



CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN of COLORADO

COLORADO CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN BOARD

PUBLIC MEETING

May 11, 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 was convened at the Ralph Carr Judicial Center in Denver, Colorado at 8:34 a.m. by Chair Ann Roan.

A quorum of the Board was present.

INTRODUCTIONS

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Board Members

Ann Roan, Chair
Hon. Kenneth Plotz
Hon. Amanda Hopkins
April Lane

Board Members on Zoom

Judith Martinez, Vice-Chair
Aaron Miltenberger
Dr. Coral Steffey

Others Present

Stephanie Villafuerte, Ombudsman
Jordan Steffen, Deputy Ombudsman
Karen Nielsen, Director of Administrative Services
Janna Fischer, Assistant Attorney General

PRESENT FROM THE PUBLIC

Rosemary VanGorder

INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Ann Roan and Ombudsman Stephanie Villafuerte facilitated the hybrid meeting in-person and through a Zoom teleconference function.

Chair Roan welcomed everyone and expressed her excitement at the opportunity to meet in person.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 9, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Chair Roan entertained a motion to approve the final minutes of the meeting held on March 9, 2023. Judge Amanda Hopkins made a motion to approve the final minutes of the March 9, 2023, meeting. April Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

March 23, 2023, Subcommittee on the Annual Child Protection Ombudsman Performance Evaluation Meeting Minutes

Chair Roan entertained a motion to approve the final minutes of the CPO Board Subcommittee held on *March 23, 2023*. Ms. Lane made a motion to approve the final minutes of the *March 23, 2023*, meeting. Dr. Coral Steffey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

April 17, 2023, Subcommittee on the Annual Child Protection Ombudsman Performance Evaluation Meeting Minutes

Chair Roan entertained a motion to approve the final minutes of the CPO Subcommittee held on *April 17, 2023*. Judge Kenneth Plotz made a motion to approve the final minutes of the *April 17, 2023*, meeting. Judge Hopkins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

April 20, 2023, Subcommittee on the Annual Child Protection Ombudsman Performance Evaluation Meeting Minutes

Chair Roan entertained a motion to approve the final minutes of the CPO Board Subcommittee held on *April 20, 2023*. Judge Hopkins made a motion to approve the final minutes of the *April 20, 2023*, meeting. Ms. Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

At 9 a.m. Rosemary VanGorder joined the meeting via Zoom. Chair Roan paused the conversation, welcomed Ms. VanGorder, and asked if she would like to make a public comment. Ms. VanGorder stated that she was just observing the meeting and had no comment at this time.

BOARD BUSINESS

CPO Board Public Complaint Process

Chair Roan stated the need for the Board to approve the revised CPO Board Public Complaint Processes. The document had previously been provided to members for review. No additional discussion was requested.

Chair Roan made a motion to approve the CPO Board Public Complaint Process. Judge Hopkins seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

Ombudsman Annual Evaluation Process

Chair Roan provided an overview of the Subcommittee's process for developing the revised evaluation timeline and process. She shared that the intention of the Subcommittee was to streamline the process, align the timeline with CPO's budget process and provide members with more guidance in completing the evaluation. She stressed that the evaluation of the ombudsman is a statutory duty for the Board and encouraged members to raise issues as needed.

Assistant Attorney General Janna Fischer thanked the Subcommittee and Kristen Mahlin, who was contracted by the CPO to assist the Board in this process. She acknowledged that no one liked the old format and changes were needed. She addressed the revised timeline for the evaluation, reiterating the reasons provided by Chair Roan.

AAG Fischer explained that all materials will go back to a third-party, such as Ms. Mahlin, to compile and provide back to the Board and the ombudsman. The new timeline will require the July meeting to take place at the end of the month and a special meeting to be scheduled in August of every year to allow the ombudsman a chance to respond.

Judge Hopkins stated that the shorter time may help reduce the frustration felt last year. Ms. Lane said the timeline felt more streamlined and the documents appeared much easier to navigate.

Chair Roan stated that part of the change is to transition the evaluation process to meet the needs of the current Board – not the original board that was in place when the CPO became an independent office. The duties of the Board are now clear, and the evaluation needs to reflect that refined role. Chair Roan stated she was glad to hear that members feel the materials look more streamlined and sufficient.

Dr. Steffey stated that she feels the revised materials are largely improved and will help avoid the rush and stress created by the old process. Vice Chair Judith Martinez added that the new process removed the "emergency feel" of the old evaluation process.

Ombudsman Villafuerte thanked the Board. She stated that the CPO will continue to contract with a third-party HR firm next year and thanked Ms. Mahlin for all her help. She stated that Ms. Mahlin will put all the documents into an electronic survey program, and she will also provide the Board with a guidance document regarding what feedback is appropriate and helpful when completing the evaluation. Ms. Mahlin will also be available to the Board during the July meeting.

Chair Roan called for motion to approve the revised ombudsman performance evaluation timeline. Judge Hopkins made a motion to approve the timeline and Vice-Chair Martinez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next, AAG Fischer discussed the changes to the ombudsman performance evaluation form. She explained that a scaling system had been implemented and the questions were divided into categories. Each category includes a text box where members may provide additional comments.

Chair Roan stated that, as a member of the subcommittee, she was focused on streamlining and working with Ms. Mahlin to make sure the tool that was developed would promote robust participation and responses by each board member. She asked members if they had any questions concerning the form. No questions or comments were made.

Next, AAG Fischer discussed the ombudsman self-evaluation form. She stated that in addition to an electronic questionnaire that mimics the Board's evaluation form, the ombudsman self-evaluation form will provide the ombudsman to provide additional documentation. She also noted the electronic evaluation that will be provided to staff. The questions, categories and scaling will be similar for that form.

Judge Hopkins asked why some of the questions included in the Board evaluation form were not featured on the staff evaluation form. AAG stated that she would inquire about this difference with Ms. Mahlin. She stated the form may be revised if needed.

Vice Chair Martinez asked if there will be any instructions for the staff or the Board in the electronic form. Chair Roan recognized a chat comment from Aaron Miltenberger, noting that such instruction would be beneficial for all the evaluation forms. Deputy Ombudsman Jordan Steffen stated that she will raise all the Board's questions to Ms. Mahlin prior to the distribution of the three evaluation forms.

Chair Roan stressed the importance of anonymity of the staff in completing their evaluations of the ombudsman. She shared that Ms. Mahlin assured her that the technology and processes used will ensure the anonymity of staff will be protected. Several board members agreed with this and stressed the need to test the technology to ensure these protections are working correctly. Mr. Miltenberger explained the importance of closing the loop for staff regarding how the information they provide will be used. He stated he did not want the information to go into a "black hole" where it would not be used efficiently. Judge Hopkins stated that the staff need to be advised about how the scoring will work and the anonymity will explicitly be addressed.

Chair Roan then called for a motion to approve the revised evaluation forms – including the ombudsman self-evaluation form, staff evaluation form and board evaluation form. Mr. Miltenberger moved to approve the revised forms. Judge Plotz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Judge Hopkins making record that the incongruity of the questions needed to be addressed before the forms were released.

AAG stated that Deputy Steffen will communicate with members to schedule the July and August meetings.

CLOSING REMARKS

Chair Roan stated that she wanted to recognize that she and Judge Plotz will not be seeking reappointment to the Board. She shared that Jerene Petersen, Ms. Lane and Brian Bernhard are awaiting reappointment. Chair Roan stated that she would encourage members to continue to be thoughtful regarding whether practices established seven years ago – during the creation of the Board – are still useful today. This includes the frequency of the meetings and whether meeting six times a year is necessary. She also asked members to consider possible term limits.

Chair Roan then closed by thanking members for their time and hard work.

Chair Roan called for a motion to adjourn. Judge Hopkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURN

The Board formally adjourned the meeting at 9:26 a.m.

ATTESTATION


As Board Chair and Board Vice-Chair, I attest that these minutes of the open public meeting held on May 11, 2023, 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

July 26, 2023

Date



Board Vice-Chair

July 27, 2023

Date

