

CASA Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

Zoom Meeting

April 18, 2023

1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda Holtzclaw 6:00
2. Advocate Speaker: to be announced at the meeting
3. Board Guest: Ashley Voorhees
4. Consent Items: Holtzclaw
 - Board of Director's Meeting Minutes – March
 - Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
 - *Consent items are non-controversial. The Board may approve them with a single motion without discussion. Any Board member may ask for an item to be removed from consent if a discussion is necessary.*

Motion and vote are needed to approve the items on the consent agenda.
5. Financial Discussion Bila
6. Fund Development Reports:
 - Fund Development Committee Roche
 - Derby Nato/Towery
 - Public Relations G. Gonzales
7. Executive Director's Report Thompson
 - Cal-CASA luncheon
Thursday, January 31, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. at CASA Offices
8. President's Report Holtzclaw
9. Member Announcements: All

Calendar: (meetings held via zoom, unless noted)

Next Board meeting 3rd Tuesday, **May 16, 2023, 6:00 pm** in person at CASA Office

Finance Committee 2nd Tuesday 7:30 am @ Zoom - Exec Committee 2nd Thursday 7:30 am @Zoom

PR Committee: 4th Thurs 7:30 am - Event Committees

Board Vision Statement: "To meet the needs of CASA, ensuring it will continue to serve as an economically effective organization, for the abused children of Kern County."

**CASA of Kern County
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2023**

Board Vision Statement: “To meet the needs of CASA ensuring it will continue to serve as an economically effective organization for the abused children of Kern County.”

Call to Order and Approval of Agenda:

Board Vice President, Matt McCort, called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM on Tuesday, March 21, 2023. Bila made and Holtzclaw seconded a motion to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

Board members present in person: McCort, Wong, Roche, J. Gonzalez, Holtzclaw, Bila, Collins, Towery, Lucas, Eberhardt, Harper, Natto

Board members present via Zoom: G. Gonzalez

Board members excused: Peters, Keller (McCort noted that Peter has advised him that she will be resigned from the board, as she doesn't have the time to commit to that service; her formal resignation has not yet been received)

Board members absent: Tomono, McCaslin

Advocate Liaison present: None

CASA staff present: None

Advocate Speaker: None. The Board will work with CASA's new ED, once one is hired, to have an advocate speaker for at least some Board meetings.

Board guests present: Janet Shaw was present as a possible new Board member. Shaw became an advocate in 2005 then came to work for CASA in 2010. She retired in 2019. She also worked at the Superintendent of Schools offices and is very passionate about CASA and the cause. She said she has been in awe of the volunteers who put so much time and effort into working with the children. After COVID, Shaw has been coming into the CASA office to assist where needed. Most recently, she worked for six months during the transition/turnover period. She continues to want to help and feels that being on the Board is a way to do that.

Consent Items:

- Board of Director's Meeting Minutes – February
- Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – March

J. Gonzalez moved to approve the consent items. Holtzclaw seconded the motion, which passed.

Board vote to approve Janet Shaw: Holtzclaw moved and Natto seconded a motion to admit Janet Shaw to the Board of Directors. The motion passed unanimously.

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Financial Discussion:

- Bila reported that the finance committee met last Tuesday and reviewed the financial statements. There are a few items that need to be reclassified. Cash is in a good position, comparable to last year and comparatively historically, at \$700k to \$800k. J. Gonzalez noted that cash has been as low as \$200k at times in the past. COVID helped build reserves. Enhanced revenues from Derby are needed.

Fund Development Reports:

- **Fund Development Committee:** Roche noted that he and Holtzclaw met with Heaven Vasquez and Jordan Glatt and was struck by their professionalism. He noted that the Pinwheels for CASA event was cancelled due to changes in resources at the Marketplace. Also, the staff at the office is focused on Derby Party preparation, and given that Pinwheels for CASA is not nearly as profitable fundraiser as the Derby Party, resources are better used to work on the Derby Party. The committee discussed the possibility of utilizing a yard signs campaign to raise money and awareness during child abuse awareness month in April. An advocate appreciation day is planned for March, and a social worker appreciation event will be held at the CASA Clubhouse on March 30th. CASA will also participate in an upcoming Bakersfield Beautification event.
- **Derby Party:** Natto reported \$66k in sponsorships toward a goal of \$85k. The goal, however, may need to be increased, depending on pricing from some vendors, such as Walker-Lewis, from whom final bids have not yet been received. Natto noted that donations of wine, gift cards and liquor for the bar cart are needed from Board members. Towery noted that Heaven Vasquez is doing a good job making asks, but progress is a bit behind. Some past sponsors haven't given in the same amounts that they have given in the past. Diana Ramirez is available at the end of the month to assist Vasquez, as Vasquez hasn't had anyone to train her in her new role. Towery asked that if anyone on the Board knows someone that might be a potential sponsor or donor, the Board member should provide contact information to a committee member so that an ask can be made. Raffle and auction items are also needed, and nothing is too small because smaller items can be bundled to create a package. Walker-Lewis' cost was \$35-\$40k last year and will likely increase this year. McCort noted that if companies are inclined to donate, but usually donate to another CASA event or cause, perhaps they would consider diverting their contribution to Derby. Lucas said she has a place to store wine donations for those contributing to the Wall of Wine. G. Gonzalez is going to find out if one of CRC's suites at the SoFi Stadium is available as an auction item.
- **PR Committee:** G. Gonzalez said the PR committee will be meeting on Thursday. The committee is currently focused on support for the Derby Party. She asked that the Derby Party committee advise the PR Committee what assistance is needed, and the PR Committee will devise a plan of action at the meeting on Thursday.

Vice President's Report:

- **Staffing updates:** McCort said that he can't compliment Heaven Vasquez and Karlee Cain enough; their fortitude and belief in CASA's mission is exemplary. Ashley Thompson and other team members

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created a slide show showing all of the interesting things that CASA is involved in. McCort noted that the leadership team has become very strong, functioning almost like an ED between the four of them. He said this strength speaks to CASA's continuity, despite not currently having the leadership of an ED.

- **Diana Ramirez:** Diana Ramirez is being brought in as a consultant for a limited term to assist Heaven Vasquez. The arrangement is a "win-win" for both CASA and Ramirez, who is starting her own company. Wong noted that he very much enjoyed working with Ramirez when she was employed at CASA, and she still has a heart for the organization. Wong made the official ask to Ramirez with regard to the consulting agreement.
- **ED search:** McCort reported that there is one internal ED candidate (Ashley Thompson, the current administrative manager). If Thompson is selected, her current (administrative manager) position will need back-filled. The ED hiring committee will be a blend of leadership staff and Board members, but the Board will make the ultimate decision. Interviews are set for March 30th. Roche added that he is personal friends with the Santa Barbara County office's ED, Kim Colby Davis. Colby Davis was initially an advocate and stepped in as the ED when the organization was about to fail. She raised substantial funds, and the organization is now serving over 500 kids. She has a business background, and her organization has offices in Santa Barbara, Lompoc and Santa Maria, including 15 staff. Colby Davis has told Roche that she will help the Kern CASA office in any way possible. She has a relationship with former Kern CASA ED, Colleen McGauley, and comes to Bakersfield often. Colby Davis' participation could add tremendous value to the interview process. Roche will contact Colby Davis and accept her offer to help. He said that the hiring committee would do well to utilize her to the fullest. It was suggested that perhaps she can help train the new ED and the staff, as well as provide advice to the Board. Holtzclaw noted that the Executive Committee would like Janet Shaw to serve on the hiring committee. Shaw said that training and recruiting advocates are extremely important. The new ED needs to be someone that can talk to anyone/everyone and keep the staff excited about training and recruiting. Shaw noted that McGauley's success as ED was partially due to her connections with other EDs (such as Colby Davis) throughout the state.
- **Vote for Board officers:** McCort noted that COVID boosted the Kern CASA organization financially, but it diminished the Board and staff. He thanked the ExCom for their work. J. Gonzalez thanked Matt, noting that he (Gonzalez) has been through six years and three EDs, as well as Covid and serving as the Board President for 2-1/2 years. He noted that the current situation with everyday Board involvement is not normal. The Board doesn't realize everything that goes into what's presented to them because the ExCom handles many matters on its own. He encouraged anyone that has the inclination and time to serve to do so because it's rewarding when you see the organization work. McCort said that, going forward, the Board will function in an oversight role. Harper thanked McCort for his guidance and time. McCort announced that he will no longer serve on ExCom. All current members of ExCom, with the exception of McCort, said they are willing to remain on the ExCom. Natto said she will retain the role of Secretary or become a member at large if anyone else would like to serve as Secretary. Holtzclaw said she will change roles, but is not eligible to be Vice President as the coming year is her last before she terms out. As such, she would not be able to move in the role of President after serving as Vice President. Wong said he, too, is willing to change roles. It was noted that there is room for

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three more members on ExCom. Towery and Shaw both said they will serve on ExCom as members at large. Wong said he doesn't want to be President. McCort said, if need be, he will be a member at large but doesn't feel he has the time. He will always be available to assist as needed, however. The slate of officers presented to the Board was as follows: Joyce Holtzclaw (President), Nate Wong (Vice President), Jenifer Natto (Secretary), Bill Bila (Treasurer), Chris Towery and Janet Shaw (members at large). Collins made a motion, which J. Gonzalez seconded, to accept the slate of officers as presented; the motion carried. Positions will be official as of today's date, but terms commence in July. In the transition, Towery and Shaw will attend ExCom meetings beginning in May. Regarding new Board member recruitment, there is a need for people with backgrounds in accounting, HR, law, banking, real estate, oil, health, and agriculture. Board membership is down to 15 people, whereas in the past, the Board has seen membership as high as 24. Bila has a contact for a possible new Board member. In the past, Board candidates were vetted by the ED. The ExCom needs to be a part of that process, as well. It was suggested that Kim Colby Davis from the Santa Barbara CASA organization can possibly help with that, as well. In the past, prospects completed a form/application. J. Gonzalez said there used to be a spreadsheet tracking Board members' terms. Collins suggested that CASA's mission statement should be read at the beginning of every meeting. She also suggested that a calendar of events be discussed at each meeting so that Board members remain accountable.

- **Cynthia Lake:** Tracy Turner of the Cynthia Lake Charitable Trust requested a meeting with the Board of Directors on June 6th to discuss the Trust's concerns about CASA's plans for going forward. Collins and Holtzclaw said they will attend that meeting. Harper encouraged pro-active communication with the Trust even prior to the June 6th meeting, as Lake likes information. Natto will send an email to the Board providing the date and time of the meeting so that other Board members can commit to attending, as well. The Board needs to be fully aligned in the presentation. If Colby Davis is able to assist the Kern organization, it would be good to advise Tracy Turner of that available assistance, as well.
- **Future meetings:** There was discussion about whether future Board meetings should be held in person (with a Zoom option). Harper noted that some boards meet alternately via Zoom and in person. It was agreed that a 6:00 PM start time (rather than 5:30 PM) is a good time. Tuesdays are still a good day. Towery asked if it is possible to remove inactive Board members. J. Gonzalez said that three instances of no call/no show within 6 months are grounds for removal of a Board member. Inactivity will be a good topic of discussion for the next ExCom meeting and to provide inactive Board members with the opportunity to exit gracefully.

Member announcements: Towery said, regarding duties as a Board member, the kids served are CASA's mission, so the advocates are the most important thing. As such, Board members need to make their presence known as a Board and show up as a Board to events so the advocates know they are appreciated by the Board. Lucas requested a calendar of events. It was suggested that perhaps Thompson can create a calendar for Board meetings.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 18th at the CASA offices at 6:00PM.

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Meeting adjourned: 7:37 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Jenifer Natto

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Fund Development Meeting Zoom Conference

March 20, 2023

Attendees: Nate Wong approved absence

Vince Rochet
Karlee Cain,
Heaven Vasquez,
Ashley Thompson
Jordan Glatt
Joyce Holtzclaw

We started 4:35 due to some connection issues.

Vince and Joyce discussed that the Judge's luncheon and the Pinwheels were events that had been assigned to Fund Development. We had canceled the Judges Luncheon but hope we can do something for the Pinwheels. Joyce expresses concern that it sends the wrong message to major donors if we are not sustaining our events. It was mentioned that Karlee has not been able to get the Marketplace to respond and so volunteers have been told we will not be needing them. Vince is going to check with MD Atkinson who he thinks is managing the Marketplace property to see if we can hold it there next year but we decided it was too late for this year. Joyce mentioned if they say no maybe the Riverwalk shops might let us do it there. They might also let us sell onsite. Instead of the pinwheels we will be selling a sign that is to include a pinwheel and a scan symbol and CASA of Kern County on it so that we get our organization out in the community. We will sell the signs for the amount to cover the costs. Joyce mentioned that it should not all fall to the staff as we need to engage more board members like we did previously when we were doing 1 to 2 events a month. We ended the discussion with Vince going to also contact a sign maker and make an introduction. The signs will go in people's yards and maybe remain up. It was mentioned that only 26 people purchases pinwheels last year and that most of the money came from an anonymous donor. The same person has donated again. Karlee suggested we might also make some window decals for businesses to put in their window or in their car. Karlee also said they could have some volunteers deliver the signs if needed.

We need more members on Fund Development and Joyce mentioned that we didn't get anyone jumping to be on the Committee last Board meeting. We have lost Tony and Nicole and not replaced them yet. We need at least 2 more members. Joyce and Vince are to try and get members at tomorrows meeting which is in person.

Ashley shared that we are having events just not board events. They having been holding something each week for social workers which the staff has enjoyed. In addition, other events were noted as follows:

March 23- Statewide CASA Advocate appreciation day.

March 24- CASA Advocate appreciation dinner and meet & greet. We have invited our advocates to join us for dinner at the clubhouse. This is an opportunity for the volunteers to meet the staff and each other in an effort to show our appreciation for our advocates.

March 30- Fiesta at the clubhouse! We are wrapping up Social Worker Appreciation month by hosting a taco lunch at the clubhouse. Our advocates have been encouraged to invite the social worker on their case and we have partnered with DHS, FFAS, and the court to extend our gratitude towards community partners that CASA works with in helping children in the foster care system. The news will also be there covering the event.

April 22- Great American Clean Up/Keep Bakersfield Beautiful. CASA will have a booth at the volunteer picnic as well as a group of Advocates and their youth participating in a service project that morning.

There is another event on May 2. Derby is on May 6 so a busy month.

Vince and Joyce expressed appreciation for all of these events and were glad they are doing such a great job.

The meeting closed at 5:30.



Court Appointed Special Advocates of Kern County

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Interim Executive Director Report

April 18, 2023

March 2023- April 18, 2023

- **CASA Social Worker Appreciation Fiesta-** Thank you to those who were able to attend the Fiesta at the Clubhouse. Over 140 attendees including Kern County Child Welfare Assistant Director, Social Workers from across Kern County, a representative from Senator Shannon Groves office, and KERO 23 news did a feature story on the event. Thank you to the many board members who were able to join us that afternoon as well.
- **Clubhouse-** Junior League of Bakersfield is collecting items for the clubhouse. Advocates are using the space frequently. We have had issues with people trespassing in the alley behind the clubhouse where the basketball hoop is, the property management company has been informed that the fence is cut allowing entrance.
- **Office-** Ceiling tiles were finally replaced. Cubicles were removed and some will be moved in order to have an accessible path in the office. Plans to make an "Advocate Area" are in the works.
- **Staff-** Having remote access capabilities (thanks to Adaptive Network) allows for the flexibility of working from home and this has improved the overall moral of the office. We know that office coverage is the priority.
- **Program-** 19 cases were assigned a CASA in the month of March. The waitlist has decreased from 117 in January to 67 as of April 17. Advocate training began April 13 with 7 in the class.
- **Survey-** Created Advocate Evaluation Survey
- **Lennar Homes-** Sponsoring Splash Day at Water Park for Advocates and their youth in May.
- **National CASA Survey-** Completed. VOCA quarterly report-Completed
- **KFHC Grant-** Submitted. Submitting this month: Crail Johnson, Parvin, Raskind, Bank of America,
- **Bank of America-** Invited to apply for Neighborhood Champion Grant- \$50k over two years.
- **In-process Reports:** First 5, Title IVE, Economic Impact Report, CAL-CASA annual impact report.

-Ashley Thompson