

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

Board Meeting Record

Thursday, January 20, 2022 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., virtual meeting

Member Attendance: Annie Blackledge, Justice Bobbe Bridge, Ben de Haan, Charles Loeffler, Diane Liebe, Judy Warnick, Katie Biron, Lois Martin, Loni Greninger, Ruth Kagi, Co-Chair Shrounda Selivanoff, Sydney Forrester, Co-Chair Tom Dent

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

Public in Attendance: Kristin Lamson, *Office of the Attorney General*, Nathan LaChine, *CaRES Training Mentor & Community Youth Services*, Mike Canfield, *Foster Parents Association of WA*, Laurie Lippold, *Partners for Our Children*, Breanna Oduwole, *community member*, Mark Pohto, *foster parent*, Jim Theofelis, *NorthStar Advocates*

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 5:30 p.m. Co-Chair Representative Dent started the meeting and roll call of DCYF Oversight Board members was taken. The September 2, 2021 meeting minutes were approved.

OFCO 2021 Annual Report Briefing | Patrick Dowd, Director, Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds

Patrick Dowd provided an overview of the 2021 Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds report. He focused on OFCO's investigation of placement exceptions and trends in complaints profiles, issues and adverse findings as well as touching on OFCO's complaint investigation process.

Public Comment | Co-Chair Shrounda Selivanoff

Nathan LaChine, *CaRES Training Mentor & Community Youth Services*, Nathan expressed concern over DCYF being able to follow their own policy around disclosure of youths SOGIE (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression) status. He continued, this information is being shared by DCYF staff in areas with foster parents present when this information is supposed to be protected, most notably on public Facebook groups.

Laurie Lippold, *Partners for Our Children*, Laurie stated the Legislature has passed some great bills and policy and wants to know how the Board was following DCYF's implementation of legislation. She continued, following implementation is important because we need to see how these investments are working for the youth and their families.

Mike Canfield, *Foster Parents Association of WA*, Mike expressed concern that once OFCO has finished their report they are not able to pursue anything further with that case. Mike continued, he had hoped that the Oversight Board would be able to perform deeper case investigations. There should be a consequence if DCYF or any agency does not follow the law.

Breanna Oduwole, *community member*, Breanna expressed concern of DCYF leaking confidential information. She continued that she had personal information leaked to the foster parents caring for her children in care

and there was nothing to stop them from continuing to do so. These types of issues are continuing and there needs to be something in place protect families and hold DCYF staff accountable.

Mark Pohto, *foster parent*, Mark encouraged DCYF to evaluate certain rules during in-person visits while COVID is still active. He continued that no matter what level of danger identified by the CDC, children, who are too young to be vaccinated, are still required to travel for in-family visits which can endanger their health.

Jim Theofelis, *NorthStar Advocates*, Jim wanted to start his comment period with a moment of silence to reflect on situations when youth are being driven to an unknown placement setting by a person unfamiliar to the youth (the DCYF caseworker). He emphasized how scary and uncomfortable that may be for the youth. Jim suggested that more resources be given to local foster parents to allow for them to take on these last-minute placements so the youth don't have to travel far away from their home community.

DCYF Updates on Implementation of Exceptional Placement Plan since November 2021 | Jenny Heddin, DCYF Director of the Finance and Performance Evaluation Division, and Allison Krutsinger, DCYF Director of Government Affairs and Community Engagement

DCYF staff presented an update focusing specifically on: the implementation of each portion of the exceptional placement plan so far, data on hotel and office stays since the plan was implemented and responding to OFCO's investigation findings in their 2021 report with the agencies plan for addressing the issues.

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for March 17, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm on Zoom.

Adjourned at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 20, 2022