



CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN of COLORADO

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

PUBLIC MEETING

April 20, 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 1:03 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 welcomed the Subcommittee. She confirmed that all members had reviewed the revised version that was circulated among the group.

The Subcommittee resumed its conversation about how to capture the impacts of the agency, while also ensuring the Board does not inappropriately extend the evaluation into the ombudsman's day-to-day

operations. The group discussed whether the statutorily required annual report is the most appropriate and complete method for capture the agency's work to address systemic issues.

Chair Roan stated that analysis should consider the quality of the work, not just whether it was completed. Ombudsman Villafuerte stated that there is a lot of work the CPO does that is not captured in either the annual report or other statutorily required documents.

Kristen Mahlin suggested a question directed at whether the ombudsman produced materials and engaged in activities that promote improvements to the child protection system. The Subcommittee agreed that a question seeking this information is appropriate.

Next, Chair Roan raised how the employee engagement survey will be administered. The subcommittee discussed who should administer this survey and discussed concerns in ensuring employee responses remain anonymous. Chair Roan raised concerns about having Ms. Mahlin administer the survey, as Ms. Mahlin has also been obtained via contract by Ombudsman Villafuerte to assist in agency human resource matters. She stated she worried this could have a chilling impact on how CPO employees respond to the survey.

Chair Roan discussed the possibility of continuing the current practice, which is to have Assistant Attorney General Janna Fischer send the survey to all CPO staff. As part of that practice, Assistant Attorney General Fischer has previously collected responses, ensured the responses are de-identified and submitted to the Board for use in the ombudsman evaluation.

Deputy Ombudsman Jordan Steffen, who participates in the employee assessment of the ombudsman, stated that concerns expressed by Chair Roan regarding Ms. Mahlin, also exist with Assistant Attorney General Fischer – who also serves as counsel for Ombudsman Villafuerte. She and Subcommittee members suggested that if proper explanation is provided to CPO employees before the survey is distributed, it would be appropriate for Ms. Mahlin to administer the survey.

Chair Roan agreed so long as Ms. Mahlin could ensure the survey results were protected and remain anonymous.

Next, the Subcommittee addressed the timing of the evaluation. In addition to creating a streamlined process, Chair Roan wanted to amend the timeline so the Board may complete its evaluation prior to the deadline for the agency to submit its budget request to the Joint Budget Requests. Such requests often include compensation adjustments.

Ultimately, the Subcommittee agreed to present an amended timeline to the full CPO Board on May 11, 2023. The proposed timeline will begin at the beginning of June and conclude by the end of August each year. This timeline will require the Board to meet in late July and schedule an interim meeting in August.

Finally, the Subcommittee discussed creating a written guidebook for board members regarding the evaluation. This document would include guidelines as to the Board's purview in completing the evaluation, and what sits outside of that purview. Ms. Mahlin will complete this document.

Chair Roan stated that they will present the revised evaluation forms and timeline to the full CPO Board in May.

Chair Roan thanked everyone for their time and commended the group for their ability to complete a substantial amount of work in a short period of time.

ADJOURN

The Subcommittee adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m.

ATTESTATION

As Board Chair and Board Vice-Chair, I attest that these minutes of the open public meeting held on April 20, 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.

Ann M. Roan

Board Chair

May 16, 2023

Date

Judith Mastz

Board Vice-Chair

May 16, 2023

Date

