

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

October 24, 2025

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on October 24, 2025, at the Virginia Department of Social Services, 5600 Cox Road, York River Room, 111B, Glen Allen, VA 23060.

Members Present

Morgan Cox
Jackie Robinson Brock
Shamika Byars
Judge Eugene Butler
Julie Dubee for Sandy Karison
Katharine Hunter
Jeannine Panzera
Pat Popp, Vice-Chair
Eric Reynolds
Lora Smith

Members Not Present

Davy Fearon
Lana Mullins
Giselle Pelaez
Judge Thomas Sotelo, Chair

Guests

Rachel Miller (VDSS)

Staff Present

Laurel Marks
Melissa O'Neill
Terry Willie-Surratt

- I. Call to Order:** Pat Popp, Committee Vice-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 25, 2025, meeting. Eric Reynolds made a motion to approve the minutes, and Shamika Byars provided the second. The motion was approved with Julie Dubee abstaining.
- III. Presentation of the Office of the Children's Ombudsman Annual Report:** Eric Reynolds, Director of the Office of the Children's Ombudsman provided an overview of the 2025 Report. The presentation focused on the report findings, data, and trends.

IV. CJA Program Update: The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was provided with a written report detailing significant activities of the CJA program this quarter. The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) received funding for the CJA Program and is actively recruiting a new CJA Program Coordinator.

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

CASA Program Guidance Policy Review: During the last meeting, committee members reviewed the current CASA/CJA Advisory Committee CASA Program Guidance Policies and suggested changes. A copy of the proposed revisions, based on that discussion, was distributed in advance of this meeting. Committee members then reviewed and discussed the updated policies. Shamika Byars made a motion to approve the revised CASA/CJA Advisory Committee CASA Program Guidance Policies, and Eric Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Citizen Review Panel Presentation: Committee members were provided, in advance of the meeting, a copy of the Virginia Department of Social Services' response to the Citizen Review Panel's 2025 Recommendations. The Committee held a discussion, offered additional input, and expressed appreciation to the Department of Social Services for its response.

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

VIII. Adjourn: Judge Eugene Butler made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Katharine Hunter provided the second. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:52 AM.

Next meeting dates:

Friday January 23, 2026 - Virtual

Friday April 24, 2026

Friday July 24, 2026 – Virtual