
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 26, 2023** **RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

CONVENE

The meeting of the Colorado Office of Public Guardianship Commission was convened by video conference via Zoom at 10:02 AM 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
Teresa Esquibel, Office of Public Guardianship
Angela Bullard, Office of Public Guardianship
Camille Price, Office of Public Guardianship
Loretta Vigil, Office of Public Guardianship
America Paz Pastrana, Office of Public Guardianship
Robert Finke, General Counsel, Office of the Attorney General

Public Attendance

Maureen Welch
Jim Tatten

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 April 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Chair Bennett-Woods asked for comments or amendments to the April 5, 2023.

Vice-Chair Garcia **moved** to approve the April 5, 2023, Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner Fields **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 the Legislative Liaisons for hard and effective work in helping OPG bill move well through the Senate. Also, thanked AG Finke for doing a great deal of legal work for OPG, which is complex and critical.

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 her that the House Judiciary Committee hearing will be scheduled for either May 2nd or May 3rd. Director Alvarez will send notice as soon as the hearing date is confirmed.
- B. Director Alvarez asked if Commissioner Crona could be available to testify during the hearing, if not she requested that other Commissioners be available to testify.
- C. Director Alvarez did not have any additional updates and asked for questions or comments.

- D. Chair Bennett-Woods inquired about the state education compliance training and discussion was held as to how the OPG can access this training.
- E. Commissioner Fields inquired about the proposal from Judge Leith for an additional guardian for the criminal docket. Director Alvarez stated that Judge Leith submitted the proposal for funding for a guardian, after discussing it with our commission, for incapacitated individuals transitioning from the Department of Corrections into the community. Director Alvarez informed that she has not received any update regarding this proposal.
- F. Vice-Chair asked if have considered temporary guardianship for those situations. Director Alvarez stated that this is an option to explore.

V. Discussion of Executive Director Evaluation Process and Timeline

Chair Bennett-Woods conveyed the following for discussion:

- A. The Staff and Stakeholder surveys questions need to be established.
 - i. The staff survey used the year prior is no longer adequate and asked the Commission to send suggestions.
 - ii. The Stakeholder survey is a typical 360 survey limited to 5 to 6 stakeholders and suggested using a longer list. Surveys will be anonymized, and feedback will be distributed to the Commission.
- B. Chair Bennett-Woods received the list of stakeholders Director Alvarez has been in contact with and asked for input.
- C. Chair Bennett-Woods suggested that the Office submit a separate survey for input about the office in general.
- D. The deadline for the Director self-evaluation will be set for the end of May.
- E. The deadline for the survey feedback will be June 1, 2023.
- F. A Special Meeting will be scheduled for June to discuss the Director's Evaluation and a quorum will be necessary.
- G. Discussion followed.

VI. Discussion of Rescheduling May Commission Meeting

After discussion, the May meeting is re-scheduled to Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 9:00 AM.

Discussion of Critical Incident Reporting

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

Chair Bennett-Woods informed that the Commission will not be going into Executive Session to discuss the March 2023 Critical Incident Report because the March report was not finalized due to staff shortages. Chair Bennett-Woods informed that the March and April reports will be discussed at the May Commission meeting.

VII. Public Comment

- A. Maureen Welch provided the following comments: The potential lack of information that is available to the public regarding this office. The definition of stakeholder also should include people that have divergent opinions from mainstream stakeholders. It was a good move of the legislature to delay the expansion of the office of public guardianship because there are existing challenges around hiring and retaining staff, and management of human resources.
- i. Commissioner Thiessen stated that there is a list of stakeholders being contacted regarding the Director's survey and asked Ms. Welch if she had a specific recommendation to be added to the list of stakeholders. Ms. Welch stated that she was referring to individuals being impacted by guardianship and actual people that have guardianship in their lives and families.
- B. Jim Tatten thanked Chair Bennett-Woods for her leadership in her 2 years of service as Chair. Mr. Tatten provided the following comments: Has seen that government action has a big impact on individuals with disabilities for example a woman in Minnesota had her home confiscated by the government for failure to pay property taxes. Today's discussion reminded him of a construction project starting with finishing details rather than setting a foundation around the office of public guardian and agrees with Ms. Welch that expanding the office is probably ill timed.

VIII. Adjourn

Vice-Chair Garcia moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Crona seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.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.

Deb Bennett-Woods, Chair

Date

Stephanie Garcia, Vice-Chair

Date

DRAFT