



**Minutes
July 1, 2015**

Present:	Ian Parkinson, Sheriff (Chair)	Kayla Plourde, JJDP
	Jim Brescia, SLOCOE	Jim Roberts, FCNI
	Lee Collins, DSS	Tracy Schiro, DSS
	Dan Dow, DA	
	Lisa Fraser, SLO-CAP	
	Jeff Hamm, HA	
Staff:	Marcie Goodale, DSS, CSN Clerk	Marci Powers
Guests:	Melinda Sokolowski, CAPSLO	
	Robert Reyes, Probation	
	Laurie Morgan, SAFE/Mental Health	

Introductions, Announcements, Critical Issues and Additions to the Agenda

Chair Ian Parkinson called the meeting to order at 1:14 PM.

Announcements: Jim Roberts announced that an event to benefit Family Care Network will be held July 26th at the Madonna Inn.

Action Item:

Approval of CSN April 1, 2015 minutes.

Motion: L. Collins

Second: J. Hamm

Motion Passed.

Information/Discussion Item: South County SAFE MOU. Melinda Sokolowski of Community Action Partnership and SAFE Coordinator, Laurie Morgan of SLO County Mental Health, were present to answer any questions regarding the new 2015-2016 Contract with partner agencies. For those unaware, South County SAFE is located on the bottom floor of the Social Services building in Arroyo Grande. Tracy Schiro praised Laurie Morgan for her efforts as well as her agency's hard work.

Information/Discussion Item: Recruiting Foster Families for Special Case Youth. Jim Roberts of Family Care Network, Inc. spoke of the challenges in finding homes for this demographic. This is a nation-wide problem due, in part, to the myth that these children are "bad". While it is true that these youth have experienced trauma and/or may have been exposed to traumatic experiences, it does not follow that these children must have behavioral problems with dangerous propensities. The fault is entirely with the adults in their lives. Furthermore, many of these youth are well behaved and well adjusted, especially considering their life experience.

There was some discussion regarding outreach and how various agencies are recruiting for this specific demographic. Legislation is rapidly changing how all Counties approach safekeeping Youth in Foster Care. The care is shifting to family based care rather than group-home institutional care. Group homes are generally used for short term care. Another challenge to recruiting is the fact that modern families have two working parents, making a commitment to foster a difficult task. Faith based organizations continue to be the biggest supporter and recruiter. Jeff Hamm pointed out the fiscal challenges to fostering, and asked if it might be worthwhile to pursue bill sponsorship. Jim Roberts reported that currently, proposed legislation addressing this issue is working its way through the process. Tracy Schiro admitted that compensation for fostering is small but there are ways in which DSS and other agencies may assist. For example, there are ways DSS may help with costs for camp, soccer, and/or other needs that benefit the youth.

Sheriff Parkinson offered to produce a recruitment video to be posted online (YouTube, local programming, etc...). Toni Ciopolla is the contact within the Sheriff's Office. Jim Brescia offered to air the video on the County's education channels and Dan Dow offered to research ways of disseminating the video or other materials among County Workers. Laurie Morgan feels that the Youth themselves are the most powerful and compelling recruiters, as do volunteers.

Lee Collins stressed the need for increasing the retention of Foster Families. He would like to see more supportive resources and Laurie Morgan agreed. The feedback Laurie hears from Foster Parents corroborates this thought. Social Services is, in fact, working on developing a rapid response team for new parents.

Information/Discussion Item: South County Youth Services Project – Lisa Fraser and Marci Powers. April 10 began the South County Youth Services Project kickoff for youth approximately aged 13-19. This Project will be modeled after a North County Program through the Housing Authority in which youth are taught life skills and employment skills. The program has been so successful in North County that they have a waiting list of interested youth. Though the SCYS project's end goal is to duplicate this in the South County, they are only in the early stages of development. The group brainstormed ideas to assist the SCYS program in attaining their goals. In particular, they are in need of funding and a location. Marci and Lisa stated that they would keep CSN Board informed of progress.

Information/Discussion Item: Ongoing CSN Priority: Homeless Services for Children and Families - Group Discussion. Lee Collins reported that DSS and Family Care Network worked together to purchase 2 apartment buildings, specifically to house homeless families as part of the Housing Stability Program grant. Since October the program has housed 75 + families. The goal is to grow the number of apartment buildings purchased specifically to house permanent families, Jim Roberts added. Purchasing apartments has been one solution to the housing shortage and a way of bypassing reluctant landlords

Adjournment: 2:20 PM