

**Far Northern Coordinating Council on Developmental  
Disabilities dba Far Northern Regional Center  
Minutes**

Regular Meeting  
Friday, June 23, 2023  
9:15 a.m.  
Gaia Hotel / Zoom

1. **Call to Order:** 9:17 AM by Chair Cali McKinzie
2. **Roll Call**
  - a. Present: Cali McKinzie, Deborah Anderson, Kim Leeseman, Daniel Strauss, Josh Flom, Joseph Culis, Araceli Garcia, Terry M., Andreas Economopoulos, Adrian Hugo, Selene Mercado, Patricia McCarthy, Edna Winkle, Ginger Moyles, William Moore, Lori Childres, Christina Johnson, Jaclyn Balanaym DDS, Cindy Freshour, We Care A lot, Audra Feedback, FNRC Controller, Mike Mintline, FNRC CFO, Tracy Duarte, FNRC Associate Director of Community Services, Keith French, FNRC IT Manager, Melinda Roberts, FNRC HR Director, Wayne Doering, FNRC Associate Director Case Management North, Chere Sullivan, FNRC Case Management Supervisor
  - b. Absent: Timothy Howard
3. **Public Input/Open Forum** (*This section is for members of the public only; and is to provide the public an opportunity to comment and/or present information to the Board on any matter. **Each member of the public will be afforded up to five minutes to speak. If you have additional information you are encouraged to submit it in writing.***)

No public input
4. **Approval of Agenda June 23, 2023**
  - a. Motion and second Kim Leeseman and Edina Winkle. No discussion, Motion passed
5. **Approval of Minutes from May 19, 2023**
  - a. Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and Adrian Hugo. No discussion, Motion passed

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**6. Report from Chairperson, Cali McKinzie:**

- a. Other : Nomination committee presented the 2023-2024 Slate of Officers

Cali McKinzie-Chair  
Joseph Cullis-Vice Chair  
Lori Childres-Treasurer  
Deborah Anderson-Secretary

Cali nominated Adrian Hugo for the position of Parliamentarian  
Joseph Cullis seconded the motion

Adrian Hugo-Parliamentarian

Motion to close nominations and second Araceli Garcia and Adrian Hugo. No discussion, Motion passed

Motion and second to accept the Slate of Officers Andreas Economopoulos and Araceli Garcia. No discussion, Motion passed

**7. Management Reports**

- a. Financial Report: Mike Mintline, Chief Financial Officer

- i. Monthly Financial Report PAGE 33 of the packet, FY 2022-2023- presented by Audra Feedback, Controller

Operations Estimated contract Allocation is \$27,805,590, Year to Date \$21,551,591 less Projected Annual Expenses \$27,610,404 = \$195,186 being returned to the state. We do have up to two years to spend these funds.

- ii. The new form “Board of Directors Financial Reports Glossary of Terms” was introduced.

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### iii. Actual and Projected Operations Expenses

- Increase in Salaries and Benefits due to the wage increase negotiated by the union and the addition of new staff positions.
- Facilities (Rent, Maint, and Utilities) New Space to accommodate increased staffing levels
- Travel Increase travel projected annual expense \$425,000 compared to prior year annual expense of \$134,332. The reason for the increase is more meetings are being held in person. Remote meetings are still an option for IPP; however, most are being done in person.
- IT Equipment -4 server replacements to support Nutanix. Phone system.
- Contracts/Software- Software updates making the system easier to use. Licensing increasing as the number of employees increase.
- Other Revenue Interest increase this year earned \$761,500 compared to last year \$54,444. Rates have increased, investing excess cash in short-term Treasury Bills.

### iv. Other: If there are additional details you would like to see on these reports do not hesitate to contact Mike or Audra.

Mike Mintline – [mmintline@farnorthernrc.org](mailto:mmintline@farnorthernrc.org)

Audra Feedback – [afeedback@farnorthernrc.org](mailto:afeedback@farnorthernrc.org)

### b. Client Services Report, presented by Chere Sullivan, Case Management Supervisor

#### i. Family Wellness – Pilot Program

Launched in both Shasta and Butte Counties

Featuring 12 week support groups:

Parent Supports/Group Counseling

Parent Trainings

Family Wellness Nights

The entire family is welcome to come. Dinner is provided along with gas cards and childcare for all the children in the family.

Session number two wrapped up last night for ages 2-5.

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This program was very successful. Enjoyed the opportunity and the resources provided.

A video of testimonials from those families who participated was shared. Each testimonial reflected gratitude and appreciation for this program.

The families even requested a possible alumni event in the future. Four other counties have reached out wanting this program as well.

Currently the program focus is on ages 0-5 it has been requested to open this up to all ages.

Spanish speaking session will begin next week. Families outside of the Chico area are welcome if they want to travel.

The funds for this program came from ARPA (American Rescue Plan) specific for the 0-5 age group.

Looking at sustainability on how to fund these types of programs for older children as well.

The childcare portion of the program is with the intent of keeping the children active and siblings can also be referred to counseling services.

Families have realized the need for emotional support especially Father's.

c. Community Services: Tracy Duarte, Associate Director Community Services

i. Action Item #1, Merakey- Vendor PF5302

Action Requested: The Board approve contract PS-2652 with Merakey Allos (PF5302) for CPP/CRDP Start-Up funding for a Enhanced Behavioral Supports Home effective June 1, 2023 through February 28, 2025 for a total maximum contract amount of \$250,000.00.

Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and Patricia McCarthy. No discussion, Motion passed

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ii. Community Serve Update:

a) Follow up from the last meeting regarding another Merakey home. The home has corrected the issues that were found and have put processes in place to prevent this issue from happening in the future. A good relationship has been developed between the home and Far Northern Regional Center. Conversations are happening weekly and audits are being done monthly.

b) 2022 Year End Performance Report

The full report is available and located in the transparency section of the website.

Overview of the report: 2022 FNRC served 8,990 individuals

More individuals are living in home settings

Improved timelines

“Five Valued Experiences” still being used

Continuing to work on employment programs

Please contact Tracy Duarte at [tduarte@farnorthernrc.org](mailto:tduarte@farnorthernrc.org) if you have questions.

d. Human Resources Report: Melinda Roberts, HR Director

i. Update on Human Resources:

a) Busy time with staff resigning, retirements and growth. The main focus for the department is recruitment, orientation and training. Looking at why people are resigning, what can we do to keep our employees and stabilizing our work force. Within the Regional Center there is a lot of movement as well with promotions. We are looking at compensation/benefits making sure we are paying competitive wages.

b) DDS has approved tuition reimbursement. We are working on the details so we can get the information out to staff. This reimbursement program will offer employee's up to \$30,000 over

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three years. There are some requirements such as continued employment after completion of their program.

This program will help our staff become more valuable to us and as individuals.

c) OnBoarding new employee's: The HR department is working with our new supervisor of training to make this process more streamline. We will continue to do the history of the Regional Center during new hire orientation. Adding layers to the training as they become more familiar with their positions.

The goal is to have this program ready to roll out in September.

- ii. Action Item #2: Retired Annuitant Diana Anderson  
Action Requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Diana Anderson to be re-employed by FNRC effective July 1, 2023, for a period of no more than 12 months, pursuant to the Government Code requirements.  
Motion and second Josh Flom and Andreas Economopoulos, discussion: Diana's expertise in setting up and maintaining contracts especially those that will need to be transitioned to new vendors with the closure of the Shasta County Opportunity Center. No further discussion, Motion passed
- iii. Action Item #3: Retired Annuitant Joan Monvik  
Action Requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Joan Monvik to be re-employed by FNRC effective July 1, 2023, for a period of no more than 12 months, in compliance with Government Code requirements.  
Motion and second William Moore and Adrian Hugo. No discussion, Motion passed.
- iv. Action Item #4: Retired Annuitant Suzanne Pitcher  
Action Requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Suzanne Pitcher to be re-employed by FNRC effective July 1, 2023, for a period of no more than 12 months, in compliance with Government Code requirements.

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Motion and second Araceli Garcia and Adrian Hugo. No discussion, Motion passed.

- v. **Action Item #5: Retired Annuitant Jane Work**  
Action Requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Jane Work to be employed by FNRC effective July 1, 2023, for a period of no more than 12 months, in compliance with Government Code requirements.  
Motion and second Kim Leeseman and Teri M. No discussion, Motion passed.

- 8. **State Council on Developmental Disabilities**, North State Office Report Renee Bauer, Regional Manager – No Report

- 9. **FNRC Board Committee Reports and Action Items:**

- a. Consumer Committee, Adian Hugo Chair
  - i. Presented by Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director
    - Community Meeting with the Advisory Committee schedule presented:
      1. August 9-Lassen County
      2. October 11-Modoc County
      3. February 14-Trinity County
      4. April 10-Plumas County

The goal is to have the board visible within the communities they serve. The meeting would be open to the public to help educate the community on the regional center and the role of a board member.

Siskiyou County is not on the schedule as we are working on having the September board meeting in Mt Shasta.

- ii. Committee member concerns were discussed
  - Being prepared for fire season
- iii. Andreas shared his YouTube video of the music recital

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- vi Introduction of the board members to Simonne Robidoux the FNRC Training and Communications Supervisor
  - Discussed the “Newsletter” and gave ideas on how to implement this project and ideas of items that could be included in the newsletter.
  - Simonne will present a draft of a template of the newsletter at the September Consumer Committee Meeting for review.
- v. Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director
  - Reviewed the action items and board packet
- b. Service Provider Advisory Committee, Josh Flom, Chair
  - i. Meeting was called to order by Jennifer Bowman filling in for current Chairperson Josh Flom
  - ii. Work Force-Presented by Tracy Duarte FNRC Associate Director of Community Services
    - DSP Workforce Survey, information collected is looking at what is impacting the DSP workforce.
    - There is a \$8,000 incentive
    - Survey must be completed by June 30, 2023 to be considered for the incentive; the link is on the DDS website
    - It has been reported that the link has not been working correctly, Tracy reports that DDS has reported that it should be fixed now. Email Tracy should you have questions or the link is not working
  - iii. Percentage of Rate Adjustment for Wages & Benefits for Direct Care Staff- Presented by Tracy Duarte
    - Providers who receive a rate increase can use no less than the percentage in the rate model for staff

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wages and benefits to enhance the wage and benefits of staff who spend at least 75% of their time providing direct services to consumers.

- Providers who received a rate increase are required to maintain documentation, subject to audit by the Department and Regional Centers, demonstrating compliance with this requirement.
  - The DDS website has an online look up tool that can show providers the required percentage applicable to each service code and rate increase received.
  - A draft of what an audit may look like will be presented at the next SPAC meeting.
- iv. Budget Highlights-Presented by Melissa Gruhler, FNRC Executive Director
- Overall budget has no negative impact on ID/DD services.
  - POS impact due to decreased utilization
  - 421,000 individuals being served
  - Adjustments include
    1. IRS mileage rates
    2. Minimum wage
    3. ILS rate
  - Trailer bills have not been drafted
- v. Success Stories
- Jennifer Bowman-Compass  
Build Project Grant-first event with 13 individuals ages 12-18 participated
  - Debbie Larmour-Mid Valley  
Celebrating people coming to work everyday
  - Tina Reszler-State Council  
Project Safe-10 Self-advocates collaborated with the Red Cross to provide training on two topics through Zoom

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1. Fire Safety- Help train and gave information to 500-600 people
  2. Hands only CPR-30 people
  - A few of the self-advocates were asked to be part of the Red Cross as co-trainers
  - Ann Silcher-Mains'l  
Friends and Family Community Picnic-Durham
    1. 250 people were in attendanceTwo students from the College Plus Program Graduated from CSU Chico
  - Melissa Aggi-North Valley Services
    1. NVS is celebrating 30 years of service
- vi. Tips for Recruiting
- Suggested ways to help make life easier for our DSP's
    1. Help with bills
    2. Loans
  - Referral Bonus Program
    1. At hire
    2. After they finish training
    3. After 1 year review
  - Bonus Programs
    1. Sign on
    2. Referral-90 days
    3. Attendance
  - Bus Advertising
  - Spotify
- vii. State Council on Developmental Disabilities- Tina Reszler
- Health and Wellness Micro Series
    1. Two more left in the series; will be sending out announcements.

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- Self-Advocate Peer Support Group
  1. North State Regional Office will host a support group every fourth Thursday of the month, 6 PM to 7 PM via Zoom.
  
- vii. Provider Updates and Announcements
  - Debbie Larmour- Mid Valley
    1. Lassen Pines Camp in Viola
      - \*September 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023
      - \*Wild West Theme
      - \*Cost \$125 for Client; \$100 for staff
      - \*Must provide vehicle for client/staff
  - Jennifer Bowman-Compass
    1. Operations Team has moved to the Mountain Lakes location: 4712 Mountain Lake Blvd
  
- ix. SPAC Meeting Schedule
  - September 27, 2023
  - November 15, 2023
  
- c. Nomination Committee: Slate of Officers Presented and Approved (see section six for the motion)
  
- 10. **Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA): Daniel Strauss, Representative**
  - i. Board Update
    - ARCA represents California’s network of 21 regional centers – over 400,000 people with developmental disabilities
    - Achieve “the intent and mandate of the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act in providing community-based services that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve their full potential and highest level of self sufficiency.”

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## ii. ARCA Strategic Plan 2023-24 Priorities

- The ARCA Strategic Plan is a three-year document with focus areas meant to guide the work of the Association
  - The 2023-24 priorities are specific objectives within those focus areas to be implemented through the current fiscal year.
1. Funding for Current and Future Needs
    - Refine rate reform for developmental services
    - Advocate for an equitable and sustainable regional center operations funding methodology.
  2. Flexible and Sustainable Services
    - Support the development of needed services identified by individuals served and families
    - Promote more efficient coordination of regional center and generic services
  3. Promotion of the Lanterman Act
    - Develop meaningful metrics to support measurement and improvement of regional center effectiveness
    - Support greater consistency and enhanced performance across all 21 regional centers balanced with local decision-making.
  4. Inclusive and Equitable Communities
    - Communicate with diverse communities and advocate alongside them for the services and supports necessary to promote good outcomes.
    - Support the work of regional centers and their community partners to increase community inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities
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## 5. Regional Center System Efficacy

- Support regional center board member development and effectiveness

## 11. Report from Executive Director, Melissa Gruhler

### i. Highlights:

- Family Wellness

Thank you Chere Sullivan, Community Services and the Fiscal department for your contribution in making this pilot program successful.

- Self Determination update-Currently serving 113 individuals in Self Determination. Challenges continue with Financial Management Services. Community Services is actively exploring other options. We have approached a local company to become a vendor.

### ii. Department of Developmental Services 2023 May Revision Highlights

- June 15, 2023 the budget was approved and waiting for the Governor's approval. Legislators are currently working on the Trailer Bill language related to the 23/24 budget.
- The number of individuals served by regional centers is expected to be 396,375 in the current year and increase to 420,927 in fiscal year 2023-24. Far Northern is currently serving 9,899 individuals this includes those in the intake process.
- Regional Center's Operations will receive a deallocation in 2022-23 budget. The current year had included \$400.3 million for policies impacting regional center operations. There is a net decrease of \$20.4 million compared to the Governor's Budget. This is primarily driven by two areas:
  1. Reduced Caseload Ratio for Children through Age Five: Decrease of \$20.6 million due to the difficulty in hiring in the current year. FNRC was able to hire all but one position. (Thank you HR department).

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2. Lanterman Act Provisional Eligibility Ages 0-4:  
increase of \$237,000 due to updated caseload  
growth.

In addition the POS updated current year reflects a net decrease of \$160.8 million in reimbursements as compared to the Governor's Budget due to lower than projected expenditures.

- For 2023-24 Budget there will be reductions in the overall State Budget however, Developmental Services were not significantly cut and resulted in expected positive outcomes. (see 2023 May Revision Summary)
- iii. Proposed bill AB 1147 Disability Equity and Accountability Act of 2023.
    - This bill would significantly change the delivery of services from Regional Centers as it is currently written. The bill proposes the following:
      - For AB 1147, emphasis the system is “plagued with racial, ethnic, and geographic disparities.” Per AB 1147 the belief is there is lack of Regional Center board trainings, service consistency, and transparent data.
      - This bill would require DDS to develop a common set of services and supports (including supported living services) that must be available to all clients at their IPP meetings.
      - AB 1147 would cut board member terms from a maximum of 7 out of every 8 years to a six-year term before requiring a minimum five-year waiting period to come back after that 6 year term. It would mandate that boards be composed of community members who are representative of the community, and that new members be found through outreach and limits the regional center Executive Director's role in the process. Board trainings would no longer be done by the center, but by DDS. DDS would have to survey board members about their ability to participate in meetings, and have to create guidance for boards in evaluating their executive directors, with “issues

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of equity and diversity” being specifically mentioned- though otherwise undefined.

- Make a brand-new set of Regional Center Performance Measures, in addition to the ones that already exist.
- Regional Centers would be subject to the California Public Records Act (PRA).
- AB 1147 would require Regional Centers to fund any needed generic service that isn't available. Current law only covers services that could potentially be paid for through health insurance for those in the Early Start program.
- Amends WIC §4659, on generic services. AB 1147 overhauls the current law about when centers can pay for medical/dental services to make those services easier to access, and reduce bureaucratic burdens on families when trying to get those services through a Regional Center. It will require Regional Centers to purchase a service once a generic agency has issued a denial.
- ARCA will be drafting the suggested amendments emphasizing the Regional Center boards providing the direction to the Regional Centers as was the intent through the Lanterman Act. The positive in nature aspects of this bill are already being looked at such as the standardization of services.

iv: Consumer Advisory Committee Meetings in the communities we serve.

- We are looking to be more involved in our rural counties.
- Doing our actual board meeting in these counties just has not been feasible.

Topics:

- What do we do as a Regional Center
- Use outreach to reach individuals that might not know about the services the Regional Center provides.

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- The CAC meetings will be open to the public
- In addition our board meeting in September will be held in Mt. Shasta.

v. Bagley Keene flexibilities

- For remote participation in meetings without disclosing remote locations or opening them to the public will expire June 30, 2023. ARCA staff worked with SCDD, DVU and DRC to come to an agreement about continuing this flexibility for LVAC meetings while keeping the meetings open to the public. DDS will explore issuing a directive on this topic under their authority related to SDP implementation .
- Potentially when joining meetings in the future you may be required to list your location address.

### **12. Announcements, Reports, Questions and Answers, Summary Comments: All Board Members**

- Andreas Economopoulos: Impact Solutions will be starting ILS services in Siskiyou County (Yreka) Impact Solutions also assisting with the closure of the Opportunity Center.
- Terri M. People First of Red Bluff June Meeting seven people attended. Hospital doing good; SCDD open application RAC membership; Lighthouse summer kickoff at Kids Kingdom in Redding; Working on the Emergency Fair which will take place in September
- Kim Leeseman People First of California-State wide gathering tomorrow via Zoom. Hoping to conduct this meeting next year in person. The September meeting will be the first in person meeting since COVID. This meeting is open to the public and all are invited.

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- William Moore People First of Chico-Travis McIvor did a presentation on Safety. An election was held for a new secretary. Welcoming committee will be putting together flyers to get the meeting information distributed. They will be voting on a new treasurer as well.
- Adrian Hugo-Going to the Pow-Wow in Susanville representing the FNRC Board of Directors. Looking forward to the possibility of being part of the Tribal Engagement Team.
- Dan Strauss-Reducing Stress-Looking at the over prescription of meds. Meds can be successful but dull the senses. Many overwhelmed and anxious. How can we test and empower individuals to take control of their lives in connection with stress management? Behavioral training thru counseling etc rather than pharmaceuticals. Suggestations:
  - Ginger Moyles- concierge clinic not covered by insurance "The WELL" located in Siskiyou County. Unconventional individualize treatment.
  - Breathing techniques being taught to marines. Life saving techniques for panic and stress issues  
Link [www.thewellcenterforhealing.com](http://www.thewellcenterforhealing.com)
- Andreas Economopoulos-ARCA CAC Meeting-Announced anyone is welcome at these meetings. Teaching Music lesson learned the true teacher is the student. Label free approach to teaching. Looking into doing a possible piano camp in the future.

### 13. Transition to Executive (Closed) Session, W & I 4663 (a),

- (1) Real estate negotiations.
- (2) The appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of a regional center employee.
- (3) Employee salaries and benefits.
- (4) Labor contract negotiations.
- (5) Pending litigation.

Motion and second to move into closed session Andreas Economopoulos and Araceli Garcia. No discussion, Motion passed

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14. Next Meeting: September 28 and 29, 2023, Mt Shasta Resort, Mt Shasta, CA
15. Adjournment- Motion and second Edna Winkle and Terri M. No discussion, Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM

Draft