



CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN of COLORADO

COLORADO CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE ANNUAL CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

PUBLIC MEETING

April 17, 2023

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 Subcommittee on the Annual Child Protection Ombudsman Performance Evaluation (Subcommittee) was convened via Zoom teleconference at 1:05 p.m. by Chair Ann Roan.

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Board Members

Ann Roan, Chair
Brian Bernhard
Jerene Petersen

Others Present

Stephanie Villafuerte, Ombudsman
Jordan Steffen, Deputy Ombudsman
Janna Fisher, Assistant Attorney General
Kristen Mahlin, Coach Craft, LLC

PRESENT FROM THE PUBLIC

None

DISCUSSION

Chair Roan thanked Kristen Mahlin for all of her work to draft the new evaluation form. She confirmed that the draft was circulated among the Subcommittee. She then started to review the document with the group.

Generally, the Subcommittee worked to eliminate redundancies in the draft and to provide clarity where needed. They also addressed grammatical issues and formatting issues.

The Subcommittee worked to ensure that the questions under the communication competency accurately reflected confidentiality requirements of the Board and the ombudsman. They also worked to ensure that all components of Colorado's open meeting laws were upheld.

The next discussion centered on the value of allowing additional comments in certain areas of the evaluation form. Ms. Mahlin stated that these open-ended questions get mixed responses depending on the individual filling out the forms. The Subcommittee decided to include the open text field on certain questions.

The group also discussed including the response of "Unable to Assess" in addition to the standard Likert responses of: Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree.

Due to recurring overlap, the Subcommittee decided to condense the "Professionalism" category into the "Communication" category.

Chair Roan then raised a question regarding goal setting in each evaluation. The Subcommittee discussed how the goals have been established in the past and how it is possible to measure whether such goals were accomplished. Ms. Petersen said this question correlates with her previous point that it difficult to measure how well the ombudsman is doing in creating change within the child protection system.

Ombudsman Villafuerte reminded the Subcommittee that this is a process the CPO is going through internally. Ms. Petersen stated that CPO's enabling statute requires certain elements to be contained in the agency's annual report and asked if there was a way that information could be incorporated into the evaluation. Chair Roan stated her concerns in getting the Board too involved in the agency's day-to-day operations. She stated that creating a metric around whether the agency is creating meaningful change in Colorado would be an unfair question to pose to the Board. To analyze this question would require the Board to evaluate the granular work of the agency, which is not the Board's role.

Ms. Petersen said she disagreed with Chair Roan's perspective. She stated she felt the Board had a duty to ensure the agency is effective. Chair Roan cited the CPO's enabling statute and said it does not include the analysis proposed by Ms. Petersen.

Mr. Bernhard stated that a solution may be to address whether the ombudsman is fulfilling the duties outlined in statute. Ombudsman Villafuerte stated that she agreed with this direction, however, she was cautious to create a metric based on whether the agency is "effective." That is because different individuals have different perspectives on what it means to be effective.

Chair Roan asked everyone on the call to use the time before the next meeting on April 20, 2023, to consider possible questions that would capture this feedback. The Subcommittee agreed to do so.

Assistant Attorney General Janna Fischer reminded the Subcommittee that it needs to consider the timeline for the evaluation. The Subcommittee then discussed the possibility of starting the evaluation process at the beginning of June each year. This would allow the Board and ombudsman to finalize the evaluation prior to the due date for the CPO's budget request to the Joint Budget Committee. The Subcommittee agreed it would be ideal to adopt a new timeline for the upcoming evaluation.

Chair Roan then raised the issue of keeping the staff engagement surveys secured and confidential. She stated the importance of explaining to staff how the information is used and that the responses will remain anonymous and will ensure more robust participation by staff. Ms. Mahlin stated there are several ways to accomplish this.

Chair Roan thanked everyone for their time and closed the meeting.

ADJOURN

The Subcommittee adjourned the meeting at 3:04 p.m.

ATTESTATION

As Board Chair and Board Vice-Chair, I attest that these minutes of the open public meeting held on April 17, 2023, of the Child Protection Ombudsman Board Subcommittee on the Annual Child Protection Ombudsman Performance Evaluation 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

May 16, 2023
Date



Board Vice-Chair

May 16, 2023
Date

