**Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Meeting**

**Wednesday March 24, 2021**

In Attendance: Emily Genoff, Sara Serelson, Laura Dobler, Ilaine Brown, Chandra Ortiz, Jana Conine, John Wright, Carissa O’Malley, Lynn Huyler

Absent: Stacy Strasser, Phyllis Sherard, Sheri England, JoLee Schuler, Dawn Sides, Carol Nicolarsen

Staff: Bryan Cook, Billie Underhill

The meeting was called to order by Emily at 1:05pm.

1. **Introductions:** Panel members and staff in attendance were introduced for the meeting.
2. **Agenda Review:** The agenda was reviewed by the panel with no significant changes. Lynn will need to leave the meeting early so her information will be moved up in the agenda.
3. **December 2, 2021 meeting minutes:** Lynn Huyler made a motion to accept the December meeting minutes and Chandra Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.
4. **Financial Report:** Billie Underhill presented the financials for the previous quarter. She stated that there is currently $50,000 in the savings account which she feels is a comfortable amount to assure continued business operation. She stated that in past years there had only been approximately $10,000 in the account and she would like to maintain $30,000 to $50,000 for operating expenses. Bryan Cook stated that he feels that the organization is in a much more stable situation than in the past and that accounting and business operations have been improved significantly. They are currently working on completing a personnel file review to assure that those documents are in order.
5. **Director’s report:** Bryan reviewed his most recent Directors report and shared the following information. There were 179+ responses received from the recent foster parent survey. This survey was completed for the purpose of hearing the voices of foster parents and obtaining their perspective on foster care. Additionally the information obtained will be used to inform the content for the Foster Parent support Group on Facebook. He has been working closely with the Children’s Trust Fund in their efforts to conduct Foster parent Cafes and the response has been very good. They have completed most virtually but some recently have been in person. Bryan has also begun to attend child protection team meetings in an effort to improve communication and collaboration between DFS and CRP and feels this is resulting in greater communication and understanding. He has also been working with YES House and statewide Independent Living Coordinators on developing a model for youth engagement that will be incorporated into the youth summit which is targeted for 2022. Sara Serelson suggested approaching Workforce Services to ask for assistance and perhaps financial assistance for the summit.
6. **WYCRP Program Reports**

**Kinship Connections**-Gabby Rogers, Jenna Monahan and Kimberly Berrettini joined the meeting to present their work with Kinship Connections. Kimberly was introduced as the newest staff joining the program, she will be working out of Sheridan Wyoming. Jenna shared year end data which included that the program had served 40 families and 65 children in kinship care during 2020. She also reported that they are excited to have begun a collaborative effort with the University of Wyoming to assist with evaluation of the program.

**PAT-** Bryan reported on the status of the program. Referrals and numbers are very good and indicative of a much needed and appreciated program. The panel discussed the recent information that the state of Wyoming may apply for the McVeigh funds which would likely have a significant effect on the PAT program. Emily has reached out to Jen Davis who will try and obtain additional information about the intentions of the state. Current McVeigh funds are secure for the PAY program until September 30, 2022. Sara Serelson informed the panel that there have been more funds allocated for McVeigh for the current funding period and feels that PAT should be eligible to receive additional funds. Bryan will monitor the situation and keep the panel informed.

**CJA-**Lynn reported that the CJA Taskforce met in January to complete strategic planning and are working on training around the state to improve knowledge around utilizing a Multidisciplinary team approach to investigations. The taskforce is working to find facilitators and communities willing and able to implement this type of investigative technique. The Taskforce is also working on the grant reapplication with DFS. Deadline for the application is March 15, 2021. Lynn further reported that the Taskforce is close to fulfilling all the membership needs on the taskforce and she feels very good about the individuals who are serving on the taskforce. The next meeting of the CJA Taskforce is April 14, 2021.

1. **Fundraising:** Lynn detailed the work that has been done on the upcoming 5K fundraiser to be held in Cheyenne May 22, 2021. Most of the costs of hosting the event have been covered by donations and the effort now is to promote the event to obtain more participants.

Bryan also reported that the CRP has submitted an application to the Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund to help provide home visitation programs. Sara Serelson reported that a decision on this funding should be made by the early part of April. CRP also submitted a grant request to the Wyoming Community Foundation which was funded for $5,000. Emily asked Bryan to prepare a budget for these funds that would be approved by the panel.

Emily asked if CRP had pursued any Cares Act funds. Bryan stated that this had not been done but he had recently been informed that additional funds may soon be available that nonprofits could apply to receive.

Bryan informed the Panel that TJMaxx had recently donated a large amount of PPE that was shared with Early Headstart and the Safehouse.

1. **WYCRP Personnel Policy Amendments and vote for approval –** this vote was postponed due to a lack of quorum at the time of this discussion. Following this decision there was a discussion as to whether or not there could be an email vote on these issues. Jana stated that the Goodwill attorney had informed that agency that before an email vote was legally binding the option of this type of vote needed to be included in the agency’s bylaws. Chandra Ortiz informed the panel that her husband who is an attorney suggested that if there was a 50% approval from the panel for this type of vote that it didn’t need to be included in the bylaws. Bryan will send an email to members requesting their approval of an email vote.
2. **Strategic Plan Discussion and updates:** The discussion of the strategic plan was postponed due to a lack of members on the call at the time of the discussion. The panel discussed the possibility of utilizing an outside consultant to update the strategic plan. Several options were discussed as well as a resource that might fund this work for the CRP. Emily will follow up with information concerning this initiative.
3. The vote to accept John Wright as a new CRP Panel member was postponed due to a lack of quorum.
4. **Agency Updates**

**DFS-** Laura Dobler reported that DFS is pleased with the work being done with Youth involvement and foster care parent engagement. These initiatives/collaborations are assisting DFS in areas that have been difficult to obtain information. DFS is currently working on federal reporting requirements and has been able to include information from the work of the CRP which has shown a lot of improvement. DFS is also working on requirements for Families First Initiatives.

**Children’s Trust Fund-**Sara Serelson- Sara shared that they have interacted with 130 parents through the parent Café’s. Most concerns involved lack of transportation, medical care, interpretive services, disability services access, services in rural areas, services for deaf parents, affordable housing and affordable childcare. Barriers identified included finances, transportation and awareness of available services. The parents also expressed interest in parent support programs, life skills classes for people of all ages, mentors for parents and suicide prevention services among others. Sara reported that the parents were paid with a $15 gift card to participate in the Café’s

**WDE Ilaine Brown-** Ilaine reported on the State’s progress on school procedures during Covid. She also informed the panel that the Department of Agriculture will extend the nutritious meals program through 9/21. She gave a brief summary of legislative action affecting education which highlighted the proposed cuts that are being considered. Finally Ilaine announced that there will be a new literacy program for 3-5 grade students and the program will be called WYBILT.

WDH- A discussion was conducted as to whether or not the panel should recruit a member from the Department of Health. It was the general consensus that this would be a good addition to the Panel.

1. **Communication**

Website/Social Media- Carissa reported to the Panel on the collaboration with Dr. Berry and others to provide on line training for foster parents. Emily and Bryan discussed the increase traffic that is being seen on the CRP Facebook site. Bryan will try and find out the amount of traffic that the CRP website is receiving.

1. June 2021 Panel/CJA Meeting date- The date of the next meeting is pending

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35pm.

Minutes taken by Jana Conine