



CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN of COLORADO

COLORADO CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN BOARD

PUBLIC MEETING

August 6, 2019

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 Child Protection Ombudsman Board was convened at 10:15 AM in the Woodruff Memorial Library, 522 Colorado Ave, La Junta, CO 81050, by the Ombudsman, Stephanie Villafuerte.

Stephanie Villafuerte reported that members from the board and the CPO team traveled to La Junta, CO for the annual Out of Town Board Meeting. There was not a quorum of the board present.

Ms. Villafuerte directed everyone to the meeting agenda and indicated that without quorum the minutes from May 9, 2019, and July 11, 2019, could not be approved, nor would the board enter into an executive session today.

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Board Members

Eldridge Greer
Richard Krugman
Peg Rudden
Victoria Shuler
Connie Linn
Karen Beye

Others Present

Stephanie Villafuerte, Child Protection Ombudsman
Karen Nielsen, Director of Administrative Services
Sara Embrey, Chief Analyst – Division of Child Welfare
Amanda Pennington – Child Protection Systems Analyst

PRESENT FROM THE PUBLIC

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

AGENDA/DISCUSSION

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Unable to approve May 9, 2019, meeting minutes because there was not a quorum of the board present.

Unable to approve July 11, 2019, meeting minutes because there was not a quorum of the board present.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Year-to-Date Financial Report

Ms. Villafuerte provided the board members with the CPO's final FY 18-19 operating budget report. She reported that the fiscal year is complete and that the CPO has closed out all our expenses for this fiscal year in a timely manner. She reported that the CPO is approximately \$50k under budget. She reported that the vacancy savings has contributed to being under budget. She reminded the board that the excel spreadsheet has all line item expenditures.

Legal Services Report

Ms. Villafuerte provided the board with the CPO's final FY 18-19 legal budget report. She reported that the CPO spent \$1040 over the anticipated legal budget. She reported that when the CPO goes over budget, the funding does not come out of the CPO's operating budget but rather it comes from the attorney general's budget. The attorney general's office will then put in a request for additional reimbursement. She reported that the CPO continues to utilize the Deputy Attorney General, Sueanna Johnson's expertise.

Board Member Terms and Vacancies

Ms. Villafuerte reported that there are four board appointments open. She reported that Dee Martinez and Connie Linn have submitted their applications to the Governor's Office and that she is waiting to hear back on their re-appointments.

Ms. Villafuerte stated that the "attorney that has previously practiced defending juveniles in a criminal proceeding" board seat is also open since Judge Charles Greenacre's resignation. She reported that she has not received any applications and if the board members would know of any potential candidates, please have them reach out to her.

Ms. Villafuerte further stated that the “former/current foster parent” board seat is open. She reported that she has been in contact with the House Minority Leader to fill this position. She thanked Tori Shuler for submitting a candidate’s application to her.

Ms. Villafuerte asked the board members to make some strategic calls to their contacts to see if they know anyone that is interested. They agreed.

PROGRAM REPORT

Human Resource Updates

Personnel

Ms. Villafuerte reported that the office has four vacancies. One of which is the Deputy Ombudsman who is out on FMLA until October 1, 2019. She indicated that the CPO plans to post for the Chief Analyst - Division of Youth Services and a Child Protection Systems Analyst within the next ten days. She hopes to have these positions filled by November 2019.

Ms. Villafuerte will fill the Legislative/Policy Analyst post this position in mid- September.

Writing Resource

Ms. Villafuerte reported that she has reached out to a handful of business writers to secure a professional writer/coach for the team. She reported that the CPO is working on strengthening their report writing skills. She reported that the analysts have also been using peer edits to assist with the reports.

Communications

Barefoot PR

Ms. Villafuerte reported that the CPO has two contracts with Barefoot PR. She reported that they were initially hired to develop a statewide communications and strategic outreach plan for the CPO. She reported that they are also creating a marketing/messaging platform for the office. She stated that she met with Barefoot PR last week and was pleased with what they have come up with so far. She stated that the messaging incorporates true Ombudsman principles and highlights the complexity of the child protection system, and how the CPO’s role is to ensure that high quality child protection services are consistently delivered. She stated that Barefoot PR also highlights the collaborative work the office has done with the counties and how we make working with people as a focal point of our work. She reported that once they finalize the documents, she will get it to board members.

There was some discussion from board members about whether the CPO has relationships with stakeholders in the behavioral health. Ms. Villafuerte indicated that the CPO does take calls concerning mental health issues and Ms. Embrey provided the group with a case example. Ms. Villafuerte indicated that the CPO is making it a priority to build strong relationships with Medicaid and HCPF so that the agency can provide better service to our constituents.

CPO Outreach

Community Outreach

Ms. Villafuerte reported that she will be presenting at the United States Ombudsman Association Annual Conference in mid- September 2019. Ms. Villafuerte stated that she will be presenting on how Ombudsman reports and recommendations can be leveraged to create make systemic policy change for children and families.

Ms. Villafuerte also reported that she, Ms. Embrey and Ms. Pennington will be presenting to the Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel Annual Conference in Steamboat Springs, CO. She reported that the team will be presenting on the type of concerns that the CPO hears from parents.

Systemic Cases

Montezuma

Ms. Villafuerte reported that she sent the board members the news article from the Cortez Journal on the Montezuma report. Ms. Villafuerte explained that the Montezuma County Social Services released the report prior to its finalization. Ms. Villafuerte reported that the CPO takes steps to assure that when the office releases a report that the office sends specific instructions describing the process that will take place once a county agency files its response. This process includes redaction of potentially confidential information. This process was followed in this case. Ms. Villafuerte indicated that she has consulted with our AG about the situation and was advised to notify the county agency as well as the CDHS. These steps have all been taken. The CPO never received a response from the CDHS regarding this possible breach of information.

El Pueblo

Stephanie Villafuerte reported that the El Pueblo report has been completed and is at the printer.

DYS Rulemaking Brief

She stated that the CPO is also waiting for the CDHS to respond to the report. It will also be redacted and sent to the printer.

She reported that Barefoot PR is working with the CPO to promote these reports. Ms. Villafuerte reported that she will get the final reports to board members when they are all complete.

Child Welfare Services

The board inquired about staff caseloads and the impact that vacancies are having on their workload. Ms. Villafuerte reported that she has been working closely with Ms. Embrey the Chief Analyst – Child Welfare Services to make sure that the CPO is fulfilling its all its obligations including external meetings and handling citizen's calls. Ms. Embrey and Ms. Pennington discussed their caseloads and indicated that they are staying on top of their work deadlines.

Division of Youth Services

Division of Youth Services Hotline

Ms. Tori Shuler reported that she was out visiting a DYS facility and that the youth were not aware of a blue phone. Ms. Shuler wanted to know if the CPO marketing outreach strategic plan included the

blue phone. Ms. Villafuerte reported that the CPO has plan to reach out to staff and the youth in these facilities once the new Chief Analyst – Division of Youth Services is hired. She reported that while the CPO has secured a toll-free number, it will require substantial efforts to implement the project. This will be part of the CPO's plan for the upcoming year.

BOARD BUSINESS

Board Notebooks

Ms. Nielsen passed out the CPO Board Notebooks to board members. Ms. Nielsen indicated that any future changes to the notebooks will be emailed to the board. The members reported that the notebooks were very thorough and helpful.

Board Meeting

The next CPO board meeting will be held at the Ralph L. Carr building, Denver, Colorado at 8:00 AM on Thursday, September 12, 2019.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 AM. No motions were made given the fact that there was not a quorum.

ATTESTATION

As Board Chair and Board Vice-Chair, I attest that these minutes of the open public meeting held on August 6, 2019, of the Colorado 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 [Signature]

Date 9/12/19

Board Vice-Chair [Signature]

Date 9/16/19

