

## **December 3, 2019 Minutes of the DC Citizen Review Panel**

Time: 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM  
Day: Tuesday  
Place: CFSA, 200 I Street SE, Washington, DC 20003  
Nearest Metro: Navy Yard Metro Station  
Driving Direction: <https://goo.gl/maps/1byRByY4bC52>  
Parking: On-street  
Catering: Cornercopia, [cornercopiamarket@gmail.com](mailto:cornercopiamarket@gmail.com)

### **In attendance:**

CRP members: Shana Bartley (Vice-Chairperson), Rick Bardach, (Treasurer), Elizabeth Corson Mohler, Joy Graham, Marie Cohen, Megan Conway, Patrick Foley, Emily Smith Goering, and Tracy Hamilton. There were two members (Maura Gaswirth and Katrina Floyd) who participated via phone conference call.

Absent: Sherrill Taylor, and Sarah Schooler.

Visitors: Roni Seabrook, CFSA Grant Monitor.

Facilitator: Joyce N. Thomas

### **Welcome/Introduction**

This is the Third Quarterly meeting of grant period FY 2019-2020, and the meeting was called to order at 6:55 PM by Shana Bartley, Vice Chairperson. The Facilitator documented that we have a quorum and that the notice of the meeting was posted on the DC and CFSA websites, thus the requirement for public notification was satisfied. All persons that were present signed the confidentiality form to ensure privacy of client information.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes and Modification of Tonight's Agenda**

The minutes from September 10, 2019 was approved. Shana indicated her desire to modify the order of discussion topics in the agenda in order to address key issues first. Topics focused on the CRP By-Laws revision, Independent Child Ombudsman, and establishment of a new working group. In the interest of time, it was suggested that they should be one discussion on the Town Hall for debriefing and next steps.

### **Town Hall Meeting Debriefing**

Joy Graham provided an update on the accomplishments and outcomes of the Town Hall meeting. Joy indicated that the forum was a success, and that 65 adults and ten children, pre-registered for the meeting. Fifty adults and three children attended the forum. Unfortunately, the keynote speaker, Morgan Baskin, cancelled at the last minute because she was on a work travel and her plane back to DC was cancelled. Joy thanked the committee members (Katrina Floyd

and Elizabeth Corson Mohler) as well as Shana Bartley for their flexibility and support. Joy mentioned the success of tabletop “break-out” groups, youth speakers, and other keynote speakers (Robert Matthews of CFSA and Judith Sandalow of Children’s Law Center). There were 22 surveys returned and feedback was very positive. The Town Hall goal to gain input from DC residents about their knowledge, attitudes, and feelings about activities of the DC Child Welfare System was accomplished. The next steps are to utilize this opportunity to elevate the presence of the CRP. Joy then asked the panel members to identify the lessons learned and to provide feedback. Comments included:

- Future Town Hall meetings should involve more young people to both attend and to participate in the sessions.
- Conducting this type of program was labor intensive. We should consider hosting Town Hall meetings every other year or using different formats to get residents’ input. The current approach took a lot of effort for such a small group of committee members.
- The excessive cost and elaborate arrangement for providing childcare during forum was problematic. It was mentioned that different approaches may be needed when the CRP offers childcare services during the Town Hall meeting.
- Foster parents and youth still had many key concerns. They expressed the need for greater support. They indicated that, “many of the issues that were raised in the group discussions have been raised before, and nothing has changed with CFSA.” They would like the CRP to get substantive feedback from the agency.
- To ensure CFSA responds to the outcomes of the Town Hall, recommendations should be in the CRP Annual Report.

Joy again thanked the panel for all of their efforts, and indicated that a report will be completed by mid-January summarizing findings from each of the small group discussions.

### **Panel Open Discussion**

Shana acknowledged the delays in moving forward with the revision of the By-Laws, was on her. It was suggested that a special meeting should be called to flush out the recommended changes.

Shana referenced the side-by-side chart that highlighted discrepancies between DC Law, CAPTA and the CRP By-Laws. This generated discussion about the due date for the CRP annual report. Shana requested that the Facilitator should provide an electronic copy of this chart.

In reference to establishing a new working group on DC Foster Care and CPS, Marie suggested there should be two separated working groups. Due to the shortage of time this evening, the topic of new working groups will be discussed during the special CRP conference call. Emily agreed to set up a google conference call.

Shana reported on the status of the Bill introduced by Councilwoman Brienne Nadeau to create an independent office of ombudsman for CFSA. Shana indicated no new updates are available and little progress has been made. In conversations with the Councilwoman, there are thought to be more comprehensive and to open the ombudsman position to be more comprehensive, rather

than just focus on CFSA. Shana will continue to monitor the progress and keep the panel informed.

### **Treasure's Report**

Rick Bardach provided an update of the CRP fiscal status. He indicated we are in the third quarter of the grant period FY 2020 between Child and Family Services Agency and the Center for Child Protection and Family Support as Facilitator of the DC Citizen Review Panel. Hard copies of the current fiscal report were provided to panel members.

The annual budget for this current grant period is \$42,887 for CRP expenses. Rick reported that we are likely to have left over funds because the working groups have not used their allotted revenue and CFSA authorized additional funds for the Town Hall meeting.

There was discussion of the need for developing more promotional materials about the CRP for the community. Shana will get cost estimates, and this will be discussed at the special conference call meeting.

### **Working Group Reports**

- *In-Home Services Working Group:* Marie Cohen, Chairperson of this working group gave the report. The final report for the project has been completed, formatted and sent to CFSA for comments. This report documented the findings of the focus groups, data review, cohort data and meetings with CFSA key informants. The working group is waiting for comments from CFSA on the recommendations. Michell Rosenberg will provide feedback to the Working Group. In general, Marie reported the Working Group was impressed with the new CFSA In-Home Team's implementation of the policy changes. The biggest concern expressed was "problems in services for families are limited." The new Families First program is not working well for this population because their focus is on "parent-child interventions," and there is a greater need for other services (e.g. behavioral health for parents, substance use treatment, etc.). There seem to be a waiting list for these services. It is anticipated that the CRP Working Group will close out activities once comments are received from the submitted report.
- *Youth Ageing Out of Foster Care:* Rick Bardach, Chairperson of this working group expressed frustration in trying to move forward with case reviews. He reported the Youth Ageing Out Working group is trying to examine services provided to foster care youth ages 18-21, focusing on program activities administered by OYE. In order to accomplish this, the working group is seeking updated information from OYE on services provided to past recipients of post-emancipation programs. Rick was in communications with Michelle Rosenberg about the participation of a non-CRP member in case reviews. He was informed that a non-Panel member is not authorized to review child welfare cases or any other confidential information. It is for this reason that Rick wants to recommend a change to the CRP By-Laws. Under Article V - Committees and Task Forces, in Section 3, he made the following suggestion for an amendment to the By-Laws:

“Non-Panel members shall have all the rights and responsibilities that all other members of the Committees and Task Forces have, including the ability to review cases and other confidential documents and the responsibility to safeguard all confidential information as outlined in Article XII of these CRP By-Laws.”

Many panel members voiced concern and disagreed with the proposed By-Laws change. It was expressed that the proposed change is inappropriate, and it has been a long-standing practice to not allow non-panel members to review case records.

Rick indicated the Working Group plans to do a detailed analysis of four QSR records to assess the services received by youth. Further discussion will be held with panel members during the special conference call meeting.

- **Facilitator’s Report:**

The Facilitator has indicated that the personnel time for implementation of CRP administrative tasks has increased by 200% in the past three-years.

Joyce Thomas provided the panel with the following report:

- ❖ Elizabeth Keeton is leaving MOTA as of Dec 6, 2019 and will be replaced by Donovan Boyd.
- ❖ Membership status is as follows: there are 13 appointed panel members and one pending appointments (Emily Bloomfield) and one vacant position on the Mayor’s side. Katrina Foster has resigned from the CRP, effective November 17, 2019. On November 18, 2019, Tracy Hamilton was sworn in and appointed to CRP by the Mayor.
- ❖ The website redesign is complete. The Facilitator is still working with Kahl Consultant Group who will design a new logo, complete a search engine optimization, and review the layout. The initial logo was not acceptable to the Facilitator and the panel member (Maura Gaswirth) who has assisted with the website redesign.
- ❖ The Facilitator asked the question, “does anyone plan to attend CRP National Conference? [National Citizen Review Panels for Child Protective Services](#). Our national conference will be June 3-5, 2020 in Columbus, Ohio.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

**Action Items:**

1. Emily will send out a Doodle search to identify an appropriate date for the special conference call meeting. Tentative agenda items include By-Laws, development of a flyer, setting up a new working group on CPS or Foster Care.
2. Within two weeks, Shana will take the lead regarding identification of a designer consultant to develop promotional graphics for the CRP.

3. By mid-January, Joy will complete the Town Hall meeting report to document the accomplishments and findings of each small group. This data will be incorporated into the CRP annual report.
4. Emily will continue to research strategies on conducting case reviews on foster children.
5. Facilitator will work with website consultant to complete logo and finalize redesign.
6. Facilitator will provide orientation to Tracy Hamilton.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joyce N. Thomas, Facilitator