

OFFICE OF THE COLORADO'S CHILD PROTECTION BOARD

**PUBLIC MEETING
February 11, 2016**

Record of Proceedings

Notice of this meeting was provided pursuant to the Colorado Open Meetings Law, §24-6-402, C.R.S.

CONVENE

The meeting of the Office of the Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman Board was convened in the Ralph L. Carr Judicial Center, 1300 Broadway, Conference Room 1F, Denver, Colorado 80203 at 9:15 AM by Chairman Ken Plotz.

A quorum of the Board was present.

Present at the Meeting

Board Members

Chairman Ken Plotz

Vice-Chair Ginny Riley*

Pax Moultrie

Victoria Black

Joe Carrica*

Charles Greenacre*

Peg Rudden

Sarie Ates-Patterson*

Simone Jones

**Participated by Telephone*

Others Present

Stephanie Villafuerte, Executive Director/Child Protection Ombudsman

Sabrina Byrnes, Deputy Ombudsman

Karen Nielsen, Intake and Administrative Coordinator

From the Public

Ann Rosales, CDHS Child Welfare Director

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Public Comment

None

II. Approval of Minutes

Chair Judge Plotz made a motion to approve the minutes of January 14, 2016. Victoria Black seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Comments –

Chairman Ken Plotz reported that he did send out the Thank You letters that were mentioned in the last meeting.

Chairman Plotz indicated that they are some concerns around the budget and travel expenses that he wants the board to discuss today.

III. Executive Director Report

1. Operations/Administrative Update

Office Space:

Ms. Villafuerte reported that the office continues to reside with the Office of the Respondent Parent Counsel in the Ralph L. Carr building in Suite 420. She indicated that it continues to go well.

Ms. Villafuerte reported that she has been working with the architects and that it looks like the move may be in May 2016. She reported that she was able to get additional space to assist with future growth of the office.

Technology:

Ms. Villafuerte discussed the offices technology issues. She reported that Judicial will be unable to provide a computer network and phones as originally contemplated by the MOU. It may be necessary to amend the MOU. Ms. Villafuerte will keep the board informed on this issue.

Ms. Villafuerte further reported that she is working with the JBC analyst on a budget proposal and that there are substantial costs related to having to purchase phones and install IT networks. These IT costs will be incurred in FY15-16 and FY 16-17. Judge Plotz and other board members asked how

they can be helpful in the budget process. The board agreed that they would be willing to write a letter or contact someone at the JBC directly if that would be helpful. Ms. Villafuerte stated that she will get back to the Board members on how they can help.

Executive Director also provided the board with an update on the Ombudsman database. She stated that she and the Deputy Ombudsman, Sabrina Byrnes have talked with the gentleman that built and developed our database and are hoping that the database will be completed by late Spring 2016.

Personnel:

Executive Director, Ms. Villafuerte, reported that she is meeting with Judicial Human Resources this afternoon to post for an investigator position. She further stated that the Judicial department may not be able to accommodate the Ombudsman office on leave management systems due to the IT network issues.

She further stated that she is continuing to work on the personnel rules and knows that the deadline is 04/18/16. If the board members have changes or additions, please get those to Ms. Villafuerte as soon as possible.

2. Financial Report

Agency year-to-date Expenses & FY 2016-2017 Budget:

Ms. Villafuerte reported that the agency balance after the January 2016 billing is \$199,558.00. Executive Director, Ms. Villafuerte reported that she has spent a significant amount of time reviewing the last four budget years. Any requests for additional money and adjustments to the 2015-2016 and 2016-17 budgets need to be into the JBC in the next three weeks.

Ms. Villafuerte reported that there are three types of expenses that will require additional money. The first type are "one-time" expenses. These are one-time costs that need to be added to the budget such as: moving, storage, setting up IT and network systems, cell phones and costs of temporary space. She has been keeping track of these expenses and projecting what the office will need.

Ms. Villafuerte further stated that the second set of expenses that she is requesting from the Joint Budget Committee are "ongoing expenses." She stated that these ongoing expenses are ones that will occur in 2015-2016

as well as 2016-2017 such as board expenses and IT costs. She indicated that she has included these expenses for the first six months of this year and for the 2016-2017 budget.

Executive Director, Ms. Villafuerte then talked about the third set of expenses that she calls "2016-2017 only expenses". She stated that these are 2016-2017 expenses related to future operations. For example; marketing, brochures, and outreach and travel expenses.

The board indicated that they are aware of the additional costs and shortages that the office has incurred. Specifically, the board expenses. Ms. Villafuerte reported that the board expenses are averaging \$1000 a month and with one rural meeting around \$14,000.00 a year. She explained that these expenses are legitimate expenses associated with hosting a board with statewide expertise. The costs include travel, parking and in some instances lodging.

The board suggested that although the board agreed to meet monthly the first year, maybe meeting every other month would assist with some savings. There were suggestions such as GoToMeeting, conference calls, and video conferencing for future meetings. There was concern by all board members that whatever technology is used that it be good. The current conference call set up is poor and does not allow members to participate as fully as needed.

Legal Fees:

She stated that the legal fees year to date at \$27,000.00 thru 12/31/2015. She stated that she requested the additional \$6000.00 from the Joint Budget Committee for 2015-2016. She stated that she also met with the Attorney General assigned to the agency and discussed what legal assistance the office needs will be for the remainder of this fiscal year and for 2016-2017. Ms. Villafuerte stated that she is asking the Joint Budget Committee for an additional \$24,000.00 for the 2016-2017 budget for issues such as finalizing the personnel rules, CORA compliance, subpoena requests and board requests. She stated that the office needs to comply with statute while continuing to insure transparency and accountability.

CDHS Contract:

Ms. Villafuerte reported that she has contacted the Colorado Department of Human Services and requested a reversion of funds to get the remainder of the \$20,000.00 from that contract. She stated she has no reason to believe that it won't be reverted back to Judicial and back into

our budget. Our office has closed out all business with the non-profit that the office was under the old contract.

3. Marketing Communications/Statewide Outreach

Immediate Actions to Take:

Executive Director, Ms. Villafuerte reported that she is working hard to put together an organizational assessment. She plans to have that to the board members at the April 2016 meeting.

She further reported that we are working with our web master to have the website updated with new personnel changes.

Legislative Mandate:

Ms. Villafuerte talked briefly about what the statute requires.

- Requires the office to make systemic recommendations for improvements to the child protection system;
- Requires the Ombudsman office to design a well-publicized, easily accessible, and transparent grievance process for voicing concerns regarding the child protection system;
- To help education the public concerning child maltreatment and the role of the community in strengthening families and keeping children safe;
- To promote best practices and effective programs relating to a publicly funded child protection system;

Develop Stakeholder Communication Plan:

Executive Director, Ms. Villafuerte reported that she is developing a strategy for our stakeholders and with the general public. The office is looking at who these individuals are and how to we reach out to them.

Ms. Villafuerte stated that she has set up a Mail Chimp email account for developing a distribution list. She reports that she has created a 200 person stakeholders list which consists of Human Service County Directors, State personal, GAL community, Foster Parent Association, Public Health, advocates, Senators and Legislators. This information has been imported

into a central database. Ms. Villafuerte indicated that she also plans to use social media to educate the public and stakeholders on what the office is doing.

She further reported that she has solicited two proposals from different Marketing/Communication firms to develop a marketing, communications, public outreach plan for the office. Ms. Villafuerte reported that we are developing a plan and will report back to the board on the outcome of those proposals.

The board has some suggestions on who those stakeholders and individuals' might be. There was also the suggestion for interns to be a part of the team in the future growth of the office.

4. Public Policy

Executive Director, Ms. Villafuerte directed the board members to the Legislative Bill Tracker 2016 handout. She reported that she has signed up for a State Bill Account or online service that assists the office is tracking bills related to child protection issues. She discussed 3 draft bills briefly. The Ombudsman office will be providing technical assistance when required. Currently the office is "monitoring" all legislation listed.

There was some discussion around the draft bills, specifically SB-16-103 Ombudsman Clean Up Bill. It is expected that the bill will look substantially different from its original form but no amendments have been publicly provided as of this date. Ms. Villafuerte will advise the board on the changes at the next board meeting.

5. Agency Update

Deputy Ombudsman, Sabrina Byrnes directed the board to the handout that they received on the Analysis of Ombudsman Contacts for the Fiscal Year thru January 2016. She discussed the specifics of the handout and that they can expect a similar report every time the board meets. Ms. Byrnes further discussed how the new database with function and how it will collect better information in the future.

There was some discussion from the board members about resources for children and youth and how our office can build that into our future outreach marketing plan.

There was also some questions from board members on how the office conducts its investigations. Ms. Byrnes discussed how the office utilizes the

Trails system, Court database, and the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) Administration to assist with the investigations. She talked about how CDHS assists in ongoing issues. Ms. Byrnes further reported the office does not have statutory authority to make county human service departments comply with the Ombudsman recommendations. There was some discussion with the board about how the office can operate more formally and develop more structure around recommendations in the future.

6. Next Steps

Executive Director Agency Assessment:

Executive Director, Ms. Villafuerte talked about continuing to review the agency policies, practice, and procedures and develop a "state of the agency" report for the board in written and verbal form by the April board meeting. She is interested in how the agency is perceived by others in the community and how to outreach to community partners more effectively.

Ms. Villafuerte discussed developing a strategic plan for fiscal year 2016-2017. She indicated that now that the office is independent it is important to develop public trust by disclosing on a regular basis what the office is doing each month and how it operates. She reported that she plans to implement this strategic plan on July 1, 2016.

Chairman Plotz reminded the board members that the board is still short two members. He stated that he would like the authority to follow up with the Governor's Office to make those appointments happen. He indicated that he will report back to the board at the next meeting.

ADJOURN

Judge Plotz thanked Intake and Administrative Coordinator, Karen Nielsen and Deputy Director, Sabrina Byrnes for their diligence in making the office run so smoothly during the transition.

Peg Rudden moved to adjourn. Victoria Black seconded the motion. The board unanimously approved the motion.

Next meeting scheduled for March 10, 2016 at 9:00 AM.

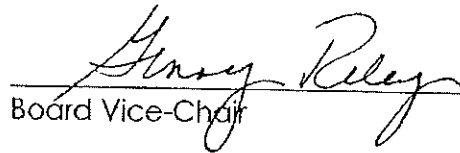
The board formally adjourned the meeting at 10:43 AM.

ATTESTATION

As Board Chair and Board Vice Chair, I attest that these minutes of the open public meeting held on February 11, 2016 of the Office of the Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman Board substantially reflect the substance of the discussion and action taken related to the matters under the authority of the Board and in compliance with the Open Meetings Law, § 24-6-402, C.R.S.



Board Chair



Board Vice-Chair

6-7-2016

Date

6/19/16

Date