

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

Regular Meeting
Friday, January 26, 2024
9:15 a.m.
Doubletree Hotel-Chico/Zoom

1. **Call to Order:** 9:20 AM by Vice-Chair Joseph Cullis
2. **Roll Call**
 - a. Present: Deborah Anderson, Kim Leeseman, Daniel Strauss, Josh Flom, Joseph Cullis, Araceli Garcia, Terry M., Andreas Economopoulos, Adrian Hugo, Selene Mercado, Patricia McCarthy, Edna Winkle, William Moore, Lori Childres , Timothy Howard, Christine Johnson, Ginger Moyles
 - b. Absent: Cali McKinzie
 - c. Visitors: Cindi Freshour, We Care A Lot Foundation; Renee Bauer SCDD; Diana Anderson
 - d. Staff: Audra Feeback, Chief Financial Officer; Melinda Roberts, HR Director; Keith French, IT Manager; Larry Withers, Associate Director Client Services South; Tracy Duarte, Associate Director Community Services;
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 for January 26, 2024.**
 - a. Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and Daniel Strauss. No further discussion, Motion passed
5. **Approval of Minutes from November 17, 2023**
 - a. Motion and second and Terri M. and William Moore, No Discussion Motion passed

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6. Report from Chairperson, Joseph Cullis, Vice-Chair:

- a. Other: Conducting the meeting on the behalf of Cali McKinzie, board chair. Will give committee reports later in the agenda.

7. Management Reports

- a. Financial Report: Audra Feeback, Chief Financial Officer

- i. Purchase of Service Report FY 23-24

- Total POS \$282,495,157; Year to Date \$97,104,179; Projected Annual Expenses \$256,786,134; Leaving \$25,709,023 remaining.

- Allocations in POS show we have sufficient and excessive funds to continue funding services. The remaining funds will shrink as the regional center continues to grow.

- Excessive funds are still being invested in short term treasury bills.

- The Governor's budget item that we are hoping will be approved for POS is the rate increase to our vendors effective July 2024.

- The Governor wants to push it to 2025. This will effect our projects and forecasts listed on page 39.

- ii. A new Financial Report was added "Glossary of Terms" page 43. This report is a list of terms that are used throughout the financial reports.

- Please let Audra know @afeedback@farnorthernrc.org if something needs to be added or changed in order to have a better understanding of the reports.

- iii. Operations Report FY 23-24

- Operations is very active due to our growth.

- Total Operations: Allocation \$32,080,180; Year to Date \$12,163,544; Project Annual Expenses \$31,883,183; Projected Funds Available \$196,997.

- Allocations (Page 35) must be spent within the year or the money reverts back to the state.

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The folding machine used for mailing is being replaced using investment funds. Along with renovation in the Chico Office due to growth.

On page 43 Glossary of Terms “IT” is listed as this is a large item within the operations budget. Currently moving from IPads to Laptops to support all the needs of our staff out in the field.

Grant Activity:

ARPA-American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 will finish in September 2024.

Family Wellness 2023-2024 pilot project. This grant may continue. Currently we are waiting on a review from The Department of Developmental Services (DDS). This has been a very successful program. We are expecting this program to continue.

Attachment A gives an explanation of large changes in projected expenses and other revenue compared to prior year. Such as Legal/Consulting/Audit – Strategic Plan consulting and Prior Year SDP Funds not yet paid reflecting a 72% increase in this category.

- b. Client Services Report, presented by Larry Withers, Associate Director, Client Services South
 - i. POS Guidelines – Action Item #5- Issue: Approval of changes to Far Northern Regional Center’s Purchase of Service Guidelines and Funding Policy due to legislative changes to the Lanterman Act reflected in Section 4688.22.
Action Requested: We respectfully request that the document, “Purchase of Service Guidelines and Funding Policy, dated January 12, 2024 be approved by the FNRC Board of Directors. Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and Araceli Garcia, no discussion, Motion passed.

A summary of these changes are listed on page 67.

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Page numbers refer to the document titled FNRC Guidelines-
1.9.2024 Revision Post W&I 4688.22.

- Purchase of Service Funding Policy (Page 3)
 - Camp (Page 15)
 - Day Care (Page 20)
 - Recreation Therapy (Page 42)
 - Respite Services (Page 46)
 - Socialization Training (Page 50)
 - Social Recreation Services (Page 51)
 - Specialized Recreation Services (Page 52)
- ii. Other: Still working on hiring staff. Focusing primarily on staff to reduce our caseload ratios. Successful interviews are taking place. With the tremendous amount of new staff it takes a lot of time and energy for training.
- c. Human Resources Department Report, Melinda Roberts, HR Director
- i. Action Item #4- Issue: California Government Code sections 21221 and 21224 require Board appointment of CalPERS retirees that FNRC wishes to re-employ.
Action Requested: It is requested that the Board of Directors appoint Donna Crotty-Boyd to be re-employed by FNRC effective March 11, 2024, for a period of no more than 12 months, pursuant to the Government Code requirements.
Motion and second William Moore and Timothy Howard, no discussion, Motion passed.
- ii. Other: Hiring foremost on our plate this last year. We have hired 62 new people which requires more training. Staff are moving to new positions as we hire new supervisors to help with the growth as well.
There have been 33 separations including a number of retirements. Currently we have about 16 positions open as we continue to move forward. A number of offers are in the process.

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As of the date of this report FNRC total employees is 263. A psychologist was hired and this is a difficult position to fill in our area. Also a new controller was hired and began working in January.

8. State Council on Developmental Disabilities, North State Office Report: Renee Bauer, Regional Manager North State

i. Report:

- North State Office is putting out a monthly newsletter. Goal is to capture local, regional and statewide information, resources, and opportunities.
- North State-Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) next meets on: February 16, 2024. We will be welcoming four newly appointed members in the following Counties: Butte, Shasta, Lassen, and Siskiyou.
- SCDD continues to offer Self Determination orientations in a variety of languages.
- State Council met on January 23, 2024. A large component of this Council meeting was dedicated to reviewing the State Plan that guides our work to review performance measures.
- In 2023, 139,089 Californians were reached through SCDD activities. This number is broken down by training, meetings, events, and technical assistance. State plan progress has been met or exceeded. Enhanced attention to system change work and increased outreach to underserved communities.
- SCDD Storytellers-each person has a story to tell. This blog provides a space to share. For more please visit our website.
- North State Office and Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) staff, Jeff Olson had the opportunity to teach a class to California State Park Cadets, at Butte College, in January. Focus was on support services and resources for field interactions relating to people with developmental disabilities. Ongoing outreach to continue to provide education opportunities in the enforcement and general responder fields.

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9. FNRC Board Committee Reports and Action Items:

a. Consumer Committee, Adrian Hugo, Chair

- Newsletter-presented by Rachel Sangenitto, Administrative Assistant

1. Community calendar discussed
2. Photo's will be added to the articles already submitted
3. Small change to the "People First of California" article
4. Printed copies will be delivered to day programs and group homes. A digital copy of the newsletter will also be available.
5. Emergency preparedness may be added
6. Articles for the next newsletter:
 - a. Adrian will submit a featured article
 - b. Kim and William will collaborate and submit a Hero article.
 - c. Joe-An article on "Getting to know your Board"
 - d. Kim- Healthy Living Habits
 - e. Edna-"What does Advocacy Mean?"
 - f. Teri-People First Conference in May
 - g. Travis-Safety

- Rescheduled the CAC meeting in Trinity County to July 9th.

- Action items were discussed and explained by Melissa

- Board Member concerns and announcements:

- a. Kim-Asking about the message getting out that our Board Meetings are open to the public

b. Membership Committee, Joseph Cullis, Ex-Officio

- Review of SPAC Applications

1. Three applications were presented and discussed.

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Motion and second to vote for approval Teri M. and
Andreas Economopoulos, no discussion, Motion passed

c. Finance Committee, Lori Childres, Chair

- Action Item #1-Bank Signers

Action requested: It is recommended and requested that the following authorized signers be approved by the Board of Directors:

US Bank Operations and Purchase of Service checking accounts, Operations Interest on Checking account, Representative Payee Checking, Representative Payee Savings account (two signatures required):

- *Melissa Gruhler-Executive Director

- *Wayne Doering, Associate Director, Client Services

- *Tracy Duarte, Associate Director, Community Services

- *Audra K. Feedback, Chief Financial Officer

- *Jim Knight, DDS, Deputy Director, Administration

- *Brian Winfield, DDS Chief Deputy Director, Program Services

Umpqua Bank Corporate contributions account: (one signature required)

- *Melissa Gruhler, Executive Director

- *Audra K. Feedback, Chief Financial Officer

- *Debit card authority only: Shelly Nickle, Executive Assistant

Motion and second Finance Committee and Christine Johnson, no discussion, Motion passed

- Action Item #2-Mains'l California

Action Requested: The Board approve contract PS-2684 with Mains'l California, LLC (PF3110) for Creative Arts Program Services effective January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025 for a total maximum contract amount of \$974,185.20.

Motion and second Finance Committee and William Moore, no discussion, Motion passed

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- Action Item #3- Siskiyou Opportunity Center
Action Requested: The Board approve contract PST-2557 ADD #1 with Siskiyou Opportunity Center (H11598) for Transportation Services effective April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2025 for a total maximum contract amount of \$2,242,080.00.
Motion and second Finance Committee and Araceli Garcia, abstain Patricia McCarthy, no discussion Motion passed

d. Executive Committee, Joseph Cullis, Vice- Chair

- Action Item #6-Membership to ARCA
Issue: Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) changed its policies requiring Regional Centers to apply to be accepted into ARCA.

*Amy Westling, Executive Director of ARCA presented:

- a. ARCA's mission in providing for Regional Centers
- b. A discussion took place and the committee did it's due diligence to insure this is in the best interest of the Regional Center.

Action Requested: Request to approve applying for Membership to ARCA. This would entail paying dues and active participation in ARCA meetings.

Motion and second Executive Committee and Timothy Howard, no discussion, Motion passed.

e. Service Provider Advisory Committee, Josh Flom, Chair

- Jane Work presented the CASH program, it was clear when they transitioned the opportunity center that there was a need for job coaches. A new program "CASH"-Calling All Senior Heroes was developed. This is an attempt to get seniors to come back to work part time as job coaches. This program is starting in Shasta County but if this proves to be successful the program may be expanded.

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- HCBS Compliancy-Tracy Duarte, Associate Director Community Services
Onsite visits occurring by the regional center. 25% must be in compliance by February and 100% by August.
Anyone who is struggling can reach out to the regional center and training videos are available.
- DSP Stipend-Tracy Duarte, Associate Director Community Services
DSP staff are excited about the opportunity to receive training.
To qualify 50% of their time must be spent doing direct care.
- Proposed Budget FY 23-24-Melissa Gruhler, Far Northern Regional Center Executive Director
 - a. Delay in the last rate increase slated for July 2024
 - b. Budget 15 billion for 2024-25
 - c. The budget reflects the growth we have seen this year
 - d. Current year budget no real change
- Masterplan-DS taskforce to be focused on Q/A
If you know anyone who may be a good advocate please contact Melissa.
- Self-Determination-Melissa Gruhler, Far Northern Regional Center Executive Director
Recruiting taking place and interest in the program; however still not enough FMS providers. The rate increase is improving the quality of the FMS providers.
Specialized service coordinators for SDP has been a success.
- Success stories were shared
- Save the date “First Annual Parent University” April 27th.
- REI café’ series will start in February and run for the next couple of months.

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- Next SPAC meeting May 15 in person

10. Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA): Daniel Strauss, ARCA Representative

- Cal-TASH Conference. Self-Determined Life. March 1st-2nd, Sacramento. Spanish language sessions available
See the flyer for details on workshops.
- Grass Roots Day. April 1st dinner. Tuesday April 2nd Advocate
 - *Why is Grassroots Day important?
 - a. Grassroots Day provides regional centers an opportunity to advocate the continuing entitlement of individuals with developmental disabilities.
 - b. We can meet face to face with those who can have a direct impact on budget dollars-California State Senators and Assembly members.
 - c. We can discuss the importance of the supports and services that enable full community inclusion of our Consumers.
- Blue “Envelope”. De-escalate with police/sheriff. Lanyard, wrist band. Currently being offered at the San Diego Regional Center.
 - *Blue Envelope Outreach Materials are available for free at participating locations.

11. Report from Executive Director, Melissa Gruhler

- i. Holiday’s are for Caring 2023.
\$6,500 was spent on gifts and gift cards. This year there was a stronger emphasis on gifts rather than gift cards. Showing the importance of being able to open a gift on Christmas Day. Each office had a tree allowing people to choose a tag, purchase the gift and participate in wrapping and in some cases delivering as well. This was a very successful event.

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Donations received just under \$9,915. The account balance for this program is \$48,286 so this amazing program will continue. This program was developed by our Vice Chair's mother Kay Cullis.

ii. Dashboard:

Caseload Ratios:

*Medicaid Waiver 1/66

*Age 5 and under 1/48.1

*All Others ----- 1/78.6

The team is working diligently to get additional staff hired to get these numbers down.

The 1/40 under 5 should be accomplished soon with the new hirers.

The department has come up with a new way of calculating these ratios the new calculations will help with workload.

iii. Self-Determination:

*Currently 164 individuals being served

- a. Butte County – 105
- b. Shasta County – 25
- c. Tehama County – 12
- d. Glenn County – 8
- e. Plumas County – 7
- f. Lassen County – 3
- g. Siskiyou County – 2
- h. Modoc County - 2

It is anticipated that we will start seeing an increase in the more rural communities. As our SDP staff begin working with those in these communities.

*Cultural Ethnicity:

- a. White – 122
- b. Spanish/Latin – 22
- c. Multi-Cultural – 8
- d. Other – 7
- e. African-American – 3
- f. Hmong – 2

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Self-determination challenges continue to be addressed. Cali has volunteered to sit on a statewide focus group. In addition, Melissa would like to be involved with these focus groups as well. Looking at the possibility of a regional center staff focus group that could bring suggestions and work together to help with the challenges.

- iv. Local Advisory Committee: SDP film developed by the local advisory committee is finalized. This film will be approved at the next committee meeting. Flyers will be going out with the details. Thank you to Selene Mercado for your participation in the film.

- v. 2024 Governor's Budget:
 - The Governor's Budget includes \$15.3 billion total funds for FY 2024-25 which is an 11.7 percent increase. This reflects the growth of the regional center with the anticipation that the growth will continue.

 - Service provider rate reform –there is a reduction of funds due to resource availability. Returning the full implementation back to the original timeline of July 2025. Providers had been told they would receive the increase July 2024. Individuals are coming together and advocating to keep the date July 2024.

 - Fairview Warm Shutdown: An additional year of funding to support the warm shutdown of Fairview Developmental Center as the property disposition process continues.

 - Preschool Inclusion Grants: A delay of the grant program from FY 2024-25 until FY 2026-27

 - Current budget no huge changes just some shift in funds to different categories.

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- For Fiscal budget year 2024-25
 - a. Regional Centers \$1.6 billion increase
 - b. Regional Centers Operations increase \$106.2 million
 - c. POS expenditures increase \$1.5 billion
 - d. Operations-Budget includes \$255.6 million for policies impacting regional center operations.
- Updated Policies:
 - a. Reduced Caseload Ratio for Children through age Five: Increase of \$16.3 million based on the anticipated growth.
 - b. Compliance with HCBS Requirements:
Increase of \$1.3 million to reflect regional center staff phase-in to support efforts to comply with federal requirements
Full compliance is due by August of this year.
 - c. Self Determination ongoing implementation:
Decrease of \$7.2 million due to limited term funding of Participant Choice Specialist positions through FY 2023-24 only. It has been determined that these positions are a must to make this program successful. Funds will be moved from other categories to fund these positions.
 - d. Service Provider Rate Reform: Increase of \$15 million supports adjustments to reflect annual costs of mileage and ILS.
 - e. Coordinated Family Support Services: Decrease in funds. We will utilize POS dollars to keep this going.
 - f. Provisional Eligibility ages 0-4: Increase of \$23.1 million due to caseload growth.
 - g. DSP Workforce: Increase of \$14.9 million. DSP Stipends will include internships moving forward.
 - h. Self-Determination Ongoing Implementation: Increase of \$205,000 due to updated caseload growth projections.

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- DDS-Masterplan to improve the experience of individuals and families receiving developmental services. DDS plans to reconstitute the DS Task Force to make recommendations that emphasize quality, equity, and outcomes, while improving the regional center accountability.
Melissa asked the Board to think about individuals that they could recommend to sit on these work groups. In the next two weeks email those individuals to Melissa. Once the email is received a discussion will take place. Once that is complete the names will be sent to the Department.

Vi . National Core Indicators: Areas we will be focusing on:

- a. Information and planning to provide more education on person centered planning.
- b. Continue to provide bilingual service coordinators and provide translated information.
- c. Health and wellness: Preventive health training
- d. Choice decision making during the IPP process

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

- i. Teri M. People First Meeting January 16 10 people on Zoom and 3 people in person. Next meeting February 20th @ 12:00
- ii. William Moore-
 - *People First Chico Chapter discussed having a social event as a way to draw in more members. Also discussed handing out flyers.
 - *Corning discussed the possibility of guest speakers
 - *Red Bluff-Looking for a treasurer. Discussed how to make meetings more fun. Healthy eating, budgeting etc. Looking forward to the Valentines Day party.
 - Shasta County-Partnering with Region 2 for the conference in May. Region 2 50th anniversary Conference – May 17-19, 2024 @ the Gaia Hotel in Anderson. A new donation letter will be going out to collect raffle prizes.

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Motion to move into close session Patricia McCarthy and Teri M., no discussion, Motion passed

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

i. Closed Session

Motion and second to move out of closed session Kim Leeseman and Andreas Economopoulos, No discussion, Motion passed

14. Employer Recognition Award:

- i. North Valley Services – Presented by Diana Anderson and Jane Work.
When Shasta County Opportunity Center closed North Valley services was contacted to see if they could help. NVS already had very successful government contracts. Many people working together on five contracts that were signed and completed within three months and this process usually takes about a year. This is a partnership. The Regional Center is a big part. Working together is the only way to make these things happen and be successful. So many were counting on them to keep their jobs when the SCOC closed. Many of the clients had been on the job 15-20 years. NVS took the lead, stepped up and made it happen. They were able to keep everybody working. Kevin Jones, CEO and Donnie Button, Community Services Director accepted the award.

This was also shared as the success story at the ARCA meeting.

15. Next Meeting: March 14 and 15, 2024 – Sheraton Hotel, Redding

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- 16. Adjournment:** Motion and second Araceli Garcia and Patricia McCarthy, No discussion Motion passed
Meeting adjourned 12:16 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Shelly Nickle

Administrative Assistant