



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## *Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board*

### Minutes of July 10, 2020

#### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

GREG COX  
First District

DIANNE JACOB  
Second District

KRISTIN GASPAR  
Third District

NATHAN FLETCHER  
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND  
Fifth District

#### **Members Present:**

Supervisor Greg Cox, County Board of Supervisors  
Judge Ana España, Juvenile Court  
Alethea Arguilez, First 5 San Diego  
Crystal Irving, Protective Services  
Meredith Riffel, District 2 Appointee  
Carolyn Griesemer, Children's Legal Services of San Diego  
Stephen Moore, Voices for Children, Inc.  
Jeff Weimann, Angels Foster Family Network  
Cheryl Rode, San Diego Center for Children  
Kimberly Giardina, Child Welfare Services  
Dean Arabatzis, County Health and Human Service Agency  
Maddy Kilkenny, District 5 Appointee  
Suzanne Starling, Chadwick Center for Children and Families  
Sade Burrell, Former Foster Youth  
Melissa Villagomez, Former Foster Youth  
Simone Hidds-Monroe, San Pasqual Academy  
Jessica Heldman, AB & Jessie Polinsky Children's Center  
Patty Boles, Straight from the Heart, Inc.  
Scott Huizar, County Probation Department  
Shane Harris, District 3 Appointee  
Armand King, Paving Great Futures

#### **Members Not Present:**

Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, County Board of Supervisors  
Dr. Paul Gothold, San Diego County Office of Education  
Adam Reed, Dependency Legal Services

#### **Staff Present:**

Stephanie Gioia, Supervisor Nathan Fletcher's Office  
Khea Pollard, Supervisor Greg Cox's Office  
Kyle Sand, County Counsel  
Sandra McBrayer, The Children's Initiative  
Sarah Rafi, County Health and Human Services Agency  
Jocelyn Nuñez, County Health and Human Services Agency

#### **1) Welcome and Introduction**

- Supervisor Cox brought the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. Advisory Board members did roll call.

#### **2) Public Comment**

- One member of the public addressed the Advisory Board.
  - A member of the public stated she would like to continue to receive services for herself and her minor child.

#### **3) Approval of the Statement of Proceedings/Minutes for the Meeting of June 8, 2020**

- Supervisor Cox called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2020 meeting, Judge España moved to approve, Carolyn Griesemer seconded the motion, with all members present voting in favor.

#### **4) Subcommittee Updates for the June 25, 2020 Meetings**

- Supervisor Cox introduced the work of the subcommittees and turned the update over to Sandra McBrayer.
- Sandra McBrayer shared that all the subcommittees met in June and each subcommittee had robust discussions regarding the original Workgroup recommendations and that progress is being made. She also shared that the meeting materials for today's meeting contains the minutes from each of the subcommittee meetings.

○ **Workforce Development**

- Crystal Irving provided the update for the Workforce Development Subcommittee. She provided the following updates:
  - Staff began teleworking in mid-March and the majority of staff continue to telework; however, staff are still working in the field conducting home visits. She stated that the majority of staff have laptops and that CWS is working to ensure all staff are provided laptops and cell phones by the end of September.
  - The new call center software for hotline calls has assisted greatly. There has been a decrease in dropped calls as well as wait times.
  - The subcommittee discussed a concern that was brought up about “body checks” occurring. This is when a social worker asks to investigate physical abuse on children’s bodies.
  - The subcommittee also discussed a concern that children could be coached by resource parents during virtual visits and staff stated that social workers are asking that children/youth are in another area from their resource parent during their virtual visit to ensure confidentiality.
  - Staff who work both at the office and at home are having difficulties transporting office equipment (chairs, monitors, mouse, keyboard) to and from work.
  - Subcommittee members discussed a concern that younger, non-school age children (2-5 years old), might not have access to cell phone and laptops for remote learning.
  - Staff shared with the committee that iFoster distributed over 200 phones and laptops for foster youth throughout the county.
  - The subcommittee supported the idea to secure a trainer on racial equity and racial impact statements for a future meeting.
  - The committee recommended stipends to assist CWS staff with ergonomic teleworking equipment costs and agreed this recommendation should go before the full Advisory Board and the Board of Supervisors.

○ **Child and Family Services**

- Sandra McBrayer provided the update for the Child and Family Services Subcommittee. She provided the following updates:
  - The subcommittee took the recommendations from the full Advisory Board and discussed the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process and barriers to completing the process. The subcommittee discussed the state requirements, timeline, and obstacles to approval, such as: ensuring the home is safe, pools are fenced, etc.
  - The subcommittee discussed relative placement and the challenges surrounding when there is a criminal background issue with extended family.
  - Currently, a standard case takes 111 days for approval and on average 94 days for emergency cases. Sandra stated 95 % of

applicants complete the process and that the state does not collect race data on the cases that are denied by the state. CWS is converting to a new tracking system that will hopefully allow for collecting race regarding denials.

- The subcommittee supports securing a trainer on racial equity and racial impact statements for a future meeting.

- **Organizational Structure**

- Jeff Wiemann provided the update for the Organizational Structure Subcommittee. He provided the following updates:
  - The subcommittee discussed the previous organizational structure and the new interim structure that was put in place in April 2020. The previous structure had the CWS director overseeing policy, but the operational oversight rolled up to the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) regional managers throughout the county. The new interim structure has all CWS social workers and supervisors overseen by Kim Giardina and her CWS management team. Jeff stated it was widely felt by the subcommittee and by stakeholders that the new structure has had many positive outcomes including streamlined responses from CWS and improvements in policy implementation. The subcommittee strongly supported keeping this structure in place moving forward.
  - The subcommittee also discussed that the title of “Chief” in CWS is culturally inappropriate and would request the County to have further and ongoing discussion across agencies about titles that have been misappropriated and to make changes.
- Sandra McBrayer reminded members of the public that all subcommittees are open to anyone interested in attending and allowed the opportunity for questions or comments from members or from the public.
  - Melissa Villagomez had concerns regarding the terminology of “Chief of Practice.” She stated that the title is inappropriate and should be reconsidered.
    - Crystal Irving agreed that the title should be replaced with a more appropriate title.
    - Jessica Heldman inquired if the new organizational chart can be shared and Kim Giardina stated it can be shared.

## 5) COVID-19 Update

- Supervisor Cox introduced the agenda item and began the update. Due to audio difficulties, the Advisory Board moved to agenda item #6 then returned to Supervisor Cox’s COVID-19 update.
  - Supervisor Cox provided updates regarding COVID-19, including a summary of ages affected by COVID-19. He also provided information on the triggers for modifying the Public Health Officer’s order. Supervisor Cox shared that the case rate trigger is problematic as we are exceeding the benchmark of 100 with the current rate of 139 per 100,000 cases. He also shared that the community outbreak trigger is problematic as we are exceeding the benchmark of no more than seven within a 14-

day period, as the current number of community outbreaks is 15. He then shared that the case investigation trigger is problematic as we are not meeting the benchmark of having 70% of cases initiated within 24 hours of notification, the current rate is 65%. Supervisor Cox stated the Public Health Department will be adding staff to assist with case investigations. Supervisor Cox added due to a high rate of positive cases in the South region, the County has increased the number of testing sites in the South region.

- Supervisor Cox allowed the opportunity for questions or comments from members or from the public.
  - A member of the public asked if COVID-19 testing can be broken down by ethnicity.
    - Supervisor Cox stated he would follow up to see if that data is collected. He added that a vast majority of testing sites are in the south and central part of the county.
  - Shane Harris had concerns regarding the racial breakdown of COVID-19 contact tracing jobs and requested that data is available for when the County hires for tracing jobs. He stated that he personally felt that it is easier to be connected to someone of the same race.
    - Supervisor Cox stated that information was not readily available
  - Shane Harris stated that he had concerns over COVID-19 testing and requested a racial breakdown of all testing being done, including positive and negative cases.
  - Shane Harris also stated that he had concerns about positive cases at Polinsky Children's Center and requested the number of children and families affected by COVID-19.
    - Kim Giardina stated that CWS is tracking the number of children and families affected by COVID-19 and she would follow-up with this information.
  - A member of the public had concerns regarding individuals waiting in line for hours for COVID-19 testing in the Southeastern community, specifically at the Tubman Center. She requested that more testing sites be available in the Southeastern community.
    - Supervisor Cox stated the Tubman Center is now able to test more individuals and that the wait time has been reduced to approximately 15 minutes. He added that testing equipment is in short supply and those without symptoms are requested to refrain from and/or postpone testing.
  - Crystal Irving had concerns over CWS staff contracting COVID-19 asked how frequently CWS staff working in the field will be testing.
    - Supervisor Cox stated testing equipment and personal protective equipment is in short supply. He shared that the goal is to have regular testing available, especially for staff working in the field.
      - Crystal Irving requested in-person visits be reconsidered due to the COVID-19 risk to staff. Kim Giardina responded that she continues discuss this concern with the State and continues to advocate to flexibility in San Diego county.
  - Patty Boles stated that resource/foster parents are concerned about contracting COVID-19 from in-person visits and that virtual visits should be available to limit the spread of the virus. She also shared that

resource/foster parents should be able to be more involved in court hearings.

#### **6) Child Welfare Services, Director's Report**

- Supervisor Cox introduced the agenda item and turned the item over to Kim Giardina.
  - Kim Giardina shared that there had been a decrease in the number hotline calls received earlier in the pandemic (close to 40%), but that June hotline calls were somewhat back to normal with a 18% decrease in the number of calls.
  - Kim Giardina shared that CWS continues to conduct in-person visits and is adapting to changing California state requirements.
  - Kim Giardina shared that 41 of the recommendations from the Workgroup report have been completed and/or implemented as ongoing and that CWS continues to make system improvements.
    - Shane recommended the formation of a new subcommittee on COVID-19 as COVID-19 is affecting youth and families. He asked that this subcommittee study the pandemic and develop a strategy to address COVID-19.
    - A member of the public asked what percentage of children are receiving regular visits with biological family members.
      - Kim Giardina stated she would follow-up with a percentage and confirmed that families are getting their visits. She stated families are assessed on an individual basis to ensure that visitation is safe for each family.

#### **7) Housing Our Youth Update**

- Supervisor Cox introduced the agenda item and turned the item over to Omar Passons, Director of the Office of Integrative Services.
  - Omar Passons described the program and shared that Housing Our Youth combines Supervisor Cox's vision to support homeless youth and builds on the existing work of the Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness. He stated that the program is built on coordinated care and positive youth development, and that it is more than just case management. Omar shared that the program is for youth up to 24 years of age, who are at risk of homeless and are former foster youth or at-risk youth. The program may include transportation resources, paid work experience, paid childcare, and flexible financial support.
    - Sade Burrell suggested that the age limit be expanded to 25 or 26 years old and encouraged a warm handoff for individuals in the program with community colleges.
    - Several Advisory members stated that they agreed with Sade Burrell's comments.
    - A member of the public shared her concern regarding youth of color and their mental health needs, including suicide.

#### **8) Proposed Child Welfare Indicator for County Strategic Initiative – Living Safely**

- Supervisor Cox stated that due to time constraints this item would be moved to the next Advisory Board meeting.

#### **9) Proposed Subcommittee on Race and Equity**

- Supervisor Cox introduced the agenda item and stated the purpose of the subcommittee is to address disproportionality in the African American and Native American youth within

the Child Welfare System. He stated he previously recommended the increased hiring of African American social workers, adding a racial impact statement to subcommittee recommendations, and requiring cultural competency training for all social workers. Supervisor Cox called for a motion to formally establish this subcommittee, Carolyn Griesemer made the motion to approve and Shane Harris seconded the motion for approval.

- Questions or comments from members or from the public included:
  - Crystal Irving had a significant concern that race and equity should not be siloed into one subcommittee and should be continuously woven throughout the work of the subcommittees and the full advisory board.
  - Jeff Wiemann shared Crystal Irving's concerns and suggested that if this committee is formed it would report to the existing three subcommittees.
  - Shane Harris supported the formation of this new subcommittee to address disproportionality in the child welfare system.
  - Stephen Moore inquired on the process for appointing members to the new subcommittee.
    - Sandra McBrayer replied that members of the public can serve on all subcommittees and it would operate similar to the three other CFSAB subcommittees.
  - A member of the public recommended that this subcommittee be a part of the Human Relations Commission to better address disproportionality.
  - A member of the public commented that this new subcommittee may not properly address disproportionality and that all voices may not be heard. She also stated that virtual mental health appointments with many different clinicians does not allow for continuity of care and that this is negatively affecting her child.
  - Maddie Kilkenny had concerns that this new subcommittee would be addressing disproportionality and equity in a siloed fashion, and that if this subcommittee was formed the three existing committees would not address these issues.
  - Members recommended that possible formation of this committee be more flushed out in each of the upcoming subcommittee meetings
- Due to time constraints, and because the discussion was still ongoing, Supervisor Cox recommended that this agenda item be carried over to the next Advisory Board meeting. Both Carolyn Griesemer who motioned for approval, and Shane Harris who seconded the motion, agreed to move voting on this agenda item to the next Advisory Board meeting.

#### **10) Glossary of Terms**

- Supervisor Cox stated that due to time constraints this item would be moved to the next Advisory Board meeting.

#### **11) Advisory Board Member Updates**

- Supervisor Cox stated that due to time constraints this item would be moved to the next Advisory Board meeting.

#### **12) Adjournment**

- Supervisor Cox adjourned the meeting at 12:15 PM.

#### **Next Meeting:**

- September 11, 2020

#### **Distributed:**

- Meeting Agenda
- Minutes of June 8, 2020 Meeting
- Summary of June 25, 2020 Subcommittee Meetings
- EPI Summary from Operational Plan
- Housing Our Youth Overview
- Glossary of Terms

Meeting minutes were submitted by Sarah Rafi. Please call Sarah Rafi at (619) 417-9114 if you have corrections or suggested revisions. She may also be contacted for agenda items or general information.

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