

IOWA CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD  
STATE BOARD MEETING  
Virtual Meeting  
Friday, January 20, 2023  
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

State Board Members Present:

Ashley Baker  
Courtney Clarke  
Mark Elcock  
Alison Guernsey  
Rick McIntosh  
Judge Owens, Chair  
Wayne Schellhammer  
Angela Stokes

Staff Present:

Kerry Brennan  
Meg Campbell  
Amy Carpenter  
Crystal Engstrom  
Cara Galloway  
Shirley Hofer  
Sherri Ripperger  
Steffani Simbric

Guests Present:

Meg Malloy  
Beth Myers  
Joe Wernau

Call Meeting to Order; Roll Call of Board Members

Judge Owens calls the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

### New Business:

Judge Owens states that there is a plan by the Governor's office to consolidate offices and agencies within the State Executive Branch. The proposal for ICAB is to move under the umbrella of the Department of Health and Human Services. The proposal has not been transparent. There was a meeting last Friday, January 13th between ICAB staff and Director Garcia, HHS. It seems from Director Garcia's perspective it was not if this is going to happen, but when this happens. Since this meeting Judge Owens has been in conversation with people from the Judicial Branch. There was a meeting today with the State Children's Justice Council in which the topic of ICAB moving was discussed. HHS did not attend this meeting. Judge Owens was told the one-thousand plus page reorganization bill would be assigned a number and be introduced early next week.

Judge Owens has a huge problem with ICAB being under the HHS umbrella. He feels it will be very difficult for the Foster Care Review Boards to conduct those sorts of examinations when they are under the umbrella of the agency they are examining and evaluating. From the perspective of CASA we are unique in Iowa that we are part of a governmental entity. It is equally troubling that CASA would be under the HHS umbrella because of the nature of the work that CASA does for our kids and families and the recommendations they are called upon to make as it addresses whether or not services are provided by HHS.

Carpenter reports that there are 15 publicly administered state CASA organizations. Eleven of the 15 are directly associated with the court in the Judicial Branch, one is affiliated with Criminal Justice Services, one with the Executive Branch (Iowa) and two that are somehow affiliated with an office of advocacy. Judge Owens states that there is one FCRB type program that is headquartered in an agency similar to HHS.

Schellhammer states that Senator Grassley was the one to bring FCRB to Iowa. He feels that we need to talk to Branstad, Senator Grassley and meet with the Governor. Schellhammer has a contact willing to take the board's message to the Governor.

Clarke supports taking this on and agrees it is not a great reorganization. She wants to caution the board that this is a part of a bigger reorganization and make sure our talking points are grounded in reality from an oversight perspective instead of it all just being a bad idea. The Governor appointed each ICAB board member as advocates for kids and families and to oversee the work of FCRB and CASA. Through the Governor's appointment we are assumed to be experts in what those two programs should be doing with families to meet statutory responsibilities.

Judge Owens suggests the first contact should be a letter to the Governor indicating to her as a board that this is not a good idea and laying out the reasons why. In this letter we should ask for a meeting with her or her staff to talk about this proposal.

Guernsey asks if anyone is collecting the data so the board can present in a very uniform way how Iowa stands among its peers in this regard. Carpenter has the CASA data and Hoefler states we would have to do some

research on the FCRB side of it. Guernsey asks if we know if we would be in compliance with CAPTA and what it would do to our federal funding? Judge Owens states there is a pot of money under CAPTA and states get a certain allotment of money. Partially that is how the act determines how many citizen review panels each state has to have. Guernsey agrees that approaching the Governor seems like the best course of action. She feels that having some of this data in hand may be particularly helpful. She recommends finding out how the FCRB within HHS is functioning and some of the critiques could be incredibly helpful. The Judge and Shirley will do research and provide some information on this.

Elcock feels our strategy is somewhat related to what we perceive the response is going to be from the Legislators. He's unsure if we have the time to wait for a meeting with the Governor. We may have to talk with people who have an influence with the Governor.

Judge Owens suggests going to the Governor, going to people who can go to the Governor, and then individually meeting with your own legislators. Clarke states that there have to be other organizations that are concerned with this reorganization. If we can identify these groups and get them to put this on their radar then they can also work on behalf of what might be a more effective outcome. The first people that come to Judge Owens' mind are County Attorneys. The Judge will reach out to some of his contacts to make sure they are aware of the situation.

McIntosh motions and Clarke seconds that ICAB merging with HHS is not an idea that this Board can support. The Board needs to take action in whatever reasonable means we have to try to get the reorganization to be best implemented to protect children. Motion passed unanimously.

Meghan Malloy, Development Director of Friends of Iowa CASA and FCRB, recommends that the board and Friends collaborate together to have a consistent, clear message and strategy with talking points. She also states that Friends is available for any assistance the board may need.

ICAB management was asked to develop talking points. They will have the talking points to the board by Wednesday next week. They will be distributed to the board and staff. Judge Owens will draft a letter to the Governor by the end of next week.

Schellhammer motions and Clarke seconds the meeting to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourns 1:00 p.m.

ICAB Minutes Prepared By: Sl. Ripperger  
Sherri Ripperger

ICAB Minutes Approved On: 3-10-23

CAB Minutes Approved by Child Advocacy Board Vote

Approved By: William S. Owens  
Judge William S. Owens, ICAB State Board Chair

Steffani Simbric  
Steffani Simbric, ICAB Administrator