

DRAFT

Pursuant to § 2.2-3707.1 of the Code of Virginia this DRAFT of the minutes of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Advisory Committee is available to the public. The public is cautioned that the information is provided in DRAFT form and is subject to change by the Advisory Committee prior to becoming final. Once the minutes have been finalized, they will be marked “FINAL” and made available to the public.

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE/CHILDREN’S JUSTICE ACT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 28, 2023

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act programs was held on April 28, 2023, at the Henrico Training Center in Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present

Kim Barbarji
Randy Bonds
Jackie Robinson Brock
Eugene Butler
Shamika Byars
Katharine Hunter
Jeannine Panzera
Giselle Pelaez
Pat Popp, Vice-chair
Eric Reynolds
Lora Smith for Shannon Hartung
Judge Thomas Sotelo
Ashley Thompson

Members Not Present

Regina Baker
Shardell Gerald
Allison Gilbreath
Judge Jerrauld Jones
Sandy Karison

Staff Present

Jenna Foster (DCJS)
Laurel Marks (DCJS)
Melissa O’Neill (DCJS)
Terry Willie-Surratt (DCJS)

- I. **Call to Order:** Pat Popp, Committee Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. Members introduced themselves. One member participated virtually (Judge Thomas Sotelo) due to medical leave.

II. Approval of Minutes: The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the October 28, 2022 meeting. Judge Thomas Sotelo made a motion to approve the minutes. Eric Reynolds provided a second. The motion was approved.

III. Final Outcome of Tracked General Assembly Bills: The committee received a final list of bills passed during the 2023 General Assembly session involving the investigation, prosecution and judicial handling of child abuse cases.

IV. Appointment of Nominations Committee for Chair and Vice-Chair
The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee elects a Chair and Vice-Chair every two years. A Nominations Committee is needed to develop a slate for consideration by the full Committee at the July meeting. Jeannine Panzera and Eric Reynolds volunteered to serve as the Nominations Committee.

V. CJA Program Update
The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was provided with a written report detailing significant activities of the CJA program this quarter.

The Committee had the opportunity for discussion around the upcoming 2024-2027 Three Year Plan and application for funding. As a reminder, the Committee met in October to plan and prepare the 2024-2027 Three-Year plan for the Children’s Justice Act. Jenna Foster, DCJS Children’s Justice Act Program Coordinator, provided a final review of the recommendations for approval. Ashley Thompson made a motion to approve the plan and Shamika Byars provided a second. The motion was approved.

VI. Citizen Review Panel
In order to finalize recommendations to the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) for the upcoming year, Committee members were provided copies of the 2022 recommendations in advance of the meeting for review. Pat Popp led the committee in a discussion of the recommendations as presented. Several amendments were made to the document during the discussion. DCJS staff will incorporate the changes discussed and forward to VDSS by the May deadline. A motion was made by Ashley Thompson to accept the amended 2023 CRP Recommendations, a second was made by Eugene Butler. The motion carried.

VII. CASA Program Update
The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was provided with a written report detailing significant activities of the CASA program this quarter.

The Committee reviewed a draft update of the Guidance Policy on the use of CASA volunteers in custody/visitation cases. Committee members engaged in discussions around the suggested changes and the need for additional clarity for local programs and courts. Eric Reynolds made a motion to accept the changes as proposed and Shamika Byars provided the second. The motion was approved.

VIII. New Business - Members provided updates, information and news from their respective agencies and disciplines. Kim Barbarji shared that she will be moving out of the country in the summer of 2023 and therefore will be resigning from the Advisory Committee.

IX. Adjourn – Eric Reynolds made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ashley Thompson provided the second. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM.

Next meeting dates:

Friday, July 28, 2023