

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

August 24, 2023

12:00 noon ET

Via Zoom



Committee Members in Attendance:

1. Nina Belli (OR), Chair
2. Julie Hawkins (MO), Vice Chair
3. Sherry Jones (MD), Treasurer and Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Chair
4. Tasha Hunt (CT), Immediate Past Chair
5. Jacey Rader (NE), Compliance Committee Chair
6. Kellianne Torres (IA), Information Technology Committee Chair
7. Stephen Horton (NC), Rules Committee Chair
8. Corrie Copeland (TN), Training Committee Chair
9. Chuck Frieberg (SD), Midwest Region Representative
10. Felicia Dauway (SC), South Region Representative
11. Howard Wykes (AZ), West Region Representative

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

1. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), East Region Representative
2. Dale Dodd (NM), Finance Committee Chair
3. Nataki Brown, Victims Representative

Guest in Attendance:

None

National Office Staff and Legal Counsel in Attendance:

1. MaryLee Underwood, Executive Director
2. Emma Goode, Logistics and Administrative Specialist
3. Amanee Cabbagestalk, Training and Administrative Specialist
4. Joe Johnson, Systems Project Manager
5. Rick Masters, Legal Counsel

Call to Order

Commission Chair N. Belli (OR) called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. ET.

Roll Call

Director Underwood called the roll and a quorum was established.

Agenda

S. Horton (NC) made a motion to approved the agenda. T. Hunt (CT) seconded. Chair Belli (OR) approved the agenda as presented by unanimous consent without objection.

Minutes

S. Jones (MD) made a motion to approve the July 27, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. H. Wykes (AZ) seconded. Chair Belli (OR) indicated the minutes were approved by unanimous consent without objection.

Commission Chair Report *by Nina Belli (OR)*

Committee and Region Reports

Chair N. Belli (OR) announced that there will be no reports by chairs or regional representatives as there were no meetings in August. She expressed her sincere gratitude for the hard work and support through the year, and shared she was honored and privileged to serve as the Commission chair and work with the committee members this year.

End of Year Strategic Plan Report and Reflections

- Chair N. Belli (OR) outlined the four (4) priorities set by the Executive Committee for the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan:
 1. Improve data systems for better outcomes
 2. Promote racial justice and leadership development
 3. Address gaps in Rules and resources
 4. Leverage relationships to promote awareness and improve outcomes
- A summary of the action items completed to advance these priorities was provided. Thirty (30) percent of action items planned for the 2023-2025 were completed in fiscal year 2023 (FY 23). Twenty-nine (29) percent are in progress, with completion of several anticipated by the end of the 2023 Annual Business Meeting.
- Chair Belli asked members to reflect on work undertaken this year prior to the next meeting, particularly related to:
 - Proactive Monitoring Program
 - UNITY enhancements
 - Live training & new training resources
 - Rules proposal process
 - New structure for region meetings
 - Implementing recommendations made by 2022 Racial Justice Ad Hoc Committee
- In September, the agenda will include a 'year in review' discussion based on the following questions:
 - What implementation science strategies were utilized this year?
 - What did you think worked well?
 - What could we have done better?
 - What cultural changes or impacts occurred within the Commission as a result of initiatives?

2023 ICJ Annual Report Update

- Each year, the National Office prepares the *ICJ Annual Report* and shares it with the Executive Committee for feedback prior to publication. Chair N. Belli (OR) shared a "sneak peek" of a few pages.

- Each year, the goal is to complete the report prior to the Annual Business Meeting (ABM). However, when the ABM is scheduled for September, the time frame for preparation of the report is compressed. To date, most of the content has been completed except the summary of the audit and state-by-state return statistics. These items will be completed soon, but staff cannot determine when the summary of the audit will be provided since the audit is ongoing.
- Once the report has been completed, the Executive Committee review could be conducted via email or feedback could be provided at the next committee meeting. If feedback is provided at the in-person meeting, the report cannot be published prior to the ABM, nor will printed copies be made available to ABM participants.
- Chair N. Belli (OR) asked if there were any objections to submitting feedback via email in order to have a printed version onsite at the ABM. S. Horton (NC) and H. Wykes (AZ) supported this proposal. There were no objections.

2023 Annual Business Meeting (ABM) Updates

- Chair Belli (OR) reported the following candidates have been nominated for the officer positions:
 - Chair: Nina Belli
 - Vice-chair: Julie Hawkins
 - Treasurer: Sherry Jones and Dale Dodd
- She thanked the Executive Committee for casting votes for the Leadership and Rising Star awards. The winners will be announced during the General Session.
- The new 15 Year Legacy Awards will also be presented during the General Session.
- A Special Edition *ICJ Updates* Newsletter will be sent to registrants on September 6 which will include important meeting information related to: the Docket Book, Yapp App, Tuesday dinner reservations, and ground transportation to name a few.
- The Rule Proposals, Notice of Public Hearing, and ABM Agenda have been posted on the Commission's website, thus all 30-day posting requirements have been met.
- Chair N. Belli (OR) reminded the Executive Committee members of their roles and responsibilities during the ABM, including during:
 - Executive Committee meeting Monday;
 - Welcome Reception Monday evening; and
 - New Commissioner Luncheon Tuesday.

Commission Treasurer Report *by Sherry Jones (MD)*

- Treasurer Jones reported the following information on FY24 dues and the FY23 fiscal year audit.
- New York's FY24 dues were received August 15, 2023. To date, FY24 dues have been received from 43 states for a total of \$1,063,125 (81% of annual dues). On August 1, 2023, the National Office sent 30-day reminder letters to sixteen (16) states, compared to fourteen (14) sent last year. Currently, five (5) states are considered overdue. If payments are not received by September 29, 2023, a 90-day reminder letter will be sent advising that if not received in 30 days, the matter will be referred to Compliance Committee.

- The FY23 audit began August 1, 2023 and was conducted smoothly. The Audit Report should be available soon. This year, the auditor conducted a more extensive review of internal controls focused on mechanisms, rules, and procedures implemented to ensure the integrity of financial and accounting information, promote accountability, and prevent fraud. The last internal controls review was conducted in 2018.

National Office Report by *MaryLee Underwood, Executive Director*

State Updates

Iowa

- ICJ appointment letters have been received for the following:
 - Compact Administrator – Janee Harvey
 - Commissioner – Curtis Hamstra
 - Full-time Designee – Kellianne Torres

Hawai'i

- Director Underwood updated that travel permits and transfers of supervision to Maui were suspended until September 10, 2023. The suspension was administered in accordance with the [Emergency Guidelines Policy](#) and was due to recent island devastation from the wildfires.

Rhode Island

- JoAnn Niksa will retire August 31, 2023. Bill Dolan has been identified as the new Deputy Compact Administrator, effective September 11, 2023. Mr. Dolan has served as back up to JoAnn Niksa for many years, and it is anticipated he too will be appointed part-time Designee to Commissioner Nash.

UNITY Enhancements Complete

- Director Underwood congratulated the Technology Committee Chair K. Torres (IA), the Technology Committee, and Joe Johnson, System Project Manager, for successful completion of the 2-year process for developing and implementing the first set of enhancements to the UNITY nationwide data system. Thanks to their hard work and the use of implementation science, the project and transition went smoothly.
- Next year, the process will be evaluated to determine whether any modifications to the process should be made for future enhancement projects. The evaluation may be led by the Executive Committee with input from the Technology Committee, Enhancement Team, UNITY Coordinators, National Office staff, Optimum Technologies, and field staff.
- Suggestions for the are process welcomed.

Results of Proactive Monitoring Survey

- Director Underwood updated that 17 respondents completed the Proactive Monitoring Survey.
- Regarding Tableau/UNITY Reports on Home Evaluations delivered via to state ICJ office staff with Tableau accounts, 100% of respondents indicated the reports

are “very useful” and “easy to understand.” All respondents also indicated that weekly delivery is the appropriate frequency.

- Regarding similar Tableau/UNITY Reports on Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs), 93% responded they are “very useful,” and 100% indicated they are “easy to understand.” Regarding frequency of reports, 87% responded that weekly is the right. Additionally, 7% indicated weekly is too often and 7% said not often enough.
- All who requested assistance with UNITY maintenance said that the assistance addressed their issues and was provided in a timely manner
- All comments on open ended question were positive, including:
 - “I love the Tableau Reports and our state uses them on a weekly basis.”
 - “The commission is very efficient in assistance with UNITY. Things are handled very timely. All materials are usually resolved within 24 hours.”
 - “Very grateful for the checks and balances that the Proactive Monitoring is providing.”
- Chair N. Belli (OR) commended the all those who have been involved in the Proactive Monitoring Program. S. Jones (MD) spoke to the ease of using UNITY, even for those not in the program daily.

Toolkit on Returns and Child Welfare

- Director Underwood reported the [ICJ Toolkit: Returns and Child Welfare](#) was recently published and is now available on the Commission’s website. A press release was issued and distributed via a special edition of the *ICJ Updates* newsletter. She acknowledged the ICJ West Region and the ICJ Training Committee on their work to bring the new publication to fruition.
- The new resource may be used in upcoming meetings federal agencies, state councils, and other allies.
- There will be a related panel discussion during the Annual Business Meeting, and the Executive Committee will discuss next steps in future meetings.

Collaboration Updates

- Director Underwood updated on the following meetings and collaborations with federal agencies and allies:
 - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
 - Chair Belli and Director Underwood will meet with Belinda Swan on August 25. The NCMEC is federally funded through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to work on runaway issues.
 - ACF Children’s Bureau
 - Vice Chair Hawkins and Director Underwood will meet with Catherine Heath on August 31. The Children’s Bureau administers many federal programs, include federal funding for state child welfare agencies.
 - OJJDP Meeting
 - On September 6, Chair Belli, and four others will meet with Administrator Liz Ryan, and Special Assistant, Marcia Good, with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

One item for discussion is the revision of the “ICJ Fact Sheet” now available on their website.

Discussion of Input from Child Welfare Agency Staff

- Director Underwood reported the National Office was recently contacted by a child welfare agency (CWA) staff member from the State of Washington who was frustrated that a juvenile could not be returned via the ICJ, and suggested consideration of “a systemic issue pertaining to ICJ.”
- Concerns were based on a case involving a youth from Indiana who moved to Washington. The juvenile was previously detained in Indiana, then was sent by her mother to live with family/friends in Washington. In Washington, the youth was charged with a felony and the family members in Washington obtained a “no contact” order. The CWA staff member asked whether anyone has considered whether ICJ should apply in such cases. Information about what triggers ICJ was emailed to him and Commissioner J. Pelander (WA) was copied.
- The issue was presented for discussion of whether any further action should be taken, such as referral to the Rules Committee for further review.
- R. Masters, Legal Counsel, inquired if the applicability to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) was ruled out. He also inquired about the court’s response and indicated that the court may bear some responsibility.
- Chair N. Belli (OR) noted a similar case involving the Washington’s CWA and questioned whether there might be a trend.
- S. Jones (MD) agreed there might be a trend but noted that it is not limited to one state. Many states have shared concerns about frustrations in relationships between ICJ and CWA personnel.
- The committee discussed the applicability of various laws and strategies, including the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) and the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA). Members noted that ICJ office often asserts that CWAs handle such cases as issues of abandonment.
- T. Hunt (CT) stated that it is important to consider the safety interests of the youth and family members when addressing cases where a parent or guardian is reluctant to have a juvenile returned. Efforts to force a parent/guardian to accept the return of a youth can place either party in danger, resulting in harm and/or subsequent running away.
- Director Underwood thanked the committee for the robust discussion and volunteered to assemble additional information regarding topics raised to share at a future meeting. She also suggested offering guidance to the Commission for addressing such concerns could be helpful to states working to build and/or improve collaborations with CWAs.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)

- Director Underwood updated that NCJFCJ President-Elect, Judge Robert Hofmann will attend the ABM and administer the oath of office to the newly elected officers. Judge Hofmann is a District Judge from Mason, Texas.

Keynote Speaker – Dr. LaMarr Shields

- Director Underwood updated that ABM Keynote Speaker Dr. LaMarr Shields requested permission to sell his books during the Annual Business Meeting. While this would be the first time the Commission allowed such sales, it does not appear that any policies or rules prohibit it. The book title is “What I Learned in the Midst of Kaos: The Making of an Ubuntu Teacher.”
- S. Horton (NC) cautioned that such sales could set a precedence for selling merchandise at future meetings. F. Dauway (SC) noted that various items are often offered for sale at large meetings.
- **S. Jones (MD) made a motion to allow the 2023 Annual Business Meeting keynote speaker to sell merchandise. F. Dauway (SC) seconded. S. Horton (NC) opposed. The motion passed.**

Legal Counsel Report *by Rick Masters*

- R. Masters, Legal Counsel, commented indicated he will follow-up with Director Underwood about the legal issues discussed in relation to the return case presented for discussion.

Old Business

New Business

Adjourn

- Chair Belli (OR) thanked everyone for a great year and noted that the next meeting would be held in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- **Chair Belli (OR) adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent without objection at 1:26 p.m. ET.**