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# Colorado Office of Public Guardianship

**Director,** Sophia M. Alvarez

**Commissioners**

Deb Bennett-Woods, Chair  
Stephanie Garcia, Vice-Chair  
Spencer Crona  
Patrick Thiessen  
Brandon Fields



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## **PUBLIC MEETING** **April 5, 2023** **RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

### **CONVENE**

The meeting of the Colorado Office of Public Guardianship Commission was convened by video conference via Zoom at 2:02 PM by Commission Chair Bennett-Woods.

A quorum of the Commission was present.

### **Commission Members Present**

Chair Deb Bennett-Woods  
Vice-Chair Stephanie Garcia  
Spencer Crona  
Patrick Thiessen  
Brandon Fields

### **OPG Director**

Sophia M. Alvarez

### **Others Present**

Janelle Cantu, Deputy Director, Office of Public Guardianship  
Rhonda Sanchez, Office of Public Guardianship  
Nancy Bowden, Office of Public Guardianship  
America Paz Pastrana, Office of Public Guardianship  
Robert Finke, General Counsel, Office of the Attorney General

### **Public Attendance**

Hani Raley, Executive Director, The ARC of Aurora

Participation was by video conference.

### **AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order. The meeting was recorded.

## **II. Approval of the February 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Bennett-Woods asked for comments or amendments to the February 22, 2023.

Commissioner Crona asked for a correction of the last sentence of Section IV. Line J. It should read as follows:

“But for purposes of our record and testimony in our bill I would like to add this point and observation to the record.”

Vice-Chair Garcia **moved** to approve the February 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes as amended. Commissioner Crona **seconded** the motion. Motion **passed** unanimously.

## **III. Chair Report (Deb Bennett-Woods)**

Chair Bennett-Woods’ Chair Report, was distributed electronically and discussed. Chair Bennett-Woods gave recognition to staff for their hard work in the last few weeks due to the challenges faced due to staff shortages and thanked everyone for stepping up and providing coverage. Chair Bennett-Woods did not have any additional updates. There were no follow up questions.

## **IV. Director Report (Sophia M. Alvarez)**

Director Alvarez’s Director Report was distributed electronically along with other materials and discussed. Additional items discussed included, but were not limited to:

### **a. SB23-064 Update**

- A. Director Alvarez informed that the Legislative Liaison notified that 3 amendments to SB23-064 bill were introduced.
- B. Director Alvarez sent amendments in an email to the Commission prior to the meeting and informed that they will be posted on the website soon.
- C. Discussion regarding the amendments followed.

### **b. Human Resource and Case Acceptance Update**

- D. Director Alvarez provided the following human resources updates.
  - i. Rhonda Sanchez resigned effective April 14<sup>th</sup>.

- ii. The application deadline for Denver Guardian positions was extended and added to an online recruiting site. We received 15 resumes from applicants interested in the positions and will be setting up interviews.
  - iii. Everyone is working hard trying to cover clients.
  - iv. Director Alvarez and the Staff Assistant have been working with the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District court staff in February and March. We will start taking referrals in April. We are currently updating the referral process on the website.
  - v. The 3-year anniversary for Camille Price, Erin McGavin, Rhonda Sanchez and America Paz-Pastrana was recognized. Director Alvarez has almost completed performance reviews for them.
  - vi. Director Alvarez submitted the Next 50 Initiative Foundation Flexible Funding grant to hire one patient navigator/client escort. She had a conversation with the Next 50 Initiative Foundation representative and discussed applying for the Advancing Innovation in Aging grant.
- E. Chair Bennett-Woods inquired if all referrals are on hold and not accepting new applications until additional staff are hired. Director Alvarez informed that we accepted 2 referrals before the 2<sup>nd</sup> staff member went on leave and have not accepted any new referrals since.
- F. Commissioner Crona congratulated staff for their 3-year anniversary. Commissioner Crona expressed appreciation to the staff for their hard work, diligence and vigilance while working understaffed.

**c. Specifically, the matters referred to Executive Session and Discussion of Critical Incident Reporting**

Chair Bennett-Woods asked for a motion to enter Executive Session.

Commissioner Fields **moved** to initiate Executive Session. Commissioner Thiessen **seconded** the motion. Motion **passed** unanimously with at least two-thirds of the membership present.

The Commission exited open session and entered executive session on a separate line at 2:34 p.m.

At 3:05 p.m., the Commission returned to open session.

**V. Discussion of Executive Director Evaluation Process and Timeline**

- A. Chair Bennett-Woods stated that the Executive Director job description and performance assessment needs to be updated and ready for when the office is established permanently.
- B. Chair Bennett-Woods recommends that the incoming Chair should work on the job description. Vice-Chair Garcia agreed to work on updating the job description.
- C. Chair Bennett-Woods indicated that she would work on the current performance assessment coordination.
- D. Vice-Chair Garcia asked for Director Alvarez's assistance in looking into other states with similar offices for job descriptions.
- E. Chair Bennett-Woods stated that she would like a more targeted 360 survey for people the Director interacts with on a regular basis. Vice-Chair Garcia and Commissioner Thiessen agree with having a more targeted process.
- F. Commissioner Crona stated that would want a process that generates more candid responses from stakeholders, and it seems that this approach would do that.
- G. Chair Bennett-Woods informed that at May's meeting the Commission needs to agree on the questions for the 360 process and questions that will be used in the staff survey. Chair Bennett-Woods will coordinate with AG Finke on how to get those disseminated and back to the Commission by the end of May or beginning of June. The Commission will have that information to work with and will have 2 weeks for the Commissioner's individual assessments.
- H. Chair Bennett-Woods informed that the June meeting will need to have an Executive Session, or a Special Meeting scheduled to discuss the Director's evaluation.
- I. Chair Bennett-Woods asked the Commission to send questions and evaluation forms that they would like to see in the Director's evaluation to AG Finke. Chair Bennett-Woods will put draft documents together to have a document to work with at the May Commission meeting.

**VI. Discussion of Commission Letter in Support of JBC Administrative Services of Independent Agencies Bill (Deb Bennett-Woods and Sophia M. Alvarez)**

- A. Chair Bennett-Woods inquired if it is still timely to submit a letter in support of JBC Administrative Services of Independent Agencies Bill.
- B. Director Alvarez stated that she does not know how timely it is anymore, since the bill was already introduced for a second iteration. Director Alvarez suggested waiting until we know what language will have at the House of Representatives before we support it.
- C. Chair Bennett-Woods asked for the Commission's conditional approval to draft the letter if needed.

- D. Chair Bennett-Woods will send a draft of the letter to the Commission for input.
- E. Chair Bennett-Woods stated that the idea of the letter is to encapsulate the experience of the office.

Chair Bennett-Woods asked for a motion authorizing the drafting of the letter in Support of JBC Administrative Services of Independent Agencies Bill.

Commissioner Crona moved to give contingent authority to draft a letter in Support of JBC Administrative Services of Independent Agencies Bill. Vice-Chair Garcia **seconded** the motion. Motion **passed** unanimously with at least two-thirds of the membership present.

## **VII. Public Comment**

No public Comment.

- A. Vice-Chair Garcia inquired about the reason for leaving public comment until the end of the meeting since we lose public presence after the Executive Session.
- B. AG Finke recommend moving public comment to the beginning of the meeting or before the Executive Session.
- C. Chair Bennett-Woods stated that public comment was moved to the end of the agenda in response to public comment. Chair Bennett-Woods is strongly in favor of moving the Executive Session to the end or later in the agenda.
- D. Commissioner Crona stated that this may elongate the meeting, but it would elicit more favorable response and presentation to the public if public comment is moved to the end of the agenda.
- E. AG Finke suggested going through all agenda items, then public comment, leave the Executive Session to the end of the agenda and leave the tail end of the meeting for any motions that are necessary for the end of Executive Session.
- F. Vice-Chair Garcia suggested having a statement of boundaries around public comment, limit comment to so many minutes, and have the public register with the office if they are going to have public comment.
- G. AG Finke suggested taking the public comment policy and synthesizing it, so it could have a concise statement of what the policy is right now. AG Finke will work on a script for the chair that gives that kind of information to the public and asked Director Alvarez to put the policy on the agenda for next month.
- H. Chair Bennett-Woods asked AG Finke to review the Director's Complaint policy and add it as an action item for the next Commission meeting.

- I. Chair Bennett-Woods asked the Commission and Director Alvarez to send input of who they want to see the surveys go to for the Executive Director's evaluation.
- J. Vice-Chair Garcia requested a copy of the current job description of the Executive Director and to start working on the new one.
- K. Vice-Chair Garcia asked if there was an MOU with CMHI-Pueblo. Director Alvarez stated that there is an MOU with the Office of Behavioral Health, for a guardian for clients in CMHI-Fort Logan and Pueblo. Vice-Chair Garcia was asked by Judge Tim O'Shea in Pueblo and wants to share that information with the Judge. Director Alvarez agreed to email the MOU to Vice-Chair Garcia. Chair Bennett-Woods clarified that the MOU is limited to clients discharging to Denver.

**VIII. Adjourn**

There was no motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

**ATTESTATION**

As Commission Chair and Commission Vice-Chair, we attest that these minutes of the open public meeting of the Colorado Office of Public Guardianship Commission substantially reflect the substance of the discussion and action taken related to the matters under the authority of the Commission.

	4.26.2023
Deb Bennett-Woods, Chair	Date

	4.26.2023
Stephanie Garcia, Vice-Chair	Date