

**South Dakota CASA Commission Meeting minutes**  
**June 3, 2021 – 8:00 AM Central Time**  
**Room 414, State Capitol Building**

**Attending: Commissioners** - Kristie Fiegen, Judge Patrick Smith, Judge Karen Jeffries, Jolynn Bostrom

**UJS Staff** - Justice Scott Myren, Sara Kelly

**CASA Program Directors** – Jackie Horton, Sherri Rodgers-Conti, Stacey Tieszen, Julie Wermers, Kate Kelley, Kehala Two Bulls

**Visitors** – Chief Justice Steven Jensen, Sally Erny (National CASA), Mike Weiss and Dan Fechner (First Circuit CASA board members)

**Opening Remarks:** Kristie Fiegen, Vice-Chairperson called the meeting to order at 8:00 am. Kristie Fiegen stated she will chair the meeting as Kim Max has resigned her position with the UJS effective June 8, 2021 and other commitments prevented her from attending today. Chief Justice Steven Jensen was introduced, he welcomed the CASA directors and the CASA directors introduced themselves. Kristie Fiegen commented the award process is competitive and no set formula or award matrix is used in determining awards to the CASA programs. Kristie Fiegen asked all the program directors several questions.

- Does the program offer a retirement match; all but East Central was noted as offering a retirement match.
- Does the program carry of paid time off and sick leave; all carry over sick leave, East Central and Southeast don't carry over PTO.

Kristie Fiegen asked for clarification on a “peer coordinator”. Kehala Two Bulls stated this is a seasoned trained volunteer to co-supervise new volunteers. This helps with the National CASA staff to volunteer ratio while programs raise funds to hire staff to increase volunteer base. Kristie Fiegen asked Sally Erny the estimated number of states that use the peer coordinator option. Sally Erny stated about 10%.

Kristie Fiegen stated they would like to be mindful of time and asked for the presentations to stay around 15 minutes and allow time for questions and answers.

**Approval of 2020 Minutes:** Judge Smith moved to approve the minutes, second by Jolynn Bostrom. No opposed. Motion carried. Minutes approved.

**CASA Program Presentations:**

- State Organization – Sara Kelly presented the activities and challenges from 2020 and the planned activities for 2021. Sara updated the Commissioners the National CASA Highly Effective Review was completed and a preliminary report is due in August and she will share it with the Commissioners and local program directors for feedback. Once the final report is sent to the state, it will be shared with all and posted on the UJS and [sdcasa.org](http://sdcasa.org) website. Sara commented she is going to explore the funding source and confirm the funds are being properly deposited into the CASA Commission fund. Kristie Fiegen commented she is glad Sara is looking into the fund and appreciates sharing the NCASA Highly Effective report with them and others.
- First Circuit CASA – Jackie Horton thanked the Commissioners for past support and highlighted two cases and why the board returned to hearing mission moments at board meetings. Jackie stated they kept the office open in 2020 with staggered work schedules. They offered flex training for new volunteers and found it very beneficial for rural areas and volunteers appreciate not having to drive to Mitchell for in-person training. The program assessed the volunteer demographic and identified areas/communities for recruitment. Jackie reviewed the proactive steps taken with a local child protection office and resolved issues on communication. Jackie gave current statistics of children served; volunteers assigned to cases. Commissioners thanked Jackie for commitment to serving children and families, not having a waiting list, and using SMART goals.
- Southeast CASA – Sherri Rodgers-Conti thanked the Commissioners for past support. Sherri highlighted the service area, gave current statistics on children served and active volunteers, and how the program adapted to virtual training, recruitment and fundraising. Sherri explained the diaper depot the program hosts is handle by

referral and collaboration with three other local programs. Sherri stressed the diaper depot takes minimal time to manage and is a great asset to families in the service area. Sherri acknowledge the financial review is not timely and Sherri will discuss this with the accountant. Commissioners glad to hear the increase in funding and the program is working towards increasing volunteer base in Turner and Bon Homme Counties.

- Sioux Falls Area CASA – Stacey Tieszen thanked the Commissioners for past support. Stacey praised her staff and volunteers for their hard work and commitment to serving children and families. Stacey stated the team was creative in ways to meet with children, build relationships and communicate with child protection and other agencies. Stacey reported staff are back to work in the office and they found the flex training for new volunteers to be very successful and plan to continue to offer this option for future new volunteer trainings. Stacey highlighted the fundraising events in 2020 and what is planned for 2021.

Commissioners congratulated Stacey on a successful Red Cape event, it was noticed on social media. Commissioners had a few points of clarification on volunteer sustainment and financials. Stacey provided explanations for volunteer retention and financial carry over.

**10-minute break** – Kristie Fiegen called the meeting back to order at 10:00 am.

- East Central CASA – Julie Wermers thanked the Commissioners for past support. Julie stated the program stayed true to the mission of CASA and proud of the staff, volunteers and board members for hard work and dedication in the past year. Julie reported on current statistics of active cases, children served, volunteers serving cases. Julie reported the program was diligent in recruiting and training new volunteers in all counties the program serves. Julie stated the program will continue to offer flex training for new volunteers. Julie stated the program received a donation to provide children items they need. The program created the Caring Closet to provide CASA

children items they need. Julie state the program updated their website and continue to have a strong social media presence. Commissioners stated their appreciation for expansion to serve more counties and expand board membership. They stated they are pleased to see an increase in assets during a pandemic.

- Northern Hills CASA – Kate Kelley thanked the Commissioners for their past support. Kate praised the staff and volunteers for their dedication to serving the children and families during the pandemic. Kate gave updated statistics on number of children served and active volunteers. Kate stated they had several board members step down in 2020, Kate assessed why and determined they were missing the vision and mission of CASA. The program has since gone back to the mission moment to engage the board. Kate stated they plan to continue with flex training for new volunteers. Kate gave an overview of the virtual fundraising and new volunteer recruitment. Commissioners commented on happy to see outreach to all counties in Fourth Judicial Circuit. Kate was thanked for using clear, bulleted items and happy to see the board completed a strategic plan in 2020.
- Seventh Circuit CASA – Kehala Two Bulls thanked the Commissioners for their past support. Kehala stated 2020 was a difficult year and children were more disconnected and unsafe and children experienced lack of permanency. Kehala reported volunteer retention was better than expected in 2020. Kehala stated the program utilized flex training for new volunteer training. The program created floor decals with the CASA logo and information as a creative CASA awareness. The program has made connections with new people and created yard signs for recruitment and volunteer recognition. Kehala stated CASA will attend a traditional Lakota healing camp in June 2021 and participate in the wiping of tears ceremony. Kehala stated the board revived the Playhouse raffle as a fundraiser and public awareness; a board member donated the materials and constructed the playhouse. Commissioners appreciated training 25 new volunteers in 2020 and 100 % retention of board members, happy to hear there is daily

communication with child protection and the program board has a former foster child on the board.

10-minute break – Kristie Fiegen called the meeting back to order at 11:35 am.

**Commissioner Discussion/Awards:** Kristie Fiegen thanked the CASA program executive directors for their presentations and dedication to the mission of CASA. Judge Smith concurred with Kristie Fiegen and thanked for the high quality of work done and that all are doing well. Judge Smith stated \$175,000 isn't enough to support all programs but that is what the Commissioners have for distribution.

Judge Smith presented an award breakdown of:  
\$45,000 to Sioux Falls and Seventh Circuit CASA  
\$21,500 to First Circuit and Northern Hills CASA  
\$20,000 to Southeast and East Central CASA  
\$2,000 to the state organization

Judge Jeffries presented an award breakdown of:  
\$60,000 to Seventh Circuit  
\$20,000 to Northern Hills  
\$15,000 to East Central  
\$40,000 to Sioux Falls  
\$19,000 to Southeast  
\$20,000 to First Circuit

Jolynn Bostrom presented an award breakdown of:  
\$44,000 to Sioux Falls and Seventh Circuit  
\$20,000 to Southeast, East Central and Northern Hills  
\$25,000 to First Circuit

Kristie Fiegen presented an award breakdown of:  
\$19,030 to Southeast CASA  
\$24,220 to First Circuit  
\$43,250 to Sioux Falls  
\$27,680 to East Central

\$ 22,490 to Northern Hills  
\$36,330 to Seventh Circuit

Commissioners discussed their award breakdown with a final breakdown presented as:

\$19,030 to Southeast CASA  
\$24,220 to First Circuit CASA  
\$43,250 to Sioux Falls CASA  
\$24,220 to East Central CASA  
\$22,490 to Northern Hills CASA  
\$39,790 to Seventh Circuit CASA  
\$2,000 to state organization

Jolynn Bostrom moved to accept the award breakdown, Judge Smith second, all agreed, no opposed, motion carried.

**Comments/Discussion:**

- Site visits and board meeting attendance (fall 2021) – Sara Kelly stated she plans to do in-person site visits to complete the Uniform Grant Governance review and will hopefully attend a board meeting just to touch base and a 2020 disconnect and to get input on the re-write of the state organization strategic plan.
- Other Business – Kristie Fiegen asked if the Commissioners could meet in December to review statistic spreadsheet and get a clear definition of each column in the spreadsheet. The Commissioners can also review grant questions. The Commissioners will also vote on a chairperson and vice-chairperson, as a new Commission will be appointed by then. Judge Smith commented on the Commissioners considering a Zoom or hybrid option for 2021 annual meeting.

**Set Date for 2022:** The Commissioners agreed to set a date at the December meeting, but will plan for the end of May, first of June timeline.

Meeting Adjourned: Judge Jeffries moved to adjourn. Jolynn Bostrom second. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:04 pm.