

Guardian ad Litem Board
Public Minutes
May 10, 2019
121 South Fruit Street

There was a meeting of the Guardian ad Litem Board on May 10, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. there was not a quorum for this meeting. The Board members present were Chairperson Susan Duncan, Attorney Betsy Paine, David Villiotti and Representative David Welch was present until 1:40 and Attorney Sarah Blodgett arrived at 1:45. Present from the OPLC was Chris Horne.

1. Moira O'Neil from the Office of the Child Advocate-

The Board spoke with Moira about the trainings that are available for a CASA Gal and what is available for a GAL. The CASA's training is far more extensive than the GAL's. The training for a GAL is 30 hours. The services are not equal to the children between the GALs and CASA. Board members wish they could offer the training that the CASA's are able to receive to the GAL's.

The GAL cases that Moira has had interaction with were troubling in the fact that the GALs seemed to lack an understanding of child development. She suggested that the training for GALs should be mostly in this area. She also stated that it is not just the GALs that are lacking this knowledge; some Judges also lack the knowledge.

GALs don't have a requirement to see the kids for a certain number of times. They really should see them more. Attorney Blodgett and Chairperson talked about the pay structure. GALs are only paid a limited amount. The Board spoke about the funding for GALs and the pay that they receive is very low compared to the work that they do and what is expected by the courts. It is hard to get paid for the time needed to care for the kids.

Court improvement may have funds for trauma training for the GALs. There are other resources that may have trainings available. ACIS, SPARK, New Futures are a few resources. Moira is going to give some information to staff about resources.

Education, the number of visits and the quality of the visits are a few areas that Moira sees a need for improvement.

2. Judge Carbon discussed a question she has regarding rule 503.06(h) requiring the GAL rule to notify the Court and the Board about being a party to an unrelated case in the Courts.

What is the rationale for this? When a Judge receives this information what should they be doing with it? There is no direction given for this circumstance. It doesn't say to let all parties know. Is it up to the Judge's discretion?

The rationale was for the GAL to be up front to make sure there was no conflict with the parties. The GAL Board felt that the Courts would make the decision about disclosing the information.

Judge Carbon is going to draft language that the Board could add to their rules.

3. Judge Carbon discussion on GALs and Attorneys submitting bills for payment-

The forms don't follow the rules and it is hard to fill them out to be sure the Guardian ad Litem gets paid properly. It has been years since the forms have been created. Attorney Blodgett is

going to work with Judge Carbon on creating new forms. This will make Attorney Blodgett's job easier when she is paying these bills.

The Board also asked Judge Carbon if there is a shortage of Guardian ad Litem's and if there are any issues with them. She said right now there are no issues.

The Board also talked about trainings for the Judges and the GALs. The Board could send a letter to Judge King suggesting some training for judges that would be beneficial to all parties. Talked about ZOOM training as a supplement to in person training.

2. Adjournment-

- a. Next Meeting June 14, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.