

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Oversight Board

Board Meeting Record

Thursday, January 21, 2021 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., virtual meeting

Member Attendance: Annie Blackledge, Annie Lee, Ben de Haan, Bobbe Bridge, Charles Loeffler, Diane Liebe, Jeannie Darneille, John Braun, Katie Biron, Lois Martin, Loni Greninger, Ruth Kagi, Shrounda Selivanoff, Tana Senn, Tom Dent

Staff in Attendance: Crista Johnson (*Executive Director*), Nickolaus Colgan (*Administrative Coordinator*)

Public in Attendance: Alishia Agee-Cooper, *Department of Children, Youth, and Families*; Erica Hallock, *representing the Family Impact Network and Start Early Washington*; Jim Theofelis, *A Way Home Washington*; Jill May, *WA Association for Children and Families*; Laurie Lippold, *Partners for Our Children*; Stacia Hollar, *Attorney General's Office*; Sarah Clark, *early learning consultant at Soar and lead for KCELC*

Only public attendees who chose to identify themselves in the chat box during the meeting, or who made public comment, are recorded in the official meeting minutes.

Welcome, Roll Call & Opening Remarks

The meeting was called into order at 5:00 p.m. Crista Johnson introduced ground rules for engaging on the Zoom. Roll call of DCYF Oversight Board members was taken.

Diane Liebe made a motion to approve the November 5, 2020 meeting minutes. Katie Biron seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

DCYF Oversight Board Proposed 2021 Framework

The proposed framework was presented to the Board. Please find the PowerPoint [here](#) containing the information presented to the Board.

The new framework changes the Oversight Board's meeting schedule. The full Board will meet monthly, while newly created subcommittees will meet quarterly. The three subcommittees are created in alignment with the stated outcome focus areas identified in RCW 43.216.0159(3)(c). Subcommittees will review the agency's performance in identified priority areas and will present their findings and recommendations to the full board meetings for final decisions at quarterly meetings.

The approval of the framework for the 2021 was put up for a vote. Bobbe Bridge moved to approve and Ruth Kagi seconded. All present gave "yeas" in approval.

Public Comment

Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children: Laurie congratulated the new co-chairs on their rolls. She also stated she liked the new framework and thought it sounded like a good plan. Laurie asked if some of the other statutory requirements, i.e. looking to see if statutes and/or policies are being implemented properly, would be covered by the full board, or the subcommittees.

Jim Theofelis, A Way Home Washington: Jim thanked Rep. Tana Senn and Ruth Kagi for their time as co-chairs and welcomed the newly elected Rep. Tom Dent and Shrounda Selivanoff co-chairs. He stated he

hopes his comments toward DCYF are viewed as him being a cheerleader for them. Jim also emphasized the importance of the DCYF Oversight Board holding the agency accountable and should be an enforcing agent to get DCYF to track what they are intended to track as identified in the original legislation. Jim also expressed appreciation for a subcommittee being created to focus on adolescent issues.

Jill May, WA Association for Children and Families: Jill appreciated the conversation around the subcommittee work and reiterated that it could be helpful having smaller groups for any stakeholders who may be fearful to speak in the full board setting. She also said in response to Patrick Dowd's presentation that DCYF has been partnering with her and it has been appreciated.

Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO) 2020 Annual Report Briefing | Patrick Dowd, Director, Office of Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO)

Patrick Dowd provided an overview presentation of the [OFCO 2020 Annual Report](#). Findings from 2020 illustrated the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the child welfare system. In 2020, there was an observable decline in CPS intakes due to schools being closed and regular medical appointments not occurring, the extra work involved in conducting face-to-face CPS Investigations and providing CFWS case services in order to ensure everyone's health was protected, the disruption and challenges to providing remote parent-child visitations, the lack of availability of family reunification services, the daunting challenges faced by young adults aging out of Extended Foster Care, and the pause in court operations that impacted the dependency system. In addition to all of these concerning impacts, OFCO reported on the increasing rate and number of emergent placements for foster children in hotel and office stays during the pandemic.

To address these trends, OFCO presented the following recommendations:

- Expand financial, concrete goods and housing supports for families
- Provide adequate behavioral health and substance abuse treatment
- Provide adequate support for caregivers
- Create a sufficient array of placement resources for children
- Normalize hotel stays to provide a more stabilizing and supportive environment for youth

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2021 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Zoom.

Adjourned at 7:20 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, 2021