

State Guardian ad Litem Board

GAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Remote/In-Person Hybrid

June 20, 2023 – 9:00 a.m. to noon

Board Members Present: *Chair* Crysta Parkin, *Vice Chair* Timothy Zuel (*joined during Manager Updates*), Ann Ahlstrom, Stephanie Bumgardner, Ruby Tolbert

Board Members Present Remotely: Angela Lallemon

Board Members Absent: Emelie Rivera

GAL Board/Staff Members Present: Tami Baker-Olson, *Program Administrator*; Linda Potter, *Director of HR*; Kaleena Burkes, *Planning Specialist*; Tiffany Halligan, *Manager 1st & 2nd District*; Jody Alholinna, *Staff Attorney*; Kirk Smith, *DEI Manager*

GAL Board/Staff Members Present Remotely: Rachel Kerr, *Staff Generalist*; Fran Hesch; Kara Obermeyer, *Coordinator*; Alex Miller, *CIO (joined for Program Administrator Update/IA Amendment Update)*

Guests: Gerard Bodell, *CASA MN*; Mike Tikkanen, *CASA MN*

Call to Order – Chair Crysta convened the meeting at 9:14 a.m. with introductions.

Announcement of Quorum

Approval of Agenda

Agenda was amended:

Board Decisions: remove *Volunteer Discussion* and add *Data Requests Update*

Board Education: Add *Kirk Smith Intro* after *Manager of 1st and 2nd District Update*

Ruby moved approval of agenda as amended, Ann seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Approval of May 16, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Ruby moved approval of May 16, 2023 minutes, Angela seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Public Comment – Gerard Bodell; Mike Tikkanen

Consent Agenda

FY24 GAL-SCAO Interagency Agreement –

- Document was provided in meeting materials.
- SCAO HR is no longer going to provide support to the GAL program. Additional GAL HR staff will be taking on those duties.

Ruby moved to approve the FY24 SCAO Agreement, Ann seconded. **Approved unanimously.**

Board Education

Manager Updates –

- Tiffany Halligan - *Manager 1st and 2nd District*
 - After an introduction by Tami, Tiffany provided the following updates:
 - Second District - Tiffany provided update on virtual hearing pilot in Ramsey County where all hearings are still virtual. They have gone down from four to two judges. A decision will be made within the court system how to proceed in the future.

Tim joined.

- First District – updated on counties returning to in-person hearings. Dakota County office will close at the end of June. Ramsey County office will be used as home base for First District as well as Second District. Ramsey County office is free of charge. There is talk of Dakota County

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- implementing ICWA court.
- Outcomes: Ramsey County has a stakeholders group looking at permanency issues.
- Overall, staffing has been quite stable in both districts.
- Kirk Smith – *DEIA Manager*
- After an initial introduction from Tami, Kirk provided detail about his background and plans.

Organizational Performance Review

EL 2.8 Compensation and Benefits – Tami, Kaleena & Linda

- Tami reviewed all provisions. We are in compliance.
- We received our full ask for wages from the legislature. Kudos to Linda Potter who has successfully facilitated negotiations with the unions. The unions will be putting it out to members for a vote.
- Highlights: Compensation and Classification study performed by Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. Last biennium we adopted their recommendations regarding salary ranges. We now can address compression due to the recent legislative and union developments. More information will be provided after the union negotiations have been finalized.

Stephanie moved acceptance of the 2.8 Monitoring Report with all OI's being reasonable and data showing compliance. Tim seconded. Approved unanimously.

Policy Development - None

Board Decisions / Work – Discussion

GAL Training Institute

- October 12 – 13 at Mystic Lake. Board is invited to attend. Board members provide short bio and picture for conference program. Crysta or Jordan will send sample bios to new board members. Board-hosted reception on Thursday evening. If outside metro, program will provide hotel. Poster containing board accomplishments could be created. October board meeting is usually conducted during the Thursday lunch. Indigenous Collaborations and Alia will provide keynotes. If anyone has ideas for board involvement, please email Crysta.

Data Requests – Subsequent to our board meeting of February 21, 2023 adopting Rules of Public Access to Records of the Guardian ad Litem Program, it was determined that Supreme Court approval of these rules is required by petition. That petition has been filed. A request was made for Board action to suspend implementation of our rules until or unless the Rules of Public Access to Records of the Guardian ad Litem Program are approved by the Supreme Court.

Ann moved to suspend implementation of the Rules of Public Access to Records of the Guardian ad Litem Program until the Minnesota Supreme Court approves our petition, Ruby seconded. Approved unanimously.

Advocacy Committee – Jody A., Tami

- Juneteenth, June 19th has now been established as a State holiday.
- Minnesota is establishing a Department of Children, Youth and Families. Implementation will take about a year. Types of things under new department – Child Protection, Foster Care and Foster Care Licensing, Adoption & Adoption Licensing, Childcare, ECFE, resettlement programs for refugees and new immigrants.
- New statute provides jurisdiction over youth coming to Minnesota for gender-affirming care.
- Minnesota has established the Office of Appellate Counsel for parents involved in CHIPS and permanency. It will provide training to parent attorneys across the state and also provide appellate representation.
- ICWA was upheld at US Supreme Court. No decision on Equal Protection issue due to no party before the court having standing.

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- Derivative (Survivor) Benefits for Children in Foster Care: Bill that was passed only provides for a study period and a report period.
- Rules of Civil Procedure: The Rules of Civil Procedure have been amended to include service of any lawsuit filed against Judicial Branch Employee related to their employee role be made upon the County court administrator.
- Staff advocacy committee is finalizing its protocol. Tricia Utsch will attend the next board meeting to present the draft document.

Alex joined.

Linkage Activities – No prior linkage activities were discussed.

- Stacy Sjogren could attend a future meeting to conduct a feedback loop exercise with the Board and assist with planning.

Other Information (*Incidental information from the Program Administrator in accordance with Communication and Support to the Board*)

Program Administrator Update –Discussion – Tami and Alex

- Last month we discussed Integration Architects Contract amendment for case management system. Alex would like to amend the amendment further to provide enhancements for a total of \$500,000. Alex presented information on the new enhancements. The amendment discussed at last month's meeting as well as this new information will need to be approved via email vote well in advance of the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2023.

Alex departed.

- Compensation: Working with SCAO to implement increases for unrepresented workers as unions finalize increases for represented workers.
- 7th, 8th, and 10th in-person meetings are being scheduled. Hennepin County meets monthly. Board members are encouraged to attend.
- Kirk's DEIA work will be collaborative with the team that came out of our strategic planning.
- Alia work in FY24 – all-staff meeting took place with Alia last week. Recording is available. New Alia contract is under development.
- Vic will join us during July meeting to update on 4th District.
- Family Court: Much hiring taking place. Laura will be invited to a future meeting to present on the Family Court Division.
- Staff Attorneys: Have been moving away from contract attorneys. Our goal will be to have the majority of legal representation in-house. We hope to add another dedicated FTE within the next few weeks. Jody recapped the recurring training which staff attorneys and legally-trained staff members have provided to GsAL.

Angela departed.

- Linda Potter updated the board on leadership career-track training underway.
- During this upcoming weekend, for the first time our program will have a staffed table (volunteers welcome) at PRIDE for marketing and recruitment.
- A number of GsAL have been contacted by the media on specific cases. Tami has notified all program-related personnel of our media protocol (no comment and refer to Tami).

July: Review Ends Language; Q3 EL 2.4 Financial Condition and Activities;
Vic Walker (4th District)

Future: Laura Miles (Family Court)

Meeting Evaluation and Adjourn

Tim moved to adjourn, and Angela seconded. Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Next Board Meetings

July 18, 2023

9 a.m. to Noon - Hybrid – Remote/In-Person

August 15, 2023

9 a.m. to Noon - TBD