

Minutes of Meeting
CASA Update
May 3, 2018
10:00 a.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Marc Eberlein and Commissioner Chris Fillios met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were BOCC Administrative Secretary Alethea Carpenter and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were CEO of the First Judicial District CASA Program KJ Brant and CASA Board President Lora Whalen. Commissioner Bob Bingham was excused.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Marc Eberlein called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda:** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Action:**

Discussion with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Chief Executive Officer KJ Brant, including:

CEO of the First Judicial District CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Program KJ Brant provided the Board with a packet containing the relevant portions of the Child Protective Act, information on the previous two contracts, the current contract, and a letter explaining the history, purpose and parameters of the CASA Program.

- **CASA Statistics**

Ms. Brant explained that every child under the age of twelve is entitled to a CASA advocate; children twelve and older may receive an advocate if directed by the judge in charge of their cases. She said that in Kootenai County, about 30% of children twelve and older in the court system receive advocates; it varies from county to county throughout the state.

- **CASA Processes (Including Statutory Requirements and Conflict Cases)**

Ms. Brant said that the current contract for CASA services is with Alexandria T. Lewis, Attorney at Law. Ms. Brant reported that Ms. Lewis has submitted a notice of her intent not to renew the contract when it ends on September 30, 2018.

Ms. Brant explained that the County needs to develop a process to select a new firm to handle CASA's needs and generate a new contract. She said that she feels CASA itself should be involved with the selection process, since their advocates will be working closely every day with the attorneys. She added that the reimbursement rate for the contract should also be reviewed.

- **Contract History and Search for New Contract Representation**

Chief Deputy Prosecutor Barry Black entered the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Ms. Brant acknowledged that past arrangements have not been fully satisfactory because of frequent rotations of attorneys assigned to represent CASA advocates in court. She explained this often led to less-than-ideal representation, a lack of comfort and communication between volunteer advocate and attorney, and even missed court appearances.

Ms. Brant remarked that an additional complication is that sometimes the firm has to excuse itself from handling a particular case due to conflict. She said she would like to see a second firm contracted to supply CASA's needs if the first firm is unable to cover a case due to a conflict.

Ms. Brant requested that the Board provide guidance on how her organization can best contribute to the search for firms willing to supply attorneys to represent the CASA advocates. Chairman Eberlein asked Mr. Black if there was an appropriate procedure already established. Mr. Black stated that an RFI (Request for Information) or an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) was generally the first step.

Chairman Eberlein suggested CASA form a committee to provide input to the selection of a new firm or firms. He also suggested that they begin to create an RFI to circulate. Mr. Black commented that since the funds for the contract would come from the BOCC, the RFI procedure should probably follow its normal course through BOCC channels.

D. Decisions/Direction (Open Meeting)

- E. Public Comment:** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing. There was no public comment.

Chairman Eberlein adjourned the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

MARC EBERLEIN, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
