

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

July 25, 2025

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held virtually on July 25, 2025.

Members Present

Randy Bonds
Jackie Robinson Brock
Shamika Byars
Judge Eugene Butler
Beth Coyne for Sandy Karison
Davy Fearon
Katharine Hunter
Jeannine Panzera
Giselle Pelaez
Pat Popp, Vice-Chair
Eric Reynolds
Lora Smith
Judge Thomas Sotelo, Chair

Members Not Present

Morgan Cox
Lana Mullins

Guests

Rachel Miller (VDSS)
Gracie Dougherty (University of Richmond Law Student Intern, Office of the Children's Ombudsman)
CJ Morgan (University of Richmond Law Student Intern, Office of the Children's Ombudsman)

Staff Present

Jessica Carter
Melissa O'Neill
Terry Willie-Surratt

- I. Call to Order:** Judge Thomas Sotelo, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. All present introduced themselves.
- II. Approval of Minutes:** The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the April 25, 2025, meeting. Melissa O'Neill noted Eric Reynolds was not listed as having attended. Davey Fearon made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, and Katharine Hunter provided the second. The motion was approved with Randy Bonds abstaining.

III. Nominations Committee Election of Chair and Vice-Chair: Jeannine Panzera and Eric Reynolds agreed to serve as the Nominations Committee during the April 25, 2025, meeting. Eric Reynolds presented a slate of officers for the next two years to include Judge Thomas Sotelo as Chair and Pat Popp as Vice Chair. Judge Sotelo asked if there were any nominations from the floor and hearing none, Judge Sotelo asked for a vote to approve the nominations as presented. The motion was carried unanimously.

IV. Set Meeting Dates for the Upcoming Year: Committee members established the following meeting dates for the upcoming year:

Friday October 24, 2025

Friday January 23, 2026 - Virtual

Friday April 24, 2026

Friday July 24, 2026 – Virtual

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

Virginia Case Studies Pre-Service Training Curriculum: Committee members received a presentation on the Virginia Case Studies Pre-Service Training Curriculum. The presentation provided details on the collaboration between DCJS and the State Leadership Team’s training committee in their efforts to update and revitalize the curriculum. Additional information was provided on the next steps for rolling out the revised curriculum statewide, including regional Training of Facilitator events.

CASA Program Guidance Policy Review: Committee members were provided with a copy of the current CASA/CJA Advisory Committee CASA Program Guidance Policies in advance of the meeting. Committee members reviewed the policies during the meeting, discussed potential updates that may be needed, and will continue the discussion at the next meeting.

VI. CJA Program Update: The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was provided with a written report detailing significant activities of the CJA program this quarter. Committee members noted the staffing change with Jenna Foster, CJA Program Coordinator who has left the position to take another position within DCJS. Committee members recognized her excellent work as the CJA Program Coordinator and wished her well in her new position.

VII. Citizen Review Panel Presentation: Laurie Crawford, Director of the Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy at the Virginia Department of Social Services, provided a presentation to the committee. She addressed specific 2025 Citizen Review Panel recommendations, including the development and integration of best practices from the Science of Hope framework in work with children and families. Ms. Crawford also shared the department’s workforce retention efforts aimed at supporting staff and improving worker retention.

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

IX. Adjourn: Pat Popp made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Davey Fearon provided the second. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM.

Next meeting dates:

Friday October 24, 2025

Friday January 23, 2026 - Virtual

Friday April 24, 2026

Friday July 24, 2026 – Virtual