

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the  
Juvenile Services Committee and the  
Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**  
January 28, 2021  
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Webex Online Video Conferencing System

**1. Call to Order**

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NCJJ Chair Elaine Menzel called the meeting to order at 9:15 am. JSC Co-chair Nick Juliano welcomed everyone and asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

**2. Roll Call**

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**Juvenile Services Committee**

***Committee Members Present (12)***

Breanna Anderson (10:00 a.m.)	Amy Hoffman	Vicky Thompson Smith
Michelle Borg	Nick Juliano	Deb VanDyke-Ries
A’Jamal Byndon	Tom McBride	Dr. Richard Wiener
Tamara Gavin	Kelli Schadwinkel	
	Bobbi Taylor (10:00 a.m.)	

***Committee Members Absent (3)***

Nicole Brundo	Patrick Sailors
Mark LaBouchardiere	

***Committee Resource Members Present (2)***

Brenda Kastens  
Julie Smith

***Committee Resource Members Absent (2)***

Nicole Berggren  
Senator Patty Pansing Brooks

**A quorum was established for the Juvenile Services Committee**

**Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

***Coalition Members Present (13)***

Neleigh Boyer	Janteice Holston	Amanda Speichert
Stanford Bradley	Denise Kracl	Bobbi Taylor (10:00 a.m.)
Patrick Connell	Elaine Menzel	Rico Zavala
Greg Gonzalez	Sheli Schindler	
Monika Gross	Jill Schubauer	

***Coalition Members Absent (6)***

Roma Amundson	Colleen Barnes	Justin Myers
Don Arp	Brian Halstead	Lorilei Stark

***Coalition Ex-Officio Members Present (1)***

Kari Rumbaugh

***Coalition Ex-Officio Members Absent (3)***

Judge Vernon Daniels

Judge Joel B. Jay

**A quorum was established for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice.**

**Guests in Attendance (5):**

Adam Anderson .....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Laura Opfer.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Jennifer Carter.....	Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare
Trent Chestnut.....	Nebraska Crime Commission
Monica Miles-Steffens.....	University of Nebraska – Juvenile Justice Institute
Jessica Svoboda.....	Nebraska Crime Commission

*a. Notice of Publication*

Administrative Assistant for the Nebraska Children’s Commission, Adam Anderson, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Children’s Commission and Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar websites in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

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

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection on the Nebraska Children’s Commission website.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

**A motion was made by Tamara Gavin from the JSC to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Tom McBride.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**Juvenile Services Committee**

**FOR (10):**

Michele Borg	Nick Juliano	Deb VanDyke-Ries
A’Jamal Byndon	Tom McBride	Dr. Richard Wiener
Tamara Gavin	Kelli Schadwinkel	
Amy Hoffman	Vicky Thompson Smith	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Breanna Anderson	Patrick Sailors
Nicole Brundo	Bobbi Taylor
Mark LaBouchardiere	

**MOTION CARRIED for the Juvenile Services Committee**

**A motion was made by Sheli Schindler from the NCJJ to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Neleigh Boyer.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

**FOR (12):**

Neleigh Boyer	Monika Gross	Sheli Schindler
Stanford Bradley	Janteice Holston	Jill Schubauer
Patrick Connell	Denise Kracl	Amanda Speichert
Greg Gonzalez	Elaine Menzel	Rico Zavala

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (7):**

Roma Amundson  
Don Arp  
Colleen Barnes  
Brian Halstead

Justin Myers  
Lorilei Stark  
Bobbi Taylor

**MOTION CARRIED for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

**4. Approval of the Minutes**

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**A motion was made by A'Jamal Byndon from the JSC to approve the October 29, 2020 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Michele Borg. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:**

**Juvenile Services Committee**

**FOR (10):**

Michele Borg  
A'Jamal Byndon  
Tamara Gavin  
Amy Hoffman

Nick Juliano  
Tom McBride  
Kelli Schadwinkel  
Vicky Thompson Smith

Deb VanDyke-Ries  
Dr. Richard Wiener

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Breanna Anderson  
Nicole Brundo  
Mark LaBouchardiere

Patrick Sailors  
Bobbi Taylor

**MOTION CARRIED for the Juvenile Services Committee**

**A motion was made by Sheli Schindler from the NCJJ to approve the January 30, 2020 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Denise Kracl. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:**

**Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

**FOR (12):**

Neleigh Boyer  
Stanford Bradley  
Patrick Connell  
Greg Gonzalez

Monika Gross  
Janteice Holston  
Denise Kracl  
Elaine Menzel

Sheli Schindler  
Jill Schubauer  
Amanda Speichert  
Rico Zavala

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (7):**

Roma Amundson  
Don Arp  
Colleen Barnes  
Brian Halstead

Justin Myers  
Lorilei Stark  
Bobbi Taylor

## **MOTION CARRIED for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

### **5. Co-Chair Report**

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JSC Co-Chair Deb VanDyke Ries adjusted the agenda to move Jennifer Carter earlier in the agenda for a report out on the YRTC Geneva. The minutes will not follow the agenda.

### **6. Inspector General Report: YRTC Geneva**

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Inspector General for Child Welfare, Jennifer Carter updated the Committee and Coalition on the recent YRTC report to the legislature of the investigation of events leading up to the August 2019 events at YRTC Geneva. She noted there have been many changes in the YRTC system since that time. Carter shared background information regarding conducting the investigation, and added that the investigation was completed prior to the beginning of her tenure with the Office of Inspector General. She shared background information regarding the youth at YRTC with personally identifiable information removed, findings, and recommendations. Carter expressed pleasure that DHHS has accepted five of six recommendations. She noted that DHHS rejected the recommendation for licensing the YRTC as a Residential Childcare Agency with the Division of Public Health in favor of pursuing more appropriate licensing. She added that DHHS had conducted an OHA investigation, noting that the rooms were unsafe for the youth, and had the facility been licensed it may have caught the unsafe conditions during licensing review. Carter answered questions regarding discussion with labor unions, and the status of past recommendations regarding trauma informed care and other past recommendations. She also answered questions regarding Racial and Ethnic Disparities. She noted that no specific analysis done in this regard, but it has been looked at.

### **7. Update Regarding Title II Funds**

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NCJJ Chair Menzel thank members on two committees that met last summer to discuss Title II. She noted that the discussion is currently paused due to COVID-19. The NCJJ has asked A'Jamal Byndon and Monica Miles-Steffens to share information regarding Title II funds.

A'Jamal Byndon gave a brief update regarding Title II funds in Douglass County. He noted that with the new federal administration there will be a renewed focus on Racial and Ethnic Disparities. He added that the key to engagement and community outreach is transparency and data. Douglass County will focus grant money to strengthen community providers and less on administration.

Monica Miles-Steffens updated the groups regarding Lancaster County's participation in Title II. The goal with the grant is to develop a statewide strategic plan to bring the state back into compliance with the Title II program. Miles-Steffens noted that she has stepped away from Probation to accept a position with the University of Nebraska – Juvenile Justice Institute. She added that the new federal administration brings a new welcomed focus on juvenile justice and she looks forward to collaborating with members of the Committee and Coalition. She shared her new email address in the chat: mmiles-steffens@unomaha.edu.

### **8. Legislative Update**

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Laura Opfer updated the groups regarding legislation that the Nebraska Children's Commission will be supporting during the current legislative session. She shared information regarding LB 202, LB 262, LB 357, LB 426, LB 428, LB 429, LB 568, LB 273, LB 354, LB 201, LB 307, LB 308, and LB 330. Opfer encouraged members to follow along with bill status via the [Nebraska Children's Commission Bills of Interest 2021 - Google Sheets](#). The bill tracker also includes.

Deb VanDyke-Ries shared information regarding an upcoming webinar regarding introduced legislation, presented by the Court Improvement Project. She noted that a webinar will also be held at the end of the legislative session to review the bills that have passed.

Opfer and Adam Anderson answered questions regarding the procedure of the Children's Commission supporting legislation. A'Jamal Byndon added that it is important for members the shared their efforts with members of their

communities to encourage participation in the legislative process. Opfer shared additional avenues for members of the public to comment on the legislative process. Tom McBride added that recommendations to support legislation at the Children’s Commission level have happened at the subcommittee, committee, and stakeholder level, possibly over the course of many years. Anderson agreed that recommendations could have been made several years in the past. Co-Chair VanDyke-Ries noted that this discussion would be good to bring up to the Children’s Commission level to continue the discussion.

## **9. JSC Workgroup Plan**

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Co-Chair Deb VanDyke-Ries shared [JSC Workgroups 2021.pdf \(nebraska.gov\)](#), an outline of the plan for the JSC Workgroups in 2021. VanDyke-Ries encouraged members from both groups to join and thank those members that agreed to chair the workgroups.

## **10. NCJJ Subcommittee Updates**

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### **a. Executive Subcommittee**

NCJJ Chair Elaine Menzel shared that Executive Subcommittee assisted with the meeting planning and setting the agenda.

### **b. Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee**

Chair Menzel noted that this subcommittee will have a meeting on February 8, 2021 to look at plans and forming teams to look at plans and applications. Amy Hoffman added that the grants plans are due March 5 and the applications are due March 26. Hoffman noted that the subcommittee will make funding recommendations in April.

### **c. Juvenile Diversion Subcommittee**

Denise Kracl thanked Amy Hoffman for her leadership and noted a recent webinar meeting with diversion programs from across the state. Kracl shared that it was a great reference session.

### **d. Grant Review Subcommittee**

Kari Rumbaugh shared that this subcommittee will meeting in April to review grant applications that are due on March 26. The subcommittee will make award recommendations at that time.

### **e. Young Adult Subcommittee**

Bobbi Taylor noted there has been an applicant to replace Cassie Davis, who left the Coalition during the summer. An application has been submitted and they look forward to moving forward once the application is approved.

## **11. Probation Update**

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Kari Rumbaugh shared with the group a recently completed [infographic](#). Rumbaugh compared data from the infographic and the past data from 2020. She noted that diversion has begun to make a difference in youth coming into care. Rumbaugh also shared information regarding Probation’s use of the newly created emergency foster care as an alternative to juvenile detention. She also shared information regarding a mentoring program for youth in the community as a detention alternative. Rumbaugh continued by noting a drop in placements from September 2019 to September 2020 much due in part to COVID-19, as facilities and foster homes were unable to accept placements. She also noted a slowdown in the processing of youth during the same time period, and added that Probation expects to see an uptick in this metric but hopes that it remains low moving forward.

Rumbaugh answered questions regarding tracking data by racial and ethnicity. She noted disproportionality in the data. Rumbaugh also answered questions regarding probation violations due to truancy issues. She offered to answered any feedback regarding specific instances of lack of action taken by probation staff, and further training opportunities for staff and educators. Rumbaugh continued to answer questions regarding detention screening validation. She noted that the Annie E. Casey foundation helped Probation take best-practice approaches and merge it into the screening tool,

based on whether the items that are screened are correctly recommending detention or community release. She continued by noting that the screening tool had not been validated previously, although it had been evaluated. She also noted that the tool should be scoring the same based on gender, race, ethnicity, etc. Dr. Richard Wiener added that there are very specific data points to study. He continued that the tool must be predictive of youth from different backgrounds.

Kelli Schadwinkel added that there has been a big increase in the availability of MST services across the state since 2013.

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## **12. Inspector General Annual Report**

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Jennifer Carter introduced herself and provided background regarding her experience and new position as Inspector General for Child Welfare. She shared information regarding her role at the Office of Inspector General (OIG), noting the main avenues for reporting. Carter gave a brief overview of the [19-20 Annual Report](#). She noted the OIG is currently investigating the YRTC Geneva incident from August 2019 and other issues stemming from that incident. She shared that a specific report will be forthcoming. Carter offered thoughts regarding planning discussions about the YRTC. Carter noted there are currently discussions in place regarding investigations of Probation, of which there are disagreements about interpretation of the law giving authority to the IG to conduct the investigations.

Carter shared information regarding the staff at the OIG. Carter noted two assistants: Sharon S. looks at Room Confinement, and one open assistant position. Additionally there is one Executive Assistant who pulls intakes. Carter noted that at times she feels like there are times she feels there is a need for additional help, although currently she shared that she feels like she is fully staffed.

Carter answered questions regarding the scope of her investigations, specifically as it relates to racial and ethnic diversity. She noted that on one had the OIG is a hindsight organization, investigating what has already taken place, while at the same time investigating situations that are currently unfolding. She added that the OIG doesn't receive much data as it relates to race and ethnicity. Carter noted that she would be interested in looking at that data while investigation how that information determines the system's response to incidents.

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## **13. Public Comment**

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Chair Menzel opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

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## **14. New Business**

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Chair Menzel noted that the Governor's Executive Order allows for meetings via Webinar through the end of April. She encouraged those that are in favor of the ability to hold Public Meeting virtually express their opinion on the Government Committee of the Legislature.

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## **15. Upcoming Meeting Planning**

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- a. April 29, 2021
- b. July 29, 2021
- c. October 28, 2021

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## **16. Adjourn**

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The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam Anderson