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4-28-2023

Act 264 Board & Child and Family State Program Standing Committee Minutes

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## Section 2: Act 264 Board and Child and Family State Program Standing Committee

**Present Members:**  Alice Maynard  Cinn Smith, Co-Chair  Megean Martin  Matt Wolfe, Co-Chair  Kristin Holsman-Francoeur  
 Heather Freeman  Doug Norford  Laurie Mulhurn  Ron Bos Lun  Ward Nial  Joe Brusatto

**DMH/State Staff:**  Joanne Crawford  Cheryle Wilcox  Puja Senning  Lauren Welch  Eva Dayon

**Public:**  Kara Haynes  Amy Lincoln Moore  Sandi Yandow

### Agenda

- 9:30 Welcome
- 9:35 Prep VT Commission on Women and DCF Meetings
- 9:45 Discussion with Cary Brown of VT Commission on Women
- 10:30 Discussion with DCF – Commissioner Winters, Deputy Commissioner Radke, Beth Sausville
- 11:25 SIT Interagency Update – Cheryle Wilcox
- 11:45 Committee Business and wrap up
- 11:55 Public Comment

Agenda Item	Discussion (follow up items in yellow) 4 members needed for a quorum vote
Opening and Act 264 Business	Meeting convened at 9:35. Introductions and Review of Agenda skipped.
Prep VT Commission on Women and DCF	Aim for VT Commission on Women: meet and greet, further recommendations in report, open up collaboration Aim for DCF: want DCF's opinion on the recommendation in H169, would like more specifics about <u>any items with which they disagree</u> .
VT Commission on Women Visit	Cary Brown, VT Commission on Women Executive Director Ellie Lane, VT Commission on Women Policy Research Analyst and Business Manager State Agency advising legislature on topics related to women, children, and families  <u>Broken Systems, Broken Promises</u> report is <u>focused on a women's issues, so they are very interested.</u>

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	<p>Substantiation affects women more than men. Often because they are generally the caregivers. Women are sometimes substantiated for “risk of harm,” often related to intimate partner violence. We don’t want women being punished as victims of domestic violence.</p> <p><u>The Commission on Women is</u> becoming the last resort for women who are looking for help, having exhausted all other options.</p> <p>Some changes needed are policy changes but many others are process changes that don’t require legislative intervention. Clarifying vague definitions and procedures would be helpful for DCF to do first.</p> <p>Matt and Cinn volunteered to act as contacts/liasons between <u>our B</u>board and <u>the C</u>ommission to keep all parties informed and <u>to</u> collaborate in preparing for <u>the</u> 2024 legislative session.</p> <p>As part of <u>the i</u>nteragency <u>S</u>ystem of <u>C</u>are <u>P</u>lan development process, <u>our B</u>board could conduct <u>an</u> annual interview with <u>The Vermont</u> Commission on Women for their recommendations and input.</p>
<b>DCF Visit</b>	<p>Chris Winters, DCF Commissioner Aryka Radke, DCF Deputy Commissioner <u>of the</u> Family Services Division Beth Sausville, <u>Director of Policy and Planning in Family Services Division, Co-Chair of State Interagency Team (SIT)</u></p> <p>Commissioner Winters intends to continue reviewing the issues and recommendations in the report. He is welcoming of the conversation. Next step is for DCF to put together a workgroup (which could include a member or two from these committees) to find common ground before appearing in 2024 legislative session</p> <p><u>Our</u> Board is heavily in favor of improved processes for notification and documentation. It seems to be a relatively easy fix for DCF and would have a large impact on children and families. DCF seems to agree with the intention to make life easier for families and eliminate this barrier. Documentation needs to come from the right sources (<u>i.e.</u> custody notifications need to come from courts and substantiation should come from DCF).</p> <p><u>Our</u> Board feels there is a confusion of roles because DCF has two conflicting responsibilities: to protect <u>children and</u> families and to investigate wrongdoing. Families are less likely to trust <u>and fully engage in</u> DCF processes when the <u>agency department</u> performs both these functions.</p> <p>Commissioner Winters has a background as a lawyer, so he brings <u>a</u> legal perspective to due process, standards of proof, <u>etc.</u></p>

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	<p><u>Our Board expressed concern</u> about the economic impacts of long term or life long substantiation. Also, how can people get off the registry?</p> <p><u>Our Board</u> also recommends making DCF communications to families more accessible (e.g., including a glossary of terms in letters and notifications). Any policies or statutes that change should consider accessibility and clarity for Vermonters with disabilities. DCF <u>reported it had</u> reviewed forms a few years ago to make sure they are written at a 5<sup>th</sup>-grade reading level (common standard for public documents and media). Is there an additional resource to provide when even simpler forms aren't clear enough? DCF just created and hired an equity position; <u>this person who</u> is partially focusing on accessibility.</p> <p>DCF doesn't intend to be a "gotcha" entity that springs big things on families, but there are infrastructural issues that impede the State's ability to effectively contact them. DCF is open to recommendations and ideas for remedying this issue.</p> <p><u>Our Board is curious to know about changes that DCF has already made.</u></p> <p>Going forward, Commissioner Winters and team need more time to come up to speed. They expect that they can respond to the survey in the next few weeks. DCF agrees there needs to be system changes to better support the dedicated workforce at DCF. <u>Our Board</u> recommends making information about <u>the entitlement to Coordinated Service Plans (CSPs)</u> more visible on their website.</p>
<b>SIT Interagency Update</b>	<p>Cheryle Wilcox</p> <p><u>The</u> VDH Maternal <u>and</u> Child Health Division is now called <u>the</u> Family <u>and</u> Child Health Division. COVID funds to support folks living at hotels <u>are</u> winding down so agencies are working to develop supports for the future. <u>Cheryle will look into a particular case brought up by Laurie.</u></p> <p>Vermont is doing a good job of clear and timely notification of Medicaid renewal and documentation (which was previously suspended at the federal level during COVID).</p> <p>DMH got additional funding for mobile outreach/crisis <u>and is</u> looking for ways to continue to support this newer part of the system of care.</p> <p>RFP for ~15 bed youth residential <u>program</u> to bring <u>children in</u> out-of-state residential placements back to Vermont.</p> <p>DMH is tracking a <u>legislative</u> proposal to increase Medicaid rates by 4%.</p> <p>Parent support/parent reps – <u>What</u> does the <u>Board</u> think needs to be included in this grant project? Cinn emphasized that parent <u>representives</u> and parent support are two different things.</p>

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	<p>Next SIT meeting will include discussion of shared AHS/AOE funding. Cheryle will bring data and updates to next <u>B</u>oard meeting.</p> <p>Mosaic <u>A</u>lternative <u>S</u>chool is going out of business at the end of the school year. Seems to be about issues of staffing and funding as well as regulations around independent schools. AOE and school districts <u>s</u> will be coordinating placement for about 20 students.</p>
<p><b>Committee Business and wrap up</b></p>	<p>Moving the May meeting? General agreement to move meeting to May 19<sup>th</sup> (despite MH Block grant meeting at 1:00 on the same day). Maybe shorten the break and assign questions ahead of time via email.</p> <p><b>Motion</b> to accept March minutes. Made by Cinn. Motion passes.</p> <p>May Agenda:          Discuss meeting in person 2x/year          Ongoing recruitment (<b>Puja will resend flyers via email</b>)          Discuss DCF responses to recommendations          Cheryle Wilcox – SIT/Interagency          Update          Review of LIT survey questions (30?) (<b>Puja will send copy of last year’s survey questions</b>)          Discuss Act 264 Co-Chair positions          12:30 – 1:40 – meet with RMHS (Children’s SPSC only)</p> <p>Board acknowledged that visit with DCF was successful. Left visit with allies even after inviting them into a <u>series of</u> difficult conversations.</p>
<p><b>Public Comment</b></p>	<p>No comments.</p>

Minutes respectfully submitted by Joanne Crawford, Administrative Assistant, Child, Adolescent & Family Unit

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### Section 3: Child and Family State Program Standing Committee

**Present Members:**  Cinn Smith, Chair  Laurie Mulhurn  Ron Bos Lun  Ward Nial  Joe Brusatto

**DMH/State Staff:**  Joanne Crawford  Cheryle Wilcox  Puja Senning  Eva Dayon

**Public:**  Alice Maynard  Megan Martin  Matt Wolfe  Kristin Holsman-Francoeur  Doug Norford  Heather Freeman

#### Agenda

- 12:30 – 1:50 Prep Questions for RMHS Designation Visit
- 1:50 – 2:00 Adjourn Meeting

Agenda Item	Discussion (follow up items in yellow) <b>3 members needed for a quorum vote</b>
<b>CYFS SPSC Committee Business</b>	Section convened at 12:30pm.  Members created questions for RMHS Designation Visit in May. Members started with Ron Boslun’s Question list, as well as, General Questions List. Puja Senning of DMH created this document – Questions for RMHS_2023, found here: S:\Advisory Groups\ACT 264 Advisory Board & CAFU SPSC\CAFU SPSC\Designation Questions  Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Puja Senning, Quality and Program Participant Specialist

[screenshot any presentaitons shared and add to end of minutes]