

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**3-0**

During the oral communication section of the agenda for Tuesday, July 21, 2015, Peter Finley-Burk spoke regarding the Department of Social Services.

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ATTACHMENTS FILED WITH  
CLERK OF THE BOARD

AGENDA NO.  
4-0

*Clerk's Original*

July 21, 2015

Riverside County Board of Supervisors

4080 Lemon St. Riverside , Ca.

Re: Termination of Employment of Mrs. Jennie Pettet

Good morning, my name is Silvia Signoret. I am the President of FOR THE CHILDREN F.A.P.A., the largest foster/adoptive parent association in Riverside County. My husband and I have been fostering over 15 years and have adopted 8 children from this county. I am here representing over 60 families and bring you letters from some of our members.

FOR THE CHILDREN has been working together with Riverside County DPSS for approximately 10 years to better serve the foster children of this county, and we have lived through the many changes of DPSS.

I, personally, have sat through many meetings with management, such as SIPs, TDM, FAMILY TO FAMILY, and any other stakeholder meetings, because I believed we could make a difference , and was disappointed time after time by DPSS.

Then came Mrs. Pettet. She was transparent. She was REAL. But most of all she was COMMITTET!!! She actually stood by her word. She held people accountable and made sure it was really "IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILDREN" a term we only kept hearing about.

She took a REAL interest in the foster parents and stopped treating us as second class citizens. She asked that workers treat us with respect and dignity, something new to us.

In my position, I meet regularly with the Deputies of as well as the Regional Managers of DPSS. Recently I had an opportunity to speak with Susan von Zabern , Director of DPSS , while filming a recruitment video in my home, with my family and we spoke about how well thing were looking .

Then suddenly, Mrs. Pettet was let go, and here we are once again. I feel disappointed by Riverside County DPSS . I am afraid all her hard work will have been in vain and the only ones who will pay the price are the children.

There is only so much instability we can deal with before we "all " call it quits.

We humbly ask you review Mrs. Pettet,s termination and make sure it was warranted .

Thank you,

Silvia Signoret

President

*Peter*  
Submitted by Finley-Burk  
07/21/2015 Item Oral Comm.  
(date)

July 20, 2015

TO: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettet

Dear Sirs,

I am a foster parent with over 10 years of experience, and I think it is a privilege to keep the children in my home. I am also a member of the organization for the children and I believe that we are just that For The Children. With that said I recently learned of the termination of Jennie Pettet.

As a foster parent it is great when we find a county employee that in my opinion gives up so much in order to help our children. I have seen Mrs. Pettet go above and beyond for our children, she was so engaging at our Foster Parent functions. She would ask what was working and she seemed genuinely concerned!

I am saddened by her abrupt removal and for what it is worth I wanted the Board to hear from me, a foster parent. I also want to express how unfortunate this termination is for the children in this system.

In closing please know that I am disappointed with the decision of removing Mrs. Pettet, perhaps things can be done better in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andre Parker", written in a cursive style.

Andre Parker

Foster Parent

7/20/2015

To: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettet

Dear Sirs,

As a member of For the Children Organization, which is, a non-profit organization who's mission is to support foster and adoptive children and their caregivers in Riverside County. Currently, I have three adoptive children and have fostered in the past being a part of this organization has allowed me the understanding and education to be the best parent that I can to my adoptive children. In my opinion it take more than one or two to raise children especially when they are special like ours. It takes a community and this community has been made up of individuals who have always had the best interest in our children foster or adoptive. This community has had members of the county that have helped in answering questions, being an advocate, or just having the best interest in these children. I am speaking of Jennie Pettet. She has always gone that extra mile for our organization and our children so when we recently learned of the termination of Jennie Pettet, Riverside County's Assistant Director of Children's Protective Services and I felt the need like to express my concerns. As a foster parents, we have seen the positive changes that have occurred under Ms. Pettet's leadership and we are deeply concerned that many of the programs and policies she put in place may now be reversed, adversely affecting children and families. In addition I am in such disbelief on this whole situation because Ms. Pettet has had nothing but compliments in regards to her position. When changes continue to occur it seems like there is a break in the system and our foundation is not strong enough to hold us up. In regards to this our foundation needs to be at the upmost quality because many special lives will be affected!! The decision to terminate Ms. Pettet reflects badly on County leadership and I am discouraged that the County Supervisors would support it.

Sincerely,

For The Children member  
Francine R. Gonzalez

7/19/2015

To: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettet

Dear Sirs,

For The Children F.A.P.A. is a 501c(3) non-profit organization who's mission is to support foster and adoptive children and their caregivers in Riverside County. We recently learned of the termination of Jennie Pettet, Riverside County's Assistant Director of Children's Protective Services and would like to express our concern.

I am shocked to hear that such a dedicated worker has been let go. Mrs. Pettet was instrumental in the adoption of one of my foster children. Had it not been for her diligence and intervention, I may not be her mom today. I was being undermined by one of the departments Social Workers who felt the child should be placed with relatives who did not surface until she was 18 months old and headed for adoption.

Please understand that there are flaws within the department and Mrs. Pettet was working to build a better relationship with foster parents and the department. Losing her will definitely be a setback that the foster care system cannot afford. Please reconsider your decision and re-evaluate the decision you have made. Our children depend on it.

Sincerely,

Barbara Jordan  
For The Children member

7/16/2015

To: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettet

Dear Sirs,

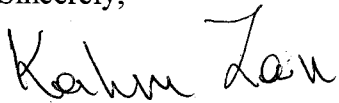
My husband and I have been foster/adopt parents for the past five years and were fortunate enough to have found For the Children. We have been members of this organization for three years now. FTC provides the support and education that we as foster parents find valuable as we try to navigate our way through the foster care system.

It was very disheartening to hear that Assistant Director, Jennie Pettet, was terminated. On more than one occasion, Mrs. Pettet was willing to take the time to come out to one of our monthly meetings and speak with us. What was/is so impressive about Ms. Pettet is her sincere desire to do whatever is necessary to improve DPSS and make a difference for the children. Ms. Pettet came to our meetings and listened to our concerns. She also asked us what was working and what was not working. She was smart enough to know that to create more efficiency and to make sure that the best interest of the child is always being put first, the foster parents need to be a part of the process.

It is our job as foster parents to be advocates for these children. Our feedback is very important. We are the caregivers for these children and we are the ones that do our best on a daily basis to make sure their needs are met. Ms. Pettet treated us as partners in this process and made herself available to answer our questions/concerns. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case with most CPS social workers.

Ms. Pettet has been a breath of fresh air in a system that all too often is bogged down by red tape and politics.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kohn Tan". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

For the Children member

7/20/2015

To: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettet

Dear Sirs:

My name is Dineen Knight; I am a former foster care and adoptive parent from Riverside County. I recently learned of the termination of Jennie Pettet, Riverside County's Assistant Director of Children's Protective Services and would like to express my concern.

As a foster parent, we have seen positive changes that have occurred under Ms. Pettet's leadership and am concerned that many of the programs and policies she put in place may now be reversed, adversely affecting children and families.

She helped to keep our children safe and held county workers accountable for their actions regarding my children and county worker's personal opinions concerning my children.

Additionally, I cannot imagine why Ms. Pettet would be removed from her position after hearing so many compliments about her from fellow caregivers and social workers across the County.

She has put so much hard work into making sure that the children are taken care of and safe that I worry for the safety of children now that she is gone.

I believe the decision to terminate Ms. Pettet reflects poorly on County leadership and am saddened that County Supervisors would support it. I hope to encourage the Board to investigate this issue and act accordingly.

Sincerely,

Dineen Knight



## Suggestions

From: **Zachery Leclair** (midgetlover4803@yahoo.com)

Sent: Mon 7/20/15 9:11 PM

To: Silvia Yeron-Signoret (silviayps@hotmail.com)

7/13/2015

To: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettet

Dear Sirs,

For The Children F.A.P.A. is a 501c(3) non-profit organization who's mission is to support foster and adoptive children and their caregivers in Riverside County. We recently learned of the termination of Jennie Pettet, Riverside County's Assistant Director of Children's Protective Services and would like to express our concern.

As an organization and individual foster parents, we have seen the positive changes that have occurred under Ms. Pettet's leadership and we are deeply concerned that many of the programs and policies she put in place may now be reversed, adversely affecting children and families.

Additionally, we are dismayed to see yet another change in upper management at DPSS and can't imagine why Ms. Pettet would be removed from her position after hearing so many compliments about her from caregivers and social workers across the County.

The loss of continuity in leadership and consistency in policy, *once again*, creates a perception of disorganization and invites a lack of confidence from stakeholders.

We believe the decision to terminate Ms. Pettet reflects badly on County leadership and we are disheartened that County Supervisors would support it. As a group, we encourage the Board to investigate this issue and act accordingly.

Sincerely,

For The Children members

## Termination of Jennie Pettet

From: **JOEY MEDINA** (ourfoursonsprincess@msn.com)

Sent: Mon 7/20/15 9:33 PM

To: silvia signoret (silviayps@hotmail.com)

To: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettet

My husband and I have been foster parents for 14 years for the County of Riverside.

We are members of for the Children a Support group for Foster/Adopt Children and Caregivers. We are very disappointed to learn of the termination of Jennie Pettet Assistant Director for Children Protective Services and would like to voice our concerns.

As Foster Parents we are given many expectations from the County/State. The County has always stated they will do what is in the best interest of the Children, that is not always the case. The County struggles to keep Foster Homes because of this example. So my question would be, what are the County's Expectations and Responsibilities when terminating someone who has only done what is right and best interest for the child. Such as Jennie Pettet who was dedicated, committed, and compassionate. We have seen so many positive changes within DPSS through her leadership.

We are very concerned that many Childrens future will be affected by this decision and we ask that this decision be reversed as you the Board of Supervisors would be doing a Service to Our Children that are in the system by investigating this wrongful termination.

I think by reading our letters you will understand we take the expectations given to us serious as Foster Parents to take the Responsibilities of advocating for what is in the best interest of children.

Sincerely

Member of For The Children

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S® 6.

7/15/2015

To: Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettet

Dear Sirs,

As a public school teacher in the County of Riverside and as a long-standing member of For The Children, I would like to express my concern. I recently learned of the termination of Jennie Pettet, Riverside County's Assistant Director of Children's Protective Services.

I have seen the positive changes that have occurred under Ms. Pettet's leadership and I am deeply concerned that many of the programs and policies she put in place may now be reversed, adversely affecting children and families.

Additionally, I am dismayed to see yet another change in upper management at DPSS and can't imagine why Ms. Pettet would be removed from her position after hearing so many compliments about her from caregivers and social workers across the County. The loss of continuity in leadership and consistency in policy, *once again*, creates a perception of disorganization and invites a lack of confidence from stakeholders.

I believe Ms. Pettet's personal attention and genuine concern for my family as well as all the families she works with has shown an exceptional leader. It is very clear that this position for Ms. Pettet is much more than a job.

I believe the decision to terminate Ms. Pettet reflects badly on County leadership and I am disheartened that County Supervisors would support it. As a group, we encourage the Board to investigate this issue and act accordingly.

Sincerely,

For The Children members  
Jerry Young - Member

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry M. Young". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

July 20, 2015

Re: Jennie Pettit

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been with the F.A.P.A. For the Children for over five years. For the Children is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization whose mission is to support foster children and their caregivers in Riverside County.

I am writing in response to the termination of Jennie Pettit, the Assistant Director of the Department of Public Social Services. I was dismayed and disheartened, given the changes I have seen in the department since Jennie started that position. I'm stating that not only as a foster parent, but also as a Supervisor in the Department of Mental Health in Riverside. I have seen such great changes in policies and procedures, since I am one of the liaison's between D.P.S.S. and Mental Health, in the inception of providing additional services for Katie A. clients. Jennie has been a guest speaker several times at the For the Children meetings, and has always been a devoted advocate for the betterment of foster children's lives and foster parents. I did not see this prior to her taking this position.

My fear is that the instability of the Department will ultimately affect these kids and caregivers, since instability breeds a sense of distrust and disillusionment among its stakeholders. I would highly advise the Board of Directors to fully investigate this matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alisa Huntington

Riverside County Board of Supervisors

RE: Termination of Ms. Jennie Pettet

Dear Sirs,

As a former Foster Parent of Riverside County, I was deeply saddened and disheartened to learn of the sudden, and in my humble opinion wrongful termination of Ms. Jennie Pettet.

While Ms. Pettet maintained her position with DPSS in Riverside County, both foster children and foster parents began to see and experience positive change within DPSS in Riverside County.

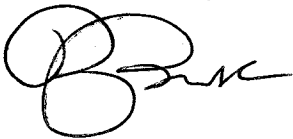
Ms. Pettet, in my opinion was able to use her compassion and understanding to improve DPSS, Riverside County for the betterment and welfare of all children currently in the foster care system in Riverside County.

I fear without her leadership DPSS, Riverside County will revert back to the "Old Way" of doing things. This would be a travesty and unfair to all the children currently in the foster care system in Riverside County.

One Simple question for all of the members of the Board of Supervisors.. "Do the Children in foster care in Riverside County not deserve the best leadership for DPSS, Riverside County?"

If you are able to answer "yes" to this question I urge you to reinstate Ms. Pettet to her former position.

Peter Finley-Burk  
Cathedral City, CA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Burk', written in a cursive style.

July 17, 2015

Supervisor Benoit  
73-710 Fred Waring Dr, Suite 222  
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Re: Termination of Jennie Pettit

Dear Supervisor Benoit,

My name is Tony Baker-Aidukas. I am a founding Board member of For The Children, FAPA a local foster and adoptive parent association in your District. We have families from Riverside to Indio in our association. I am also a former foster parent and my husband and I have adopted two boys in the foster system of Riverside County. Silvia Signoret and I have met with you in your office regarding our issues with DPSS previously.

For the Children has been an active stakeholder with Riverside County DPSS for over 10 years. I have been in numerous meetings at various levels of DPSS management, supervisors, and social workers attempting to help DPSS fix their processes to better serve foster children, their families, and stakeholders in the community. The management level of DPSS is in constant flux. It seems that one year Family to Family is the priority. There is a change in management and priorities changes leaving us, foster and adoptive parents left to manage the changes and attempt to make new relationships with new leaders. It is a never ending cycle.

Jennie Pettit has been a godsend. You can feel her commitment to the children in Riverside County's care and to do the best for these children. I've met many of DPSS top leadership and I have not felt that commitment before. It's about budgets, processes, lack of money, and assessing outcomes but I've never felt that personal concern with DPSS management. Jennie has spoken to our association many times to further educate us on DPSS goals, benefits available to our foster children, and listened to issues we have encountered with DPSS with our children.

I strongly recommend you review her termination. Our foster children deserve a leader like Jennie on their side.

Sincerely,  
Tony Baker-Aidukas  
Treasurer, For The Children, FAPA

**Riverside County Board of Supervisors  
Request to Speak**

Submit request to Clerk of Board (right of podium),  
Speakers are entitled to three (3) minutes, subject  
to Board Rules listed on the reverse side of this form.

**SPEAKER'S NAME:** PETER FINLEY-BURK

**Address:** 67911 VEGA Rd  
(only if follow-up mail response requested)

**City:** Cathedral City **Zip:** 92234

**Phone #:** 760-285-6986

**Date:** 7/21/2015 **Agenda #** Public Comment

**PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:**

**Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:**

**Support**       **Oppose**       **Neutral**

**Note:** If you are here for an agenda item that is filed  
for "Appeal", please state separately your position on  
the appeal below:

**Support**       **Oppose**       **Neutral**

**I give my 3 minutes to:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **BOARD RULES**

### **Requests to Address Board on "Agenda" Items:**

You may request to be heard on a published agenda item. Requests to be heard must be submitted to the Clerk of the Board before the scheduled meeting time.

### **Requests to Address Board on items that are "NOT" on the Agenda:**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these rules, member of the public shall have the right to address the Board during the mid-morning "Oral Communications" segment of the published agenda. Said purpose for address must pertain to issues which are under the direct jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors. YOUR TIME WILL BE LIMITED TO THREE (3) MINUTES.

### **Power Point Presentations/Printed Material:**

Speakers who intend to conduct a formalized Power Point presentation or provide printed material must notify the Clerk of the Board's Office by 12 noon on the Monday preceding the Tuesday Board meeting, insuring that the Clerk's Office has sufficient copies of all printed materials and at least one (1) copy of the Power Point CD. Copies of printed material given to the Clerk (by Monday noon deadline) will be provided to each Supervisor. If you have the need to use the overhead "Elmo" projector at the Board meeting, please insure your material is clear and with proper contrast, notifying the Clerk well ahead of the meeting, of your intent to use the Elmo.

### **Individual Speaker Limits:**

**Individual speakers are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes.** Please step up to the podium when the Chairman calls your name and begin speaking immediately. Pull the microphone to your mouth so that the Board, audience, and audio recording system hear you clearly. Once you start speaking, the "green" podium light will light. The "yellow" light will come on when you have one (1) minute remaining. When you have 30 seconds remaining, the "yellow" light will begin flash, indicating you must quickly wrap up your comments. Your time is up when the "red" light flashes. The Chairman adheres to a strict three (3) minutes per speaker. ***Note: If you intend to give your time to a "Group/Organized Presentation", please state so clearly at the very bottom of the reverse side of this form.***

### **Group/Organized Presentations:**

Group/organized presentations with more than one (1) speaker will be limited to nine (9) minutes at the Chairman's discretion. The organizer of the presentation will automatically receive the first three (3) minutes, with the remaining six (6) minutes relinquished by other speakers, as requested by them on a completed "Request to Speak" form, and clearly indicated at the front bottom of the form.

### **Addressing the Board & Acknowledgement by Chairman:**

The Chairman will determine what order the speakers will address the Board, and will call on all speakers in pairs. The first speaker should immediately step to the podium and begin addressing the Board. The second speaker should take up a position in one of the chamber aisles in order to quickly step up to the podium after the preceding speaker. This is to afford an efficient and timely Board meeting, giving all attendees the opportunity to make their case. Speakers are prohibited from making personal attacks, and/or using coarse, crude, profane or vulgar language while speaking to the Board members, staff, the general public and/or meeting participants. Such behavior, at the discretion of the Board Chairman may result in removal from the Board Chambers by Sheriff Deputies.