if she's there. We can like it or not. Covering ground with her from regional info to staff reviews is a pretty different animal. She may prefer to come at another time. We do need to prioritize. But it is on the agenda...

Diwakar: This agenda is the one from our call with Christy last month. We can bring it up again with Christy this month. If we don't get an answer this Friday we'll bring it up with Bernita. For Christy, we just wanted to see staff survey results for just line workers.

Susie: Let's ask Bernita to do it too. Maybe give her an agenda—just 15 minutes on staff surveys?

Diwakar: I sent Bernita a note telling her what we'd be interested in.

Dana: Are we talking about our meeting Friday or with Bernita?

Sylvan: We're mixing and matching.

Diwakar: I just forwarded an e-mail I sent to Bernita about what'd we'd like her to cover. The whole focus was on CFSR.

Sylvan: We could ask her if two hours is enough time to do both.

Diwakar: That's a good point.

Susie: She could do it on a teleconference if she doesn't have time on the 6th.

Diwakar: We just want to know the results for only line workers.

Margie: Christy doesn't want to give it to us, or says she will and then doesn't?

Sylvan: The second.

Diwakar: How many of us really want to go into more detail about that? There are so many answers in that data but they don't use it.

Margie: They don't really care what the line workers think of OCS management.

Dana: The data is two years old, but we want to know what they did with this. If they didn't value line workers' responses we want to know why not and what they will do differently.

Sylvan: So one agenda item for Friday is the staff survey data.

Susie: I have a different suggestion for the meeting on Friday. It would be nice to give her the floor--change the approach so she can choose her pet things to share with us. It might be interesting to have her update us on things she's currently working on.

Dana: I think that's a good idea. But I think we need to keep asking [about the staff survey data] since we asked about it.

Susie: I'm just suggesting we throw some diversity into the agenda.

Diwakar: This last teleconference we didn't have it as part of agenda. We used to do it and it's nice.

Susie: Maybe give her half the time. If she got a heads up that she has half the meeting to tell us about three things she's working on.

Dana: I think we'll get...I get really tired of her telling us about the great things, I think we need to hear about some challenges too.

Susie: Some of the things they are doing are pretty good.

Margie: Last time she mentioned priority setting for the next five years.

Diwakar: I think they are working on the new CFSR. It's a good set of metrics. They have to tell the feds what they plan to do and then the feds follow up with, "This is what you said you'd be doing. Did you?"

Susie: I don't think that's our job. I think we're getting too data driven. We're a grassroots group, the feds will review CFSR and see if they are doing it.

Diwakar: The one thing I wanted to avoid...Christy said we were a loosey-goosey group. We recognize that we're a driven group.

Susie: We have a unique group. We need to find our focus. We've struggled with it for ten years. I don't want to be data driven. I don't think it's the main focus that was intended.

Diwakar: We need to find ways to tighten up though.

Susie: Our struggle will be to find a balance.

Diwakar: We don't want to collect data. We don't have the resources to collect data.

Susie: I think using Bernita's data for site visits is good. Using data and following through is good. That eliminates us being loosey-goosey.

Dana: I don't hear that, Diwakar's not saying we should be all data. I think we look at information. And ask what did OCS learn from this and what will they do with that and when it will happen and then check back with it. I think monitoring is our role. They have been short on accountability the last few years.

Diwakar: When I felt inadequately prepared was on site visits—we have no way to check for accuracy.

Susie: What's an example of that?

Diwakar: In Bethel, YKHC complained about IA, that OCS asked them to do an assessment of everyone. But then OCS said they did not do that. I don't know if that was true. Michael gave us a different picture than YK and I don't know how to ground truth what's real.

Susie: What would you need to reconcile it?

Diwakar: I don't know, but we need to know who is telling the truth.

Dana: We asked for information on closing out the files and I'm still not satisfied that we have the complete picture on what they did.

Diwakar: Did you read what Travis sent? They don't have a team—it's one person usually. The team--one person or more--would talk to the worker that was assigned the IA to determine if there was enough information to close it. That was based on one person's assessment. How is this better than just closing cases?

Dana: What was the rubric used to determine if the cases were closed? When we see it, there was no team. One person went out and did a cursory evaluation. I would like them to have enough integrity to be honest up front. When we ask concrete questions I would like concrete answers.

Diwakar: I don't want to get too data intensive either. It'll be hard to recruit members.

Margie: It depends on what we're talking about.

Diwakar: Can't all do legal and just rely on Margie because the rest of us will be lost.

Margie: When I read what the CRP is supposed to do, it seems like there's stuff the court could do to assist.

Diwakar: So we'll give Christy 30 minutes for her to share recent developments. Then we'll ask about the staff survey. Maybe ask what other surveys they might be planning to do? What about thing Sylvan went to?

Susie: Last year she was honest about potential budget cuts. What does she think is coming?

Sylvan: The budget training we got from Nancy Burns years ago was very informative.

Dana: Maybe ask her to come again?

Susie: There's no person now [doing the budget at OCS].

Dana: We have to be careful about what we expect Christy to do. The Legislators, most of them are citizen politicians. They don't know what this is about. I think we're sort of there too. We're a little better prepared.

Sylvan: Many of the Legislators did not seem to get OCS and what their responsibilities were.

Dana: I think we do need to push the future budget. I think it's important. They can hardly manage with the budget they've got. With less, how will they manage?

Susie: I really come back to Steve's analogy with the baby in the river. Focused on trying to save the baby in the river and not wondering how the baby got in the river.

Dana: I think it's really a need to raise the minimum wage.

Diwakar: I agree, but it's beyond CRP and OCS scope.

Susie: I think within our scope we can ask that PSRs be evaluated more strenuously. There can't be 8 and 20 PSRs without them investigating.

Margie: I have an interesting program out here with Tlingit and Haida. They started a program that when people come in to apply for TANF if they score high enough they get sent for prevention services. I think it's a good idea, catch them before they get referred to in-home services.

Susie: I have a different focus, non-emergency petitions. That will keep the baby out of the river. It keeps kids out of the system to intervene earlier.

Dana: We can talk about root cause.

Susie: We can't do anything about it.

Sylvan: Looking at data could help show that prevention is worth the money. When we complained about how small the hole had gotten to get into OCS with Tammy, she said they didn't have money for prevention. They had to spend their limited resources on active cases where kids were being abused and neglected.

Diwakar: We just want to push OCS to use data in better ways.

Margie: I want to see if they do things differently with kids getting removed and in-home. I get cases where stuff's been going on for a year. It's a black hole. They wait too long to file the petitions.

Susie: It's supposed to only be six months in-home and then remedy or to custody.

Margie: It bounces back and forth, the parents do a little better and so OCS steps out and then the parents are back in...

Susie: I have another suggestion for Christy which is staff turnover. In Anchorage it's been huge lately. Why does she think people are leaving? What is their next strategy to address it? They are doing lots of good things, but the job is too hard. The line workers are getting killed.

Margie: It's been stable down here except for intake where they is a terrible supervisor so people quit all the time.

Susie: From here I just want to give her a hug. They are trying really hard. Since it is a goal for the year asking about turnover is on track. Kodiak has been down workers; they just hired one. After a year Valdez is staffed. It'd be interesting to hear where she is. If there's anything else we can do? In Anchorage it's a different deal.

Dana: I was right there with you, Susie, till you got into relationships. 😊

Margie: Down here there is a big disconnect between licensing and workers. Workers place kids into homes that are inappropriate.

Dana: What's an example of a placement that's a bad match?

Margie: They don't talk to workers--one home has a teenage girl already, and they try to place a teenage boy. They could have avoided this by talking to the case worker. There is no process to do that.

Susie: People make complaints about foster parents and it goes into the licensing file and then the case workers don't see it.

Dana: What's the question?

Susie: We need to formulate it. We've been kicking it around for a long time.

Margie: What's supposed to happen when licensing is looking for a placement? They have ORCA. Is there a way for them to see that there's already a case worker for a kid in that home?

Susie: We talked about getting trained on licensing first.

Margie: I would love that.

Susie: It's kind of like the financial thing. Learn what they do and when we have current practice info, then ask our question.

Diwakar: We have a lot on the table for training. We should lay it out over the next year.

Susie: We need goals and to start getting goals again. We didn't really do anything last year. We did site visits, but we didn't go anywhere. I think this conversation needs to be held until the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Sylvan: So items for the 6<sup>th</sup> include: Bernita, finish strategic plan, set goals and trips (dates and locations), recruiting, and Diwakar's manifesto. While items for our meeting with Christy include: staff survey, measures for results based budgeting, staff turnover, and budget forecast.

Dana: Any strategy to keep things moving along? She's pretty wordy.

Susie: She's pretty good about moving things forward if there's an agenda.

Sylvan: So we will always continue to meet for a half hour after our teleconferences with Christy to debrief—one hour with Christy then 30 minutes without her. It sounds like we have more than one day's worth of items to discuss in Anchorage. Should we extend the meeting?

Agreed to meet a half day on Saturday also. Diwakar offered dinner at his house on Friday night!