

**Ramsey County Children’s Citizens Review Panel**

Minutes

Thursday, May 11, 2023

Zoom link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88988698997?pwd=MWFTdGtYbmZBYWVsMk8xYURpeXhjdz09>

Meeting ID: 889 8869 8997

Passcode: 202823

**Mission Statement**

Provide opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring the child protection system is protecting children from abuse and neglect and ensuring a nurturing home environment.

Meeting Called to Order: Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 4:35 pm by Co-Chair Tonya Long

**Attendance**

Members:	Tonya Long, Jill Esch
Past Members:	Jill Gunderson-Gernes, Jacqueline Thomas
Guest(s):	Janet Salo, Kinship Unit at LSS
Ramsey Staff:	None
DHS:	Vicki White, DHS

**Welcome:** Tonya welcomed everyone and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Janet Salo, LSS, introduced herself and highlighted the kinship work she is doing at Lutheran Social Services (LSS).

**Minutes:** April minutes were not approved but will be approved at June’s meeting.

**Agenda:**

Tonya verbally described the agenda and order of business. Tonya attended the Kid Connect community gathering. She also did some Ramsey County Citizens Review Panel (RCCSRP) recruitment and had 3 women sign up for more information about the Panel. She had lots of conversations with kin. Since the Panel was unable to support the Kid Connect monetarily, she did not administer the questionnaire that the Panel developed and there were no gift cards to give out. She had a table at the event. Rebecca Wilcox and who??? met with Tonya. Windy Ross says that RCCSRP is on pause as the County deals with \$5 million budget deficit and lack of staff to assign to the RCCSRP. Jacquie Thomas has applied for RCCSRP. Tonya emailed Windy Ross about interviewing Jacquie and moving forward with her application but she received no response. Tonya then asked Vicki White, DHS, if the Panel could move forward and process Jacquie’s application for membership. Vicki White will find out. There was a DHS and Ramsey County meeting re: RCCSRP. Tony was not present. There is no longer a Winona CRP. By statute, there must be 3 CRPs in Minnesota. If Ramsey County does not have a CRP, then there would only be 2 in the state of Minnesota. Jacquie emphasized that she is willing to do

whatever it takes to become member and that she wants to do things by the book so there is no question about the legitimacy of her membership. Jacquie added that she feels that Ramsey County wants to get rid of the RCCSRP. Tonya had talked to Sarah Bello about the change whereby members apply for membership through the Secretary of State website and the DHS commission appoints members. This has been out there unresolved for 2 years now.

Update on National CRP conference: Tonya asked Windy Ross at the County about the Panel using its \$5000 for down payment for the National Conference for next year. Windy Ross indicated that the County is too busy and understaffed to support National Conference. Tonya does not know whether this is possible but will try to pursue.

Recruitment for the RCCSRP: Since Janet Salo is guest for first time, Tonya explained that the RCCSRP is looking for members with lived experiences, as well as service providers. Tonya mentioned that Saint Paul school district is the most diverse in the state and the Panel is looking for more members.

Other business: Tonya will be attending the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council on 05/17/23. She will give a presentation about Citizen Review Panels (CRPs). She mentioned that 50% of Indian children in Redwood County are in Out-Of-Home placement (OHP). The Fond Du Lac Chair is also interested in the CRP. CRPs are powerful. Question for Vicki White: Would there have be legislation to have CRPs on tribal land?

Meeting Adjourned at 5:10 pm by consensus.

The next meeting of the Panel is Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 4:30 pm.

FYI – here is the email that Tonya is reading.

**From:** Goodsky, Yvonne (DHS) <[Yvonne.Goodsky@state.mn.us](mailto:Yvonne.Goodsky@state.mn.us)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:20 PM  
**To:** Tonya Long <[tklong50@gmail.com](mailto:tklong50@gmail.com)>; Esch, Jill (OAIF) <[jill.esch@state.mn.us](mailto:jill.esch@state.mn.us)>; Adler, Cassandra <[Cassandra.Adler@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US](mailto:Cassandra.Adler@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US)>; Ross, Windy <[Windy.Ross@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US](mailto:Windy.Ross@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US)>; Hedin, Kathy <[kathy.hedin@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US](mailto:kathy.hedin@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US)>  
**Cc:** Wilcox, Rebecca L (DHS) <[rebecca.wilcox@state.mn.us](mailto:rebecca.wilcox@state.mn.us)>; Wahi, Bharti M (DHS) <[Bharti.Wahi@state.mn.us](mailto:Bharti.Wahi@state.mn.us)>; White, Victoria F (DHS) <[victoria.white@state.mn.us](mailto:victoria.white@state.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Ramsey County Citizens Review Panel

Aaniin – Greetings.

I am reaching out today to you as Ramsey County Citizens Review Panel (CRP) members and Ramsey County staff that work with the CRP.

To begin, Miigwech (thank you) for the commitment you have made to participate in the CRP process. It is not easy work; systems change is difficult and slow in nature. You came to this work with a love for our community's children and families and a desire to improve their experiences within systems that, too often, were not created for them or by them.

We all know that in recent months the work of the CRP has become more difficult, with added tension and stress. DHS staff want to better support your success, understand obstacles to the work, revisit the core intentions of the CRP at Ramsey County, and create a path forward together. DHS staff will provide technical assistance and support to navigate this with you as partners. We will work to resolve any issues impacting CRP's ability to carry out its core functions.

To better understand the complexities that exist for CRP, we are setting up individual meetings with each of you. This is not an investigation. The intent of these meetings is to hear your concerns, explore what success has looked like for the CRP, and brainstorm ideas for how to move forward. We hope to meet with each of you over the next couple of weeks and then follow-up about potential next steps.

In her former role at DHS, Sarah Bello developed a draft set of CRP Operating Procedures that we'd love to share with you at a future meeting. These guidelines could possibly help with some of the structural questions that are arising. We need your expertise and input on this draft.

One issue we have gained clarity around is the role of the Ombudsperson for Indian Families as a member of the CRP. This role should not be excluded as a voting member of the Ramsey County CRP. See the following:

Minnesota statute specifically requires that CRP membership include representatives of certain other government bodies. It states, "The panel membership *must* include volunteers who broadly represent the community in which the panel is established, *including* . . . representatives of the councils of color and ombudsperson for families." Minn. Stat. § 256.01, subd. 15(b). In listing these representatives as required members, the statute does not draw a distinction between representatives of these bodies and community members appointed to the panel through an application process. The implication is that these members are on level footing, at least in the eyes of the statute.

We look forward to our upcoming conversations and creating solutions to move forward.

In partnership,

**Yvonne Goodsky**

Deputy Director of Prevention and Operations | Child Safety and Permanency Division

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### Ramsey County Children's Services Review Panel Kinship Survey

**Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Relative (Related by blood, marriage or adoption)

\_\_\_\_\_ Kin (Close to family and considered family)

**Optional:**

Race \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

#### SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Did you encounter any barriers during the licensing process?
  - a. If you answered "Yes", please elaborate:
2. The Process:
  - a. What worked best for you during the process of becoming a Relative/Kin provider?
  - b. What did you dislike about the process?
3. Your perspective, insight and suggestions so that the system can be improved:
  - a. What would really have helped you during the process of becoming a provider?
4. Are you or have you been involved in case planning for the youth in your care?
  - a. If you answered "Yes", please elaborate on your involvement.
5. Has any of the County requirements affected your family and your relationships with your family?  
Licensing and visitation are examples.