

Family Services Review Commission Meeting

October 4, 2007

HSB-252

Members present: Maggie Bagon, Jessica Chanay, Diane Cohen-Alpert, Kim Freeman, Shirley Kaping, Rosemary Lazzari (VCON), Mavel Morales (VCON), Rob Potter and Michael Ware (by phone)

Members excused: Doreen Binder, Peggy Kennerly, Angela Sanchez

Members absent: Bonnie Davidson and Miranda Herrera

DHS staff present: Ramona Foley, Vic Todd, Dave Lyda, Xochitl Esparza and Nancy Sathrum

Administrative Handouts, sent via email prior to the meeting: Meeting Agenda, Draft Minutes of the August 2, 2007 FSRC Meeting, Draft Minutes from the September 6, 2007 FSRC Meeting, DHS Summary of Complaints Report for August 2007, 2006-07 Strategic Plan, Policies and Operating Procedures, Expense Reports/Per Diem, Self-Sufficiency at a Glance for August 2007, August 2007 Public Assistance Caseload

Additional Administrative Handouts at meeting:

Greeting and Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 8:37 a.m. with a quorum in attendance.

Chair Report:

- Action and follow-up items:
 - Discussed comment deadlines on time limit letters.
 - Further discussion on the 16 new MSW level Self Sufficiency Program (SSP) positions. Diane and Maggie said there is some contention in field offices around these positions because child welfare is very understaffed and no new positions are being added. Diane has heard that the positions are being handled differently than expected. Michael suggested that Ted come back to a future meeting to discuss these issues. Ramona said she believes the new positions will help initiate strength-based services to clients prior to their entry into the child welfare system.
 - Feedback on 2008 state plan: Kim believes the 2008 plan lines up with discussions at FSRC and the federal guidelines. Michael pointed out that there is no mention of mentoring services and thinks it should be added. Diane said the plan was well presented and very clear. The FSRC respects the fact that the plan was presented to the commission for comments.
- Approval of August 2nd and September 6th Minutes:
 - August 2nd: Requested changes made.
 - September 6th: Changes needed; page 6 first line, last word on line should be quality instead of qualify; page 6, under Legislative Subcommittee, correct FSRC; page 7 re:

voting in front of DHS, change “hem” to them. It was requested that “we” not be used in the minutes. Refer to DHS or FSRC.

- Maggie motioned and Jessica seconded the approval of the August 2nd and September 6, 2007 FSRC meeting minutes as amended. Vote of approval was unanimous.
- Commission Policies and Operating Procedures:
 - Expense Reports/Per Diem: Approve revision to add **“Upon their appointment to the FSRC, members will receive reasonable and customary travel expenses to attend the Board and Commission Member Training sponsored by the Department of Administrative Services.”** to the top of page 2 under General Considerations. Michael motioned and Maggie seconded the approval of this addition. Vote in favor was unanimous.
- Board/Commission Member Training, September 11, 2007 update: Not discussed.

CAF Report, Ramona Foley, Jim Neely, Vic Todd, Dave Lyda:
TANF General Update, Vic Todd and Dave Lyda

2008 TANF State Plan: The amended 2007 state plan was submitted prior to end of FFY2007. No response has been received. The 2008 plan will be submitted mid to late October. General comments received to date ensure plan lines up with new legislation. The FSRC had positive comments on the 2008 plan; it lines up with work done by work group, was well organized and easy to read. Diane said she appreciated the opportunity to represent the FSRC on the work group. Kim and Diane both commented that they weren’t attorneys so couldn’t review for legal sufficiency. Michael was surprised there wasn’t more information on mentoring and the role it plays in treatment and intervention services for children. **ACTION: Michael to send Vic and Dave comments on this subject.**

Ramona would like the plan to be more proactive around young people, teens, and moving clients to employment. Diane said she liked the teen pregnancy prevention piece although the content was out of date, about 10 years old, but didn’t know how to comment. Vic said it would be helpful to receive her comments. Dave clarified that DHS wants to explain what we’re doing but don’t want to get ourselves boxed into a corner. The plan document needs to include the framework to enable DHS to offer creative services.

2008 State Plan will begin on October 1, 2007. DHS will incorporate comments into plan, hold an internal DHS review, obtain signatures and submit by the end of October. The plans are currently accepted as received at the federal level, not approved. Federal role is to ensure plan is complete.

Diane reported that she attended an intense meeting in Multnomah County of approximately 78 people. The meeting was well run, attempted to work with frustrated agencies dealing with the new TANF requirements, and included a panel with DHS staff to

answer questions. It was a good process for DHS to get out discussing issues and providing opportunity for feedback. Partners are concerned about how the new requirements will affect the clients they work with and there is a great deal of misinformation circulating around the state. The Director's Office is working on a communication strategy to explain the new plan. Communication has been sent to clients but hasn't yet moved to general communication with the public. Kim is happy to hear that a communications piece will take place. Community partner meetings are also important and will be very helpful to get the word out.

TANF Rules Advisory Committee: An invitation to participate in a new TANF Rules Advisory Committee was sent to FSRC members on September 26th. Rosemary and Doreen responded that they were interested in participating and have been chosen to represent the FSRC on this committee. Jessica will be participating on behalf of the Hunger Relief Task Force. Dave will be contacting them to participate as this committee is formed and meetings are scheduled.

TANF policy changes related to October 1st temporary rules:

The TANF Rules Advisory Committee will meet a few times to look at the rules for Post-TANF, SSI, Time Limits, and the Sanction Policy, etc. and make recommendations before going out for formal comments. The committee's final product is needed by mid-November to file the rules with the Secretary of State's office. DHS hopes to move to this as an ongoing process; to have an ad-hoc group look at significant policy and related fiscal impacts before entering the formal comment process. How does FSRC fit into this process? DHS invited two FSRC members, and other community partners, to participate in the rules review.

Vic mentioned that this is a new process for DHS. There are approximately 60 rules affected by TANF reauthorization, but many are pretty straight forward. DHS hopes to have the committee formed and meetings scheduled by mid-October. Although details still need to be worked out, DHS has worked hard to get the new regulations in place and Vic is pleased with where we are. **ACTION: Dave will provide a timeline to be sent to the FSRC and will explore the use of video conferencing for the committee meetings.**

Grievance Report: Rosemary asked if there is an explanation why the report looks so light. Have field offices set up their own systems to handle complaints? Maggie said she hears that clients are afraid that it will be held against them if they complain. Maggie encourages clients to follow through with the formal complaint process. Ramona requested specific case information via email so it can be researched. She thought that the new programs being introduced have encouraged clients and staff that improvements are on the horizon. **ACTION: Ramona said that she'd ask Jim to follow-up on this issue.**

Information on the Food Stamp participation grant that DHS received is in your meeting packet. The Food Stamp bonus was announced last Thursday and DHS is asking for input on how these funds should be used. The use of the funding is pretty open, but need to be careful about including things that are only one time. Please send comments on usage to Vic at vic.todd@state.or.us. Michael thinks there should be more publicity when Oregon receives grants to highlight how the funding helps meet client needs around the state. Other grants mentioned: Lane County OVRs received a five-year grant for 2.8 million; 4 Meth grants totaling 13.8 million; Klamath Tribe five-year grant for 5 million; On Track in Medford received a grant; Fit Team in Multnomah County received grant for 3.7 million; Baker City received a grant for .5 million.

Update on 16 new positions, Ted Swigart

There seems to be some confusion and rumors in the field about the positions and the duties they will handle. Diane has heard that planning is being done in the field. Clarifying communication with DHS staff and the public regarding these positions may be helpful.

The positions will be used to assist families with multiple barriers. Their purpose is to provide expertise to case managers. Although they won't carry a caseload, they may have direct contact with clients. Michael sees it as a treatment team approach to provide strength-based services to clients. Ramona said that the positions will evolve as staff are hired and begin their work, but they shouldn't evolve 16 different ways. **ACTION: Ramona requested that the topic be on a FSRC future meeting agenda for discussion with Jim.**

Rosemary asked for clarification regarding child care; co-pays are being reduced at the same time providers are receiving more money. Vic reported that the co-pay amounts are being modified with an average reduction of approximately 20% and that provider rates are being increased. The new rates will strive to reduce the amount of income used for day care expenses. **ACTION: Vic will have the child care office send out clarifying information. Add topic to future agenda if needed.**

The FSRC asked for input on how they can prepare for the supplemental legislative session. Ramona said we have very little information at this time but mentioned three things that may be included; the DHS budget, TANF, and health care. There is a commitment to a four-week session with each legislator introducing one bill. It doesn't appear that DHS will be spending much time at the capital. **ACTION: Keep on agenda for further updates.**

Degree Completion Initiative (DCI) handout outlining current issues was distributed. There will be a major shift as DCI moves to Parents as Scholars (PAS). A workgroup will be formed to review the PSA program. Please let Dave know if you are interested in participating at dave.m.lyda@state.or.us. **ACTION: Jessica requested a report showing**

the reasons applications were not approved and the number of clients denied for each reason.

Mavel brought up the issue of empowerment of FSRC members on work groups, etc. The FSRC is being asked to participate in many groups and we need to decide how the FSRC will delegate authority to members to speak on behalf of the commission. The FSRC is a diverse group and we don't have a consensus policy in place. To say they speak for the entire commission may be problematic. Michael suggested the members identify themselves as FSRC members, participate and provide input, and bring back information to FSRC for the commission's position. Jessica voiced concern about the representation issue without policy. She is uncomfortable giving input on behalf of the FSRC without consensus. If FSRC members move from the position that we all advocate for clients, we could use this as the platform for our comments. Rosemary said her representation has been as a former recipient so she has felt comfortable speaking out. Shirley said the FSRC now has a much more communicative relationship with DHS and we need to take advantage of these opportunities to provide input. Mavel ran into this problem when commenting on the access rules; she decided to comment as herself because the FSRC didn't have time to vote. FSRC members participating in workgroups and committees are responsible to provide feedback to the other commission members. **ACTION: Procedure was requested to enable participating members to provide feedback on behalf of the commission.**

Rob sees a difference between Peggy's involvement with the rules writing group and the currently proposed workgroups who are looking at the higher level overview of the rules. DHS is inviting major stakeholders to review and comment on rules prior to sending them out for public comment.

How does the FSRC want Rosemary and Doreen to proceed with the TANF advisory workgroup? This question speaks to the larger issue of how the FSRC makes decisions as a commission. How can the FSRC improve the process? Historically, the policy committee looked at the rules for review and provided feedback to the FSRC. Many issues are on a short time frame and the FSRC doesn't have a good process to share comments via email. How can the FSRC meet the timeframes and support members as they participate on behalf of the commission? **ACTION: TANF Rules Advisory Committee information will be sent to committee members. Rosemary or Doreen will send information to Nancy with a request to forward to all FSRC members. Members should provide feedback to Rosemary and Doreen with a cc: to all FSRC members**

Rosemary asked, "If we discuss issues via email, are we complying with the public meeting laws?" In the Commission training, the instruction was to conduct business as much as possible in meetings and that it was permissible to provide feedback via email, but the FSRC shouldn't be voting by email. This may be a grey area for the FSRC. The two

FSRC participants will carefully review materials and bring feedback to FSRC for consensus. Time lines are often problematic; do we want to vote for Doreen and Rosemary to represent the FSRC in this workgroup? Diane Cohen-Alpert motioned and Shirley Kaping seconded the decision that Doreen Binder and Rosemary Lazzari be selected as the FSRC representatives to the Rules Advisory Committee for TANF and will provide feedback to the FSRC on status of group and meetings. Doreen and Rosemary will be clear when they are representing the FSRC, their organization or themselves, with the understanding that they are participating primarily as FSRC members. Vote was unanimous in favor of motion. Shirley said this is the first administration that is requesting FSRC input and DHS should be commended for this.

Mavel was asked to bring a concern to the FSRC regarding the current TANF rules and exception policy. Certain categories, such as DV survivors, don't count against the 60 months. DHS is proposing the 60 month count begins in July 2003, but exceptions for hardships don't count until October 2007. If you experienced a hardship prior to October 2007, you won't get the exemption. This means that some clients may run out of benefits by July 2008. DHS said they are allowed to do this because that's when the new rules became effective. The Oregon Law Center believes there can be exceptions to the time limit requirements. Clients should be able to make an argument if they had the hardship prior to the October 2007 time frame. **ACTION: Rob asked Mavel to send out an email letting members know exactly where in the rules this appears so this discussion can take place in the workgroup meetings. ACTION: Jessica asked if this could be used as an example in the strategic planning process on how to handle situations. If these issues continue, should the FSRC bring them up with the legislature?** Rosemary thanked Mavel for bringing this up. As a client advocate and FSRC member, Rosemary believes we advocate for the most advantageous position for the client and would be asking that the policy be revisited with the legislature.

Child Welfare Advisory Committee (Diane): Diane reported that CWAC is glad FSRC has a member participating in their meetings. CWAC members are asking Diane questions about what we are doing. Primarily CWAC is dealing with: 1) defining safety and looking at the overlap between SS and CW clients, and 2) federal requirement for 30-day face to face visits for children in foster care and residential treatment centers. DHS and the feds want 100% participation. Is this requirement feasible with the current large caseloads? Rob thanked Diane for her participation on CWAC and helping FSRC to develop partnerships with other groups.

Strategic Plan 2008-2009 Development

FSRC Operating Practices and Procedures:

- **Develop Priority list of practices and procedures**

Brainstorming session to develop 2008-2009 Strategic Plan

- Strategic plan meeting may have to be held later than November.
- Discuss how we operate as a commission early in the meeting. Members would like to have more written procedures. Rob worked with Mickey on a list of topics in August 2006. The expense procedure came out of this meeting. FSRC Policies and Operation Procedures document handout distributed.
- Rob briefly went through the handout. Include list of “tools of trade” with the orientation packet. Provide information on how things work around DHS; flow charts, and link to Family Services Manual. Jessica thanked Rob for pulling this information together. A manual would be helpful. Rosemary would like to see written expectations of FSRC Chair and other leadership positions and a communication flow chart. Diane would like a more personal look at DHS staff prior to meetings. Who would be responsible for this? Mavel doesn’t know what most commission members do in their community positions. This information would be very helpful. Include commission member bios, history, where they work, what they do; and short bios for DHS leadership positions. If agreed upon, bio information can be sent to Nancy and she will create document for orientation packet.
- Establish policies for changing leadership positions. They come up for vote every other year; next vote in January 2008. How will this be handled? Jessica asked about term limits. How do we influence the Governor’s office on membership recruitment, term limits, etc? What are the FSRC expectations on partnerships and how do we support them? Discuss when responses are appropriate under “How we work with DHS.”
- Prioritize topics via email; review at meeting, edit and approve.
- Include link to Family Services Manual and DHS organizational charts. (Already included in FSRC Welcome Packet on Helpful Websites List.)

How do we want to structure the Strategic Planning meeting? Rob reviewed last year’s agenda and suggested we look at what work has been accomplished during the past two years. Prepare and review environmental scan of what may happen in the world during the next few years from DHS Management and FSRC perspectives, legislative sessions, etc.

ACTION: Rob will request information from DHS management on what they think will be coming down the pike, federal regulations, state regulations, etc.

Begin meeting with discussion of mission statement and bylaws. Send appropriate documents with agenda; current strategic plan, bylaws, environmental scan, and past accomplishments. Shirley suggested we set aside a different day to meet and concentrate specifically on the strategic plan or pick a different date for the monthly FSRC meeting. Poll group to determine how many people will be attending the November meeting? It is preferable to have a majority of members in person at the meeting. Another option would be to schedule both meetings on the same day, with morning and afternoon sessions.

ACTION: Rob to send out an email for member’s preferences. (Done: 10/8/07)

FSRC Meeting Minutes
October 4, 2007

Rob would like Dr. Goldberg's comments to include any thoughts about strategic planning for this Commission. How he sees the FSRC operating?

Next Meeting: The next FSRC meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2007, 8:30 a.m. to noon, in HSB-252. Please let Nancy know if you plan to attend by Video Conferencing or phone.

Meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.