



CRP Annual Retreat  
September 10-11, 2021  
Anchorage, Alaska

## MEETING NOTES

**September 10, 2021 – 10AM to 5PM**

10:00 AM Introductions, review agenda and grounding activities

Present:

- Cameron Adams (CRP Chair)
- Lucinda Alexie (CRP Vice Chair)
- Retchenda George-Bettisworth (CRP)
- Sharon Sparks (CRP)
- Trevor Storrs (CRP)
- Denali Daniels (Coordinator)
- Logan Daniels-Engevold (Coordinator)

### **Introductions**

Cameron, Trevor, Sharon, Retchenda and Lucinda introduced themselves and each shared some of their background and what they hoped to accomplish through the retreat.

- Building relationships.
- Stronger commitment.
- Solidify direction.
- Clear role of CRP and utilize that role to enact change.
- Finding common vision.
- Teamwork with each other.
- Build tangible goals.
- CRP is autonomous to ensure kids are safe.
- Focus on the rest of Alaska not just Anchorage and Mat-Su.

### **Review of CRP's Long-Range Plan, Policies and Procedures and Operating Guidelines**

General Organization: Cameron provided a general overview of the long-range plan, the policies and procedures and the operating guidelines documents.

## **Officers**

**Action:** Removal of Secretary position from policies and procedures

It was discussed that the policies and procedures document added the secretary position, however this position was not necessary. Trevor moved to remove secretary from position from the policies and procedures and Retchenda seconded, there were no opposed.

**Action:** 2021-2022 Chair and Vice Chair

Trevor moved to elect Cameron chair, Retchenda seconded, there were no opposed. Cameron moved to make Lucinda vice chair, Trevor seconded, there were no opposed.

## **Membership and recruitment**

The membership matrix was reviewed to identify gaps.

**Action:** Two membership applications were reviewed and approved to move forward to the interview stage (Colin Underwood and Kathleen Yarr).

The panel discussed following up with Jennifer Luke referred last spring by Trevor, and to prioritize foster parents.

## **Open Meetings Act**

The coordinator shared how the current open meetings act has been occurring, noting that in consultation with the state ombudsman who would handle a complaint should one be made about the CRP, that at the very least the CRP should be noticing its meetings through the state public notice system. Once the panel is ready to accommodate public participation, the coordinator is prepared to begin this practice.

## **Site visit and Quarterly Meeting 2021-2022 Calendar**

The site visits discussion was held until the workplan discussion. The following meeting schedule was established:

October 28<sup>th</sup> from 11AM to 1PM – Quarterly Meeting

January 13<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 12PM – Quarterly Meeting

May 12<sup>th</sup> 9-5 and May 13<sup>th</sup> 9-1 – typically held in Anchorage

**Action:** Trevor moved, and Sharon seconded the approval of discussed edits to the policies and procedures document and the operating procedures document. Before document are finalized and posted, updated drafts will be sent to the panel via email for concurrence.

## **Public comment**

There were no public comments.

### **Legislative meetings**

There were no legislative meetings scheduled due to special session.

### **2021-2022 Workplan**

Through working lunch and into the afternoon, the CRP began developing the next year's workplan document.

### **4:00-5PM**

#### **OCS Briefing including update on PIP and any requests of CRP**

- Meeting started with introductions then straight into an update on the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
- The PIP was created in 2018 and is on a 2-year cycle with a 1-year evaluation upon completion.
- The state has requested an additional 6 months to continue implementation efforts in the PIP and a year extension for increasing recruitment and retention efforts.
- COVID-19 has had an impact on the PIP and created further stress on OCS, especially on recruitment and retention. Areas OCS is focusing to improve this are monetary incentives, community and cultural incentives, and other ideas to see what incentive has the most impact.
- OCS has developed new recruitment and retention strategies that are looking for long term to provide further monetary allotments to OCS staff. Such as increasing their pay grade or providing bonuses.
- OCS is working on bettering their mentorship program and 2 weeks on 2 weeks off schedule.
- OCS was hoping that budgetary requests would be approved by the legislature that were not, so they are working through alternatives to complete their objectives outlined in the PIP without the increased funding.
- OCS is currently working on proving improvement on the 12 goals outlined in the PIP or they will be fined. They have currently completed 4 of the 12.
- OCS is looking at refining and focusing on their core services which will have an increase in overall success in those 12 goals in the PIP.
- When it comes down to it OCS can't do the work if they don't have a work force.
- Their lack of staffing is not being taken seriously as this has been an ongoing issue and is seen nationally.
- OCS currently has the highest turnover rate that they have ever had.
- Even with these challenges OCS still has over 3,000 kids in custody.
- With school back in session they are seeing an increase in front like reporting.
- OCS is advising the CRP to focus on the workforce as an area to work on.
- OCS's current turn-over rate is between 52-58%.

- OCS has multiple vacancies in every office across the state, especially in front line positions.
- The impact of these vacancies can be seen most in the central services. OCS is currently not meeting acceptable central services rates.
- OCS is not seeing improvement as these issues have been around for 20 years and these conversations are still happening.
- COVID-19 is making housing and transport of children in custody much more challenging.
- COVID-19 is also taking away services as staff are being taken away to help deal with COVID-19 positive or exposed children.
- OCS has had to hire people that may not be the best fit for the job due to the lack of applicants and the fall out of that is having more of an effect recently.
- Both the job and the pay are problems that have to do with the high turnover rate.
- OCS is using a research paper to drive the work that OCS is currently doing around recruitment and retention.
- OCS has previously done \$1,000 bonuses which had no meaningful impact on recruitment.
- House Bill 151 was an attempt to increase the effectiveness of the OCS systems. This included things like capping caseloads so that people were not overwhelmed or overworked.
- OCS was given new positions to make this happen although they have never been able to fill them.
- If all roughly 200 front line positions were filled, they would be able to enact the 13-caseload cap outlined in HB 151.
- On June 30, 2021, 233 positions were available and 54 were vacant. And of the ones filled, half of them were there less than a year.
- This information is being given to decision makers through the director, to the commissioner, then to the governor with rules in place about what that looks like. A report is submitted to the legislature annually on how well OCS has been able to accomplish the goals outlined in HB 151 and if they can't meet those goals why they can't.
- OCS wants to know the perspective of their front-line staff and to become a voice for that work force to convey to the powers that be the current system is not working.
- OCS needs policy that can get their average worker to not be underpaid, overworked, undertrained, and with little experience.
- The competition between government and private sector jobs leads workers to leave the government jobs and move to private sector for higher pay and less stress.
- OCS workers are often first responders for certain calls, but they are not given the same benefits as other first responders.
- There is a lot of data from OCS right now and they are getting better at exit surveys as well as conducting focus groups with longer term employees, but they could still use data that originates from outside the organization.

- Possibility of pooling funds with ACT and possibly banks looking for tax credits to conduct a research project around OCS recruitment and retention.

**September 11, 2021 – 9AM to 1PM**

Present:

- Cameron Adams (CRP Chair)
- Lucinda Alexie (CRP Vice Chair)
- Retchenda George-Bettisworth (CRP)
- Sharon Sparks (CRP)
- Trevor Storrs (CRP via videoconference)
- Denali Daniels (Coordinator)

**9:00AM -12PM - Completion of 2021-2022 Workplan**

The panel continued its work from the previous day building out the workplan and adding notes for context. There was an overall shift in how site visits would be handled based on the input heard from OCS at the end of day one, specifically regarding the critical need to address workforce retention. Resources for site visits would be dedicated to working with OCS to conduct a literature review and input process from all OCS regions focusing on workforce retention. The 2021-2022 Workplan reflects an emphasis on this effort throughout the identified priorities.

**Adjourn – Chair**