

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

Regular Meeting  
Friday, November 17, 2023  
9:15 a.m.  
Gaia Hotel-Anderson/Zoom

1. **Call to Order:** 9:15 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, William Moore, Lori Childres, Timothy Howard, Christine Johnson
  - b. Absent: Ginger Moyles
  - c. Visitors: James Ford, DDS; Cindi Freshour, We Care A Lot Foundation;
  - d. FNRC Staff: Audra Feeback, Chief Financial Officer; Melinda Roberts, HR Director; Keith French, IT Manager; Wayne Doerning, Associate Director Client Services North; Dr. Christine Austin, Medical Director; Tracy Duarte, Associate Director Community Services; Larry Withers, Associate Direct Client Services South
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.***)

Far Northern Regional Center's NCI Child & Family Survey  
Presented by: Melissa Gruhler Executive Director of Far Northern Regional Center

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### **Adult Family Survey (AFS) 21/22**

The purpose of this survey is to collect data in order to evaluate the quality and performance of the California Regional Center System.

FNRC completed surveys: 333

Demographics: Percentages

- Family Member lives at Home with Respondent
  - i. Yes -100%
- More than One Person with I/DD Lives in the Household
  - i. Yes- 18%
  - ii. No - 82%
- Family Member's Age
  - i. Mean – 35 years old
- Family Member's Gender
  - i. Male – 58%
  - ii. Female – 41%
  - iii. Other – 1%
- Family Members Disabilities Top five
  - i. Intellectual Disability – 65%
  - ii. Autism spectrum disorder – 40%
  - iii. Mood disorder/psychiatric diagnosis – 27%
  - iv. Other disabilities – 22%
  - v. Cerebral Palsy – 18%

### **Child Family Survey (CFS) 21/22**

Demographics: Percentages

- Child lives at Home with Respondent
  - i. Yes- 100%
- More than One Child in Household
  - i. Yes- 70%
  - ii. No- 30%
- Child's Age
  - i. Mean – 10 years old
- Child's Gender
  - i. Male- 73%
  - ii. Female- 27%
  - iii. Other- 1%

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- Child's Disabilities Top five
  - i. Autism spectrum disorder- 77%
  - ii. Intellectual disability- 30%
  - iii. Other disabilities- 20%
  - iv. Mood disorder/psychiatric diagnosis<sup>1</sup> 11%
  - v. Seizure/neurological disorder- 10%

Topics covered:

- Information and Planning
- Access and Delivery of Supports
- Choice Decision Making and Control
- Community Participation
- Health and Safety
- Satisfaction
- COVID

The full survey with all the details is available for viewing on our website's transparency page (AFS report; CFS report).

#### **4. Approval of Agenda November 17, 2023**

- a. Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and Christina Johnson  
No further discussion, Motion passed

#### **5. Approval of Minutes from September 29, 2023- No Changes**

- a. Motion and second and William Moore and Patricia McCarthy,  
No further discussion, Motion passed

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

- a. Action Item #1 – The approval of the amended 2024 Far Northern Coordinating Council Meeting calendar.  
Action Requested: Changing of the date in March 2024 from March 22<sup>nd</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup>.  
Motion and second William Moore and Terri M.  
No further discussion, Motion passed

- b. Other: Self Determination Program was discussed.  
Topics included in the discussion:
  - Concerns regarding transparency

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- Requests for more information from the finance department. Cali and Audra will work on putting this information together
- Possibility of a survey going out to those on SDP
- FNRC is ahead of the curve in regards to the implementation of this program.
- More discussion will take place in the future to look for areas that could be improved.

### **7. Management Reports**

a. Financial Report: Presented by - Audra Feedback, Chief Financial Officer

i. Monthly Financial Report contract year 2023/2024

- Total Operations Estimated Contract Allocation \$33,070,180. Year to date expenses \$7,812,715. Projected Annual Expenses \$32,886,079.

- Total Purchase of Services Estimated Contract Allocation 282,495,157. Year to date expenses \$52,070,356. Projected Annual Expenses \$255,521,471. Projected surplus \$26,973,686.

ii. Actual and Projected Operations Expenses

- This report reflects our growth. The areas associated with increases this year are Salaries/Benefits; Facilities Cost; IT Equipment; General Office and Legal/Consulting/Audit. Also showing an increase is Travel as we are out in the field more this year.

- Other Revenue – investments

This area is expected to do well again this year. We will be investing our excess cash.

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## iii. Purchase of Service Expenses

- Last January 2023 was the implementation of the Burns rate study. Several vendors received large increases due to the study. The 2022-2023 Fiscal Year only reflected this increase for six months. The 2023-2024 year will be a full year of impact of the rate increase.

## iv. POS Current year projected comparison to prior year actual expenses contract year 2023/2024

- Residential Care Increase \$7,696,692 – 10.8%
- Supported Living Increase \$7,504,077 – 18.8%
- Respite Increase \$2,138,829 – 12.5%
- Personal Care \$2,886,770 – 22.6%
- Child Development and Therapy Increase \$2,764,455 – 27.8%
- Independent Living Increase \$2,739,131 – 32.9%
- Other Services Increase \$2,052,085 – 32.8  
This category is not affected by HMA-Burns rate study. Projected increases in this category result from increased utilization of Promotores services and Self-Determination Fiscal Management Service (FMS) fee increases and utilization.
- A graph was added which reflects how we are spending our funds for POS. Our focus is on finding providers and reaching people that need these services.

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- b. Client Services Report, presented by Larry Withers, Associate Director, Client Services South
  - i. POS Guidelines:  
The process of getting these guidelines approved began in 2019.

### Summary of Changes – October 2023

FNRC Requested and Approved changes in the following areas:

- Authorization Duration
- POS Funding Policy
- Behavior Management Services
- Dental Services
- Supported Employment
- Vehicle Modification for Accessibility

DDS Requested Changes-Purchase of Service Funding Policy

- Adult Day Programs
- Independent Living Skills Instruction
- Intensive Early Treatment for Autism
- POS Funding Policy-Deductibles and Copayments
- Relationship to the Developmental Disability
- Sex Offender/Victim Counseling
- Supported Employment-Competitive Integrated Employment
- Supported Employment – Group
- Transportation – Work & Day Programs

- ii. Action Item #5 Correction under the Background portion of the item should read October 2023 not 2022.  
Action Request: Respectfully request that the document, “Purchase of Service Guidelines and Funding Policy, dated October 11, 2023 be approved by the FNRC Board of Directors. Motion and second Andreas Economopoulos and William Moore, No discussion, Motion passed.

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- iii. Case Management update: Seeing a lot of client and staff growth. Extra time is spent in interviews adding a number of new staff and it looks like this will be continuing.  
In addition a new Associate Director has been added to the Children's Unit-Chere Sullivan
- iv. Client ID cards will be discussed at the next CMS meeting. Wanting to make sure all staff are aware these are available. The idea to present this at the next People First Meeting was discussed so the information can get out to individuals as well.
- c. IT Report- presented by Keith French, Manager of Information Systems
  - i. The New phone system will be implemented on November 27, 2023. All numbers will remain the same no changes.
- 8. **State council on Developmental Disabilities:** Renee Bauer, Regional Manager, North State – No Report
- 9. **FNRC Board Committee Reports and Action Items:**
  - a. Consumer Committee, Adrian Hugo, Chair
    - 1. Newsletter, presented by Simonne Robidoux Training and Communications Supervisor
      - An updated draft newsletter was presented
      - Bids are coming in for the publishing
      - Template of the newsletter was handed out
      - Asked for volunteers to write the articles due January 10.
        - Lori –Heroes who go the extra mile
        - William/Kim –People First Article- recruiting/membership
        - Kim –Healthy living habits
        - Cali-Getting to know your board
        - Regional Center staff to provide a calendar of events
        - Travis – Safety Article

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The contributor names will be first name and last initial.  
Finalization will take place at the January Board Meeting.  
The newsletter will be digital with hard copies available

2. Review Board Packet and Action Item (s)
  - Melissa presented the Action Items including the POS guidelines.
  
3. Board member concerns and announcements
  - William – People First combined conference May 17-19, 2024 @ the Gaia in Anderson
  - Kim- Resigned from her position of president of People First of California
  - Andreas – voiced his concern about what individuals have to do to get money from the state and federal government

b. Finance Committee, Lori Childres, Chair

1. Action Item #2 -Mains'I Contract

Action Requested: The Board approve contract PS-2684 with Mains'I California, LLC (PF3110) for Creative Art Program Services effective January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025 for a total maximum contract amount of \$751,267.68  
Motion and second Finance Committee and Araceli Garcia  
no discussion, Motion passed.

2. Action Item #3 – IPS Services, Inc Contract

Action Requested: The Board approve contract PS2674 with IPS Services, Inc. (PF1501) for Community Integration Services effective January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 for a total maximum contract amount of \$376,254.00  
Motion and second Finance Committee and Andreas Economopoulos, no discussion, Motion passed

3. Action Item #4- First Transit, Inc Contract

Action Requested: The Board approve PS-1095 ADD #9 with First Transit, Inc (HF0366) for Transportation Services effective



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September 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 for a total maximum contract amount of \$2,486,292.20.

Motion and second Finance Committee and Timothy Howard,

Discussion: - Increase is in the fuel portion of the contract due to the increase in fuel costs. No further discussion, Motion passed

- c. Service Provider Advisory Committee-Josh Flom, Chair  
No Report

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

- i. Board Update November 2023

- Caring Futures, Family Caregivers and long-term planning.
- BoardSource; Board development resources.
- ARCA budget priorities for 2024-25.
- ARCA housing advocacy webinar

- ii. Family caregivers and long-term planning

- Information on free classes can be found on the Arc of California website: <https://CaringFutures.org>

- iii. Board Development Resources

- Resources on advocacy and ambassadorship, financial oversight, strategic planning etc.
- Monthly webinars on a variety of board leadership topics.
- BoardSource's governance experts via its "Ask-an-Expert" email Q & A service
- The BoardSource Exchange, a peer learning platform.
- To get started: <http://www.boardsource.org/arca>

- iv. ARCA Budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2024-25

- Prioritize truly affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities in projects funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

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- Update service provider rates based on inflation and needed rate model assumption fixes to better address service access needs, particularly in underserved communities.
  - Fully fund regional centers for service coordination and commit to a revision of the Core Staffing Formula.
- v. ARCA Housing Advocacy Webinar
- Webinar is set for Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, from 2-3 PM.
  - Hear from self-advocates-how to get involved in housing advocacy.
  - Spanish and ASL interpretation will be provided. To register:  
[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_XJKAyQ3mTQWc-HrfNJFcmg#!/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XJKAyQ3mTQWc-HrfNJFcmg#!/registration)

### **11. Report from Executive Director, Melissa Gruhler**

- i. Growth:
- New Associate Director in the Children's Unit – In addition we are looking at adding two additional units to the regional center.
  - We have received funds to hire more individuals to support the 1/40 ratios
  - Looking to improve the Onboarding and training process  
We recognize with so much growth many of our staff have limited experience.
- ii. Holidays are For Caring:
- Information has gone out supporting Holidays are For Caring in identifying individuals that might not get a gift under the tree.
  - We will also have the "Gift Tree" available again this year. Tags are displayed on the tree listing gifts that have been requested. Once a tag is signed out you can then purchase the gift and drop it off for wrapping and delivery. This is available to the public as well as out staff
- iii. Consumer Committee (CAC) going out to the rural areas
- October the meeting was held in Modoc County  
One individual was present who was on the Board of Supervisors.

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He was able to provide a lot of input and will be providing output in sharing about the regional center.

- iv. Self Determination Program (SDP) continues to grow as of October 31, 2023 there were 141 individuals enrolled.
  - In October along with the local advisory committee a film was created that featured three individuals on this program. The film was well received. The team is currently discussing if there will be future showing of this film.
  
- v. Regional Center updates:
  - New phone system will be in place next week all phone numbers will remain the same.
  - We are growing out of our facility spaces primarily in the Redding office. We are currently doubling up and trying to gain additional space. We are also doing some research in the Redding area for other sites that would be more accommodating due to our growth.
  - The Chico office did receive additional space that now needs to be remodeled.
  - Performance incentive funds were received which will assist in a couple of areas: Our strategic planning and a lump sum payment along with swag to each staff member.
  
- vi. Ground Breaking Event: We had the privilege to be part of this event. A new senior housing project which will consist of a total of 60 units with nine being set aside for individuals with disabilities along with six units being set aside for individuals with mental health issues. So nice to see the partnership with Tri-Counties Bank and our Community Services Department.

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

- i. Christina Johnson – Program IRL-In Real Life-A social skills program 11-15 year olds; 16-22 and those over 22. This is a 16 week commitment. Wonderful program

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- ii. William Moore – People First 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
Corning chapter making pet beds out of t-shirts  
Chico chapter had a Christmas party and gift exchange
- iii. Teri M. – People First Red Bluff-discussed Christmas party and gift exchange decided to have the party.
- iv. Araceli Garcia – Excited about the family event that was organized by Veronica V. the FNRC Diversity & Inclusion Specialist. Eleven families were in attendance. Hoping to have a parent cafe so families can meet and support one another once a month.
- v. Andreas Economopoulos – Passion to fight for those with disabilities and veterans.  
Music program going well. Teaching individuals piano and now has added teaching people how to sing. Working on getting business cards to expand his business.

**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

No closed session

**15. Next Meeting:** January 25 and 26, 2024 Chico, Ca

**16. Adjournment:** Motion and second William Moore and Andreas Economopoulos, No discussion Motion passed  
Meeting adjourned 12:37 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

*Shelly Nickle*

*Administrative Assistant*