



CARTF

Virtual

September 10, 2021

## MINUTES

**Joshua Wickard**- Public Defender (Chairman)  
**Michelle Weir**- DHW, Family & Children Services  
**OPEN**-Children with Disabilities Representative  
**Sheila Sturgeon Freitas, PhD**- Mental Health  
**OPEN**- Law Enforcement Representative  
**Melissa Osen**- Foster Youth  
**James Curb** – Homeless Education Liaison  
**Jill Robertson**- Parent  
**Molly Vaughn**- Victim Services Coordinator

**Jennifer Tachell**- Educator (Vice-Chairman)  
**Susan Bradford, MD** – Pediatrician  
**Jennifer Bergin**- Child Advocate Attorney  
**Hon. Steve Clark**- Civil Magistrate Judge  
**Madison Miles**- Prosecuting Attorney  
**Tahna Barton** – CASA  
**Hon. Mark Rammell**- Criminal Magistrate Judge  
**Nadine McDonald** – Juvenile Justice  
**OPEN**- Administrator of the Courts Representative

Mindy Peper – Task Force Support

### ABSENT

Guests: Amanda Bartlett and Rakesh Mohan, OPE

## Welcome

Wickard welcomes everyone.

CARTF reviews the June 2021 minutes. Barton makes a motion to approve the minutes with minor noted changes (spelling mistake on page one), Freitas seconds, all in favor and so moved.

## Subcommittee Updates

CFRT- Barton reports that they canceled yesterday's meeting due to rising COVID numbers. The meeting will be held in a couple weeks, hopefully, which should keep the report on track. Kris Spain and Kara Stevens have resigned from CFRT. Weir mentions that it may be worth exploring to see how other states are handling virtual case reviews. Weir mentions that may need to put some COVID expectations in place, have the committee vote on what those expectations might be.

Conference- have been meeting, date tentatively set for October 11, 2022, at Riverside Hotel. Looking at breakout sessions. Weir would like to join the conference subcommittee. Peper will send the monthly invites to her. Barton would like to see if there is a way to include CASA programs in the breakouts as part of the conference. Have subcommittee discuss this possibility of having CASA tag on to the Keeping Children Safe Conference. Or are there other ways we can approach this. Perhaps Barton can join us at our next subcommittee meeting to share some of her ideas. Peper will send Barton meeting invitation for September. Freitas shares that one thing that continues to come up is how to help kids maintain the relationships that they have developed in their life. Weir mentions one thing we might look at is speakers and breakouts from a couple conferences she has recently attended. Wickard mentioned

that he liked the app that was last used at a conference and perhaps we need to find one or develop one that we can also use.

Publications- no new updates

Grants- Peper updates that grant guidance has been created, a fillable .pdf has been put together for the application, and cycle 2 opened August 1. No applications have been submitted to CARTF yet.

### **Budget Update**

Budget doing very well. The grant we are using is from 2018 (we have 3 years to spend each cycle). The 2018 money needs to be spent by September 30, 2022. We have about \$110,000 left in this cycle. This is a good year to do some other projects, such as publication updates or creation. If we don't spend it, the money goes back. Nationally, there is a lot more funding that has not been use due to COVID. Clark asks if then we are able to expand grant funding or is it already allocated elsewhere? Weir states that yes, our budget is set but to a limit it can be revised. But we could allocate more money to grants just have to stay within those limits of each individual recipients. Might be beneficial to have a small group to come together to do some budget revisions and make sure monies are being maximized. Wickard, Weir, and Tachell will get together to look at the budget.

### **Conference Sponsorship/ Levels**

Peper gives some background on this action item. It is carried over from June. Some conferences to consider include ISPA, Idaho Sheriff's Association, SFTI, IPAA, etc. Weir mentions that perhaps for now we just take these month-to-month as the opportunity presents itself. We will have the conference subcommittee take a look at the sponsorship levels. Clark asks what are the benefits in sponsoring these conferences? Barton asks how this idea fits in the 3-year strategy? Task force discusses. Peper shares her opinion on some of the value of going to conferences to share our mission and grant program, to meet people and tell them about CARTF. We have money to give but if people don't know about the grant program, we can't give it out. Peper would like to share the grant information as well as have a subscriber sign up list. Barton motions that CARTF support the Idaho Sheriff's Association annual conference business membership of \$250. Clark seconds, all in favor (Bergin Yes, Clark yes, Barton Yes, Weir Yes, Vaughn Yes, Freitas Yes, Bradford Yes, Robertson Yes, Miles Yes, Wickard Yes), and so moved.

### **Bylaws**

Wickard introduces discussion on the bylaws and that some changes need to be made to update them as a reflection of how we do things. Bradford mentions the bylaws need to be updated to reflect that we can do meetings virtually. Members read through the bylaws. Peper mentions that we need to update the representative list. Wickard wants to form a subcommittee to do the work and then they will need to be approved by the Governor's office.

Other changes needed include:

- Page 3 and 4- terms of office but not term limits or multiple terms- implied with term(s)?
- 1.0 Administrative Procedures- demographics? Membership list and numbers? Update Executive order and bylaws to accurately reflect one another.
- Proxy member/ delegates? Language that it is not allowed to have a proxy vote.
- Weir mentions this is an open meeting- anyone can attend. If we need more voting members because we find a need, the language is in the bylaws to address adding members.
- 1.1.3 How do we fulfill this? Letter from the chair to the governor? Input from the task force to make the appointment and then chair sends a letter of recommendation to the Governor.
- 1.1.4 chair and vice chair positions- term length, secret ballots, etc... vice-chair should be selected by the chair. Two years seems to be a short term- takes longer to learn the role, however, would be good to have a rotation. Perhaps a 4-year rotation would be better. Do we need a secret ballot provision?
- 1.2 says we will meet monthly, doesn't say how, so not preventing us from meeting in person, virtually, etc. Need to update the months we won't meet to include June.
- 1.2.3 Add a line that speaks to the agenda being posted on the website each month.
- 1.1.5 Do we need a process for moving someone off a task force that just doesn't have the time to participate and then be able to replace that person. Maybe need a limit on unexcused absences.

Wickard asks who would like to be on the bylaws subcommittee? Jennifer Bergin, Madison Miles, and Michelle Weir volunteer. Peper will facilitate the subcommittee meetings. Wickard will forward the bylaws he has from Texas and South Carolina to the subcommittee.

#### Executive Order Update

No new update as of today. Hopefully hear back today. May be better to update the roles now if they haven't made any changes.

#### Vacancies

Regarding the role of representing children with disabilities. Peper can continue to pursue Ruth York. Freitas asks what about a parent of a child with disabilities. Bradford asks about perhaps recruiting a physician with background in this area. Idaho Parents, Unlimited could be a good group to reach out to regarding this role. Also another group to reach out to would be Idaho Federation of Families, the group as a whole (this is the same group Ruth is with). Peper will send emails to these groups about CARTF, mission, and open role available and ask that if anyone is interested that individual to submit a letter of interest to the chair and a resume to Peper.

## October and November Planning

October- Weir will look into inviting Citizen Review Panel; continue work on bylaws; October 2022 conference update; Wickard will invite a former parent involved with foster system and reunification; vacant positions- Law Enforcement- Det. Carper; Monty Prow with IDJC

November- start strategy review, review and decide on Cycle 2 grant applications; winter planning; Weir will invite foster youth panel

January (virtual)- update from Robertson and Curb about McKinnley-Vento conference; Roger Sherman and Children's Trust fund; strategy 2

February (virtual)- McDonald update on probation services and protocol on children who disclose when in custody, victim compensation discussion; strategy 3

## Guests OPE

Wickard welcomes Amanda Bartlett and Rakesh Mohan. In 2016 OPE asked to do a study and a report on child protection and welfare system in Idaho. It was a large project. Then asked to do another study in 2017 and two more in 2018. A bill was then introduced to make some major changes to child protection and welfare system in Idaho as a result of the studies. The most recent report is on child neglect and on how data and reports are being treated in the system, which will be released this month. There has been an increase in funding and support from the legislature, partly due to the reports from OPE.

Bartlett talks about the Evaluation and Retention of Child Neglect Referrals.

The OPE wanted to look at the balance between safety and family rights as well as how the data management system works and how the data is retained. Bartlett covers the two data management systems, the Child Welfare Data Management System and the Child Protection Central Registry system. Bartlett also talks about the definition of neglect in statute, finding that Idaho has a more limited definition giving social workers less discretion in the field. May need to make clearer about abuse and neglect and "unstable home environment."

Two policy considerations came out of this report: 1. Clarify and strengthen Idaho's laws for child protection records by establishing criteria and timelines for when records must be deleted from the department's child welfare data management system. 2. Clarify Idaho's statutory definitions for child maltreatment by removing or further defining the term "failure to provide a stable home environment".

Wickard says as a parent's defense attorney, he feels the unstable home environment is a useful tool. Sometimes if clients are not open to admitting abuse or neglect, they may agree to an unstable home environment to allow the court to have jurisdiction so there can be a case plan put in place, allowing for the case to move forward and eventual reunification. Bartlett mentions that is a good point and worth bringing up. She asks is this something parents are admitting to or is it being used to bring families under the child protection umbrella. Wickard states that often there are other underlying things going on—could be homelessness, perhaps it's not the parents but rather it is an out-of-

control teenager, etc. Bergin adds that it is broad but useful because sometimes you can't define every situation that makes the home unstable- dirty home, drug use, etc—it is a useful tool as stated for the same reasons Wickard mentions.

Wickard also speaks to some of the pitfalls of the Child Welfare Data Management System. Madison mentions regarding the retention of referrals. It's such a double-edged sword of keeping information forever vs not making decisions in a vacuum without any information. Bartlett says one state has a rule that states must be 2 years past the time the youngest child turns 18 before the data is deleted. To give some context, Mohan said that one of the complaints from parents was that there are these reports created and they are not informed, and whether true or not, there is perception of mistrust that is created between the people and the government.

Barton brings up the point to improve the quality of representation of the child, she feels this has gone backwards since 2016. Bartlett will follow up with Barton to get further feedback and clarification on what she sees happening in this area. Mohan mentions that the reports are open and they are looking for follow-up and feedback as to whether their recommendations are helping. He welcomes CARTF reaching out to them to share feedback and information.

Wickard thanks the office of OPE and the work they are doing for the state.

### **ISPA Door Prize**

Barton will collect some CASA and Foster Youth swag and school supplies along with basket and cellophane, Peper will collect CARTF swag, and Weir will get in touch with Dr. Cox for some soaps. CARTF will donate a scholarship for travel and lodging for one person to the October 2022 Keeping Children Safe Conference (fully transferable). The basket will be at our table and they have to fill out name, email, occupation, organization.

### **New Business**

No new business.

### **Adjourn**

**Next meeting will be October 1, 2021.**