



NORCOR

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NORCOR

Board of Directors

Minutes of the Emergency Special-Called Board Meeting

December 8, 2017

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS:

Quorum was determined and the Board Meeting was called to order on December 8, 2017 @ 9:05 AM by Rod Runyon, Chairman.

Present: Bryan Brandenburg- NORCOR Administrator **Board Members:** Rod Runyon- Wasco County Commissioner, NORCOR Board Chairman; Tom McCoy- Sherman County Commissioner, NORCOR Board Vice-Chairman; Ron Rivers- Hood River County Commissioner; Molly Rogers- Wasco County Youth Services Director; Matt English- Hood River County Sheriff (*alternate for Brad Lohrey- Sherman County Sheriff*); Steve Shaffer- Gilliam County Judge (*attended by phone*)

Guests: Will Carey- NORCOR Attorney; Jeff Justesen- NORCOR Juvenile-Detention Manager; Sherrin Ungren- Gorge ICE Resistance; Gary Bettencourt- Gilliam County Sheriff; Jim Patterson- Hood River County Juvenile Director; Juli Twidwell- NORCOR; Dan Lindhorst- NORCOR Administrative Lieutenant; Neita Cecil- The Dalles Chronicle; Tyler Stone- Wasco County Administrator; Tim Schechtel- Gorge ICE Resistance; C.J. Toole- NWCSO 21, Behavior Specialist; Jary Snodgrass- NWCSO 21, Student Services Director; Mark Bailey- Bicoastal Media; Steve Kramer- Wasco County Commissioner; Robert Benton- Hood River County Commissioner; Kristen Campbell- Wasco County Counsel; Amber DeGrange- Sherman County Juvenile Director; Roger Nichols- Gorge Country Media News Director; Scott Hege- Wasco County Commissioner; Joe Dabulskis- Sherman County Commissioner; Randy Anderson- NWCSO 21, CFO; Candy Armstrong- NWCSO 21, Superintendent; Karen Joplin- Hood River County Commissioner (*attended by phone*)

Rod Runyon, as Board Chair, called this meeting as a result of the findings released in the Disability Rights of Oregon (DRO) report and the response to that report that was distributed to the Board on December 5, 2017; the DRO Report and the subsequent response are the subject of this Emergency Special Board Meeting. Rod then invited introductions of those present and attending by phone.

- **Executive Session 192.660 (1) (i)** –The Board adjourned into Executive session @ 9:07 AM. The Board was called back into regular session @ 10:30 AM.

Discussion and Decisions Resulting from Executive Session:

Rod Runyon noted that the following topics were discussed in Executive Session:

1. The recent findings and recommendations contained in the DRO report
2. Launching an independent investigation to address the findings and recommendations within the DRO report
3. Making sure that the Juvenile Directors Oversight Committee works more directly with Bryan Brandenburg and Jeff Justesen on a stronger level to address the issues as quickly as possible
4. Clear answers to the DRO report that the public can understand in a message that is specific and accurate

Rod also noted that putting together an ad hoc committee was discussed in Executive Session and suggested that anything that is done in response to the DRO report needs to go out to the public. Rod suggested that Will Carey and Molly Rogers also be involved with Karen Joplin, who had volunteered to be in on the ad hoc committee. Rod further noted that Wasco County will be discussing with their legal counsel and their administrative officer what the response will be and how to get that message out as far as the decision of whether to transfer operational control of the NORCOR Juvenile facility to the Juvenile Directors Oversight committee. Will Carey noted the suggestion by Matt English that a letter of response be prepared that will go out to the general public. Matt clarified that his suggestion of retaining someone to help with preparing a letter is more of a strategic plan to help clear up communication issues. Will Carey suggested that there should be some expediency in the preparation of this letter.

Ron Rivers noted that this is a four county Board and that if there is action that needs to be taken, it should be taken as a Board. Rod Runyon's response: "All that I would say to that Ron is that's fine. I'm on Boards that have five counties and I get a call from the Directors of each one of those Boards at the trip over a cube of ice. So, we haven't had that and so that's where we are." Bryan Brandenburg pointed out that Rod could have called to talk with him when these reports came out. Rod responded that Bryan had left town at that point. Bryan responded that he was here and that his phone is always on.

Rod Runyon asked how the ad hoc committee investigation should proceed. Matt English cautioned against the use of the term investigation, as it is more of an inspection. Molly Rogers suggested that the term used should be, assessment, because that is what it really is.

Bryan Brandenburg asked who was going to write the letter that will be going out to the public. Will Carey noted that he does not feel confident enough with the facts to be able to write the letter and suggested that Jeff Justesen and Bryan produce the facts that will go into the letter. Bryan answered that he and Jeff could get something together by the end of the day and asked who they would be giving the information to. Kristen Campbell volunteered to work with Will on putting the letter together. Will noted that he wanted everyone to be able to have input on the letter before it goes out and that he would be sending it out to the Board Members for review and input.

Rod Runyon noted to the press that NORCOR is on it, we're working on it, we've been working on it and the parts that are missing are going to be addressed seriously. Ron Rivers asked if Wasco County Commission was ready to retract their statement redirecting county youth. Rod answered that Wasco County would talk about it. Scott Hege thanked the Board for meeting today and noted that he appreciates the action that is being taken.

Jeff Justesen noted that he met with his contact with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), who had come to do a site visit because of the DRO report; this contact said that his report to Warm Springs, the entity that actually places kids in NORCOR, would be favorable and that the kids are safe here and being treated well. The final decision about continuing to place kids here will rest with Warm Springs. Jeff further noted that he had spoken with Umatilla County and that they are not removing any kids currently at NORCOR, but did place a freeze on sending kids here pending a response from NORCOR regarding the report. Jeff had also spoken to Morrow, Jefferson, and Baker Counties who are all supportive of NORCOR and will continue to place their kids here, confident of their safety and well-being. Jeff had not heard back, personally, from any other county that has used NORCOR in the past, but he has sent out emails and phone calls to try to reach them. Rod Runyon told Jeff that the update was appreciated.

Rod Runyon asked Candy Armstrong if there was anything that she wanted to add. Candy responded that she is very supportive of Jeff Justesen and has full confidence in the work that is going on at NORCOR. Candy pointed out that NORCOR, in the past, has been identified as one of the top in the State as far as being able to offer services to juveniles. Candy noted that she is open to learning from this experience to help improve even more.

- **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned @ 11:00 AM.

Date

Rod Runyon, NORCOR Board Chair

Date
Respectfully submitted,
Beth Anderson, NORCOR

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