**Welcome and Roll Call**

**In-Person Meeting**

**September 11, 2023 12:00 PM to 2:16 PM**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Florida Department of Law Enforcement**

**Missing Endangered Persons Clearinghouse (MEPIC) Advisory Board (MEPICAB)**

**FDLE Attendees:**

Commissioner Glass, Assistant Commissioner Matt Walsh, Chief of Staff Shane Desguin, SAC Mike Phillips, ASAC Jeffrey Watson, SAS Jeremy Gordon, Ashley Bullard, Kandace Zachary, Reneé Strickland, Megan McDonald, Quentin Harris, Lauren Kaldor, Kaitlyn Weinstein, Grace McBride, K. Ibarra

**Board Member Attendees:**

Chairperson Dan Campbell, David Brand, Bill Corfield, Janet Hartman, Stephanie White, Sean Visners, Roxie Brookshire, Walt McNeil, Kim Spence, Hilary Sessions, Kristin Morgan, Mark “Jerry” Hensley, Julie Collins, Karen Mazzola, Geoff Willoughby, Darry Lloyd, Brian Moore, Travis Paulk, Terri Lynn, Mark Young, John Pitta, Peggy Pitta, Carolyn Goedert, Tracy Clark, David Bernhardt, Fran Carlin-Rogers.

**Organizations/Individuals Represented:**

Impacted missing child families, former law enforcement, private citizens, St. Petersburg Police Department, Florida Police Chiefs Association, Florida Association of School Administrators, Florida PTA State Office, Leon County Sheriff’s Office, Tallahassee Police Department, the Jimmy Ryce Center for Victims of Predatory Abduction, Florida’s Office of the Attorney General Ashley Moody, Florida Highway Patrol, Office of State Attorney 8th Circuit, Florida Public Safety Institute, Target Corporation, Florida Department of Education, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Sheriffs Association, UCF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Association of District School Superintendents

**Introductions**

Commissioner Glass thanks everyone for attending and speaks on implementation of rapid DNA tests in jails in several Florida counties.

Hilary Sessions asks if it is possible to request DNA from family of missing through FSA; Mr. Brand says he can discuss this with her. FDLE explains that MEPIC tracks availability of DNA in these cases and that the supervisors present may be able to speak further on this.

**Approve June Meeting Minutes**

Lloyd moves to approve minutes; Moore seconds; motion passes.

**MEPICAB Bylaw Revision** (This section includes excerpts of the bylaws)

Motion made to accept the proposed changes to the **Background and Purpose** section; Moore seconds; motion passes.

PROPOSED BYLAW LANGUAGE FOR REFERENCE

* The FDLE Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse Advisory Board (the Board) was created in 1996 to inform the Florida Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) on Florida’s missing children issues. The Board is comprised of a diverse mix of law enforcement officials, **~~victim parents~~** **impacted missing person families**, representatives of government agencies, representatives of missing children non-profit organizations, and members of the business community with interest in missing persons issues.
* The mission of the Board is to promote the safety of children and other vulnerable populations, and enhance response and recovery efforts for missing and endangered persons and their families. **Strategic Plan Mission: Together with the citizens of Florida, we promote the safety of children and other vulnerable populations through public and private collaborations.**

After discussion FDLE recommends review of first four bullet points in the **Membership, Voting, and Elections** section.

* Discussion of whether to remove language regarding committee structure, with the justification that there have been no committees in the past several years, and when there were committees they struggled to achieve a quorum and complete their work. The current practice is for projects have been the effort of the entire Board. Moore moves to approve these proposed changes; seconded; passed.

PROPOSED BYLAW LANGUAGE FOR REFERENCE

* The Advisory Board will consist of a minimum of 16 regular members appointed by the Commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Regular members shall have one vote per issue or election before the Board **~~or a Committee on which the regular member sits~~**. Regular board members shall recuse themselves or be recused by the presiding officer on any matters which may present a conflict of interest.
* Regular membership shall include, but is not limited to, law enforcement officials, **~~parents~~** **family** of missing, abducted, and recovered children, business and community leaders with an interest in children’s issues, legislators, media, government, tourism industry, schools, and non-profit missing children organizations.
* The Commissioner of the FDLE may designate ad hoc members from state government with subject expertise on missing children. The board will strive to reach consensus as much as possible. **Ad hoc members do not have regular voting authorities, but may vote at the request of the chairperson.**
  + **Ad hoc members may substitute a proxy to participate on their behalf, functioning in a similar capacity**.
* The term of each regular member shall be two years, unless a member vacates the public office or position which qualified the member for appointment to the board. Ad hoc members serve at the pleasure of the agency head for which they are representing. All members are eligible for reappointment after their two-year term has expired. Two-year terms begin with the first quarter of the calendar year.
* **Members that serve on the Board due to their specific position associated with a particular organization, agency, or other entity are replaced automatically upon FDLE notification of position change.**

Substantial discussion involved bullet 7 in the **Membership, Voting, and Elections** section. Ultimately, modifications to this bullet were deferred for additional research. A summary of discussion follows:

* Board members support ad hoc members holding an elected position.
* Replace proposed: **In the absence of any elected members, FDLE reserves the right to appoint an attending regular member to run the meeting in the place of an elected member**. With: **In the absence of elected officers at a Board meeting, FDLE will facilitate the election of a Chairman Pro Tem.**
* Strike the sentence **This vote does not have to comply with quorum requirements if there are not enough members.**
* Update: **In the absence of other elected voting members, any member from an ad hoc entity (regular or proxy) occupying a Board elected position will be automatically conferred voting rights for that singular meeting.**
* Discussion regarding if the Florida statute dictates number of Board members, specifically voting members. FDLE explains that the number dictated is a minimum, not a maximum. *Action to clarify whether this comes from statute or executive order and look up reference to confirm this explanation*.
* Question as to whether ad hoc members may vote if they are an elected member; to clarify the wording re: ad hoc voting.
* Kristin Morgan question as to whether an ad hoc in an elected position can confer their voting rights to a proxy for the duration of a single meeting if they are unable to attend. Moore asks if an ad hoc member elected as chairperson needs to be able to vote if it will cause an issue; explanation is that the chair can break a tie.

Motion made to accept the proposed changes bullet 8 in the **Membership, Voting, and Elections** section; Moore seconds; motion passes.

PROPOSED BYLAW LANGUAGE FOR REFERENCE

* Elections are to be held **~~on the third quarter of~~** every odd-numbered year, or else as needed by unforeseen vacancy. In the event that a quorum of regular members cannot be reached by that time, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman will continue to serve in their respective capacities until a quorum and vote can be held.

Mazzola moves to approve changes in the **Meetings and Records** section; Lloyd seconds; passed. Note, only modified sections provided below.

PROPOSED BYLAW LANGUAGE FOR REFERENCE

* The Board shall hold at least four meetings per year, held on a quarterly basis. Additional Board meetings may be held upon the call of the Chairman **or the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.** Board meetings may be held **~~by telephone or in person~~** **in person, by telephone or via virtual conferencing software.**
* **~~The Board may designate Committees to handle the work of the Board based on more specific areas of responsibility, upon the call of the Chairman.~~**
* **~~Committee meetings shall have the same notice and open sunshine requirements as Board meetings~~**.
* **~~Committees shall hold regular conference calls to discuss matters of interest of the Committees and the Board as scheduled by FDLE staff.~~**
* **~~Regular members shall have voting rights at Committee meetings, to include one vote per issue brought to vote by the Committee chair, as designated by the Board president. Ad hoc members may attend and provide input at Committee meetings.~~**

Motion to accept bylaws as amended [and provided above]. Seconded; the Board votes to pass the motion. The leadership responsibilities of ad-hoc members and proxy (regular or ad-hoc) members were deferred to the next meeting.

**Florida Missing Children’s Day Discussion**

Overall comments from MEPICAB members was positive. The venue change was well received. Salient points are provided below.

Chair Campbell reports a suggestion from a family member to include county and date when the names are being called during the ceremony. [The information is currently on the posters.] A question of whether it is appropriate to include “deceased” or “recovered” for those deceased was raised. Mr. Pitta suggestion to ask the families directly. This lead to a Board recommendation to survey the families participating the event. Possible questions include opinions on the lodging and ceremony venue, Time Of Remembrance music and the safety fair. Additional suggestions for the survey should be emailed FDLE by 9/22/23, to send the survey out by the 25th at latest.

Family members shared with FDLE that while they did not want the change of venue from the capitol, as they age they appreciate the shelter from the weather and the close proximity of parking.

Mazzola suggests that Advisory Board chairperson should be on stage during the event. Additionally, she suggest the Board to have the opportunity to visit the safety fair at future events before the meeting begins.

The possibility of hosting the safety fair the Sunday before the event to bring kids on the weekend who would not be free on a Monday was discussed. This would be a different approach to working with school boards to bus classes in. TPD representatives expressed that Sunday events are not well attended. FDLE will discuss options.

Ashley reminded all that the Capitol renovations will continue into next year. Pending family response to the venue, FDLE will discuss permanently relocating the event away from the Capitol, due to concerns regarding a viable rain plan, safety concerns regarding wind, temperature, lack of parking, additional vendor requirements for equipment and staging, difficulty of ADA access, etc.

Suggestion by board members to thank the museum owner in some way.

Board members noted an increased attendance of state agency heads, possibly due to convenience of parking/access.

A change was requested for next year that the bagpipe player crosses the entire stage area before coming down the aisle.

**MEPICAB Logo**

Introduction of new logo options based on suggestions from a previous meeting.

Motion to accept logo #2 as the new MEPICAB logo. Seconded; the Board votes to accept #2 as the new logo.

**Newsletter Article Discussion**

Possible topics include Fortify Florida and Crimestoppers. Recommend including photos to make articles more engaging for the public.

FDLE requests articles be submitted, with photos, by December for Winter Newsletter.

Ms. Mazzola and Ms. Collins committed to writing articles.

Question from Chairperson Campbell as to whether we may source articles from outside the Board, with permission of the writer. Suggestion for members to consider who they may be able to contact.

**Upcoming conferences and safety events**

* Trunk or Treat at the Capitol
* Soul Santa in Tallahassee
* St. Pete National Night Out

One concern expressed regarding the safety events is a lack of giveaways based on availability of funds. The Foundation is working on securing funding.

**MEPIC Annual Report**

The draft MEPIC Annual Report was provided for Board members only, not for distribution. Any suggestions for clarifying points in the report should be emailed to FDLE.

**Adjournment**

Reminder to turn in travel forms to FDLE.

Meeting adjourned 2:16 PM.