DRAFT

Pursuant to § 2.2-3707.1 of the Code of Virginia this DRAFT of the minutes of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Children's Justice Act (CJA) Advisory Committee is available to the public. The public is cautioned that the information is provided in DRAFT form and is subject to change by the Advisory Committee prior to becoming final. Once the minutes have been finalized, they will be marked "FINAL" and made available to the public.

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

October 23, 2026

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on October 23, 2026, at the Virginia Department of Social Services, 5600 Cox Road, York River Room, 111B, Glen Allen, VA 23060.

Members Present
Judge Eugene Butler
Kristen Camp
Morgan Cox
Davy Fearon
Allison Martin
Lana Mullins
Jeannine Panzera
Patt Popp, Vice Chair
Eric Reynolds
Lora Smith
Kayla Stoltz
Judge Thomas Sotelo, Chair

Members Not Present
Shamika Byars
Jackie Robinson Brock
Mary Chamberlin
Katharine Hunter
Viola Vaughan-Eden

Guests
Rachel Miller (VDSS)
Kristi Wright (Office of the Executive Secretary, Supreme Court of Virginia)
Shannon Freeman (Virginia Department of Social Services, Office of Family Violence)

Staff Present
Jessica Carter
Jenna Foster
Tracey Jenkins
Melissa O'Neill
Terry Willie-Surratt

I. **Call to Order:** Judge Thomas Sotelo, CASA/CJA Advisory Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. All present introduced themselves.

II. **Approval of Minutes:** The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the July 24, 2026, meeting. Pat Popp made a motion to approve the minutes, and Eric Reynolds provided the second. The motion was approved.

III. **CASA Program and Children's Justice Act Reports Review:** Judge Sotelo noted that members received written reports on the CASA program and Children's Justice Act programs in advance of the meeting. Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions.

IV. **CJA Strategic Planning:** The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee engaged in a strategic planning process to further define the 2026-2029 CJA Three-Year Plan. Goals for the strategic planning meeting included the following:

- Establish a shared understanding of statewide trends and system challenges.
- Clarify the priorities and requirements of the 2026–2029 CJA Three-Year Plan.
- Identify system-level gaps and opportunities for improved coordination.
- Leverage existing strengths, partnerships, and ongoing initiatives.
- Build consensus on feasible, high-impact activities for inclusion in the CJA Three-Year Plan.

The strategic planning session brought together Advisory Committee members to develop a shared understanding of statewide trends, emerging challenges, and the broader child welfare landscape. Participants reviewed the priorities and requirements of the 2026–2029 Children's Justice Act (CJA) Three-Year Plan, while identifying system-level gaps and opportunities to strengthen coordination across agencies and partners. The discussion also highlighted existing strengths, successful collaborations, and ongoing initiatives that can support future efforts. Through collaborative dialogue, the group worked to build consensus around practical, high-impact strategies and activities for inclusion in the 2026–2029 CJA Three-Year Plan.

Advisory Committee members received presentations on the following topics:

- **Human Trafficking in Virginia** – McKayla Burnett, State Trafficking Response Coordinator, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
- **Office of the Children's Ombudsman Update** – Eric Reynolds, Director
- **Foster Care Updates** – Lora Smith, Foster Care Program Manager, Virginia Department of Social Services
- **Domestic Violence** – Shannon Freeman, Contract Administrator, Virginia Department of Social Services
- **CASA Trends in Virginia** – Jeannine Panzera, Executive Director, Henrico CASA Program

- **Educational Stability for Homeless Youth and Children** – Patricia Popp, State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Youth and Children
- **Child abuse and Children with Disabilities** – Jenna Foster on behalf of Jackie Robinson Brock, VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities

Members worked in teams based on CJA priorities to identify strategic opportunities including relationships, collaboration points, and system-level supports to achieve the greatest impact. Focus remained on gaps in statewide coordination, existing efforts to amplify, and partnerships for sustainable implementation of priorities.

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

VI. Public Comment: Judge Sotelo called for public comment. No public comment was given.

VII. **Adjourn:** Judge Sotelo adjourned the meeting at 2:33 PM.

Next meeting dates:

Friday January 22, 2027 - Virtual
Friday April 23, 2027 – In-person
Friday July 23, 2027 – Virtual