

**COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 27, 2026**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**Commissioners Present in Person:** Jackie Aaron, Clay Bullard, Jeffrey Cartmell, Jason Hicks, Kalie Kerth, Bryan Larison, Mary Melon-Tully, Sharon Millington, Luann Schmiedel, John Schneider, and Mike Warren

**Commissioners Attending Virtually:** None

**Guests Present In-person and Virtually:** Senator Warren Hamilton (virtually), Ty Mowdy (Assistant Attorney General), Darryl Savell (Parent Partnership Board), Nancy Charbonneau, Chris Foster (BlueJay), Curt Foster (BlueJay), Lisa White (University of Oklahoma E-Team), Deba Knecht (Oklahoma Department of Human Services, and Jane Silovsky (University of Oklahoma Center on Child Abuse and Neglect)

**Staff Present:** Annette Wisk Jacobi, Lakesha Mackie, Cherra Taylor, Isabel Rodriquez, Danielle Dill, Marcia Johnson, Robert Agnew, Mark James, Ellen Hardy, Joseph McGrath, Jasmyne Mackie, Elizabeth Kaup, Keith Pirtle, Shelbi Tartarian, and LeeAnn Bennett

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**Welcome, Introductions, and Determination of Quorum**

– *Chairperson John Schneider*

- Chairperson John Schneider called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. with a quorum present.
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**Public Comment**

– *Chairperson John Schneider*

Senator Warren Hamilton provided public comment regarding Senate Bill 504. He stated that the bill seeks to raise the legal age of marriage to 18 years of age to prevent exploitation of minors and align with protections established in age of consent laws. He requested support or consideration from the Commission and its members.

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**Discussion and Possible Vote Regarding the Minutes of February 6, 2026, Commission Meeting**

– *Chairperson John Schneider*

Commissioner Aaron moved to approve the minutes. Director Cartmell seconded the motion. Commissioner Aaron, Kerth, Larison, Millington, Schneider, Director Cartmell, District Attorney Hicks, and CEO Bullard all voted in the affirmative. Judge Warren abstained. The motion passed.

- *Copies of the minutes were provided.*
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### **Presentation of the OCCY Parent Partnership Board Report**

– *Darryl Savell, OCCY Parent Partnership Board Member*

Darryl Savell presented information regarding the Parent Partnership Board and shared personal experiences related to Oklahoma’s child-serving systems.

Highlights included:

- The role of lived experience in understanding how systems impact families.
  - Families often navigate multiple systems simultaneously, including housing, education, health care, and child welfare.
  - Fragmentation across systems creates additional burdens on families.
  - Parent leadership provides insight that cannot be captured through data alone.
  - Inclusion of parent partners early in decision-making improves outcomes and builds trust.
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### **Discussion and Possible Vote Regarding the Finance Report**

– *Mark James, OCCY Assistant Director*

Mark James presented an overview of the February 2026 financial report. Highlights included:

- The agency’s total budget increased from \$5.8 million to approximately \$6.4 million due to higher-than-anticipated revenue.
- Year-to-date expenditures are approximately \$3.9 million, representing about 65% of the total budget.
- Year-to-date expenditures represent approximately 98% of the year-to-date budget.
- Minor variances exist in maintenance and repair as well as library/equipment categories, but the variance amounts are low.
- Current cash balance across funds is approximately \$1.2 million.
- Funds include general revenue, prior-year balances, and partner reimbursement funds.

*Judge Warren moved to approve the finance report. District Attorney Hicks seconded the motion. All members present voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.*

- *Financial reports were included in packet.*
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### **Presentation: The “Home for Every Child” Foster Care Initiative**

– *Debra Knecht, MSW, Deputy Director CW Programs, Oklahoma Department of Human Services*

Debra Knecht presented an overview of the “Home for Every Child Initiative.”

Highlights included:

- The initiative is a new federal approach to child welfare improvement planning.
- Oklahoma is the first state selected and approved under this model.
- The initiative focuses on ensuring every child in foster care has a home.

Four primary focus areas include:

- Keeping children safe in their homes whenever possible.
  - Increasing kinship placements.
  - Reducing reliance on congregate care.
  - Supporting children with complex needs in family settings.
  - Current removal rate is approximately 6% of cases reviewed.
  - Approximately 50% to 53% of children are currently placed in kinship care, with a goal to increase to 70% to 80%.
  - Emphasis on partnerships with community organizations and faith-based groups.
  - Initiative begins April 1, 2026, and runs through September 30, 2027.
- *Powerpoint Presentation was shown.*
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**Presentation: The “Blue Jay App”- A two-sided Platform for Police Officers and Drivers**  
– *Chris Foster, Blue Jay Executive Partners, Inc.*

Chris Foster presented an overview of the Blue Jay application.

Highlights included:

- The application is designed to improve interactions between law enforcement and drivers.
  - It allows drivers to voluntarily create a profile linked to their license plate.
  - Profiles may include information related to medical conditions, disabilities, or communication needs.
  - The application aims to reduce misinterpretation of behaviors during traffic stops.
  - Teens are identified as a high-risk group for traffic stop interactions.
  - The application is proposed as part of a pilot program under House Bill 1250.
  - The system may notify drivers when officers access their profile and confirm the driver's identity.
- *Powerpoint Presentation was shown.*
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**Discussion and Possible Vote Regarding Senate Bill 509 by Senator Warren Hamilton and Representative Nicole Miller**

This agenda item was not considered due to an error in the bill number and acting on it would

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have been in violation of the Open Meeting act. The bill number was listed on the agenda as 509 and should have been 504.

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**Presentation: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Sexual Abuse Prevention Education in Rural Schools Grant**

– Jane Silovsky, PhD., OU Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Director

Jane Silovsky stated that the OU Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN) has been awarded a four- year CDC grant to provide sexual abuse prevention in 40 rural schools in Oklahoma. CCAN will identify gaps in rural communities' access to prevention resources and developing school-based toolkits and training materials. Collaboration with state agencies and community organizations will be paramount to the grant's success. Dr. Silovsky asked commissioners to contact her if they are aware of rural schools that may want to participate in this grant project.

- *Powerpoint Presentation was shown.*

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**Legislative Update**

– Marcia Johnson, OCCY Legislative Liaison

Marcia Johnson reported that the legislative session is halfway complete and noted that a key deadline had passed, requiring bills to advance out of their chamber of origin to remain active. She provided updates on several agency-request bills:

- **HB 2892** would allow the commission's executive director to request investigations by the OSBI and is expected to advance without issue.
- **HB 3001** extends the sunset date for the Child Death Review Board by five years, through July 1, 2031.
- **HB 3849** updates the Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents Program, providing greater flexibility and aligning it with current mentoring practices. The bill has passed the House and is awaiting Senate committee assignment.

Ms. Johnson also reviewed two medical marijuana bills previously supported by the commission:

- **SB 1592**, which would have limited THC levels in edible marijuana products, passed committee, but failed to reach the Senate floor before the deadline. It is no longer active.
- **HB 4454** originally included similar THC limits, but those provisions were removed. The bill now focuses on clearer THC labeling and prohibits packaging, shapes, and designs that could appeal to children. Johnson noted this child-protection measure as a positive development despite the removal of THC limits.

The update concluded with a brief discussion about how the bill defines products that may appeal to children, with Ms. Johnson noting the legislation contains detailed restrictions on packaging and product appearance.

- *Powerpoint Presentation was shown.*

**Discussion and Possible Vote on Amended Language for House Bill 4302  
(Representative Norwood and Senator Gillespie)**

– Marcia Johnson, OCCY Legislative Liaison

Marcia Johnson updated the Commission on House Bill 4302, a commission-requested bill originally intended to give OJSO subpoena authority and allow disclosure of a complainant's identity when threats of serious harm were made. Due to legislative opposition, the subpoena provisions were removed, and the bill was significantly amended before passing the House.

Ms. Johnson explained that the amended version allows OJSO to notify law enforcement when a complainant makes a threat but now includes qualifiers requiring the threat to be considered "credible" and "imminent." She expressed concern that these standards place significant judgment on the Executive Director and create uncertainty about when disclosure would be legally justified.

Commission members engaged in extensive discussion about the practical and legal implications of the revised language. Some felt the "reasonable person" standard provided flexibility and guidance for determining when a threat should be reported. Others worried that staff could face liability either for reporting a threat later deemed not credible or for failing to report a threat that ultimately resulted in harm. Members noted that OJSO frequently receives emotional and angry complaints, making it difficult to distinguish between frustration and a genuine threat.

Ms. Johnson noted that the original language was intended to address a rare but important situation and that, in her experience, such circumstances had only occurred once during her tenure. Several commissioners agreed that while the amended bill may provide some benefit, it was not as clear or protective as the language originally approved by the Commission.

The discussion focused on whether to pursue additional amendments, seek liability protection for the Executive Director, or withdraw support for the legislation altogether. By the end of the discussion, there was a motion to withdraw commission support for the bill as currently written.

Judge Warren made motion to withdraw Commission support of language as is written in the bill. District Attorney Hicks seconded the motion. All members present voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

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**Discussion Regarding Senate Bill 1570**

– Marcia Johnson, OCCY Legislative Liaison

Ms. Johnson briefed the Commission on Senate Bill 1570, which initially proposed a task force to examine child welfare outcomes but was later amended to create a new Department of Child Safety and Well-Being by combining child welfare services and the Office of Juvenile Affairs. A subsequent floor amendment also proposed dividing OCCY's functions, moving oversight responsibilities to the Office of Client Advocacy.

Commission members discussed the proposal as an opportunity to reimagine how Oklahoma serves children and improve outcomes across child-serving systems. While several members expressed support for exploring system improvements, there were concerns that the bill lacked sufficient planning, supporting research, and stakeholder input for such a significant restructuring. Questions were also raised about whether the proposed changes would meaningfully improve outcomes or simply shift responsibilities among agencies.

A substantial portion of the discussion focused on the importance of maintaining an independent oversight function. Members noted that OCCY was created to provide external oversight of child-serving agencies and expressed concern that moving oversight functions into another service-providing agency could weaken that independence.

Commissioners also discussed operational challenges facing OCCY, including limited staffing, resource constraints, delays in investigations, and the need for expertise beyond child welfare, particularly in mental health and education. Leadership acknowledged those frustrations and agreed there is a need for more information to be shared with the Commission – particularly information related to OJSO investigations and oversight efforts.

Overall, members welcomed continued dialogue about improving Oklahoma's child-serving systems but emphasized that any major restructuring should be carefully studied, adequately resourced, and designed to preserve strong independent oversight for children and families.

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### **Presentation: Child Death Review Board Annual Recommendations**

– Elizabeth Kaup, OCCY Child Death Review Board, Program Manager

Elizabeth Kaup presented the Child Death Review Board's 2026 recommendations, which are based on trends identified through child death data. The recommendations include:

- 1) requiring safe firearm storage to prevent child access;
- 2) expanding safe sleep education to the prenatal period;
- 3) strengthening child passenger restraint laws by requiring all children in back seats to be properly restrained; and
- 4) improving medical marijuana packaging to better communicate the risks of THC exposure to children.

Further discussion on the growing number of cases involving children ingesting THC products and the challenges of advancing related legislation was had. While some proposed THC limits on edible products have stalled, members discussed possible compromises, including stricter regulations on gummies and child-appealing products while preserving access for legitimate medical marijuana patients.

Ms. Kaup briefly discussed the status of child death review data and stated that reviews are now being conducted in near real-time. The 2023 data is nearing completion, and 2024 cases are already under review.

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**Presentation: Post-Adjudication Review Board Annual Recommendations**

– Keith Pirtle, OCCY Postadjudication Review Board, Program Manager

Keith Pirtle provided an overview of the Postadjudication Review Board (PARB) program, which supports more than 300 volunteers who review active, deprived-child cases across Oklahoma. Mr. Pirtle explained that PARB annually identifies systemic issues affecting children and families and presents recommendations to the Commission.

For 2026, PARB submitted one recommendation: support for Senate Bill 1806, which would allow eligible youth in foster care to voluntarily remain in care until age 21 and permit certain young adults who previously aged out of foster care to re-enter services before turning 21. The recommendation reflects PARB's ongoing focus on improving outcomes and support for youth transitioning out of foster care.

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**Presentation of the Executive Director's Report Regarding Agency Activities and Personnel Changes**

– Annette Wisk Jacobi, OCCY Executive Director

Director Jacobi reported several staffing changes, including the hiring of LeeAnn Bennett as a Community Planner and the promotion of Cherra Taylor to Business Manager. The agency also announced the departure of Richard Yahola, who coordinated the juvenile competency program and was credited with significantly expanding the number of competency evaluators available statewide.

An update was provided on discussions regarding freestanding multidisciplinary teams. While the related legislation is no longer advancing this session, OCCY has participated in multiple meetings with legislators and stakeholders, and the issue may reappear as part of broader child welfare reform efforts.

She then noted ongoing conversations among community partners about expanding transitional housing options for youth and young adults in Oklahoma City.

A significant portion of the report focused on OCCY's new effort to use child death data to identify preventable causes of child fatalities and guide prevention strategies. Using October data as an example, Director Jacobi reported 44 child deaths statewide, including natural deaths, accidents, suicides, homicides, and pending investigations. Particular concern was expressed about deaths related to unsafe sleep, motor vehicle incidents, firearms, suicides, and substance ingestions, many of which were viewed as potentially preventable.

Director Jacobi announced that OCCY will begin regularly tracking and reporting data related to these key risk factors and will use information from multiple programs to identify trends and opportunities for intervention. The agency also plans to expand public education efforts by presenting child safety data to community organizations and stakeholders to raise awareness and encourage prevention efforts.

Finally, Director Jacobi introduced a new reporting format for Commission meetings that will provide quarterly performance and outcome data from OCCY programs. The goal is to improve

transparency, better measure agency impact, and identify trends across child-serving systems to support data-driven decision-making and prevention efforts.

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**Chairperson's Remarks**

– *Chairperson John Schneider*

Chairperson Schneider acknowledged improvements in data reporting and thanked staff for their hard work.

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**Adjournment**

– *Chairperson John Schneider*

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.