

Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council Critical Incident Committee Meeting

November 23, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes-FINAL

Due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the meeting was conducted by Zoom rather than in person. Copies of the agenda and presentation were emailed in advance to the Partnership Council members and other interested persons who receive advance notification of Partnership Council meetings.

Committee Members Present

Chairperson Libby Mueller

Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr.

Supervisor Patti Logsdon.

Notice of Meeting

The notice of the meeting was published on the DCF and DOA websites on November 18, 2020 and in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on November 20, 2020. Second, the notice was faxed to the newspaper of record for the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Journal, on November 20, 2020. The notice was emailed to the Partnership Council stakeholders including any media who had requested such notice on November 20, 2020. Finally, the agenda was posted on the front door of the DMCPSC building at 635 N. 26th St. on November 20, 2020. This satisfies the requirements for notice under Wis. Stat. 19.84(1)(b).

Because the meeting was conducted by Zoom, the notice included information about how members of the public could connect to the Zoom meeting and how to locate the agenda and other meeting materials posted on the DCF website.

Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Chairperson Ms. Libby Mueller welcomed people to the meeting. Also appointed to the committee are Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr. and Supervisor Patti Logsdon.

There were approximately 19-21 community members in attendance. It should be noted that Bri Perez appeared for a portion of the meeting as a representative for Supervisor Sequanna Taylor.

Ms. Mueller provided information regarding public notice of the meeting to the committee.

Department of Children and Families System Change Review Process, Lexi Matter, Child Welfare Program Initiatives Supervisor, Bureau of Safety and Well-Being (BSWB)

Ms. Matter provided a presentation to the committee regarding the DCF System Changes Review Process. Presentation materials have been posted to the MCWPC website.

Committee Member Remarks

When the presentation concluded, the committee members provided remarks and Ms. Matter answered the committee members and attendees' questions.

Committee Member Feedback and Questions

Ms. Muller asked a question regarding the review process. Ms. Matter advised that this process has been happening in the balance of the state for a few years. She advised that the state is responsible for reviewing any critical incident at either the county or DMCPSC level.

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Ms. Matter advised that other counties may have similar or different ways of reviewing cases but BSWB is not involved. Other counties have Citizen Review Panels who have the authority to conduct reviews of cases, but Ms. Matter was not aware that they are regularly conducting reviews. But if they are, it is due to a specific incident/case. Ms. Matter advised that as a state, they do not receive results of what cases county citizen review panels look at.

Ms. Mueller advised that as a committee, they need to decide how they want reviews to look moving forward. She advised that in the past case reviews were a look back at cases that they would discuss and when relevant, make their own recommendations.

Ms. Matter advised that when they are doing a review at the state level the report just comes up with general trends. These reviews have been occurring at the Safety Action Workgroup (SAW). For the balance of the state, quarterly director summaries are given to counties to provide data and trends.

Ms. Matter advised that it was determined that with Milwaukee, those quarterly reports were not helpful, so they are receiving semi-annual reports with feedback about aggregate scoring data. Ms. Matter advised that these reports do not include recommendations for system data. She advised that SAW has representatives from Milwaukee and looks at systemic changes and opportunities for local agencies. Ms. Matter advised that they are looking to make some updates to the feedback loop so that feedback is provided in a faster way.

Supervisor Willie Johnson Jr. did not have any questions regarding the presentation materials. He provided the feedback that it would be helpful to look at the critical incident reports. He advised that it was new to the committee. He reported that in the in the past, the committee had looked backwards and been critical in looking at the facts of cases and the system, and what could be done to improve situations in Milwaukee.

DMCPS Administrator Sarah Henery provided feedback that this information was presented to the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council a few years back. She advised that the Critical Incident Committee has not met since the Systems Review process was changed and that DMCPS wants to be a good partner in figuring out what information is helpful for the committee.

Ms. Mueller asked about if there was guiding statement for the Critical Incident Committee. The Bylaws were opened via shared screen for the committee to review the description. The description of the Critical Incident Committee from the Bylaws reads as follows.

“The Critical Incident Committee shall review child fatalities and near fatalities in accordance with 42 U.S.C.A. § 5106a(c)(4)(A)(iii)(II). It shall also review recommendations of the DCF Independent Review Team (IRT) following any death or egregious incident review. The Committee shall follow DMCPS’s progress in addressing these recommendations.”

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Ms. Matter advised that from the review, DMCPs would receive key observations and the scoring tools. She advised that historically they have not shared whole case review narratives as it was not successful when trying to share second stories.

Ms. Mueller advised that it would be helpful to have someone come to explain to the committee the data and scoring system. Then, in Milwaukee the report can be viewed biannually.

Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr. agreed that this would be a good next step.

Supervisor Logsdon requested that the presentation be emailed to them and advised that she was presented with a lot of new information. A concern Supervisor Logsdon noted was asking how it is known if it is a critical incident from a foster home or a parent and that she was concerned that it would take a take a year from incident to review it. It was clarified by Ms. Matter that the review process is separate from steps local child welfare agencies take to address and review safety concerns that result from a critical incident. She clarified that the state review process is happening ninety days after a critical incident but is also happening in tandem with what is being done at a local level.

Supervisor Logsdon also asked about the committee meetings being recorded. Ms. Henery advised that this was not being done and at this time, DMCPs does not have the capability to record meetings.

Ms. Muller advised that at the next meeting they should receive more education on the review process specifically the review report and the scoring system.

Community Member Jermaine Reed asked a question regarding presentation material related to Ms. Matter's comment about how child welfare is an imperfect system and that safety is not always the number one priority.

Ms. Matter advised that was an easy talking point to say internally and externally that safety is always number one but clarified that there are other things to consider where safety falls on continuum. Ms. Matter advised that she could not say if one thing should be prioritized more over the other as it would be a counter factual statement. She advised that workers make the best decision they can at the time and that this means that some things take precedent over others at times. Ms. Matter advised that not all priorities can be number one at the same time and gave the examples of the priorities such as safety, permanence, sibling placement, etc.

Ms. Mueller determined that the next step for the committee would be to get an explanation of the report and scoring system.

2021 Committee Meeting Dates

No meeting date was set, but the committee expressed an interested in meeting again in January 2021. It was determined that Ms. Matter will present on scoring and the data from a review. It was requested that any questions for Ms. Matter be submitted in writing in advance of the meeting.

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Closing

Ms. Mueller provided concluding remarks and adjourned the meeting.