South Dakota CASA Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2017- 8:00 am

Room 412, Capitol Building

Pierre, SD

**Commissioners**: Judge Patrick Smith, Kimberly Max, Judge Karen Jeffries, JoLynn Bostrom, Kristie Feigen

**SCAO**: Sara Kelly, Marci Stevens, Lori Grode (recording secretary)

**CASA Directors**: Jackie Horton, Kehala Two Bulls, Sherri Rodgers-Conti, Kate Kelley, Taryn Sietsema, Julie Wermers

CASA Program Board Members: Kirsten Aasen (Seventh Circuit), Mark Limberg, Michael Weiss, and Josh Klumb

**Call the Meeting to Order**: Ms. Max called meeting to order at 8:00 am.

**Approve 2016 Meeting Minutes**: Judge Jeffries moved and Ms. Bostrom seconded the motion to approve the 2016 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**NCASA Updates**:

Three directors said they attended the NCASA CASA (NCASA) annual convention. Julie Wermers is the NCASA CASA point of contact and Jackie Horton is on the NCASA CASA Planning Committee.

Ms. Horton said she attended and reported there will be changes in policy and procedures by the first quarter of 2018. These include self-assessments and new training policies that will be released in June. They are requiring a minimum of 6 people in training. There is a governance development pilot being developed in 15 states. Every state is to have a state association by the end of 2017, and currently we’re one of 3 states that do not have one.

There is a grant of $50,000 states can apply for to hire a part-time person to get this state association developed. The NCASA grant process has become very competitive. NCASA’s goal is to have every child served by the year 2020.

Ms. Horton mentioned that NCASA is under new leadership and that has started the strategic-forward thinking, but these goals are more designed for the larger cities and not realistic for rural South Dakota.

The Commissioners asked what the penalty is if South Dakota did not change their training procedures and if there is a deadline for applying for the grant. Ms. Horton did not know the answer to these questions. She mentioned it is difficult to get answers from NCASA as they do not return phone calls. Ms. Max asked Ms. Horton to step out of the meeting at some point to try to reach NCASA on the phone for some answers. Further questions by the board and discussion were held on the new training criteria on whether adaptations can be made to the training.

**Presentations and Question/Answer**:

Ms. Max commented all CASA program directors were encouraged to stay and participate through each presentation. Ms. Fiegen inquired about the order of presentations on the agenda and who determines who goes first. Ms. Max stated they try to mix it up and go back and forth across the state. Ms. Fiegen asked that the order is mixed up more in the future and that Mitchell does not have to present first every time. The Ms. Max reminded presenters that they have had the opportunity to read all applications beforehand and to limit their presentations to the strongest points for discussion.

**First Circuit CASA (Mitchell)**

Ms. Horton thanked the Commission for their support of the First Circuit CASA program and provided an update.

* The First Circuit CASA is made up of ordinary people from all walks of life. The volunteers are trained to assist the judges and the children.
* They are continuing to do Mission Moments. The volunteers present quarterly.
* All staff has input into the Board meeting reports.
* In 2016 the number of children served increased by 51% with 23 more children. 83% of the children involved child neglect and 7% were sexual abuse victims.
* The goal by the end of 2018 is to train 50 new volunteers.
* They have 38 volunteers at present. They have volunteers waiting to take on a new case. They would like more volunteers to ensure all children are helped and that volunteers are able to take a break when needed.
* On average it takes 19 days to assign a volunteer to child. The goal this year is to get it down to 15 days. That will depend on the waiting period for reports to come from DSS and the State’s Attorney’s office.
* In 2106 they served 29 new children.
* There are increasing numbers of children coming into care due to the meth cases.
* They have looked at a mentoring program and creating mentoring policy.
* The program manager, Bonnie, served on a committee to bring a safety expo to Mitchell on Apr 6th. The main session speaker came from Omaha to speak about meth use, human trafficking, safe dating and kid danger.
* In the last two weeks they had their first case of child exploitation by the mother.
* Ms. Horton stated they have a very strong Board with 3 of the members in attendance today.
* They have 19 active Board members. One Board member always attends the first day of training a volunteer and the volunteer swearing-in ceremony
* The First Circuit has completed 354 hours of service training and community outreach.
* They do a radio show the 1st Monday of every month.
* The website has been updated.
* A survey was sent to their volunteers, which received a 60% response rate. 28% of the volunteers have been with the program more than 4 years. 97% say they do feel they make a difference to the community. 100% of the volunteers believe they do purposeful work.
* Ms. Horton says she looks at the NCASA annual program to compare where they’re at.
* The program is doing well.

Ms. Max asked if there was any way to get a case worker started sooner. Ms. Horton replied that Davison County has a new State’s Attorney she will speak with him after he gets more adapted to the office. Ms. Horton commented there is a lag time from getting the order from the State’s Attorney, time for DSS to review the case information, then for the Order to go on to the Judge for assignment. Ms. Horton would like to see this all completed in 7 days but knows that is not a realistic expectation.

Ms. Bostrom stated that 15 days is a pretty remarkable and realistic time frame and that all of the children having volunteers is very commendable.

Ms. Horton stated meth is an epidemic problem statewide. Heroin is now in Mitchell. The program manager, Bonnie, has met with the Drug Task Force team. They would like to bring a JDAI into the Mitchell community.

Ms. Fiegen stated her thanks to the program and their grant application was a delight to read. She remarked on their SMART goals. She commented the Board being very diverse group.

Ms. Fiegen did ask if they were doing flex training. Ms. Horton said they are not. Ms. Fiegen asked why the volunteers do not want to participate in all training presentations. Ms. Horton replied that they do have volunteers that live out of town and do not always want to commit to attending the in-service, on-going training. They serve eight counties in their circuit. Volunteers cannot make it to all offered training. Ms. Horton is looking into more online training and has researched a model they could use. There is a minimal fee every month. They decided to start with Facebook live with a private page for volunteers.

Ms. Fiegen inquired about their fund-raising events. Ms. Horton replied they did not do the popcorn ball fund raiser; it was too much work. They are bringing in dueling guitars out of Minneapolis this year.

Ms. Fiegen commented that the program had only one child on the waiting list. When Ms. Horton first began there were 46 kids on the waiting list.

Ms. Max commented about the CASA being asked to be on the safety plan provider by DSS. Ms. Horton said the volunteers will go to the residence’s door unannounced and then report to DSS of any findings or call 911 if any potential harmful situation. Ms. Max strongly encouraged them to talk about safety measures going forward. Safety measures need to be in place.

Judge Smith mentioned the Board has a good diversity among them.

Ms. Horton mentioned they just trained 2 new mentors. The volunteers have been primarily female. She would like to see it 50/50 and they are working on that.

Ms. Fiegen asked if there have been any new policies or procedures noted in the bylaws. Ms. Horton stated the policies were reviewed last year and included with the minutes. There were only minor changes, such as grammar and punctuation.

**Seventh Circuit CASA (Rapid City)**

Ms. Kirsten Aasen, Board Chairman, thanked the Commissioners, introduced their new director, Kehala Two Bulls, and gave the following history of their program:

* She assumed chairmanship in January 2016. At that time two-thirds of the Board had resigned.
* She started recruiting her friends and colleagues to help her on the board.
* She focused on getting HR, financial, and accounting professional on the board
* She feels they have come really far.
* They started with what she described as a mushroom board.
* They had to dig and search for their financial statements to understand the funding sources and salaries.
* She put material together and then benchmarked other CASA organizations and put together benchmarks and dashboards for financial operations.
* She looked at retention of volunteers, recruiting, training, and established goals.
* Pennington County has the largest number of A&N petitions filed in the state.
* She stated they have a long way to go but are on track with a new focus.
* They have made significant amendments to their bylaws
* They have increase the size of the board and expanded term limits.
* The goal is 10 years from now to have a diversified board with members’ tenure all at different times so they do not lose the majority of the board at the same time.
* They would like to start electronic filing systems to compile information for board members and staff online.
* Ms. Aasen stated they are facing many challenges and dealing with them one at a time. They had limited oversight to operations.
* They now require the executive director to make detailed reports to the Board.
* They are establishing new committees for fundraising, public relations, financial reports, human resources
* Established a committee to search for an executive director and revised the job description for the ED.
* The entire board helped search for a competent executive director. They received over 40 applicants, with half of them qualified. They interviewed 16 candidates, with 7 completing a second interview. Three finalists were selected and interviewed by board and staff. Kehala Two Bulls was selected as the new executive director
* Another crisis in their circuit was a severe budget shortfall. They have reduced line item expenses on the budget such as rent and computer expenses.
* Board members became heavily involved in fund raising. The PR people on the Board put together a marketing campaign which rose close to $70,000 by the end of Feb. 2017.
* They now have over $1,000,000 in reserves right now.
* Ms. Aasen stated they have a long way to go, but are sitting today as a solid organization.

Ms. Two Bulls stated she moved here from Santa Fe working in a nonprofit center. She was a mental health counselor. She started as executive director in Rapid City mid-January and has been there 90 days. She has many future goals for the program.

* They have 53 volunteers.
* There are 105 children currently receiving services, with 283 on the waiting list.
* She is working to build relationships with all agencies in community by networking to improve collaboration among the community.
* She is making an effort to work with tribal entities.
* She has developed an MOU with the Oglala Lakota College to do presentations on family structures and students there learn about the CASA program.
* There are a large number of Native American children in the program. They do have a large number of kinship placements.
* She stated that it is not realistic in their area to train volunteers in Rapid City and expect them to drive to the rural areas such as Kyle, Allen or Wanblee to visit children.
* 89% of the cases are in the Rapid City area.
* Ms. Two Bulls is looking into more media appearances to put CASA back on map, doing television and and radio appearances.
* She works with the Ellsworth Airforce Base to recruit volunteers from there. She met with sergeants there to find new recruits.
* The Seventh Circuit is working on staff development. The office has 53 years combined experience with children but still some need retraining and updates on how to approach cases.
* A new grant initiative was received for grade level reading. It is a new program to work on school attendance and reading activities.
* They are looking at new funding sources such as the John Vurcurevich Foundation.
* They are looking at ways to develop and track benchmarks, looking at the population of meth-affected children. They had over a dozen infants taken into custody at birth, due to meth exposure.
* The Seventh Circuit covers 16% of the state. Last year they had 35% of the A&N petitions filed statewide.
* 57% of children that were provided services were Native American
* They are promoting positive aspects of the native culture
* They did host a Fire and Ice event; their goal in 2017 was to make $26,000 before expenses, they made over $35,000.
* Did do a Chuck Puck fundraiser with a hockey team.

Ms. Max mentioned there is such a wide view by the community of what CASA’s functions are and encouraged Ms. Two Bulls to stay true to the CASA program and mission. Community programs are great referral sources, but CASA should not help create those programs, but rather make referrals to them instead. Ms. Max cautioned her to look at what CASA is doing in the community by reviewing the mission statement focus on serving the children on the waiting list, recruit and train new volunteers. Ms. Max strongly encouraged the program to focus on what’s right in front of them to meet the needs of children and not expand out too far.

Judge Jeffries asked Ms. Two Bulls to elaborate on volunteer recruitment.

Ms. Two Bulls stated they are in the process of developing an analysis of volunteers to target potential volunteers. She stated they are making media appearances to connect with more people, engage in community events, tabling events, and talking to the Ellsworth Air Force Base for volunteer recruitment. This summer she was invited to Red Shirt for a table event, in the Oglala community.

Judge Smith said he was unsure whether Seventh Circuit CASA would be here today. He said it is difficult to identify problems and then act on it. He recognized strides have been made in improving the board. He sees a great turnaround and said he’d like that to continue. He agreed with Ms. Max to focus on basics and expand the financial order.

Ms. Aasen stated she’d like to bring on more lawyers to the Board that has in-depth experience in A&N’s. She is reaching out to high-level DSS people to help make volunteers more effective in A&N proceedings.

Ms. Bostrom stated she is anxious to see results in the Southern Hills. She asked if they have volunteers there. Ms. Two Bulls said they do have 10 volunteers in the Southern Hills.

Ms. Bostrom said the waiting list of 284 is a concern to her. That is 10 more from last year’s waiting list.

Ms. Two Bulls reported that Pine Ridge has no CASA representative.

Ms. Fiegen stated that she has seen four different executive directors in this Circuit. She has many questions for Ms. Two Bulls to answer. She mentioned their application is very vague on their goals. Their bylaws look like the Board is focused on human services.

Ms. Aasen replied that they are rebuilding the bylaws. She feels it is important that the board reflects the community as a whole. She wants different expertise from around the community to be available. She feels a lawyer is important to be on the board. She is trying to get feedback from judges and state’s attorneys. Their vice-chair will always be a lawyer. They have created a new position called Chairman Elect which will shadow the Chair.

Ms. Fiegen suggested the board look at more businesses such as banks and investment firms. Ms. Aasen said they did within the last couple months get more businesses involved. She has a wish list of different organizations for the future.

Ms. Fiegen asked if they have a board development committee. Ms. Aasen answered they do and they have expanded their board number from 12 to 15.

Ms. Fiegen commented on their direct mail went to zero, direct mail is important.

Ms. Aasen said they had to recreate their donor database. They used direct mail for their Christmas mailing, Save the Day. In 2016 there was $1,640 collected.

Ms. Feigen asked about the $30,000 gift. Ms. Two Bulls said the gift is from an anonymous donor. This year they gave only $10,000 and that it will fluctuate depending on an endowment fund.

Ms. Aasen said that strategic planning is important to the board and they hope to have procedure mechanisms nailed down this year.

Ms. Fiegen stated that a quorum is important for motions to be approved by the board. Do they always have a quorum? Ms. Two Bulls said she has been tracking the methods of the board and has asked if there were meetings with not a quorum there.

Ms. Fiegen suggested they could use a spreadsheet on the front of the minutes to track board members’ attendance. Ms. Two Bulls stated she does have use a tracking device now.

Ms. Fiegen asked about the board drive goal of $9,000 last year. Ms. Aasen said that the $9,000 was a wrong number that was just plugged in. Traditionally the Board has not given money directly to their organization. There were coding problems.

Ms. Fiegen mentioned their financials need a lot of clean-up, she asked about their Run/Walk fundraiser, Ms. Aasen said there were coding problems with donations. They did make $3,000 on their last 5-K. Ms. Aasen said they contracted with Diana Melvin to assist with fundraising. Diana Melvin tried to work with Scott with no success and then became just an advisor to the Board. Diana’s services were terminated after Ms. Two Bulls came in. Ms. Two Bulls commented that Diana time was mostly donated.

Ms. Fiegen asked about the Larson Foundation not mentioned in the minutes. Ms. Aasen said this was left up to Scott and Diana to develop. They did not receive funds from the Larson Foundation. Ms. Aasen stated the Board can’t run the organization but can only provide direction and support.

Ms. Fiegen suggested a preliminary board task list that includes items such as rent, space needs, mailing list, and a database. She would like to see attachments with the minutes to know what’s going on. Ms. Aasen replied that the Board’s and director’s tasks and duties are still evolving.

Ms. Two Bulls said the Finance Committee does meet monthly and she has asked for a printed report.

Ms. Fiegen mentioned the reserve of $100,000. What was prior year’s reserve? Ms. Aasen reported it was $85,000 at the beginning of the year. The Finance Committee established a formula to designate the reserve every year. In 2015 the reserve fluctuated. Ms. Aasen mentioned the large donation from the single donor impacted the reserve. She stated to her the reserve is the cash flow, the net assets are money that they have and don’t need in savings; the reserve is cash flow. Ms. Fiegen stated they have differing definitions of cash flow.

Ms. Fiegen asked how much fundraising responsibility the board has. Ms. Aasen replied fundraising should be the primary goal.

Ms. Fiegen asked what the top three priorities are for the first 90 days.

Ms. Two Bulls said her goals are:

* To learn the current situation of how the program is operating
* To make informed decisions on where to go from there.
* Build relationships
* Create reports.
* Recruit volunteers; put out a message to find recruits.
* Educate her-self on the program and where to develop her-self from there.
* She has written about $300,000 worth of grants in the last 90 days.

Ms. Fiegen asked if there had been conflict in hiring the new director. Ms. Aasen replied there was conflict among the staff and director in prior years, and staff was involved in interview process this time. Ms. Fiegen asked if they had a yes or no or confidence or no confidence vote. Ms. Aasen stated staff gave a recommendation.

Ms. Two Bulls said their administrative assistant, Ann, has been with the program 12 years; their volunteer coordinator, DeNean, has been there 9 years; Shirley, their new volunteer coordinator, had been with a CASA program in Oklahoma for 13 years.

Ms. Fiegen said that the grant application is too minimal and she will have more questions in the next year. She stated Seventh Circuit CASA has a great future. She encouraged them to not limit the Board members and to look to teachers, farmers, community members to be on the board.

Ms. Max suggested they should talk to other board members around the state to get an idea of who their board members are.

Ms. Aasen thanked the Commission and said their input is very much appreciated.

Ms. Fiegen said the Board Source is a great place to learn from and is helpful for nonprofit organizations.

**Southeast CASA (Yankton)**

Sherri Rodgers-Conti thanked the Commissioners for their support of the program and provided an update:

* It has been 5 years since they first assigned a CASA volunteer to a child.
* 100% of children are provided service in their area, including Yankton, Clay and Bon Homme Counties now.
* In 2016 they advocated for 45 total children.
* They have a total of 25 volunteers.
* Eight new volunteers were trained last year.
* 63% of the cases were from Yankton County, 35% from Clay County, 2% from Bon Homme County.
* Almost 60% of the children are 5 or younger.
* Of the cases that were closed in 2016, 2/3 of the children did return to their parents, 7% were placed with a guardian. One child aged out of care, 25% of the children were placed for adoption.
* Volunteers are included in the family safety plan.

Highlights of last year included:

* The expansion of program services to Clay County and Bon Homme County.
* They hired a second staff person but that person resigned after 6 months. They had trouble hiring a staff person, with two turning it down.
* The Board hired Crystal Gemar, who has 8 years’ experience as a child case worker.
* Both received salary increases from the Board.
* They now have a Board orientation booklet for each new board member
* They participated in River Boat Days parade with Toy Story as the theme for the parade.
* They held a human foosball tournament.
* Hosted an open house social in Vermillion in July to celebrate Clay County
* Other fund-raising activities included their 4th annual Reverse Your Luck Gala Dinner that was business-sponsored.
* End-of-year direct mail fundraising letter.
* Hosted a Holiday Cheer for CASA social. This year collected over $2,000 in free-will donations
* 100% of the Board donates individually.
* The Yankton Medical Clinic donated $5,000.
* Local sorority hosted a style fundraiser and a fun run.
* Local churches donated Sunday school offering.
* Another local church donated funds
* Established partnerships with new businesses.
* Continue to be a member of United Way in Yankton and Vermillion, making presentations in both towns.
* The Southeast CASA continues to make contacts with businesses.
* The Dakota Hospital Foundation awarded funds for CASA training.
* SE CASA is trying to build up reserve volunteers.
* They held 2 training courses and have 11 volunteers now in Clay County.
* Crystal is a member of the Child Protection Team in Yankton and Clay Counties and does go to court hearings. She has implemented several new practices to increase communication.
* Fifth year that United Way awarded the funds to SE CASA.
* The Board financials include profit and loss and bank statements.
* Their goal this year is to expand CASA to Union County.
* They plan to hold a fundraiser in Vermillion this fall.
* Level of community engagement is high.
* The 3 counties continue to build awareness of advocacy and how groups can get involved.

Ms. Max mentioned the 2017 requirements ask for a letter of recommendation from a judge but there is not one included. Ms. Rogers-Conti said that Judge Eng in Yankton does not believe in assisting programs that do fundraising because there could be a conflict of interest. Judge Eng is a member of Kiwanis and does advocate for CASA. Judge Jensen is the judge in Clay County. He wrote the letter last year but not this year. Ms. Rogers-Conti will emphasize this letter is not related to fundraising.

Ms. Max asked the board if this requirement should be changed. Judge Smith said the canons of ethics are broadly worded and there is a difference of opinion among judges. He suggested they could change the requirement for a letter. Judge Smith stated he does not write a letter for Mitchell since he is on the Commission.

Ms. Bostrom stated they should be congratulated on 100% coverage, also that they had no volunteers leaving. They are making great gains. She congratulated them for reaching out to the Bon Homme Co State’s Attorney and should be commended for that.

Ms. Max asked about the expansion into Union County if only 1 petition was filed there in 2016. Ms. Rogers-Conti replied they wouldn’t have to hire another staff person. There is the same judge and same social services office and it would be a simple transition there. Union has a lot of potential as a fundraising region.

Ms. Fiegen stated that the changes have been phenomenal and successful. She commented their Board is very engaged. Ms. Fiegen asked if they are bringing on governance members. Ms. Rogers-Conti replied they tried to recruit board members from Clay County and cannot get anybody to commit. Ms. Fiegen suggested it could be telephonic participation. They are working on that.

Ms. Fiegen commented how great it is to have third-party fund raising. They have SMART goals and this CASA is just fun to watch.

**Northern Hills (Spearfish)**

Ms. Kate Kelley thanked the Commissioners for their support and provided an update on the program there.

* This year there were 44 new petitions.
* There are children are on waiting list right now.
* There has been staff turnover and half of the staff left.
* Focused on cases taken, focused on volunteer retention.
* Did send out survey to volunteers for helpful information. Suggestions were to get to know each other.
* Implemented a couple events. One is the Cup of CASA, come and have coffee/chat.
* CASA mixer in the evening to come after work where they invite board members. This has been very successful.
* Continued the Lunch and Learns the 3rd wed of every month.
* Every month a different restaurant sponsors dinner where they bring in a speaker.
* Last fall there was training on testifying, geared more to forensic interviewers and making the report more as evidence to the Court, that they saw, observed the investigation to back up their recommendations.
* Lunch and Learn brought in a law enforcement to speak on meth and heroin.
* A trauma in-service is planned for the end of May with a psychologist and the Children’s Home Society on how to look for child trauma and how to handle it.
* Child Watch Tour is coming up.
* Children’s Home Society has a new facility tour.
* Plan to visit the Rapid City Visitation Center.
* Abbott House in Mitchell has expanded has foster residences.
* Look at safety plans training to help volunteers.
* Hired a new case manager, Amy Cermak.
* Two volunteers completed spring training.

Ms. Max stated that safety training is very important for the volunteers and they should be commended. She said trauma-based training is also very beneficial.

Ms. Bostrom commented that the Lunch and Learns are a terrific idea to bring people together and the speakers are important. She inquired into the waiting list. Ms. Kelley said that children are sometimes placed in other states or with family or residential treatment where they can’t assist the children.

Judge Jeffries asked why there was a big change in staff. Ms. Kelley said the two staff members left the program to move from the area for family reasons.

Judge Smith stated they have done a good job pursuing help from every municipality in their service area and exposing themselves to the leaders in each community.

Ms. Kelley said that Meade County has been a challenge, but county commissioners have said to apply again.

Judge Smith commented that he was once a prosecutor and from experience, he said they should go to the cities for funding request too and not just counties.

Ms. Fiegen thanked them for a very detailed application. She said they did a great job on revenue. The goals for the coming year do not have a lot of SMART analysis, SMART goals attainable, numbers, and timeline. She asked if it is in the strategic plan. But their report is delightful and their focus and mission is right on target.

**Sioux Falls Area CASA (Sioux Falls)**

Ms. Taryn Sietsema stated she has been there a year and a half and is very excited by the momentum they have started. She gave the following report:

* She had a board member from an advertising agency create new marketing materials to look more professional.
* They started the Strap On Your Cape logo and held a fundraiser called the Red Cape fund raiser, which rose over $40,000. All of corporate sponsors participated. They use the capes to swear in volunteers and for other events. Because the volunteers are super heroes for the children.
* There has been a huge meth epidemic in Sioux Falls with 8 babies in Sanford Hospital born with meth in their system, just this year.
* This region has 250 children on a waiting list.
* Need to put measurements in place and keep moving forward.
* She is studying on how to contact new volunteers.
* They have put performance measurements in place.
* Case managers have a minimum number of times they connect with volunteers.
* They plan to look at which generational information regarding their contacts. Sometimes contacts should be by texting, calls, email, face-to-face meetings.
* The volunteer manager has a goal of 8 speaking engagements per month, 20 contacts per month.
* Plan to contact employers of volunteers and ask for their donations.
* Taryn has set goals for herself for speaking engagements.
* A part-time development director was hired .
* The Capital Campaign is successful.
* Their Optima Case Management software is successful that tracks time of volunteers.
* Made new guidelines for volunteers.
* Implemented volunteer touch points where after training a board member calls and checks and then 60 days later the director calls volunteer. Feeling a positive impact from that.
* Cup of CASA sees 45 to 50 members showing up.
* Started new advertising campaign with over 55,000 clicks on their website.
* They are training 13 new volunteers per training class with the hope to have 50-60 new volunteers by the end of the year.
* Continuing to partner with Avera.
* Training is offered to board members on compassion fatigue and secondary trauma.
* Law Enforcement officers help with training volunteers on safety issues.
* Awarded a Rotary grant of $10,000 donation.
* Spoken to over 90 different community events and businesses
* United Way has been beneficial to the CASA.
* Mindful Marketing campaign in place.
* Volunteer development plan in place.
* They have active board committees.
* The board is expected to contribute donations.
* Went to training at the NCASA CASA Annual Conference
* Plan to incorporate the ARP Avera Program.
* Plan to look into different generational styles.
* Brand new website is up and working.
* They have their first intern and another intern starting in May from SDSU
* A USD marketing class studied CASA for their final project. The Professor had great ideas for CASA.

Ms. Max stated she is glad to hear that the compassion fatigue training is helpful. Ms. Sietsema stated Mary Engebretsen, a mental health therapist, comes into training classes and the Avera EAP program comes in for training.

Ms. Max stated situations will continue to be more unbelievable and tragic and encourages all CASA programs to reach out to critical risk management resources and programs.

Ms. Bostrom stated she appreciates the active forward-thinking goals and appreciates the minimal contacts with volunteers, get on or get off.

Ms. Fiegen stated she enjoyed reading the board minutes and said the board is very active.

Ms. Sietsema said the Board really wants to do an advertising campaign this year. The budget has a $62,000 deficit. They had to spend down $30,000 to meet United Way requirements. Health insurance for 4 staff is $18,000. She would like to find better life insurance options. Only one person participates in the insurance program and the others have better options through their spouses, but the program has to budget for all staff.

Ms. Fiegen stated that a negative $62,000 is alarming. If it’s a United Way funding issue, please put it in the notes somehow. Ms. Sietsema explained they had a $21,000 expense last year because not all employees are offered the IRA plan. They have worked with a tax accountant to make this right.

Ms. Sietsema said they have Mission Moments with DSS and the State’s Attorney’s office coming in in June. The Board needed to learn how to interact with all agencies.

Ms. Fiegen asked if there is any way to go after some funders that are contributors of cash donators. Would it be possible to do an endowment? Ms. Sietsema said yes, they are working with $25,000 from Sammons Financial and they may channel that money in a different way.

Ms. Sietsema stated they are working from a California retention program model to help keep their volunteers.

Ms. Fiegen said the financial reports are hard to figure out. Ms. Sietsema stated that she is now doing the minutes this year. She will add more financial information.

Ms. Fiegen asked about the Facebook posting. Ms. Sietsema stated 12 people were interested and responded. It was explained that the Facebook inquiries are treated the same as phone calls. The volunteer manager puts them into Optima and then will interview them.

Ms. Fiegen asked if she was a Chamber ambassador. Ms. Sietsema stated she is looking into it, but the time commitment is a concern.

Ms. Fiegen congratulated her for the great committee reports every month. Ms. Sietsema stated she is doing the minutes for every committee meeting now.

**East Central (Brookings)**

Ms. Julie Wermers thanked the Commissioners for their support and provided an update about the program.

* This is her 11th year as executive director and the 15th year for the program.
* The biggest accomplishment has been expansion into Codington County. 2 new volunteers there now and been assigned to 3 cases.
* They have a Watertown Advisory Board in place with plans of seating somebody new to the board. They’ve had a couple different meetings with the advisory committee to let them know the plans and progress. Continue to be supportive. Made a number of community presentations in Watertown.
* Training in Watertown is planned for June.
* They regularly train 1 or 2 volunteers, but do not anticipate 6.
* Reassured they are very careful stewards of the dollars given to organization
* Strive to balance needs with eye on expansion and moving forward.
* Recruit and train volunteers for voice of children.
* Last year provided service to 58 children in 6 counties.
* Currently have 35 volunteers on the roster, with 24 active.
* Just finished up Fire and Ice event, which was successful but do not have final total at this time, but believes they raised around $59,000 this year. They have received individuals call in from that event as volunteer prospects and one person interested in a board position.
* Currently serving on all child protections teams. Ben attends those meetings.
* Continue to do public awareness through speaking and radio engagements.
* Car Full Karaoke with board members in Brookings was live on Facebook where they sat in a van and sang to promote Fire and Ice.
* Intend to have had some third-party fundraising events.
* They have a Giving Tuesday, a wine tasting, wall of wine for Fire and Ice.

Ms. Wermers stated she included a letter from a former volunteer regarding a child that is aging out of the foster care system. This person has no one in her life but the CASA volunteer, which makes this a unique case.

Ms. Max stated they need more board members. Ms. Wermers said they are small but mighty and get the job done. They will be adding 1 – 2 new members from Watertown. She said they do need a governance position from either community.

Ms. Max noted in going through the minutes, the board was looking at a different direction for securing financial support in Watertown. Ms. Wermers said the board wanted to be set in the community before securing funding sources. The Board has been persistent with financials and didn’t feel that was the main goal to focus on then. Ms. Max remarked the Board needs to understand the funds are contingent on that even though the board has different ideas. Ms. Wermers will let the Board know the Commission’s concerns.

Ms. Max asked if the Board met in December of 2016. Ms. Wermers stated the board meets bimonthly but notes are not taken at every meeting.

Ms. Bostrom inquired if Watertown is taking new cases only to begin. Ms. Wermers answered yes, new cases only.

Ms. Fiegen commented it is fun to see the new movement in Watertown.

Ms. Wermers informed there are 11 advisory committee members, it was two and they now have 11. She has met with them a couple times; Joy Nelson is considering a Board position.

Ms. Fiegen asked what their roles are in Watertown. Ms. Wermers said she hoped they would provide direction as far as contacts and helping with public relations and presentations in the community. They will help with funding sources but are not raising money.

Ms. Fiegen stated the strategic plan and their goals should be more. Ms. Wermers said they have focused on the Watertown expansion. Ms. Fiegen commented they lost no volunteers in 2016, but they should be mindful of keeping a good volunteer fit to the program and the child. Maintain regular volunteer contact.

Ms. Fiegen asked how many children are served by 24 volunteers. Ms. Wermers answered 58 children. Ms. Fiegen commented the minutes are vague and it is difficult to figure out the organization. They need to beef up the minutes. Maybe advisory boards need to submit minutes. She suggested the board needs to broaden their diversity. They should be seeking out not only governance roles, but go after Daktronics, banks, investors. Ms. Wermers said that Daktronics is on the list.

Ms. Fiegen asked about the stipends from last year and said the laws needed to be adhered to. Ms. Wermers stated this was misrepresented in the minutes and that it’s a part of their salary.

Ms. Fiegen asked about the turnout at the Watertown social, which was low. Ms. Wermers stated that Joy recruited more people. There will be an excellent turnout next time.

Ms. Fiegen asked if United Way in Watertown has given. Ms. Wermers replied that they have not but the campaign is in the fall.

**Commission Discussion, Allocations, and Action**

Ms. Horton reported that she spoke to Susan Grant from NCASA to find out if their Marketing and Financing departments are willing to help states start an association. She learned a new grant application will come out over the summer. If awarded funding, it would be Oct. 1st. with $75,000 over 2 years, which would go to start a State Association, hire one person, who would then have to look for funds to sustain that role. She was informed that it is a competitive grant process; however there is no penalty if you do not participate. Facilitator training will be set up by NCASA and the training will be offered four times a year. Ms. Horton believes the state association would need to get a new 501(c) (3). Ms. Kelly asked what the current standing is with the IRS, and Ms. Horton believes it was dissolved.

Ms. Fiegen asked the group what they thought of creating a state-wide association. Ms. Kelly gave a brief history of the state CASA Association and in some larger states, the local programs pay dues to the state association, but that is not realistic for South Dakota. Ms. Wermers stated she is the NCASA CASA point of contact at this time. She does participate in NCASA conference calls, but did not attend the state directors’ meeting at the NCASA conference.

Ms. Fiegen stated it is up to the directors if they want to form a statewide organization for South Dakota. Ms. Kelly said she would check with NCASA to inquire what the specific criteria would be to form a state organization and then brainstorm with the directors to decide what they would like to do. Ms. Kate Kelley mentioned a state board of directors would have to be created.

The consensus was the program directors need to check on what other states are doing and what would be the benefit of having a state organization and determine if it would it be too much work to get it up and going? Other questions that need to be addressed are: Who will write the grants? How will the position be sustained after the NCASA grant fund is depleted?

Ms. Fiegen asked if the state association could take on some of the volunteer training duties for the organizations. Ms. Horton replied, “No,” to the training. Ms. Kate Kelley remarked that it’s tailored to how each judge and organization works. Ms. Fiegen replied that potentially it could have some new added value. Ms. Two Bulls expressed her concern about ICWA cases and NCASA’s one-size-fits-all training would not provide the necessary training for ICWA awareness.

 Ms. Fiegen commented that the Commission could send a letter to NCASA to express concerns of the mandates and find out how flexible they are.

**Grant Allocations and Actions:**

Ms. Fiegen proposed we set money aside for a new state organization and for a director that would be involved in all NCASA CASA meetings and prepare a report for the Commission. This position could help with best practices, board development, fund raising, and be the face at the NCASA CASA conference, be a liaison, and help all directors around the state.

Ms. Max agreed that South Dakota should have a voice at the NCASA level and that we get reports from them on what’s going on with mandates and training.

Judge Smith asked for a clarification if the Commission needs to set aside money that is allocate to six programs for the purpose of funding a state association. Ms. Fiegen answered that the directors need to decide whether South Dakota needs a state association or should we just keep out enough money to send a spokesperson to the NCASA. Judge Smith inquired if they would select that spokesperson among themselves and would that person be a director? Unanimous answer of yes. Judge Smith stated that we either need to create a state organization or financially support someone to take on more communicable role to NCASA. Additional dollars would help offset their salary. If neither option will happen, then the rest of the money should be redistributed so that all dollars would be allocated.

Ms. Fiegen asked what does it cost to attend the NCASA convention. Ms. Wermers replied it’s around $3,000.

Judge Jeffries made the following motion: To award Mitchell $30,000, Rapid City $45,000, Northern Hills/Spearfish $30,000, Yankton $25,000, Brookings $20,000, Sioux Falls $65,000, and to hold back $10,000 to go to set up a state organization or use $5,000 for NCASA conference and $5,000 to be redistributed.

Ms. Fiegen suggested that person should be voted on among the group of directors with the idea that person would help other CASA organizations with best practices or development, fund raising, volunteer recruitment, etc. Ms. Max stated this should be outlined in letter form for expectations for the funding. She would also want a detailed report from that person.

Ms. Max asked the directors if that is something they would be comfortable determining who would be willing to do so? They need to submit their name to Ms. Kelly. Ms. Kelly said she would be willing to contact NCASA for more information. Her question was would this position attend NCASA as a state director or local program director? The requirement is someone would have to be budgeted to attend NCASA as a local program. Ms. Wermers stated a person could be there in both roles. Ms. Kelly will look further into that.

Ms. Max suggested the program directors vote on the direction they want to take with a state association or state liaison and let Ms. Kelly know. Ms. Kelly will then report back to the Commission, by July 1st.

Further discussion was held on motion. Ms. Fiegen seconded the motion to distribute the funds as listed above. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Motion was carried.

Judge Smith asked which of the organizations awarded money were fully funded. Judge Smith made an amended motion to redistribute the $10,000 if it is not used for a state organization to those not fully funded. Motion was seconded by Judge Jeffries. Discussion on amendment.

Judge Smith stated this would only be redistributed if the $10,000 did not go to a state organization and then to the new liaison position.

Ms. Fiegen stated that she believes we need a voice at NCASA and she would not support the amendment. Ms. Kelly commented the $10,000 could stay in the state fund for next year.

The motion passed with 4 in favor, 1 opposed.

**Grant Application/Process**:

Judge Jeffries would like to see the mandated language that letters are needed from judges be removed. Ms. Max stated this could be incorporated with the site visit with the judges. Sara Kelly volunteered to speak with the judges. Judge Smith agreed to strike it. Further discussion held. There was a consensus agreement it could be removed. The files sent to Ms. Kelly are already enormous. Ms. Max stated she would still like to see the boards’ minutes and attachments every year. The Commission agreed. Ms. Fiegen stated she would like to see board minutes also.

Ms. Kelly asked if they would like to see the cover page spreadsheet of the board members’ attendance. Ms. Fiegen said that was just a suggestion for Rapid City. She stated handouts from the board meetings are not a requirement, with the exception of bylaw changes. Judge Smith suggested it should be made less onerous for Ms. Kelly. Ms. Kelly stated that because of the unified grant guidance for internal control, she needs to keep this information on file, but did ask whether the Commission needs to see them. Judge Smith stated they need to be sent to Ms. Kelly and kept for reference on file in her office.

Discussed meeting dates for 2018 Dates. The Commission set April 18, 2018, for the next Commission meeting, with a backup date of April 25th, should it be needed. Ms. Kelly will contact Ms. Fiegen in October to check on her calendar hearing dates and then confirm the dates with the entire Commission and program directors.

**Adjourn**: Judge Jeffries made the motion to adjourn, which was seconded. All agreed by voice vote at 12:56 pm.