Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Meeting

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Attendance: Emily Genoff, Chair, Jana Conine, Vice Chair/Treasurer, JoLee Schuler, Sherilyn England, Secretary. Panel members: Carol Nicolarsen, Lynn Huylar, CJA Liaison; Laura Dobler, Department of Family Services; Ilaine Brown, Department of Education; Dawn Sides, Department of Corrections; Carissa O’Malley, Stacy Strasser, Chandra Ortiz; CASA Natrona County Liaison, Phyllis Sherard and Sara Serelson; Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund, new Panel Member.

Employees: Bryan Cook, Director, Billie Underhill, Bookkeeper

Meeting called to order at 11:30am.

1. **Introductions:** The meeting was called to order and introductions made.
2. **Agenda Review:** The agenda was reviewed, and Bryan requested that we move number 4 up and address it first since Sara has a meeting she must attend. Laura will go after Sara because Laura has another meeting to attend also.
3. **Introduction of Sara Serelson:** Sara Serelson is the Executive Director of the Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund. She was a case worker and supervisor for DFS. Sara believes there will be opportunities for WYCRP & WYCTF to collaborate and partner on future projects. Sara has been invited and would like to be a Panel Board Member and on the CJA Task Force.

**Nomination & Vote:** Phyllis Sherard made a motion to accept Sara Serelson as a Liaison on the WYCRP and the CJA Task Force. Stacy Strasser seconded the motion. There was a discussion about if Sara wanted to be a Panel Member or a Liaison. Liaisons cannot vote and since there may be opportunities to partner on future projects, Sara & the Panel decided she should be a Liaison. A vote was taken, and it passed unanimously. Sara stated that she is only 15 days into her new role, and she has a lot to learn. The WYCTF focuses on primary and secondary prevention in hopes that it does not lead to incidents of abuse/neglect. Sara works with the Child Protection Team on various projects, implements the Safe Sleep Project messaging, helping parents and the community be aware and make our state and communities stronger. Sara appreciates the welcome and is looking forward to working with WYCRP.

1. **WYCRP Program and Contract Updates:**

**DFS-Laura Dobler/Bryan:** Workers are not traveling because of COVID-19. Trainings and meetings are being done on an on-line platform and will continue through 2020. Next year (2021) will have to be assessed to determine if health and safety standards will be relaxed. DFS is seeing the impacts of the budget cuts with minor losses of positions to date. Impacts for the phase III budget cuts remains to be seen. The budget cuts have not impacted WYCRP. The 2021 contract is progressing and is now with Director Schmidt waiting for her to review and sign it. The current contract ends September 30, 2020. The CQI process has continued virtually and has decreased WYCRP’s involvement. Bryan is talking with DFS about how WYCRP will continue to be involved in this process. Emily expressed her gratitude that WYCRP and DFS have such a great working relationship. Emily acknowledged that this has been a trying time due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1. **June 2020 Meeting Minutes:** Jo Lee Schuler made a motion to approve the June 25, 2020 Minutes. Lynn Huylar seconded the motion and vote was taken. There was no discussion and the motion unanimously carried.
2. **Director’s Report-Bryan:** 
   1. The Foster Care Committee has met once in August and plans to meet again in September.
   2. Bryan has reached out to Stacy and Sheri and others to set a date to meet for the Independent Living Committee. The hope is that the Committee will meet by the end of September or the beginning of October.
   3. WYCRP received a formal response from DFS to the WYCRP Annual Report. WYCRP agrees with the statements and response. WYCRP will be reviewing our methodology to engage parents and youth.
   4. WYCRP Annual Report-On Friday, Bryan will provide copies of the report to the Governor’s Office, DOH, DOE, etc. as is customary.
   5. Bryan is working with DFS on updating the contract between DFW and WYCRP. Bryan is excited about the new directions this could take us. WYCRP will still have a hand in collecting information and feedback.
   6. Bryan continues to participate monthly in the Community Family Support Forum.
   7. Bryan is working with the Youth Involvement Work Group with DFS. The group is making sure youth voice is heard and youth have input in their case plans and other areas. Bryan has been communicating with Dan Wilde with GAL, Karissa O’Malley IL Coordinator, and others to gather information on what youth need, giving guidance and exploring roles.
3. **WYCRP Program and Contract Updates:**
   1. Addressed in 4) (a)
   2. PAT’s “Agreed Upon Procedures” engagement we were required to complete through our contract with PAT was completed by RLR CPAs and submitted by the deadline. The one finding was that WYCRP overbilled PAT for employee fringe benefits. WYCRP has already paid PAT back and has corrected the process to prevent the error again. Billie Underhill has helped with this process and has helped improve/repaired WYCRP’s relationship with PAT. Billie has written the Policies and Procedures for WYCRP Financial Policies. Lynn Huylar thanked Bryan and Billie for working really hard on the Policies. Bryan appreciates Billie’s persistence in completing the Financial Polices.
      1. WYCRP is still waiting for the formal Blue-Ribbon announcement. Bryan stated that WYCRP PAT has the best data and numbers of an Affiliate in the country. Bryan feels confident that WYCRP will receive the award especially since staff engagement is high and all outcomes continue to be met. The Staff do an excellent job and are the best in the country. JoLee Schuler wanted to know if PAT has any recommendations for meeting families in person when the weather turns colder. Bryan said he has been in conversations with Angela Ward, the program person for PAT, about JoLee’s question. He has been advised to proceed as they have, and PAT will be in touch to advise WYCRP further.
      2. PAT has advised by the Federal Government that in 20-21 their budget will see a 10% budget cut. Bryan and staff were able to make purchases to carry over for 20-21 grant year so those program materials and up grades in technology won’t have to be made in the 20-21 grant year. Bryan believes if we need additional financial support, we can make a request to PAT.
      3. The Community of Practice Training/Staff Training Retreat was held this month in Saratoga. Bryan attending the meeting virtually due to a family medical situation.
      4. The Annual PAT Conference will be held virtually in October 2020.
      5. PAT’s discussions to have an active role in the “Family Resource Campus”, being contemplated in Laramie County by Family process, has been put on hold due to a turnover in Leadership within Family Process.
      6. Even though we experienced the loss of one staff, we were able to hire another staff who started in August. Numbers have been consistent and never drop below 113. Heather, the staff who started in August, has a connection with the Air Force Base and has a lot of interested families. Emily appreciated the staff’s hard wok on staying connected with their families especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
   3. Kinship Navigator/Wyoming 2-1-1 updates: The Kinship Navigator Program continues to serve Natrona and Laramie Counties. Gabby Rodgers, the Kinship Navigator in Cheyenne has been filling in and keeping up while another staff is on leave.
      1. Bryan has been working with Wyoming 2-1-1 on our new contract for budget year 2020-2021.
      2. WYCRP is partnering with Public Knowledge and 2-1-1 to assist with the Year One Evaluation. Wyoming 2-1-1 is contracting directly with Public Knowledge.
      3. The Kinship team continues to participate in the National Evidence Building Academy through the Urban Institute.
4. **Financial Report:** P & L was sent out to all Panel Members by email. Billie Underhill started her position as Bookkeeper for WYCRP the end of April 2020. She is doing a great job. Billie and Bryan are checking into processes and making sure we are doing what needs to be done. There were no Financial Policies & Procedures so, Billie created them. The changes that Billie has suggested, and the Financial Policies will assure that WYCRP follows Standard Accounting Procedures. Emily expressed her thanks to Billie for all her hard work in this area. RLR needs documentation for personnel files which includes job descriptions, evaluations and anything related to an employee pay rate and changes made to their wages. This task needs to be assigned to someone and a deadline indicated. Jana Conine agreed to help Bryan in this task. After the meeting they will select a deadline.
5. **Review and Ratification of new WYCRP Financial Policies**: JoLee made a motion to adopt the Financial Polices as presented. Stacy Strasser seconded the motion. No discussion and the motion was unanimously approved.
6. **Review and Ratification of Personnel Policy re-write:** The personnel policies have not been updated since December 2016. The policies were cleaned-up and streamlined. Bryan will have all the employees sign off that they have read the policies and acknowledge that they have received them. This will be one of the steps when a new employee “on-boards”. Another statement will be signed by employees that they have received keys, equipment, technology, cell phone, credit card, etc. When they leave employment, they will sign a statement indicating that they have returned those items. Jana suggested to Bryan that employees sign a statement saying that they are “At Will” employees. This was advise given to Jana’s organization. Make sure the “At Will” is in bold letters. Chandra Ortiz made a motion to adopt a motion to accept the revisions to WYCRP Personnel Policies. Lynn Huylar seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion unanimously passed.
7. **Discussion and votes regarding Health Insurance and Aflac Plans-**Information provided by email: WYCRP offers health insurance to employees. Historically the BCBS Premium Only Plan has been operated as though it was a pre-tax premium only plan. There is no documentation that this plan was ever set up, but the deductions were still taken. We are not in compliance and will need to adopt the plan and fill out the documentation. If we adopt the plan now, we will be in compliance for 2020 but will have to review several years back and make corrections by correcting the payroll, W2’s & notifying employees that they will have to correct their taxes . This would affect 1 to 2 employees. Phyllis had reviewed the POP sent out by BCBS and her question related to flex spending. Do we have to provide employees with flex spending and the answer is no. Lynn Huylar had a question on would WYCRP be subject to a penalty and interest from the IRS. Bryan, Billie and RLR are working on this question. Stacy made a motion to adopt and implement the Premium Only Plan offered by BCBS. Phyllis seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed. Stacy had a question – Are employees looking at fees and does WYCRP need to cover the fees? After discussion it was decided that WYCRP would pay any costs associated with the costs of not having the POP set up properly. Billie thinks that in 2019 it would be one employee and the cost would be around $200.00. Stacy made a motion to cover expenses caused by the absence of the POP plan. Phyllis seconded the motion and the motion carried.
8. **Sabrina Lane, Executive Director of Wyoming 2-1-1:** Wyoming 2-1-1 was designated as the Statewide Call Center for the State of Wyoming. They have implemented a webpage for COVID-19 information and have seen a dramatic rise in phone calls requesting information since March 16th, 2020. Calls centered around health-related issues & assistance for utilities and rent. Wyoming 2-1-1 has been busy making sure their data is correct and records up to date. The COVID-19 Pandemic has increased collaboration and networking. Wyoming 2-1-1 has helped over 20 aging adults since July. The next project involves a childhood survey to determine that well-being of children in Wyoming. Wyoming 2-1-1 has not experienced budget cuts. Wyoming 2-1-1 is making their website more user friendly. It’s still the access point to enroll in Health care. Wyoming 2-1-1 is listing all mental health services not just non-profit. Emily expressed her gratitude.
9. **Gabby Rodgers with Kinship Navigator:**  Kinship Navigation is going well, and they continue to have new clients inquire about services. Gabby has a plan to provide outreach in communities and counties. Public Knowledge is providing and evaluation of the Kinship Navigation and should have a report by the end of September. The ultimate goal is to have this program listed in the California Clearinghouse. Phyllis complimented Gabby on a job well done.
10. **Adding Aflac to WYCRP Benefits:** Bryan would like to offer supplemental health insurance through Aflac. WYCRP doesn’t contribute to this plan. JoLee made a motion to add Aflac to WYCRP benefit plan. Carol Nicolarsen seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.
11. **Committee Reports:**
    1. **Foster Care:** The committee is working with DFSto improve Foster Careand has met once in August**.** The committee has discussed ways to engage foster parents through various social media and increased training opportunities. Bryan has been researching starting up the Foster Parent Association by having conversations with the National Foster Parent Organization. If a Foster Parent Association were to be created, it would need to a 501c (3). There was discussion about conducting a survey to determine the need.
    2. **Independent Living:** This group has not scheduled a date to meet yet. In hopes to have a meeting by the end of September of the beginning of October.
    3. **Fundraising:** The Committee has met a couple of times and has accomplished quit a bit. They worked on identifying tiers (goals) of fundraising. Tier 1 is about name recognition and generating Facebook followers. This fundraising effort might include a contest on Facebook that would end October 31, 2020. Tier 2 is Bryan signed WYCRP up for the Wyoming Non-profit Network and use the Grant Station to identify grants that WYCRP may apply for. The goal is to look at 3 new grants. Tier 3 would be the most labor intensive. Ideas include a raffle, on-line auctions, Thankful Thursdays, or some other event. The goal is to have unrestricted funds to assist when cash is needed when payments do not arrive on time or items that need to be purchased that the grants do not pay for. Emily expressed her gratitude for members giving of their time.
12. **CJA – Lynn:** CJA will be meeting tomorrow. CJA is looking at various ways to collect more data and identify trends. There are certain individuals that are identified to be on CJA, but they are difficult to recruit. CJA is looking for Judges and Attorneys.
13. **Next Quarterly Meeting date is December 2nd from 1pm-5pm. CJA will meet December 3rd.**
14. Emily thanked everyone for participating.
15. Meeting was Adjourned at 2:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Sheri England, WYCRP Secretary