

KITTITAS COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMISSIONERS AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL MEETING

TUESDAY

1:00 P.M.

SEPTEMBER 10, 2013

Board members present: Chairman Obie O'Brien; Vice-Chairman Paul Jewell and Commissioner Gary Berndt.

Others: Mandy Buchholz, Deputy Clerk of the Board; CASA Board Members: Nancy Jewett, Shelly Baird, Connie Anderson and Executive Director, Carol Newell Pidduck.

SPECIAL MEETING KITTITAS CO./ROLE OF CASA COMMISSIONERS

Chairman O'Brien opened a Special Meeting to receive a presentation from the Kittitas County's Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for children in Kittitas County and their role in the community.

Carol Pidduck, Executive Director reviewed what CASA is. She explained that it is where the Superior Court Judges appoint specially trained volunteers to speak up for abused and neglected children. They are called "court appointed special advocates" (CASAs), they are also known as "guardians ad litem" (GALs). CASA's serve as the "eyes and ears" of the Court. They are independent of the child's parents and independent of the State's child protection and child welfare system.

She stated that CASA's investigate a child's case and make recommendations to the Court. They monitor ongoing cases and try to facilitate communication and collaboration amongst the people and agencies involved with the child and the child's family. Throughout the case they advocate for the child's best interests.

She explained that one of the strengths of the CASA program is that its volunteers come from all walks of life. Regardless of the background of each volunteer, all CASA volunteers will listen, keep an open mind and are concerned for children and dedicated to making a difference for the children they represent.

She stated that CASA programs operate in most counties in the State of Washington and some Tribal Courts. A Statewide

2013-09-10 MINUTES

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9/17/2013

Association, (Washington State CASA), provides support to its member CASA programs.

Ms. Pidduck explained that they have approximately 20 active CASA's and this year's case load to date is 111 kids, noting that this will be a record year.

She explained that the intent of the meeting was so that the Board would have a chance to sit down and meet with the members and be aware of the services provided by the group so that when Superior Court Judge Scott Sparks (potentially) has a line item increase, they can understand where it's coming from and hopefully it will seem justified. She noted that they are facing approximately a \$2,000.00 cut from the State this year.

Nancy Jewett, CASA Board Member spoke from her prospective as a retired Court Administrator working with the Court system. She reviewed the four areas they are responsible for and the benefits the County and the children receive from the programs work.

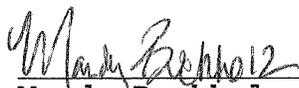
Chairman O'Brien questioned how its determined if a case is given to CASA or not. Ms. Pidduck explained that they take the cases when the Courts have been asked to intervene.

Commissioner Jewell questioned their budget and where their funding comes from. There was discussion on donations and fundraising. Commissioner Jewell questioned whether or not they could provide statistical information that would make a case for the Board to seek funding assistance from other jurisdictions in the County (City, Upper County, Kittitas) depending on the demographics of where the majority of their clientele was coming from.

Commissioner Berndt spoke of finding a "stop-gap" and finding a way to help the program with that.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD


Mandy Buchholz

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Chairman Obie O'Brien

2013-09-10 MINUTES