



## **COURT SYSTEM DEPENDENCY NEGLECT TASK FORCE**

### **68th Montana Legislature**

#### **HOUSE MEMBERS**

Jennifer Carlson  
SJ Howell

#### **SENATE MEMBERS**

Ellie Boldman – Vice Chair  
Dennis Lenz - Chair

#### **PUBLIC MEMBERS**

Kelly Dirscoll  
Wamnee Ereaux  
Jessica Finley  
Rachel Green  
Nikki Grossberg  
Jon Kadner  
Hon. Rienne McElyea  
Jennifer Owen

#### **COMMITTEE STAFF**

Milly Allen – Research Analyst  
Jolanda Songer - Secretary

# **MINUTES LOG**

January 16, 2024

Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sen. Ellie Boldman, Chair (D) – Via Zoom  
Rep. Jennifer Carlson (R)  
Rep. SJ Howell (D)  
Sen. Dennis Lenz (R) – Via Zoom  
Hon. Rienne McElyea  
Jessica Finley – Via Zoom  
Jon Kadner  
Rachel Green  
Wamnee Ereaux – Via Zoom  
Jennifer Owen  
Kelly Driscoll  
Nikki Grossberg

#### **MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Milly Allen, Research Analyst  
Jolanda Songer, Secretary

**AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))**

**VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))**

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

09:01:35 Rep. Carlson called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. The committee secretary took roll.  
09:02:50 Presiding Officer Lenz  
09:04:16 Presiding Officer Carlson shared a change in the agenda.  
09:05:39 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman

**WORK PLAN FINALIZATION**

09:06:47 Milly Allen  
[EXHIBIT 1](#)  
09:09:15 Presiding Officer Lenz directed a question to Milly Allen

**Motion**

09:09:39 Sen. Lenz moved to approve the meeting schedule change from 7/18/24 to 7/19/24.

**Discussion on the Motion**

09:10:10 None

**Vote**

09:10:26 The motion carried without objection.  
09:11:23 Judge McElyea  
09:11:36 Milly Allen  
09:11:56 Judge McElyea  
09:12:05 Milly Allen listed the topics discussed at the last meeting.  
09:12:58 Presiding Officer Carlson  
09:13:35 Kelly Driscoll  
09:14:10 Judge McElyea  
09:14:38 Presiding Officer Carlson

09:14:54 Judge McElyea

09:15:43 Jennifer Owen

09:17:29 Presiding Officer Carlson

09:18:26 Judge McElyea

09:19:13 Rachel Green

09:19:30 Presiding Officer Carlson

09:20:31 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman

09:22:47 Presiding Officer Carlson directed a question to Vice Presiding Officer Boldman.

09:23:25 Kelly Driscoll

09:24:23 Nikki Grossberg

09:25:04 Presiding Officer Carlson directed a question to Nikki Grossberg.

09:28:18 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman

09:30:19 Jennifer Owen

09:31:11 Presiding Officer Carlson directed a question to Kelly Driscoll and Nikki Grossberg.

09:31:39 Kelly Driscoll

09:32:42 Nikki Grossberg

09:35:14 Rep. Howell joined the meeting.

09:33:16 Judge McElyea directed a question to Nikki Grossberg.

09:36:53 Presiding Officer Carlson shared an update to the agenda.

09:37:33 Milly Allen summarized the added topics.

09:38:23 Presiding Officer Carlson directed a question to Judge McElyea.

09:40:02 Jennifer Finley left the meeting (Zoom) at 9:37 a.m.

09:40:41 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman

09:41:19 Nikki Grossberg

09:42:05 Kelly Driscoll

09:43:18 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
09:43:54 Rep. Howell  
09:45:14 Nikki Grossberg  
09:45:58 Kelly Driscoll  
09:46:45 Presiding Officer Carlson shared a summary of the topics.  
09:48:45 Sen. Lenz directed a question to Kelly Driscoll.  
09:51:32 Rep. Howell directed a question to Jessica Finley.  
09:52:50 Wamnee Ereaux joined the meeting.  
09:52:40 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
09:54:26 Kelly Driscoll  
09:55:55 Nikki Grossberg  
09:56:18 Presiding Officer Carlson  
09:56:56 Jennifer Owen directed a question to Sen. Lenz.  
09:58:21 Presiding Officer Carlson  
09:58:43 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
10:00:08 Kelly Driscoll  
10:03:07 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman directed a question to Kelly Driscoll.  
10:06:14 Sen. Lenz  
10:06:39 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
10:07:31 Sen. Lenz  
10:09:28 Rep. Howell  
10:11:32 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
10:13:29 Judge McElyea  
10:14:09 Presiding Officer Carlson directed a question to Milly Allen  
10:15:51 Rachel Green

10:16:17 Milly Allen directed a question to Rachel Green.  
10:16:56 Kelly Driscoll  
10:17:29 Judge Mcelyea  
10:20:14 Jessica Finley joined the meeting.  
10:20:36 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
10:22:46 Sen. Lenz  
10:24:26 Milly Allen  
10:25:07 Sen. Lenz  
10:26:30 Milly Allen  
10:26:56 Jennifer Owen  
10:27:43 Milly Allen shared a summary of the subject headings and topics.

**Motion**

10:28:38 Rep. Howell moved to adopt the workplan as listed by Milly Allen.

**Discussion on the Motion**

10:28:47 None

**Vote**

10:28:52 The motion carried without objection.

**RECESS**

10:29:43 Reconvened at 10:34:38 a.m.

**PARENTS AND GUARDIAN ISSUES IN DEPENDENCY AND NEGLECT CASES**

10:34:55 Kelly Driscoll - Family Defense Bureau Chief, Office of State Public Defender  
[EXHIBIT 2](#)  
[EXHIBIT 3](#)

**Task Force Questions and Discussion**

10:52:16 Presiding Officer Carlson  
10:53:02 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
10:55:07 Judge Mcelyea  
10:56:06 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
10:56:51 Wamnee Ereaux

11:01:17 Jennifer Owen

11:06:28 Presiding Officer Carlson directed a question to Nikki Grossberg.

**PARENTS AND GUARDIAN ISSUES IN DEPENDENCY AND NEGLECT CASES continued**

11:08:44 Kelly Driscoll, OPD

**Task Force Questions and Discussion**

11:35:54 Rep. Howell

11:37:47 Presiding Officer Carlson directed two questions to Nikki Grossberg.

11:42:21 Presiding Officer Carlson directed a question to Kelly Driscoll.

**Public Comment on any topics discussed this morning**

11:46:33 None

**DPHHS CHANGES AND EFFORTS TO REDUCE DEPENDENCY AND NEGLECT CASES IN MONTANA**

11:47:33 Nikki Grossberg - Child and Family Services Division Administrator, DPHHS  
[EXHIBIT 4](#)  
[EXHIBIT 5](#)

**Task Force Questions and Discussion**

11:59:55 Rep. Howell

12:00:16 Kelly Driscoll

12:01:07 Rep. Howell

12:05:39 Wamnee Ereaux

12:11:37 Presiding Officer Carlson

**Public Comment on DPHHS Changes/Efforts to Reduce DN Cases**

12:13:27 None

**Task Force Questions and Discussion**

12:13:45 Presiding Officer Carlson

12:16:53 Nikki Grossberg

12:18:32 Jennifer Owen

**RECESS**

12:21:53 Reconvened at 13:31:00 p.m.

**THE ROLE OF CASA/GAL IN MONTANA**

13:31:40 Glenda Noyes - Executive Director, CASA/GAL of Gallatin County

**Task Force Questions and Discussion**

13:46:00 Judge Mcelyea  
13:48:18 Rep. Carlson directed a question to Nikki Grossberg.  
13:49:07 Presiding Officer Carlson  
13:51:49 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman

**Public Comment on the Role of CASA/GAL in Montana**

13:58:03 Matt Furlong, Montana Child Protection Alliance

**Task Force Questions and Discussion**

14:08:43 Judge Mcelyea  
14:14:53 Wamnee Ereaux  
14:18:26 Kelly Driscoll  
14:23:32 Presiding Officer Carlson

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY MATTER WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE TASK FORCE ON AND NOT ON THIS AGENDA**

14:24:34 Chase Rosario

**Task Force Questions and Discussion**

14:30:34 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
14:32:37 Judge Mcelyea

**RECESS**

14:33:20 Reconvened at 14:44:21

**WORK SESSION**

14:45:35 Presiding Officer Carlson  
14:48:14 Judge Mcelyea  
14:50:44 Presiding Officer Carlson  
14:51:39 Kelly Driscoll  
14:54:56 Vice Presiding Officer Boldman  
14:58:25 Jennifer Owen  
15:02:52 Judge Mcelyea directed a question to Kelly Driscoll  
15:05:29 Chase Rosario

15:09:44 Sen. Boldman  
15:13:19 Rep. Howell commented about the conversations around resources.  
15:16:24 Nikki Grossberg  
15:17:42 Jennifer Owen  
15:19:09 Presiding Officer Carlson directed a question to Nikki Grossberg.  
15:20:46 Rep. Howell  
15:22:52 Sgt. Kadner  
15:23:28 Rachel Green  
15:24:06 Presiding Officer Carlson  
15:26:00 Sen. Lenz  
15:26:44 Presiding Officer Carlson

**ADJOURNMENT**

15:27:44 Presiding Officer Carlson adjourned the meeting at 3:27 p.m.