

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE/CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

October 25, 2024

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on October 25, 2024, at the Virginia Department of Social Services, 5600 Cox Road, York River Room, 111B, Glen Allen, VA 23060.

Members Present

Randy Bonds
Jackie Robinson Brock (Virtual)
Judge Eugene Butler
Morgan Cox
Katharine Hunter
Jane Lissenden for Eric Reynolds
Jeannine Panzera
Giselle Pelaez
Pat Popp, Vice-Chair
Lora Smith (for Shannon Hartung)
Judge Thomas Sotelo, Chair

Members Not Present

Shamika Byars
Davy Fearon
Sandy Karison
Lana Mullins
Ashley Thompson

Guests

Rachel Miller (VDSS)
Patrick Bridge (VDSS)
Carley Lansden (VDSS)
Jamie Andersen (Office of the Children's Ombudsman)

Staff Present

Jenna Foster (Virtual)
Laurel Marks
Melissa O'Neill
Terry Willie-Surratt

- I. Call to Order:** Judge Thomas Sotelo, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. Members introduced themselves. Jackie Robinson Brock attended the meeting virtually per the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee approved Policy for The Remote Participation of Members. Ms. Robinson Brock's virtual attendance was due to a personal family matter. She was in Bumpas, Virginia.
- II. Approval of Minutes:** The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the July 26, 2024, meeting. Pat Popp made a motion to approve the minutes and Jeannine Panzera provided the second. The motion was approved.

III. Presentation of the Office of the Children’s Ombudsman 2024 Annual Report: Office of the Children’s Ombudsman staff members, Jane Lissenden, Policy Analyst, and Jamie Anderson, Senior Investigations Analyst, provided an overview of the 2024 Annual Report. The presentation focused on the report findings, data, and trends.

IV. CASA Program Update: The committee was previously provided a written update regarding the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program. The following additional updates were discussed.

CASA Expansion Legislative Study: Committee members were briefed on the CASA Expansion Legislative Study Report. The report was provided to committee members in advance of the meeting for review. Committee members discussed the report findings.

CASA Program Annual Statistics: Due to time constraints, this agenda item was not discussed and will be added to a future meeting agenda.

V. CJA Program Update: The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was provided with a written report detailing significant activities of the CJA program this quarter. The following additional updates were provided.

The Domestic and Sexual Violence (DVS) Children’s Programming Workgroup presented a session at the recent DCJS Domestic Violence Conference. The session was related to MDTs and the importance of including DVS Child Advocates in child-focused MDT meetings and case reviews. The session resulted in three child advocates interested in joining the DVS workgroup.

VI. Citizen Review Panel: Committee members were provided in advance of the meeting copies of the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) response to the Citizen Review Panel’s 2024 Recommendations as directed by the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA).

The committee received presentations and information on two VDSS projects in response to Citizen Review Panel recommendations.

Carley Lansden, Child Fatality Specialist, VDSS, provided a presentation on the FY23 Child Maltreatment Death Investigations.

Patrick Bridge, Director of the Division of Local Training and Development, VDSS, provided a presentation on the training system redesign for the VDSS workers. The redesign incorporates an “academy model” training style. Plans are in place to launch the new system by FY26.

VII. New Business: Members provided updates, information and news from their respective agencies and disciplines.

VIII. Adjourn: Giselle Pelaez made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Judge Eugene Butler provided the second. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Next meeting dates:

Friday January 24, 2025 – Virtual

Friday April 25, 2025

Friday July 25, 2025 – Virtual