



## Regional Service Council Minutes Region 3

**Meeting Date:** January 29, 2024  
10:00 a.m.

**Meeting Location:** St. Joseph County DCS Local Office  
**300 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.**  
**South Bend, IN 46601**

**Council Members Present:** Kathryn Stephenson, Regional Manager, Sara Cole, Kosciusko County Director, Amanda Egger, Marshall County Director (via Teams), Tonya Douglass, FCM Kosciusko County, Tamara Perkey, Elkhart County Director, Heidi Trenerry, Supervisor St. Joseph County, and Teresa Zornig, St. Joseph County Director.

**Council Members Absent:** Judge Curtis Palmer, Marshall Circuit Court, and Judge Karin McGrath, Kosciusko Superior Court. Kelli Deisler, Supervisor Elkhart County, and Philice Hutchen, Supervisor Marshall County.

**Others in Attendance:** Dion Smith, Christy Robbins, Lisa Blanchard, Jan Rathberger, Jamie Brown, Michael Deranek, LaShaunda Parker, Nicholas Neal, Kristin Chamberlain, Kiana Jackson, Janice Nichols, Kandyce Emmendorfer, Libby Martin, and Ray Caples.

### Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 10:00am by Kathryn Stephenson.

1. Welcome/Introductions Members and Guests.
2. Approval of Minutes. Minutes from the 10/16/2023 meeting reviewed. Motion to approve minutes by Sara Cole. Teresa Zornig seconded. Approved.
3. Community Partners Update: Christy Robbins, Program Director.
  - Referrals dip slightly in December due to sickness and bad weather. DCS is the top referral source.
  - Flex funds reviewed. Purchased alot of beds. Safety is the focus and trying to address those home safety needs. Assisting with rent and utilities.
  - Ongoing Case management, struggle with initial contact.
  - We are at full staff.
  - Focusing on achieving small goals to encourage families.
  - Local Prevention dollars reviewed.
  - The Elkhart County Family Resource Center is opening on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Flyers available. Ribbon cutting event on February 20<sup>th</sup>. The center is designed to strengthen families offering comprehensive case management, parenting skills, support groups, health workshops, kids' korner, computer labs, financial and legal sessions just to name a few of the many collaborative services and supports available.
  - Local Prevention dollars reviewed.
4. Service Update: Dion Smith, Service Coordinator.

- Region 1,2, and 7 had expanded Services Hub rolled out. We can expect it in Region 3 soon.
- We have a shortage in visitation services in Elkhart County. If you have visitation, we need availability. Any thoughts, or ideas send Dion an email.
- RFP extended contract to 5 years, that mark is coming up in 2025. Out by the fall. Dion can help with the process but once the RFP opens, he cannot help you. Reach out to Dion if you need assistance prior to the RFP opening and look for those dates on the website.
- Family Preservation – trying to get it recognized as an evidence-based program. Randomly picking reports to look at. Region 3 is great, keep doing what you are doing. Other regions are not that great. We have a spreadsheet and pulling a random report. Looking at timely initiation, evidence-based in the treatment plan, and receiving monthly reports. Also, initial safety and verifying that the reports match the treatment plan.
- Biennial Plan - every two years we create a plan of focus. Overview of plan. Public testimony was held here on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 9am.
  - Summary of the work group topics –
    - Increase parent engagement, understanding and knowledge of the services available and roles of the providers.
    - Improved tracking and assessing, that services are meeting the individual needs of each family member on every DCS case.
    - Measurable Outcome for increase engagement with community resources and providers to increase the ability to meet the cultural, linguistic, and developmental needs of families.
  - Questions, concerns.
  - Council members vote to approve the Biennial Strategic Plan in Region 3
    - Approval of biennial plan as written. All in Favor. 0 opposed. Motion passed.
      - Council members sign the signature page.

#### 5. County Updates:

- Tamara Perkey, Elkhart County – fully staffed, hiring clerical, and assisting St Joseph County.
- Teresa Zornig, St. Joseph County Director – a bunch of FCMs in training once they graduate, we will be fully staffed. Hiring a supervisor positions.
- Sara Cole, Kosciusko County Director – transfer FCM from Allen County. Fully staffed.
- Amanda Egger, Marshall County Director- 8 FCM in February, one graduating and one starting.

#### 6. Other Business –

Holistic Engagement Tool – Tonya Douglass gives a brief description.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 10:29am by Tamara Perkey. Heidi Trenerry seconded. Meeting adjourned.

*Next RSC Meeting on April 15th in South Bend.*