

CASA Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

June 20, 2023

1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda Holtzclaw 6:00
2. Advocate Speaker: Greg Muir
3. Board Guest invited: Mercedes Thayer,
Patrick Collins to be voted on if in attendance
4. Other Board Guest: Tracy Hylton & Melissa
Morse Holtzclaw
5. Consent Items:
 - Board of Director's Meeting Minutes – May
 - Finance Committee Meeting Minutes and
others

 - *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.
6. Financial Discussion Bila
7. Fund Development Reports:
 - Fund Development Committee Roche
 - Derby Final Nato/Towery
 - Public Relations Tomono
8. Executive Director's Report Vorhees
9. President's Report Holtzclaw
10. Member Announcements: All
11. Adjourn Holtzclaw

Calendar: *(meetings held at CASA office, unless noted)*

Next Board meeting 3rd Tuesday, **July 18, 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 TBA

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
May 16, 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 President, Joyce Holtzclaw, called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM on Tuesday, May 17, 2023.

Board members present in person: McCort, Wong, Holtzclaw, Bila, Towery, Lucas, Harper, Shaw, Tomono, Natto

Board members present via Zoom: Collins

Board members excused: Keller, J. Gonzalez, Roche

Board members absent: Eberhardt, McCaslin

Advocate Liaison present: None

CASA staff present: Ashley Thomas (as Interim Executive Director), Ashley Voorhees

Advocate Speaker: Shaw introduced Beth Heisey, who advocated for four brothers. Between them, they’ve lived in 17 different places. The eldest is now 20 years old. She no longer advocates for the 19-year-old brother. The 16-year-old brother was adopted into a permanent home, and the remaining brother has decided to retain Beth as his CASA. Often when they are in public, people think she is the boy’s grandmother, and neither the boy nor she corrects them. There have been many social worker transitions, and Beth keeps in touch with the social workers’ supervisors to ensure those transitions are smooth. She attends IEPs, meets with teachers, and goes to school functions. She has had poignant experiences with the brothers, such as when she told them that their mother had passed away. She has attended psychological and other medical visits. Through their lives in foster care, she has been their only constant. The one brother for whom she continues to advocate is in independent living, and he likes it very much. He enjoys cooking, and he has a job where he does janitorial work for four hours per week at a church. The youth also has a mentor from the Bakersfield Angels, whose rules are very different. The mentor has a different focus and can do things that, as a CASA, Beth isn’t permitted to do (like invite the boy to the mentor’s home). Beth said that she and the Bakersfield Angels mentor make a good team. She and the boy go to MARE on Fridays. The family of the brother that was adopted have made Beth and the boy part of their family, as well, and Beth takes both boys out to eat together. The boys tell each other they love each other. Beth thanked CASA for its support; she said her supervisors have supported her very well and keep her focused.

Board guests present: Holtzclaw introduced Patrick Collins, whose wife is Board member Terri Collins. T. Collins noted that P. Collins has a lot of experience as a leader both from conducting his own business and from serving on the KEDC Board of Directors. Holtzclaw also introduced Mercedes Thayer, whom Chris Towery recruited. Thayer said she has always had a heart for CASA because she grew up in foster care from age 8 to age 18. She said she would like to be an advocate but doesn’t have the time, so she was glad when Towery mentioned the need for Board members, which gives her a way to serve.

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Consent Items:

- Board of Director's Meeting Minutes – April
- Fund Development Meeting Minutes April
- Staff program report and outreach report

Lucas moved to approve the consent items. Bila seconded the motion, which passed.

Financial Discussion:

- Bila reported that the Finance Committee met this afternoon to review March and April financial reports. He said that, knowing what's coming through in May with Derby revenue and expenses, there should be positive income. The cash position is very strong, with over \$800k in cash/investment accounts, which is just a bit less than last year. He said that the 75% of the Cal CASA grant funds that were allocated was utilized. He also said that, at least for now, CASA is re-included in the State budget for the State's next fiscal year. Bila noted that the Finance Committee is looking for new members as J. Gonzalez' Board membership is terming out. Gonzalez may, however, stay on the committee as a consultant.

Fund Development Reports:

- **Fund Development Committee:** Wong reported that the Fund Development Committee met yesterday. Several different grants are in progress, and there are others that CASA has decided not to pursue. The Pinwheels for a Cause fundraiser is ongoing. There are two major events coming up for which sponsors are needed: the advocate appreciation event and the Superhero Run. There has been a request from the staff to pool the Board's resources to continue to solicit leads for sponsorships. The advocate appreciation dinner will be held at the Junior League Community Center. Sponsors are needed because a dinner event will cost more than the luncheons held previously. Diana Ramirez still has some hours left that will be used for a variety of things. Wong noted that Heaven Vasquez and Karlee Cain are doing a very good job, taking initiative, and handling many different projects and tasks.
- **Derby Party:** Towery reported that, initially, she had concerns because there were 80 fewer guests this year at the Derby event than last year, there was \$30k less in sponsorships, and Fund-A-Cause was down \$10k compared to 2022. However, she received preliminary numbers today (she has not yet received the Greater Giving report/information). The event grossed over \$315k; projected expenses are \$102k (there are a few remaining expenses for which invoices have not yet been received, and there were some attendees that bid on auction items but did not have a credit card on file). The estimated net revenue for the event is \$212k. Sales of the Mexico trip helped to raise revenue, the Wall of Wine sold out, and silent auction items sold for over their value. Towery noted that there were many challenges with this year's event, but set-up this year went more smoothly than ever. If the generators had arrived at the venue earlier in the day, set-up would have been completed by 1:00 Friday afternoon. Towery thanked the Board for their representation at the event. McCort

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congratulated Towery on the success of the event and noted that the event wouldn't have been possible without Towery's guidance and leadership.

- **PR Committee:** There were no PR committee members to provide a PR Committee report.

Executive Director's Report:

- Holtzclaw thanked Ashley Thompson for her support in serving as the interim Executive Director. Thompson said she did not prepare a formal report for this Board meeting. Ashley Vorhees, a mere five days into her employment as CASA's Executive Director, said she is very excited about the opportunities ahead. She has met with each of the members of the management team and will be meeting with the rest of the staff in the coming days. Her goal is to hear about the areas in which the staff want to see growth and what they like about the organization. She has realized that she will be very focused on mending the culture within the organization. She said that the staff is good at running the program, and attention to the atmosphere within the office is what is most needed currently. Additional work to the program aspects will come later. Vorhees said that everyone needs to come together and heal what they've been through for the past couple of years. She requested the Board's patience because she feels there will be additional issues to deal with before the staff is whole again. She has scheduled an "all staff" meeting for Thursday. She said that the entire leadership team is on board; Vorhees is hopeful that the rest of the staff will follow, and CASA will return to being the stable organization it has been. Her objective is to move forward and upward. She will be meeting with donors and sponsors in the near future. She will hear everyone out and move forward from them. She said that Ashley Thompson "has been amazing". McCort acknowledged that the office situation has been difficult for some time, and the Board recognizes its own responsibility for that. The Board knew the transition would not be an easy one and is behind her with support. If she needs anything, she needs to let the Board know.

President's Report:

- **Bank account signers:** Holtzclaw asked Board members to advise which, if any, bank accounts they are authorized signers for; the banks in question are Mission Bank, Bank of Sierra, Edward Jones, Wells Fargo Investment Account, and Citizens Business Bank. CASA is trying to update signers, as some people that are no longer on the Board may still be signers on some of the bank accounts. McCort said he thinks he signs on the Wells Fargo account, and Natto said she thinks she may sign on the Mission Bank account.
- **Website information:** Holtzclaw asked that Board members check the CASA website to confirm their individual information. Any changes should be sent to Ashley Thompson. Natto noted that she can't log onto the website.
- **Cynthia Lake:** Holtzclaw reminded the Board that those Board members that will be attending the June 6th meeting with Cynthia Lake's team are asked to stay after the Board meeting to discuss responses to the questions posed by Cynthia Lake's team. Holtzclaw also reminded Board members not to mention

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to anyone that said meeting with Cynthia Lake's team is taking place. Cynthia Lake called Holtzclaw concerned that her business was being discussed in public.

Member announcements: None

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 20th at the CASA offices at 6:00PM.

Meeting adjourned: 6:39 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Jenifer Natto

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 16, 2023
12:00pm via Zoom

Board Members 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"*

Members Present: Bill Bila, Julio Gonzalez, Matt McCort, Ashley Vorhees (staff),
Ashley Thompson (staff)

Members Absent: Shannon Webster

Guest: Joyce Holtzclaw (Board President)

Bila called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

Review of Minutes of the prior meeting:

Minutes are sent via email for approval to be included in the board packet.

Financial Reports:

Financial reports for March & April were reviewed and approved. Motion: Gonzalez; Second: McCort.

Online Banking:

N/A

General Ledger Review:

N/A

Admin Manager Report:

Ashley Vorhees, CASA's new Executive Director, will be working with Joyce Holtzclaw (Board President) to update the signers for CASA's financial institutions, Citizens has been taken care of. CAL CASA grant report was submitted and the next round of funding for grants #2 and #3 will be deposited this month.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35pm.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 12:00pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Thompson

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 16, 2023

9:00am via Zoom

Board Members 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"*

Members Present: Bill Bila, Matt McCort, Ashley Vorhees (staff), Ashley Thompson (staff)

Members Absent: Julio Gonzalez, Shannon Webster

Bila called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

Review of Minutes of the prior meeting:

Minutes are sent via email for approval to be included in the board packet. Minutes for May & June will be emailed following today's meeting for approval.

Financial Reports:

Financial reports for May were reviewed. Income is up with revenues from Derby and CAL CASA coming in. Funds that were processed through Greater Giving for Derby were deposited into the Tri-Counties account. Vorhees will coordinate with Bila to pull the funds from Tri-Counties and deposit into Valley Strong.

Online Banking:

N/A – Bila offered to take on the monthly online banking review moving forward. He will work with Ashley Vorhees to get set up with online access to the Valley Strong Account.

General Ledger Review:

Not available, will touch base with Webster to see if there were any items needing attention.

Executive Director Report:

Ashley Vorhees will work on scheduling a time for future meetings that will work with Webster's schedule.

Other: Vorhees and Thompson will work on a Finance Calendar to share during future meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18am.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at TBD via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Thompson

CASA of Kern County

Minutes of Fund Development Meeting

May 15, 2023 scheduled for 4:30-5:30 pm

Attendees: CASA staff Heaven Vasquez, Ashley Voorhees, Karlee Cain

Board Members Vincent Roche, Joyce Holtzclaw, Nate Wong. Joyce to take minutes.

The meeting was called to order by Vince at 4:35 pm due to some confusion over multiple Zoom emails.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Heaven gave an update on several initiatives:

- Waiting to hear back on \$2000 request was submitted to Bakersfield Breakfast Lions for the advocate corner.
- We did not apply for the Bank of American grant it was for something that was not really applicable.
- Pinwheels we made about \$700 from the sale of signs.
- Prelim numbers on Derby:
 - \$96,000 sponsorships
 - \$137,000 auctions gross not net
 - 360 tickets were sold less then the over 400 last year but revenue was equal or greater.
 - Fund Development was \$26,000

We have about 10-12 hours remaining on Diane Ramirez contract. Ashley V and Heaven to work up strategic questions together before meeting with her.

Heaven and Ashley have had meetings since Derby with PlanMasters, Chevron, Valley Children's, and Kline DeNatale with Karlee in attendance as well at that meeting.

Cal CASA has been put back on the governor's budget for a second year and the new application is due in July although the state's budget has not yet been approved for next year.

An Advocate Appreciation dinner is planned for September at the Jr. League of Bakersfield Building. It will be the 30th anniversary and a 60's theme. Discussion on the number of attendees and the costs must be budgeted. The intent is to get sponsorships to pay for it. A request was made to ask the board to assist in getting sponsors for it and upcoming Superhero run. Currently there are 312 advocates although not all are assigned a case. It was suggested that spouses should also be invited or ask the advocate to bring a potential advocate with them.

Two potential board members will be attending Tuesday's Board as guest.

The next graduation is next Wednesday at the KCSOS bldg. at 6:00

The meeting ended at 5:15.

CASA of Kern County

Submitted by:

Madelyn Holtzclaw

Joyce (Madelyn)Holtzclaw

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Respectfully Submitted by
Ashley Vorhees
June 19, 2023

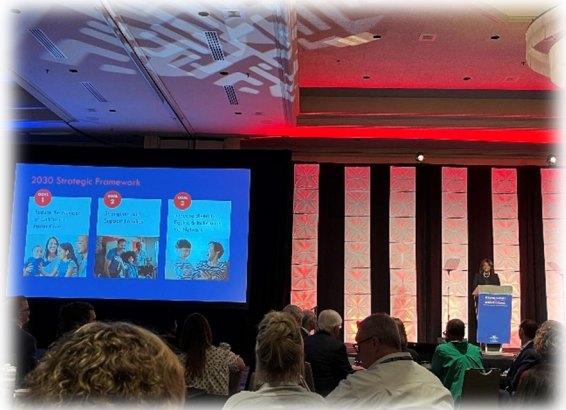
As we near the end of our '22-'23 fiscal year, CASA of Kern County sits in a good financial position as we look to the new year. A big thank you to our Board of Directors; committee members; staff members Ashley Thompson, Heaven Vasquez, and Karlee Cain; and California CASA for advocating and recruiting new revenue so that we can continue to serve the foster children and youth in our community. As I look to the future, I am hopeful that we can rebound back to the healthy, stable position CASA of Kern County once was in so that we can look to serve more foster children in the system. Together, with CASA staff, Board of Directors, advocates, and community partners, I have no doubt that we will get there.

CASA Program Highlights



Miracle Mutts, a therapy program of Marley's Mutts, joined us at our Clubhouse on June 6th for some pawisitive interaction with our kiddos. Nine foster youth and their advocates interacted with the dogs, giving our youth the opportunity to engage in healthy dialogue with the facilitator and their peers. We look forward to continuing this program for our foster youth as we know the power that canine/human connection can have on bringing about healing when it's needed the most. Our next session is scheduled for Tuesday, June 20th at 5:30pm at the CASA Clubhouse.

I had the pleasure of attending National CASA/GAL Conference in St. Louis, MO this past week where I learned so much about CASA. National CASA shared their Strategic Framework through 2030 which will provide guidance on our local strategic plan as we look to align our work with theirs. The three priorities they defined were: (1) reduce the number of children in foster care; (2) strengthen and support families; and (3) increase diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the network. I applaud their desired outcomes but know that this cannot be



done alone in order to achieve success. I look forward to having conversations with our local community partners to see how we can work together for the betterment of our foster youth.

Staff Update

- On Thursday, June 1st, I brought all the staff together for our first All-Staff meeting. I formally introduced myself to them and shared my cultural assessment of our organization after collecting their feedback along with that of our advocates. I then shared how we would work to address the concerns that had been shared with me by having stability in leadership, training, professional development, regularly scheduled meetings (all-staff, leadership, one-on-ones), along with performance goals and appraisals. Overall, it was a great first meeting and it seemed to be received well.
- We had two Advocate Supervisors resign, Angela Cruz and Angela Davis, but thankfully, we were able to retain Angela Davis. Angela Davis currently handles our Mental Health cases so this is a blessing to be able to keep her on staff. As Natalie mentions in her report, Kristina Spencer, our Program Court Assistant, applied for our Advocate Supervisor role and was offered the position a few weeks back. Lastly, we did hire one more Advocate Supervisor, Hannah Henry, and she begins in her role on June 26th. I am reviewing the Program Court Assistant role with our Program Manager to see if filling that position is in our best interest. Currently, we do not receive funding to support this role so I want to make sure we are utilizing our funds wisely. In addition to reviewing the work of that role, I will be assessing other roles in the office to make sure that we have the right people in the right positions for our organization.

Fund Development

- We were awarded two grants since our last board meeting: \$25,000 from Chevron to support STEM programming in our Clubhouse along with \$2,843 for Volunteer Training Support. Huge kudos to Ashley Thompson for applying for these funds so that we could financially support the work we do here at CASA!
- Applications for second-year funding from the State of CA will open up in July 2023. We look forward to applying for more funding to support our efforts as the funding we've received to date has helped us tremendously!

On behalf of all of our staff and volunteers, thank you for your continued service to the organization and to our mission. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Memorandum

To: Ashley Vorhees, Executive Director
From: Natalie Sullivan, Program Manager
Re: Program Update to the Board of Directors
Date: 06/07/2023

TRAINING & RECRUITING:

On 05/24/2023 we celebrated our Spring 2023 training class graduates. We had a total of 7 people graduate, 3 of whom are employees. Prior to their graduation exit interviews were completed to determine the type of case they would like to take and the age ranges of the children they are interested in working with. The program team had a brief case-matching meeting and has already reached out to the new advocates to come in and read through cases. Our Summer 2023 class session will begin on 06/10/2023 with 5 registered for the class.

Community Outreach Coordinator, Jordan Glatt, continues to recruit for our Summer and Fall 2023 classes and has completed her Pre-Service Facilitator training. As we continue to recruit it is our hope to find new advocates while we continue to build and strengthen the relationships with our current advocates.

PROGRAM UPDATE:

We welcomed our new Executive Director in May, and the month has gone quickly assessing the agency and the needs of the departments. We are happy to have our new ED's support and look forward to positivity, mission focus, and growth as our goals.

CASA participated in Splash Day at Wild Water Adventure Park in Clovis, CA. This event was sponsored by Lennar Homes and was a great time for the 9 children, 6 advocates, and 3 CASA staff that attended. We hope that this will become a yearly event and that participation would increase as it was a nice time to get to know our advocates, the children we serve, and build relationships.

Advocate Retention continues to be our focus and the program team has discussed ways to engage the advocates and get them involved. We are focusing on areas they feel they need support in and will be offering training and continuing education that is more in line with their needs and the children they serve. We realize that not every training pertains to every advocate and want to ensure we meet all their needs.

We are currently in the process of hiring an Advocate Supervisor as we recently had Advocate Supervisor, Angela Cruz, move on to another opportunity. We have promoted our Program Court Assistant, Kristina Spencer, to Advocate Supervisor and know she will be a welcome addition to our current team.

PSYCHIATRIC & MENTAL HEALTH GRANT:

We are currently serving 111 children on mental health medications. We have been diligently working to complete the Essential Histories for the mental health grant. Our Advocate Supervisor specializing in this grant has been working tirelessly to complete as many of the 50 cases that are our yearly goal. The deadline for completion is 06/30/2023. Moving forward we have shifted the way we do things and all Advocate Supervisors are trained and will be responsible for helping with these cases moving forward.

Traditional CASA:

CASA Statistics	May 8, 2023	June 7, 2023	
Children served to date	3568	3568	
Children currently being	288	279	

served (point in time)			
Children on the waiting list	94	88	
Total number of active cases	167	163	
Advocates currently assigned	125	122	
Total CASA's Graduated	1,678	1,682	

Family Connections:

FC CASA Statistics	May 9, 2023	June 7, 2023	
FC Children served to date			
FC Children currently being served (point in time)	42	43	
FC Children on the wait list	13	16	
Total number of active cases	30	32	
Advocates currently assigned	19	19	
Total FC CASA's Graduated	158	158	

Strategic Plan Goals: Year 2023-2024/ WORK IN PROGRESS

Mission Driven Goals: Strategic Plan	Actual	Fiscal Year to Date	# of Advocates reinstated FY	2023-2024 Goal
New trained CASAs				
# of CASAs served on a case				
# of children served by CASA Volunteers				

VOCA Grant July 1, 2022, thru June 2023

As to recruiting there was not a Community Outreach Coordinator employed until 03/27/2023 and the Fall 2022 training session was cancelled. We will continue to make this a priority goal.

40/75 Advocates Recruited

18/65 Advocates Assigned (graduated)

Goals: 75 Advocates recruited

65 Advocates Assigned