



**Nevada Children's Commission
Full Commission Meeting
Minutes**

DATE: Thursday, August 13, 2020

TIME: 1:00 PM

LOCATION:

This meeting will be conducted via video conference and teleconference options listed below, in accordance with Governor Sisolak's Declaration of Emergency Directive 006; Subsection 1; The requirement contained in NRS 241.023 (1) (b) that there be a physical location designated for meetings of public bodies where members of the public are permitted to attend and participate is suspended.

Governor Sisolak's Declaration of Emergency Directive 006 shall remain in effect for the duration of the current state of emergency, unless terminated prior to that date by a subsequent directive or by operation of law associated with lifting the Declaration of Emergency, pursuant to Directive 029, Section 4.

VIDEO CONFERENCE: <https://call.lifesizecloud.com/486948>

TELECONFERENCE LINE: 1-312-584-2401

EXTENSION: 486948

1. Call to Order – Justice Nancy Saitta, Justice Elissa Cadish, Ross Armstrong

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Justice Saitta.

2. Welcome and Introductions (Roll Call) – DCFS Staff

Members Present: Justice Nancy Saitta, Justice Elissa Cadish, Ross Armstrong, Nancy Brune, Senator Marilyn Dondero-Loop, Brigid Duffy, Tim Burch, Amber Howell, Shannon Gildea, Megan Miller, Judge Michael Montero, Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Kimberly Palma-Ortega, Shelia Parks, Judge William Voy, Judge Egan Walker, Janice Wolf, Assemblyman Steve Yeager

Members Absent: Margaret Crowley, Valerie Fujii, Judge Cynthia Lu, Senator Keith Pickard, Judge Frank Sullivan, Jared Busker

DCFS Staff: Kathryn Roose, Elvira Saldana

Public: Abbie Frierson, Jill Marano, Dr. Monica Cortez, Wanda Pena, Cynthia Carstairs

3. Public Comment and Discussion:

There was no public comment.

4. For Possible Action: Discuss Pandemic Response and Decide Upon Next Steps

Justice Saitta thanked the Commission members for taking the time out for being there on short notice. The purpose of the meeting is based upon the new world we live in, the effects the pandemic has on our community and most importantly it is essential the Commission gives a voice for the children in their community. Justice Saitta provided a brief summary of what Arizona, Oregon and Washington are doing during the pandemic.

Jill Marano reported there has been a decline in the number of reports from April through May. June through July leveled out. However, there has been an increase in substantiations. The severity of cases received is of concern. Visits require in person visits in any unlicensed homes and for all investigations. In person visits have not been required for licensed foster homes. There has been discussion for managers to put together a plan of when or how they may go back to in person visits and establishing criteria.

Abbie Frierson informed they normally have approximately 3000 children within Clark County Department of Family Services care. There are 1400 school aged children whom will need technology and about 400-500 have the technology they need. The other 900 children they have not confirmed if they have a computer or internet. There is an Educational Workgroup being put together to come up with how to support caregivers.

Justice Saitta asked Abbie Frierson if there has been any discussion with school officials about prioritizing onsite learning for our children much like some of the jurisdictions mentioned at the top of the meeting.

Abbie Frierson replied she has not heard of it being offered by the school district. They are prioritizing getting technology to the children. They do have a mechanism to adjust the needs of the 900 children Abbie spoke of.

Dr. Monica Cortez reported the Board of Trustees have approved for rural to determine what type of programming they will be offering. The rest of the region will be full time distance education.

Justice Saitta asked if an onsite learning specialized center has been discussed or considered.

Dr. Monica Cortez replied there have been many conversations.

Brigid Duffy stated it would make a difference if a certain level of students such as special education and foster children would be prioritized.

Justice Saitta asked Amber Howell if there is anything in her area the Commission may consider.

Amber Howell reported their reports for March through June were down. They have partnered with FedEx, UPS, and the Postal Service to train them on what things to look for. There have been several public awareness interviews with the news. The numbers are back up to what they were prior to COVID. Elementary schools are opening Monday. Middle and high schools will be hybrid. Transportation is a challenge. Domestic violence is high. Although there were lower reports and investigations, they have found the home environment, complexity and depth of abuse and neglect to be much further on. Case workers are going back into foster homes to do visits. They have applied for grants and CARES funding, however, have not been able to secure any. For the children participating in distance learning, they have been able to find a grant to allow to purchase laptops for foster children.

Justice Saitta asked Jill Marano if they have received any grant funding relating to technology Amber mentioned.

Jill Marano replied they have not received any technology grants, only CARES Act dollars.

Amber Howell informed she can share the two organizations they are working with.

Ross Armstrong informed DCFS submitted a request for 6-7 million dollars to the Governor's Finance Office to help the child serving agencies and the applications were declined. DCFS will continue any opportunity they can to apply for funds.

Brigid Duffy asked Amber Howell how they are handling mental health and if telehealth is as effective.

Amber Howell stated she struggles with telehealth when it comes to mental health. They did not go the telehealth route. They were able to take their mental health staff from adult and senior and redeploy them into one unit and assign them based on their expertise. Their challenge is not having where to place children when residential services are needed. They did not find telehealth to net what they would hope it would.

Brigid Duffy commented she is concerned with that as well, unless there is already a connection with the counselor.

Amber Howell stated being in person and having a human connection is a better investment than talking through a computer.

Senator Marilyn Dondero-Loop asked Abbie Frierson if all the 900 students need help or assistance.

Abbie Frierson replied the 900 are unknowns as of Tuesday morning. They are making efforts for workers to reach out. The school district will be prioritizing those students.

Senator Marilyn Dondero-Loop asked how the school district would know the children are the ones that need to be prioritized.

Dr. Monica Cortez replied for technology and registration, staff are calling all students whom have not responded to the survey.

Senator Marilyn Dondero-Loop asked who is part of the Educational Workgroup.

Abbie Frierson replied Judy Tudor is heading the Workgroup. They have not met, and they would be happy to add anyone.

Nancy Brune commented it has come to her attention the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority has 26,000 Clark County School District (CCSD) children in its care and there is very little collaboration between the two. The Housing Authority has 36 properties where they have a community center which could potentially be used for space for children. They are collaborative and have CARES funds to spend. Nancy Brune stated she'd be happy to make a connection between Brigid and the Housing Authority.

Justice Saitta requested Jill Marano and Amber Howell to connect regarding the grant process and Nancy Brune to connect with Brigid Duffy relating to the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority issue. Justice Saitta asked Ross Armstrong about children's mental health.

Ross Armstrong reported DCFS applied for and received a grant through the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) with some federal funding to temporarily expand mobile crisis in the South and the North. The North will now have 24-hour coverage. Dr. Freeman from DCFS and Dr. Woodard from DPBH collaborate on the State Behavioral Health Workgroup to evaluate behavioral health needs and plan the behavioral health response. Regarding the discussion about telehealth, Ross Armstrong stated he echoed some of it especially for younger children who need the person there. However, at least the providers in the community can get the reimbursement for telehealth. There is some caution about making everything available via telehealth, however the flexibility can be helpful to maintain services in a public health crisis or for the rural areas. In the budget reductions, Medicaid prioritized children and their health.

Brigid Duffy asked what the expansion of mobile crisis will look like in the South, if more clinicians will be added.

Ross Armstrong replied it will be a full team which will be a supervisor and 3 or 4 extra clinicians. DCFS had to do some contemplating in the budget reduction process. All the agencies were asked for 6%, 10%, and 14% cuts. The 14% scenario wiped out almost all of Community Services Children's Mental Health. The big portion of reductions, the Governor eliminated in his proposal. DCFS is grateful for him prioritizing children's mental health. There may be a need to explore how to best serve families as further budget reductions come in or the landscape of health changes. Mobile crisis is a priority.

Justice Saitta asked if there were any questions or concerns.

Janice Wolf commented she has forwarded some flyers of events and a lunch and learn class they are doing for parents or caregivers.

Justice Saitta requested Elvira Saldana to disseminate to the Commission members.

Judge William Voy asked Ross Armstrong what will happen when cuts come in 3 months from now.

Ross Armstrong replied DCFS is still in the process of building agency budgets. Currently there has not been direction to find additional cuts.

Judge Egan Walker stated as to Judge Voy's questions to Ross Armstrong about the budget cuts, the state has had to report from the juvenile justice perspective, it will result in reductions of bed capacity at state facilities. The bed reductions will very quickly create challenges. Judge Egan Walker also informed he was made aware this week a child at the Nevada Youth Training Center tested positive for COVID. The penetration of COVID in the state system is only going to increase. The purpose for raising the issue is to beg people to start breaking down the information silos that are part of our state. It is critical we get ahead of any challenges or crisis with information.

Brigid Duffy stated to Judge Walker's point, the importance of the Children's Commission is the fact they are siloed throughout the state. Clark County is the fifth largest school district and has 100% disengagement from school which means the pipeline to prison is going to increase. There is a lot of work to be done within the community. Brigid Duffy suggested getting all the people in the community that have all their own things going, to funnel into one place to get the message out to the community. On the

juvenile justice side, Clark County has the Harbors and the Grassroots program. They are also starting a Truancy Prevention Outreach Program and partnering with law enforcement agencies. There are recreation centers in the at-risk communities, however they are not serving high school students. Juvenile Justice Services is trying to figure out an evening program for the older kids in the community. Brigid Duffy stated she looks forward to joining county partners and share resources.

Justice Saitta requested Commission members to provide bullet point of what they are currently doing to identify and serve their demographic, what they plan to do, or what they know someone else is doing. One of the areas of stakeholders the Commission does not have is religious based community. Justice Saitta asked if anybody is doing anything about family respite or if there is anything missing.

Assemblyman Steve Yeager stated there is a lack of a repository or place where people can go to, to figure out what is out there for them. It would be nice to have a one stop clearinghouse which collects all the information and guides people in the right place.

Senator Marilyn Dondero-Loop stated she agreed with Assemblyman Steve Yeager and it would be great to have a bullet point sheet.

Amber Howell stated she would be happy to help and share what they have done with public awareness campaigns. Regarding respite, money was received the last legislative session. Washoe County has a policy on how foster families can access respite and it could be shared. Amber Howell reminded the group there is respite money available for the child welfare agencies.

Justice Saitta requested Amber Howell to provide what she has described, information and efforts she is doing and things she plans to do, to pass it on to others.

Ross Armstrong commented in terms of the repository, the Health and Human Services Director's Office operates and oversees 211 which is a service folks can call to have a navigator help them through services. If everyone provides Justice Saitta the information requested, it can be sent to 211 to be included on their website. Going forward, how to protect the agency's capacity will need to be monitored and considered.

Jill Marano mentioned some of the outreach efforts made such as online media campaigns, a search engine optimization, distribution of materials with information, and partnering with the Harbor. Some of the efforts are being focused on empowering children to be able to call the hotlines.

Abbie Frierson clarified when she stated they have approximately 900 or so children where they are not 100% sure they have all the technology needs met, it is because the school district has just begun their technology deployment, not that they will not get technology needs met. The Educational Workgroup is going to be important and helpful in figuring out what will be needed.

Justice Saitta asked Abbie Frierson when the Educational Workgroup is meeting.

Abbie Frierson replied they have not set their first meeting yet.

Justice Saitta asked Assemblyman Steve Yeager if he works with the law school.

Assemblyman Steve Yeager replied Dean Hamilton is a constituent of his, he could reach out to him and make the connection.

Justice Saitta requested Assemblyman Steve Yeager to follow up with her. Justice Saitta asked if anybody has an idea or consideration relating to those children who may be between 9-13 years of age, who are caring for 2-3-year old's in their home and if someone would volunteer to do some research in that area.

Brigid Duffy commented a definite gap is being identified.

Janice Wolf stated some of the Y's have an education program and she will provide information.

Tim Burch commented DPBH might be a more direct group to obtain information relating to census at childcare facilities.

Ross Armstrong stated DPBH is the licensing entity for childcare facilities, except for Washoe County. Restrictions have been eased up to allow facilities to take older siblings to make it easier on families. The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) has the childcare block grant which can help fund those slots. Ross Armstrong will reach out to DWSS.

Amber Howell commented the childcare block grant went up 86%. There should be plenty of funds and it would be a good resource to tap into.

Shelia Parks stated someone from the foundation has been in communication with Legal Aid about partnering and assisting financially. They are also planning to increase the amount of money for tutoring.

Justice Saitta requested the list of outreach points of contact to be emailed in a week, to Elvira Saldana or her. Justice Saitta asked if there was anything else of emergent consideration.

Kimberly Palma-Ortega commented she does a lot of stuff with the disability world and she may be able to pull some people within the disability area to help.

Justice Saitta asked Co-Chairs Justice Elissa Cadish and Ross Armstrong if there was anything else missing.

There were no other additional items.

5. For Possible Action: Discuss and Decide Upon Next Steps – Justice Nancy Saitta

- Assign Tasks to Committee Members (if needed)
- Specify Agenda Items for the Next Meeting
- Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time

6. Public Comment and Discussion

There was no public comment.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m.