

DRAFT

South Dakota CASA Commission Meeting

May 1, 2012

8:00 am – 12:00 pm (CT)

Pierre, SD

Capitol Building, Room 413

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Commissioners: Kathleen Trandahl, Circuit Judge; Jaime Reiff, Child Protection Services; Kristie Fiegen, Public Utilities Commission Kim Max, Court Services Officer

Excused: Lisa Thompson, Wiconi Wawokiya, Inc.

Court Improvement Program Committee members: Tony Benning, Sharon Kallemeyn, Judge Jeff Davis

SCAO: Sara Kelly; Gloria Guericke, Recording Secretary

Welcome/Opening Remarks

Judge Kathleen Trandahl called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

The Commissioners introduced themselves, also the CIP members and SCAO staff

Approval of May 2011 meeting minutes

Kristie Fiegen moved the correction of the spelling of her last name. Jaime Reiff seconded the amendment.

Kristie Fiegen moved and Kim Max seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Introduction of new CASA program – Southeast CASA

Sherri Rodgers-Conti, Director of the CASA program in Yankton.

Sherri informed the group that their program is open and has been operating now for six months. Their first need was to raise awareness in the community. They recruited and

trained six CASA volunteers so far. They currently have two cases with CASA volunteers assigned, plus just received notice of another case needing a volunteer. Currently they are only focusing on the Yankton area but plan to expand their services.

CASA program presentations:

- **First Circuit CASA, Jackie Horton, Director**

Jackie distributed a report (Handout A) of what their program has accomplished since the last meeting.

Jackie noted that they are located in Mitchell but have expanded into Hutchinson County during the past year. They've also relocated their office to an area with more space for their four workers.

During the past year they held a CASA Day at the state legislature to help raise awareness of the program. A "Cup of CASA" is done monthly with workers and volunteers to provide networking and recognition. They did volunteer training in March, but have had to do additional trainings due to interest expressed by individuals wanting to become involved with the program after seeing media coverage regarding Sioux Falls Area CASA.

Jackie discussed a forum they hosted plus discussed various fundraisers. Several restaurants donated a percentage of their sales during a special day set aside for CASA.

They have 21 volunteers this year versus the 10 last year at this time. The program has implemented new software to track their cases and they really love this program Jackie commented that they still need to work in their outlying areas and to get the word out there. Direct mail fundraising brought in an increase of donations.

Jackie felt they had a successful year as they increased their caseload, their number of volunteers, and fundraising.

Committee Questions and Comments

Jaime complimented Jackie on her strategic goals and successful fundraising.

Judge Trandahl stated she liked that the First Circuit Program was using Experience Works for assistance.

Kristie commented that it was fun to read their report and noted that their growth was phenomenal. She asked how they account for the large increase in direct mail fundraising? Jackie replied that they utilized RSVP volunteers and Life Quest to help with the mailings.

Kristie questioned how they determined the time and benefit on new fundraising events. Jackie explained that they mainly are looking at getting the word out while raising money; they want to raise money or at least break even for this year. They plan to include face-to-face fundraising in the future. She noted that it's scary the first time someone does this, so they may start by having coffee and telling our story, and then ask for money if the situation feels right.

- **Sioux Falls Area CASA, Amy Benda Director**

Amy informed the committee that as of April 20, they had 112 sworn-in volunteers. Their goal is 140 -150 sworn-in volunteers, knowing that there is usually a percentage not available due to medical, vacation, on leave, etc. Amy stated they are trying to foster relationships with the volunteers on hold as they tend to lose them if they are inactive for nine months or more.

Currently, 73 volunteers are appointed to cases. We want to have 115-120 volunteers active at a time.

The number of cases is starting to level off, but the number of open cases seems to be extending in length. Page 4 of the report is the number of recorded hours by their volunteers, but several of their high-volume volunteers do not report their hours. They are working on reminding these volunteers to record their hours.

The program moved to a larger office area in January. They are now in the county extension office. Computer support is donated by a CASA volunteers and staff now have dual monitors.

All three local TV stations attended their office ribbon cutting in March, resulting in phenomenal publicity, which was referenced by Jackie. This publicity resulted in 16 individuals submitting applications to become a volunteer.

Amy stated she is working with a Rotary Club to have CASA put in their annual giving plan. In April, the program sponsored two educational events. Publicity was disseminated through electronic means and via press released.

A recognition and recruitment event is scheduled for this fall. They are asking their volunteers to bring someone to breakfast that they feel would be a good volunteer. This will lift up and recognize the volunteers while CASA tells their story to the guests.

They've looked at fundraising events vs. private parties and determined that the fundraising events have a lower return than private parties. An example of a private party is a wine tasting event; in two hours they raised \$10,000. Private parties result in very little cost to them as the host sponsors them at their site. Some of the guests were current donors who upped their donation amount.

Amy discussed a “Kangaroo Court” which was held during hunting season in the evening. The “judge” cited the driver of the hunting party for not making sure his passengers were secure on the vehicle. A passenger was cited for not using their seatbelt, plus other passengers cited for various offenses. CASA ended up with over \$6,000 from the Kangaroo Court.

Amy said that they are also encouraging donations to CASA in people’s wills. Amy sent around an announcement from a wedding where the bride and groom’s party favors encouraged guests to make a donation to CASA.

A new event this year was a Children’s Style Show. It was as a small event that raised \$2,300. Expenses were minimal as publicity was handled electronically and they used a local church for the style show, 92 guests attended at \$20/ticket. They have room to expand attendance as only a portion of the site was utilized.

Amy stated that their grant request is for 24% of their operating budget.

Committee Questions and Comments

Judge Trandahl noted that both Amy and Chad (Rapid City) have the ability to reach the entire state by the things you do, which helps the other CASA organizations.

Jaime asked about volunteers resigning. Amy replied that this occurs due to life-changing circumstances, relocation, family member illness, etc., and rarely do volunteers leave due to frustration with the system. CASA walks them through the situation when they get frustrated.

Kim commented that she was amazed at all the new fundraising ideas stated by all the programs.

Amy discussed a golf tournament fundraiser, which costs nothing to CASA to implement. The fundraiser has teams of 3 amateurs bidding on which pro they want to golf with for the weekend.

Kristie noted that switching to a new database takes a lot of time to learn, yet your staff kept up on cases. Kristie asked about analysis of fundraising. Amy replied that analysis of the style show is on tomorrow’s agenda. JC Penny’s did all the work regarding clothes and another sponsor underwrote the expenses for food.

Kristie noted that individual giving is up, which is good; however in the 990 form, on page 7, there are two board members who spend an hour a week, whereas other board members didn’t show any hours. Amy stated that this isn’t accurate as they all give more than the recorded number of hours.

- **East-Central CASA, Julie Wermers, Director, Brookings, SD**

Julie thanked the committee for allowing her to share East-Central CASA's highlights of the past year. She stated that we continue to set goals in child, volunteer and advocate areas. They have a strategic planning session set for this fall.

For child goals, they currently provide advocacy services to 63 children utilizing 23 volunteers. Some volunteers advocated for educational testing that probably wouldn't otherwise have been done.

For volunteer advocate goals, they continue to provide in-services to meet national CASA training goals. They continue to provide "CASA Connections" so that volunteers can meet, visit about cases, and network. This networking opportunity has been positively received by volunteers. Julie stated they will send staff to the national CASA conference. They utilize radio and newspaper ads to keep CASA awareness in the community.

The program hosted a Fire and Ice fundraiser, which raised \$47,000 this year. Julie stated this fundraiser is a lot of work for them. They have considered doing private parties but their pool of givers is small in their area. They continue to see the same donors and givers at all their events. They helped raise 27% of their operating budget last year. Julie talked about several other events where they've been the third party beneficiary of the fundraising events.

Julie stated that their volunteers do not want a formal recognition, so they send birthday cards or a thank-you note at the end of a case. Surveys are sent periodically to volunteers for input on how to improve services.

An SDSU intern has helped with office functions, especially with the new Case Manager software recently implemented.

Committee Questions and Comments

Jaime complimented Julie on her action plan and on having no kids on the waiting list.

Judge Trandahl stated she liked hearing stories about the impact of volunteers on the children.

Kristie commented that it's always fun to read what is being done in the communities. She noted that last year you talked about expanding to Huron and Watertown. Julie replied that the funding hasn't been available but continue to work on this expansion. Huron is a commute for the program and they need to consider the financial aspect to the volunteers and program, but Huron did have a volunteer.

Kristie pointed out that the board of directors is also showing "0" for hours on the 990 form. Julie replied that this was an oversight.

- **Northern Hills CASA, Kate Kelly, Director**

Kate reported that she took over as director last August. Kate has a new staff member with great grant writing skills and a BHSU intern who has lots of energy and computer skills.

They seem to be getting a lot of families with four to five children, which is a lot to put on a volunteer. The seasoned volunteers are handling these families.

Gasoline reimbursement has not really been taken up in the past by volunteers, but this is changing due to high gas prices.

Kate stated that they are doing “Cup of CASA” for volunteer networking. They took it on the road to Sturgis and plan to do it in other towns.

They are featuring a “Volunteer of the Month” on their website and in the newspaper. Along with recognizing the volunteer, this also helps maintain awareness of the CASA program in the community.

Kate discussed a public education program they held regarding synthetic drugs. Approximately 200 people attended. They felt the program was worthwhile and may do this in other communities. They also did educational sessions on Autism and on Childhood Depression, which were open to the general public.

Kate informed the group that they want to work with their young people to get them trained in independent living skills such as how to handle money, get a job, buy healthy food and cook it, laundry, etc., as many of these do not come from an environment where these basics are taught.

The Northern Hills CASA switched to Casa Manager case management system this year, plus they are also doing Facebook and adding more to their website.

The Forgotten Children cardboard kids were displayed in downtown Sturgis stores and each kid held a sign with CASA-related statistics on it. The media covered this story, resulting in good publicity.

Kate discussed various businesses and organizations that have helped them spread the word about CASA and helped with fundraising. Several fundraisers include a fundraising walk, an auction at Deadwood Lodge, and a raffle for a trip to Hawaii.

They have 91 kids right now and 37 volunteers are assigned to the kids. Twelve volunteers were sworn in last year.

Committee Questions and Comments

Judge Trandahl endorsed the Cup of CASA as she felt it was important for the volunteers to have a networking opportunity. She appreciated the thank-you letter from Kendra that Kate submitted with her report.

Jaime commended Northern Hills on keeping their expenses down. Kate stated she checked the budget when she first started so that she was familiar with it and could keep track of high expense areas.

Kim said she has referred kids to the Big Brother, Big Sister program after they leave CASA as they still need an advocate in their life. It is another great opportunity for kids for follow-up in their lives.

Kristie asked if Kate really held over 80 meetings this year and Kate replied affirmatively. Kristie questioned the revenue of over \$80,000. Kate explained that they plan to buy a building. Kate budgeted for the rental income of the rental area in the basement.

Kristie asked about the county and city budget cut of \$11,000 last year. Kate stated she and two board members went before the commission and asked why the funding was cut and they found out that one commission member told the other commissioners that CASA gets funded from the state. Kate and the members set them straight. They were told to submit a request to the commission next year.

- **Seventh Circuit CASA, Chad Catron, Director**

Chad stated that 2011 was a difficult year for the Rapid City CASA as they struggled with new volunteers coming in. They had the same number of applicants as in the past but the applicants didn't turn into volunteers. Many backed out after the first couple of weeks of training. In addition, there were a couple applicants they were hesitant about having as volunteers.

Eleven volunteers were recruited this year and were sworn in at end of February. They already have 10 applicants signed up for the next training. There are 62 volunteers assigned to cases as of last Friday, who are serving 112 kids. They have 114 kids needing volunteers right now. We have more kids being served but less are coming in with Petitions.

The program is in the midst of an expansion. They were contacted by Hot Springs and the Seventh Circuit CASA recently assigned their first volunteer (from Hot Springs) to this area.

Chad reported that they are working with the Hot Springs United Way to get some of the United Way funding. They are planning an informational meeting in Hot Springs to help spread their story and hopefully acquire some local volunteers.

Chad discussed a recent challenge he faced where a volunteer declined a case as they were afraid of the family. He felt that this could be a problem they see more of in the future.

Continuation of the Fire and Ice fundraiser is under consideration as is a lot of work, but they don't have a fundraiser to replace it with at this time. A goal this year is to review fundraisers and see what we need (regarding net income) and how we can get there. They want events that are not so time consuming.

Chad discussed a 5K Fun Run a board member did for them. The run helps get the word out and isn't a lot of work. CASA gave away their 20th CASA playhouse last week. The playhouse doesn't bring in a lot of money but does get the word out about their program.

A "Light Up the Night" event was held on the courthouse steps to raise awareness about child abuse and to help get word out about CASA.

Chad noted that they contacted 7-12 restaurants which will donate 10-20% of their daily business to CASA. All we need to do is get the word out in advance.

Committee Questions and Comments

Jaime commented that she liked their strategic plan layout but she couldn't find a letter of support. Kristie added that she couldn't find the 990. Sara apologized and stated that the copy machine was being temperamental during copying and some pages must have been omitted from their packet. Both items were submitted as noted on checklist on the front of the packet.

Kim stated that the number of volunteers is important, but they need to be good volunteers.

Kristie noted last year's \$16,000 deficit and asked Chad to explain temporary restrictive funding. Chad replied that they run on a cash basis. They had some early sponsors for Fire and Ice who came in earlier than the FY11 year, and had the opposite situation this year when sponsors came in late. Last year we had some grant sources and a foundation we planned to contact, but some fell through. We had a lot of one child cases vs. many child cases. We plan to aim higher this year.

- **SD CASA Association, Chad Catron, Director**

Chad reported that the Association no longer has a full-time state director. The South Dakota CASA directors met with National CASA Association staff and discussed what they wanted from the Association. The Association was put in the hands of the local programs and all local program directors are automatically on the board of directors. Members at large from across the state are also on the board. Chad is the Director for

FY12. He stated it's been challenging at times holding this position and his local position. A lot of questions were answered at the director's meeting and the directors feel they can now move on in the desired direction.

Chad informed the group that Voices for Children Day and the CASA Day at the Capitol were two events where directors and board members could help out. He stated that some states are switching to this format and others are keeping a paid person in the state director position.

Committee Questions and Comments

Judge Trandahl asked if there were growing pains in the transition from having a state director to working as a group. She also asked if they felt they were moving in the right direction and what help might you need down the road. The major changes Chad noted were that communication has opened up and they don't need to pay a director anymore. The programs help each other out. We've split up our allotted amounts and he noted that 80% of national funds were for paying the director, which is no longer an expense. He feels the day to day duties will be easier in the future. He felt that things should be easier next year regarding funds for travel, publicity, training, volunteers, etc., now that they've worked out a plan this year for national funds.

Kim asked about National CASA funding. The National CASA program was awarded \$4.5 million, but will probably end up at about \$3.5 million after certain allotments are removed. The maximum amount for state organizations would be \$40,000 grants, but at this amount only about 11 states would be funded. They are looking at about 66% of the funds going to local programs.

Kristie asked how much of the Association money was split up yesterday. Chad: replied \$10,500, part was the Walmart foundation grant and part was national CASA.

Amy reported that the network has built strong relationships over the years and a "worm in the apple" was hindering their growth. We now have a great flow in supporting each other. She finds this a positive change and felt that Chad did a great job in getting this started this year. They felt that a person in Chad's position should be supported financially for supplies and to compensate for Chad's time in this position.

Judge Trandahl informed the directors that \$200,000 is available this year. This is a decreased amount. She noted that the local programs have done some amazing things, which is how you've survived.

Distribution of Funds:

First Circuit CASA: \$24,000

Sioux Falls CASA: \$65,000

East-Central CASA: \$20,000

Northern Hills CASA: \$30,000

Seventh Circuit CASA: \$61,000

Judge Trandahl noted that we'll probably see the addition of another program in the future plus requests for the SD CASA Association..

Kristie informed the programs that we've seen you do the changes we requested and continue to see great work from you.

Kristie Fiegen moved and Kim Max seconded the CASA funding amounts for FY 13. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Schedule 2013 meeting

Kristie asked if the annual meeting could be moved to the second Wednesday in May due to a scheduling conflict. This date would be May 8, 2013.

The date of May 8, 2013 was approved by commission members.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m. CT.