



State of New Hampshire Guardian ad Litem Board

Public Minutes

January 17, 2014

Legislative Office Building Room 101

Members Present: Susan Duncan, Chair, Alan Cantor, Chris Keating, Ann Larney, Master Henrietta Luneau, Dave Robbins, David Villiotti

Members Absent: Representative Deanna Rollo, Senator David Pierce

A. Larney called the meeting to order at 1:07pm

A quorum was present.

1. Training

- a. A. Cantor disclosed that his wife works for NHTI.
- b. M. Luneau disclosed that her husband is on an advisory Board at NHTI.
- c. Discussion with Kathleen Moore from NHTI.
 - i. Ms. Moore stated the following:
 1. NHTI has been putting on the GAL training for a number of years.
 2. The most recent training was in 2012.
 3. The GAL training is the most labor intensive training that NHTI puts on.
 4. NHTI does not have ownership of content of training. Their role is more administrative.
 5. Satellite training is possible but would cost a good amount more of money.
 6. Web based training would make more sense in the current times than a paper based training.
 7. Make the information downloadable in smaller modules.
 8. There needs to be a minimum of 30 people per session to cover the costs of NHTI according to the current model of training.
 9. Why make people drive somewhere when there is information they can read through at home first.
 10. Other states have applied for grant money which may be possible for NH.
 11. Other states separate the lawyers from non-lawyers.
 - a. The college receives numerous people upset that NH does not separate lawyers from non-lawyers.

S. Duncan arrived.

12. The manual is very labor intensive as some of the course material is old school photocopy and not an electronic file.
 - a. It is over 450 pages long.
 - b. Each section is a different color.
13. The more electronic documents that can be submitted for manual vs. paper would make a difference in terms of cost and labor.
14. The people taking the training resent having to take the training and take out their anger on the NHTI registration staff. Maybe it could be pointed out on the flyer that if someone has a frustration they should not direct that towards NHTI but to Board.

15. It would be helpful to reinforce on training notification that payment must be made to register.
 16. The agenda and courses need to be finalized ahead of time so teacher contracts can be generated and signed prior to the training.
 17. There should be a separation between what materials in the manual are needed for the course and what is informational and read only.
 18. The manual takes at least a month to complete the process.
 19. The survey process is now electronic.
 20. NHTI lost about \$1,500 for the last training.
 21. If the costs are met NHTI is willing to discuss what to do with leftover money.
 - a. It could go into enhancing the training.
 - b. It could pay for the coordinator.
 - c. This all depends on if there are more than 30 participants per session.
 22. The fee hasn't been changed in years.
- ii. Board discussion included:
1. The training is the only way to certify new GALs.
 2. The Board is obligated by statute to offer the training.
 3. If the training were to be web based:
 - a. Is it possible to have applicants take a test before getting a certificate of completion?
 - b. It would allow people to take the training at their own pace on their own time.
 - c. There would not be a minimum number of participants.
 - d. Can we have participants sign a statement under penalty of perjury that they completed the course?
 4. Maybe only offer web based training to lawyers?
 5. There have been a number of changes since the last training that will need to be updated in the manual.
 6. Instead of printing the text for the statute or court rule etc. just provide the link in the manual.
 7. CASA does part of their training as independent study and part as must attend in person.
 8. Courts are appointing about half as many GALs as they used to leading to the decline in demand for training.
 9. There is no guarantee that once you are a Certified GAL you receive any appointments.
 10. The Board does not have a mechanism to offer scholarships or discounts for the tuition cost of training.
 11. Being a Certified GAL is not a viable career. There are some GALs who are vetted within the court and receive all the appointments and other who have never had a chance to prove themselves.
- d. The Board agreed to ask Kathleen Moore to do some research into what other states do for training and what possible grants are available.
- e. Current statistics regarding training:
- i. Memo regarding training was sent to 56 people.
 1. 16 expressed interest in remaining on the notification list.
 2. 40 people did not reply and have been removed.
 3. 20 new people have been added.
 4. The total is now 36 people interested in training.

C. Keating left the meeting.

A quorum was still present.

- f. The Board agreed to draft a new statement regarding training and email those on the notification list along with posting it on the website.

2. Welcome

- a. Chairwoman Duncan welcomed new Board member Dave Robbins who is representing the General Public
- b. The Board now has all 9 positions filled.

3. Public Comment

- a. There was no public present.

4. Continuing Education Requests

- a. Evaluating Truthfulness and Detecting Deception
 - i. A. Larney made a motion to approve. A. Cantor seconded. Vote: 6-0 Motion passes.
- b. The Role of Fathers and Implications for Child Custody Evaluations
 - i. A. Larney made a motion to approve. M. Luneau seconded. Vote: 6-0 Motion passes.
- c. You're a Heartbreaker
 - i. A. Cantor made a motion to approve. A. Larney seconded. Vote: 6-0 Motion passes.

5. GAL Statistics as of January 17, 2014

- a. 111 Certified GALs
 - i. 1 is on an alteration of time to complete CEUs
 - ii. 3 are no longer accepting appointments
 - iii. 3 are temporary for the purpose of completing an appointment
 - iv. Technically, there are 104 Certified GALs able & willing to serve.
- b. 6 GALs expired in December
 - i. 11 expire in January
 1. 1 renewal has been received
 2. 1 person has contacted office and will be renewing
 - ii. 3 expire in February
 1. 2 renewals have been received
- c. 8 GALs are still within the 90 day re-certification period
 - i. 2 have contacted the office and will be submitting re-certification packets

6. Board Actions & Updates

- a. 2014 House-Senate Bills
 - i. Bills involving GALs or GAL Board
 1. HB 1550 Permitting the audio & video recording of a public official while in the course of his or her duties
 - a. The Board agreed to monitor the bill but that there was no need to attend the hearing.
 2. HB 1153 Allowing public bodies or agencies to require a deposit for RTK requests
 - a. The Board agreed to monitor the bill but that there was no need to attend the hearing.
 3. HB 1156 Making certain changes to the RTK Law
 - a. The Board agreed monitor the bill and the office staff was welcome to attend the hearing if they were able.
 4. HB 1267 Relative to removing a Public official for cause
 - a. The Board agreed to monitor the bill but that there was no need to attend the hearing.
 5. HB 1343 Relative to guardian ad litem fees and complaints
 - a. Discussion Included:

- i. The Board does not have the statutory authority for fee authorizations.
 - ii. It is problematic to have the Board interfere in open court case.
 - iii. It is not the Boards job to be a second hearing of the case.
 - iv. It could be considered Judge/GAL Shopping.
 - v. The Board only meets once a month. If this Bill passes it says that a complaint would be acted upon before the next Court hearing or mediation session.
 - b. The Board agreed to not take an official position unless it passes the House and goes to the Senate.
 - c. The Board also agreed to have the Office staff attend the hearing taking notes and then report back to the Board. Board members were encouraged to attend the hearing and reminded that if they decided to speak it was not on behalf of the Board.
- 6. HB 1454 Relative to increases in fees using rulemaking authority
 - a. The Board agreed to monitor the bill but that there was no need to attend the hearing.
- 7. HB 1470 Relative to quorums for meetings
 - a. The Board agreed to monitor the bill but that there was no need to attend the hearing.
- 8. SB 302 Relative to public of private criticism of employers by employees
 - a. The Board agreed to monitor the bill but that there was no need to attend the hearing.
- ii. The Board agreed that the following Bills did not involving GALs or the GAL Board and do not need to be followed any further.
 - 1. HB 1380 Establishing a Citizen's Appeal Panel
 - 2. HB 1157 Relative to establishment of fees by certain regulatory boards
 - 3. HB 1341 Relative to grounds for divorce for persons with minor children
- b. Office Furniture
 - i. The Board office needs a new chair.
 - ii. There is currently \$450 in the new equipment line.
 - iii. The Board agreed to authorize the Office staff to order a new chair after they physically try them.
- c. Budget
 - i. Money Transfer
 - 1. When the office moved there was a \$130 charge to move the phone & data line.
 - 2. There is not enough money in the telecommunications line 39 to fund this.
 - 3. With approval of the Chair a transfer of funds has been requested from line 70 (In-state travel reimbursement) to line 39.
 - 4. The transfer has been approved by Fiscal and will go before G&C this week.
 - ii. 2015-2017
 - 1. The budget preparations will be starting in the next couple of months.
 - 2. The Board agreed that with the current decline in Certified GALs there is not currently the need to make the office staff full time. There are enough hours in the current budget to get the job done.
 - 3. The Board also agreed to do more research on defining what a GAL Supervisor would be but not to include a new position in the next budget.

7. Non-Public Session

M. Luneau moved to go into non-public session for the purposes of discussing a matter which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of a person or persons who is not a member of this body pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c). A. Cantor seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

*Susan Duncan, Aye, Alan Cantor, Aye, Ann Larney, Aye, Master Henrietta Luneau, Aye,
Dave Robbins, Aye, David Villiotti, Aye*

~Non-Public Session~

C. Keating returned to the meeting in Non-Public Session.

M. Luneau left the meeting during Non-Public Session recused.

M. Luneau returned to the meeting in Non-Public Session.

A. Larney made a motion to go back into public session. C. Keating seconded. Vote: 7-0 Motion passes.

D. Villiotti made a motion to adjourn. C. Keating seconded. Vote: 7-0 Motion passes.

Items on agenda held until February Meeting:

1. Review Minutes
2. Discuss the proposed new format for minutes
3. Website
4. Financial Interest Statements
5. RTK Request
6. In an effort to improve, the Chair and Administrative Secretary are now meeting weekly.
7. Employee Handbook
8. Elect a Vice-Chair
9. Communications from Sunny Mulligan
10. Rules Only Meeting
11. Late Reports