

**Nebraska Children’s Commission Meeting**

October 15, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

SCC Continuing Education Center, Rooms 303 & 304

301 South 68<sup>th</sup> Street Place, Lincoln, NE 68510

**1. Call to Order**

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Acting Chair Jeanne Brandner called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m., welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**2. Introductions and Roll Call**

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***Commission Members Present (14)***

Breanna Anderson	Misty Frazier	Felicia Nelsen
Beth Baxter	Ron Giesselmann	Lana Temple-Plotz
Jim Blue (9:22 a.m.)	Richard Hasty	Susan Thomas (9:30 a.m.)
A’Jamal Byndon	Jessica Hilderbrand	Melanie Williams-Smotherman
Kathy Dinkel	Terri Knutson	

***Commission Members Absent (1)***

Vernon Davis

***Commission Ex-Officio Members Present (10)***

Senator Kate Bolz	<i>Proxy for Sheri Dawson, Tamara</i>	Senator Patty Pansing Brooks
Michele Borg (10:30 a.m.)	Gavin	Julie Rogers
Jeanne Brandner	Lori Harder	Deb VanDyke-Ries
	Kim Hawekotte	Senator Lynne Walz (10:00 a.m.)

***Commission Ex-Officio Members Absent (1)***

Judge Roger Heideman

**Roll call was taken through introductions and a quorum was established.**

***Guests in Attendance (10)***

Adam Anderson.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Chris Jones.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Tami Soper.....	Office of Senator Kate Bolz
Chris Triebsch.....	Office of Senator Patty Pansing Brooks

*a. Notice of Publication*

Recorder for the meeting, Adam Anderson, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar and Nebraska Children’s Commission websites in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The publication would be kept as a permanent attachment with the meeting minutes.

*b. Announcement of the placement of Open Meetings Act information*

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection and was located on the sign in table near the entrance of the room.

**3. Orientation and History of the Nebraska Children’s Commission**

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Acting Chair Brandner explained the role of the Executive Committee and her current status as the Acting Chair of the Commission. Past Chair Beth Baxter directed the Commission's attention to the [Member Orientation Packet](#) and [PowerPoint](#). She provided history of the Commission and background of the work that has been done in the past. Commission Staff Member Chris Jones discussed some key work of the Commission, such as the Annual Report, Commission updates to the Legislature, and research conducted by the Commission regarding children in the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems. Jones also provided an overview of the structure and governance of the Commission, including a brief overview of the Statutory Committees under the Commission: Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee, Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee, Juvenile Services Committee, Psychotropic Medication Committee, and Strengthening Families Act Committee. Chairperson Brandner added that per the Governance Document, Members of the Commission make up the Chair Positions of the Statutory Committees. Jones answered questions regarding deliverables by the Commission, how Members can request items be added to the agenda, and the Open Meetings Act. Jones iterated the importance of reviewing documents prior to meeting and that meeting documents will be sent out at least one week prior to meeting. Jones also pointed out that it is worthwhile for Members to take a look at [LR 37](#), the Legislative Resolution that brought the Children's Commission into existence.

Acting Chair Brandner thanked Jones and Anderson for their work coordinating the Commission. Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks thanked the Commission and expressed that there is an opportunity for the Commission to take a more proactive approach to offering input to the Legislature. Sen. Kate Bolz agreed and added that the Commission should be prepared to provide feedback to the Legislature by January.

#### 4. Approval of Agenda

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**It was moved by A'Jamal Byndon and seconded by Jim Blue to approve the agenda as presented.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (14):**

Breanna Anderson  
Beth Baxter  
Jim Blue  
A'Jamal Byndon  
Kathy Dinkel

Misty Frazier  
Ron Giesselmann  
Richard Hasty  
Jessica Hilderbrand  
Terri Knutson

Felicia Nelsen  
Lana Temple-Plotz  
Susan Thomas  
Melanie Williams-Smotherman

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (1):**

Vernon Davis

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Note that the order of items in the minutes will be reflective of the original agenda*

#### 5. Approval of Consent Agenda

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- a. [June 18, 2019 meeting minutes](#)
- b. [Committee Member Nomination Report](#)

**Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee**

- An advocacy organization, the singular focus of which is issues impacting children

- **Liz Lovejoy-Brown, to replace Misty Frazier (Voting)** – Secretary, Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition Board; Resource Development Coordinator, Winnebago Tribe
- Representative from a child advocacy organization that supports young adults who were in foster care as children
  - **Phillip Burrell, seeking re-appointment (Voting)** – Director of Youth Services, Project Everlast
- Representative from the Division of Children and Family Services from the Western Service Area
  - **Brenda Brooks, to replace Jerrilyn Crankshaw (Non-voting)** – Western Service Area Administrator, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children & Family Services

**Juvenile Services Committee**

- Representative of Juvenile Probation
  - **Kelli Schadwinkel, to replace Jim Bennett (Voting)** – Director of Juvenile Placement, Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation
- Young Adult with Previous Juvenile Justice Experience
  - **Bobbi Taylor, new position (Voting)** – Young Advocate

**Susan Thomas moved to approve the Consent Agenda items with minor changes to remove wording “Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association” from the Member Nomination Report. Jessica Hilderbrand seconded the motion.** No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (14):**

Breanna Anderson	Misty Frazier	Felicia Nelsen
Beth Baxter	Ron Giesselmann	Lana Temple-Plotz
Jim Blue	Richard Hasty	Susan Thomas
A’Jamal Byndon	Jessica Hilderbrand	Melanie Williams-Smotherman
Kathy Dinkel	Terri Knutson	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (1):**

Vernon Davis

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6. Governance Discussion**

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a. Approval of the Governance Memo

Commission Staff Jones directed the Commission’s attention to the [Governance Document](#) and provided an overview of potential changes to the document regarding Second-Tier membership, Executive Committee terms, meeting frequency, and obligations of the Commission Staff to support the Commission Activities. Vice-Chairperson Baxter provided history and feedback about meeting frequency and the work of the Commission.

Commission Members had lengthy discussion regarding meeting frequency, the focus of day-to-day activities of the Commission, and the structure of the Executive Committee. It was recommended that the

Commission's time be best used to discuss recommendations on the issues of child welfare. The Members decided it would be best use of the Commission's time during this meeting to focus on the structure and nominees to the Executive Committee and to allow the Executive Committee to develop processes for the operation of the Commission.

**Lana Temple-Plotz moved to suspend discussion of full Governance Document and focus on Executive Committee Options A, B, or another option. Kathy Dinkel seconded the motion.** No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (14):**

Breanna Anderson  
Beth Baxter  
Jim Blue  
A'Jamal Byndon  
Kathy Dinkel

Misty Frazier  
Ron Giesselmann  
Richard Hasty  
Jessica Hilderbrand  
Terri Knutson

Felicia Nelsen  
Lana Temple-Plotz  
Susan Thomas  
Melanie Williams-Smotherman

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (1):**

Vernon Davis

**MOTION CARRIED**

Chairperson Brandner opened discussion regarding options other than A and B as outlined in the Governance Document. Discussion from members raised the issues of size, diversity, and powers of the Executive Committee. The Chairs Brandner and Baxter reassured the Commission that the ideas and direction of the Commission come directly from the Members of the Commission. A recommendation to extend the Executive Committee Membership to five members, including a Chair, Vice-Chair and three-at large members, a majority of which are voting members, was raised. Discussion continued regarding the makeup of Executive Committee.

**Jim Blue moved to set the Executive Committee membership to five members, including a chair, vice-chair and three at-large members, one of whom is a legacy member of the Commission. The Executive Committee will be comprised of a majority of voting members on the Executive Committee. The motion was seconded by Jessica Hilderbrand.** No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (13):**

Breanna Anderson  
Beth Baxter  
Jim Blue  
A'Jamal Byndon  
Kathy Dinkel

Misty Frazier  
Ron Giesselmann  
Richard Hasty  
Jessica Hilderbrand  
Terri Knutson

Felicia Nelsen  
Lana Temple-Plotz  
Susan Thomas

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (1):**

Melanie Williams-Smotherman

**ABSENT (1):**

Vernon Davis

**MOTION CARRIED**

The issue of Executive Committee diversity was brought forward by Commission Member Williams-Smotherman as a discussion point, as research has shown that minority children are disproportionately involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems at a higher rate than white children. Members engaged in lengthy discussion regarding the diversity of the Executive Committee and how it might be best to determine appropriate minority representation on the Executive Committee.

**Melanie Williams-Smotherman moved to have one member of the Executive Committee be African American, Native American or Latino. The motion was seconded by A’Jamal Byndon.** No further discussion ensued. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (9):**

Beth Baxter	Misty Frazier	Lana Temple-Plotz
Jim Blue	Richard Hasty	Susan Thomas
A’Jamal Byndon	Terri Knutson	Melanie Williams-Smotherman

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (5):**

Breanna Anderson	Jessica Hilderbrand
Kathy Dinkel	Felicia Nelsen
Ron Giesselmann	

**ABSENT (1):**

Vernon Davis

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7. Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee**

Acting Chair Brandner tabled discussion of the designation of Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee Chairs to a later time or at the discretion of the Executive Committee, following a vote to elect members to the Executive Committee.

**8. Nomination and Election of the Executive Committee**

Chairperson Brandner advised the Commission on the procedures for nominating Members to serve on the Executive Committee. Brandner advised the Commission that Members can nominate themselves or others that have expressed interest in serving on the Executive Committee. Members discussed voting procedures and decided that the Voting Commission Members will vote for five members to serve on the Executive Committee. The five members receiving the most votes will serve on the Executive Committee.

**The following nominees to serve on the Executive Committee were put forward. Ballot Voting was conducted. The five members receiving the most votes will serve on the Executive Committee.**

Number of votes cast.....68

A’Jamal Byndon received .....13

<i>Beth Baxter (Declined Nomination)</i> .....	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Lana Temple-Plotz received</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Jessica Hilderbrand received</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Richard Hasty received</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Jeanne Brandner received</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Jim Blue received</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Melanie Williams-Smotherman received</b> .....	<b>6</b>

Through ballot voting, A’Jamal Byndon, Lana Temple-Plotz, Richard Hasty, Jeanne Brandner, and Jim Blue received the highest number of votes and will serve as five members of the Executive Committee.

Members of the Executive Committee will meet prior to the next full meeting of the Commission to discuss Chair and Vice Chair position and changes to the Governance Document. Executive Committee members will bring recommended changes for a vote by the Commission.

**9. Public Comment**

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Acting Chair Brandner opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment.

**10. New Business**

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Acting Chair Brandner reminded the Committee that at upcoming meetings documents will be sent ahead of the next date, and that it is important to review the documents in advance of the meeting.

Tami Soper, from the Office of Senator Bolz suggested that Commission Staff reach out to the Office of Senator Howard; Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature to discuss the Nebraska Children’s Commission briefing tentatively scheduled for November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**11. Upcoming Meeting Planning**

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Members discussed adding meetings before the end of the year, so the strategic priorities could be established prior to the start of the Legislative Session in January. The Executive Committee will meet and suggest meeting dates for November and December.

**12. Adjourn**

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The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam Anderson