

**FDLE Attendees:**

**In-Person Meeting**

**November 16, 2023 @ 12:00 PM to 2:28 PM**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE)**

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

SMAS Ashley Bullard, Reneé Strickland, Mehgen Peoples, Megan McDonald

**Board Member Attendees:**

Chairperson Dan Campbell, Emmy Kyllonen, Bill Corfield (came in late), Janet Hartman, John Robertson, Brian Moore, Major Jerry Hensley, Karen Mazzola, Brandi Smith, Dr. Kim Spence, Major Tracy Clark, Mark Young, Terri Lynn, AUSA Frank Williams, Fran Carlin-Rogers, Logan McGee, Travis Paulk, Kristin Morgan, Major David Bernhardt, Hilary Sessions (came in late). Quorum reached by voting time.

**Organizations/Individuals Represented:**

Impacted missing child families, private citizens with public safety interests, Florida Outdoor Advertising Association, St. Petersburg Police Department, Florida Police Chiefs Association, Florida PTA State Office, Tallahassee Police Department, the Jimmy Ryce Center for Victims of Predatory Abduction, Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Public Safety Institute, Target Corporation, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, UCF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Association of District School Superintendents, Florida Network of Youth and Family Services, Florida Governor’s Legal Office, United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Florida

**Welcome and Roll Call**

Meeting begins at 1 PM.

Ashley Bullard introduces Mehgen Peoples as the new contact for the board.

**Agenda Items**

Brian Moore motions to approve previous meeting minutes for the 9/11/2023 meeting. Janet Hartman seconds the motion; the motion passes.

**Discuss Bylaw Changes and Vote**

Select MEPICAB Bylaws Revisions were made at the September meeting, however several outstanding items remained. The proposed bylaws changes were provided to the board for reference. The following is a summary of the discussion regarding the proposed changes:

* Copies of bylaw language changes were provided to the Board before the meeting. Reneé from FDLE asks for any questions or concerns regarding the highlighted items that need to be address for voting before walk through of changes.
* Reneé clarifies that the bullet beginning “In the absence of elected officers…” should not be marked as a proposed revision, as the Board voted to approve this last meeting. However, it may need to be modified depending on the highlighted bullet points and bylaw discussion.
	+ Reneé explains the two proposed bullet points highlighted in the Bylaws that will need to be voted on before moving forward with voting for Chair and Vice Chair for the board. These two bullet points are the main bylaw changes being discussed at meeting. Other comments in red are based on prior meeting and clarification.
1. Proxy members seeking the Chairman and Vice-Chairman position must provide written approval from their designated regular or ad hoc member prior to an election.
2. Ad hoc entities may hold an elected position. Ad hoc entity members holding an elected Board position will be conferred voting rights for the duration of their term.
* Karen Mazzola request an understanding of the positions of the board and who is a regular member under their personal or business name, a representative, and an ad hoc member. In response, Ashley provides a brief explanation of who is an ad hoc member and who is a regular member, as well as who is on the board as an entity and who is on as a private individual. The breakdown of this can be found at the end of the meeting minutes.
* Karen expresses a desire to strike the bullet proposing to allow ad hoc members to hold an elected position. Chairperson Campbell opens the floor to discussion. The Board discussed if they will be able to reliably elect a Chair and Vice-Chair without this language due to members not expressing interest in the positions and regular attendance.
* Based on the discussion, Reneé suggests removing “or ad hoc” from the first highlighted bullet above that refers to proxy members seeking an elected position. The Board agrees to this.
* Reneé also suggests removing “will be conferred voting rights” from the highlighted bullet that refers to the election of a Chairman Pro Tem. This will modify a different bylaw. Other red text is proposed bylaw change, see notes after minutes.
* Ashley clarified that ad hoc members do not have an attendance requirement nor voting rights like regular members. While they do not have the voting rights or attendance requirement, they are valuable members who may serve as subject matter experts, participate in special projects, and otherwise further the Board’s strategic plan. Traditionally, ad hoc members consist of some state agencies and members that may not be able to consistently attend meetings but contribute in other ways to the Board. Typo “missing” needs to be “miss” on final bullet point on last page. Only regular members should be held to attendance and not ad hoc. No objections regarding ad hoc issue.
* Karen created a motion to the Board to vote to adopt all changes agreed upon and updated on document as meeting progressed. Janet Hartman seconds; Terri offered a third in support. The Board votes in favor of accepting the bylaws changes. There is a quorum at this time during the meeting. No dissent. Yellow highlight is primary bylaw discussion changes for this meeting discussing elected positions. Red text indicates possible change to bylaw. Strikethrough indicates text not adopted.



* FDLE will make the approved changes and will send out the updated bylaws. Additional bylaw changes may be discussed at later date to address member status regarding regular member or ad hoc status.
* A revision summary and the final bylaw language is at end of this document for reference.

**Family Survey**

* FDLE presented the single response to the Family survey and provided comments of overall positive response we received at the event about Florida Missing Children’s Day. Additionally, the board discussed best practices moving forward with the survey and other alternative path to get feedback from the families.

**Newsletter and Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson through Survey Monkey**

* The board discussed the obligations of members to provide articles to continue the Newsletter and with sufficient content to produce two to three newsletters a year, with one being a recap of the Florida Missing Childrens Day. The Fall/Winter Newsletter was discussed and will be voted on through survey monkey for approval.
* Since the board approve the bylaws during the meeting the voting for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson moved forward. The potential candidates for Chairperson are Frank Williams and Karen Mazzola. Additionally, since Karen is a proxy member, she will have to submit written permission to hold an elected position from the sitting member per the Bylaws. The potential candidates for Vice-Chair are Karen Mazzola and Darry Lloyd. The voting will take place via Survey Monkey.

**Florida Department for Law Enforcement Update in EIS**

Law Enforcement DNA Brochure was removed from the agenda due to loss of quorum.

SMAS Bullard explains the importance and relevance of pushing information on services offered by MEPIC.

**Adjournment**

Karen moves to adjourn meeting; Frank Williams seconds; motion passes.

Meeting adjourned 2:28 PM 11/16/2023

**The following MEPIC Board positions are held by organizations:** Florida Outdoor Advertising Association, Florida Sheriff’s Association, Florida Association of School Resource Officers, Florida Public Safety Institute, Florida Association of School Administrators, Florida PTA, Florida Association of District School Superintendents, Florida Network of Youth and Family Services, Florida Governor’s Legal Office, UCF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Office of the State Attorney, 8th Circuit, and Fox Valley

**The following hold individual memberships to the MEPICAB:** Dan Campbell, Bill Corfield, Sheriff Walt McNeil, John Pitta, Peggy Pitta, Hilary Sessions, Darry Lloyd, Mike Vasilinda, Major Tracy Clark, Mark Young, Terri Lynn, Joe Butler, Frank Williams, Fran Carlin-Rogers, Susan Smith, Craig Weidele

**Dual:** Chief Anthony Holloway has served on the Board since inception and sits in a unique position. He is both serving as an individual and as an organization representing St. Petersburg Police Department and the Florida Police Chiefs Association. When he decides to retire, his status will be re-evaluated.

**Ad hoc members represent the:** Florida Department of Education, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Highway Patrol

**MEPICAB Bylaw Revision,** November 16, 2023

*This document includes excerpts of the bylaws modified to supplement the November 16 meeting minutes. See the meeting minutes for motions regarding acceptance of these changes.*

No changes were proposed in the Background and Purpose section.

Proposed changes to the Membership, Voting and Elections section are provided. Note that the text in *italics* was marked in the file MEPIC Advisory Board Bylaws approved draft next revision on 11.2023 as a modification in error. This language was approved in September 2023.

PROPOSED BYLAW LANGUAGE FOR REFERENCE provided at beginning of meeting

* Regular membership shall include, but is not limited to, law enforcement officials, 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.
	+ **Regular members may substitute a proxy to participate on their behalf, functioning in a similar capacity.**
* **A regular or ad hoc proxy who separates from an entity can no longer represent the entity.**
* Officers of the Board shall include a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman elected by the board’s regular members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will serve for a term of two years. After completion of the two-year term, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman may be re-elected to serve in that capacity. The Chairman shall preside over Board meetings, or if the Chairman is unavailable the Vice-Chairman shall preside.
	+ **Proxy members seeking the Chairman and Vice-Chairman position must provide written approval from their designated regular or ad hoc member prior to an election.**
	+ **Ad-hoc entities may hold an elected position.**
		- **Ad hoc entity members holding an elected Board position will be conferred voting rights for the duration of their term.**
* ***In the absence of elected officers at a Board meeting, FDLE will facilitate the election of a Chairman Pro Tem. The Chairman Pro Tem will be conferred voting rights and will chair the meeting until an elected member joins the meeting or the meeting ends, whichever comes first.***
* Elections are to be held 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. **However, proxy members holding an elected Board position will not remain in office when they have separated from the entity.**

Through the meeting, additional modifications were made resulting the following:

* Regular membership shall include, but is not limited to, law enforcement officials, 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.
	+ **Regular members may substitute a proxy to participate on their behalf, functioning in a similar capacity.**
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	+ **Proxy members seeking the Chairman and Vice-Chairman position must provide written approval from their designated regular ~~or ad hoc~~ member prior to an election.**
	+ **~~Ad-hoc entities may hold an elected position.~~**
		- **~~Ad hoc entity members holding an elected Board position will be conferred voting rights for the duration of their term.~~**
* In the absence of elected officers at a Board meeting, FDLE will facilitate the election of a Chairman Pro Tem. The Chairman Pro Tem **~~will be conferred voting rights and~~** will chair the meeting until an elected member joins the meeting or the meeting ends, whichever comes first.
* Elections are to be held 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. **However, proxy members holding an elected Board position will not remain in office when they have separated from the entity.**

Proposed changes to the Meetings and Records section are provided. PROPOSED BYLAW LANGUAGE FOR REFERENCE provided at beginning of meeting

* **Regular and ad hoc** Board members who miss three meetings, **without designating a proxy who attends the meetings,** within a two-year period are subject to replacement by the Commissioner of the FDLE. ~~Members may designate~~
* **Board members should replace proxy members who missing three meetings within a two-year period, or the board member becomes subject to replacement by the Commissioner of the FDLE. If a proxy is designated; however, to ensure continuity, the same person should be selected. A proxy must be designated in writing to FDLE.**

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**Final MEPIC Advisory Board Bylaws as of Meeting End**

*Background and Purpose*

* 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, 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.
* The Board operates under the following principles:
	+ Every county in Florida should have the capacity to respond effectively within a defined timeframe.
	+ The State of Florida should integrate governmental and private resources to leverage all available assets.
	+ Every public safety agency should adopt and implement best practices in order to provide an effective response.
	+ Training and education on the prevention of victimization should be available to every person in the State of Florida.
	+ The State of Florida should continue to maximize efforts to collect and publicize information on sexual offenders and predators.
	+ The Board should recruit community groups and organizations to assist with mentoring and volunteering.
	+ The Board shall collaborate with the Florida Missing Children’s Day Foundation and its members to actively support Florida Missing Children’s Day.
* Every three years, the Board will create a strategic plan to guide the Board’s actions. The strategic plan may be amended as necessary by the Board.

*Membership, Voting and Elections*

* 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. 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, 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.
	+ Regular members may substitute a proxy to participate on their behalf, functioning in a similar capacity.
* 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.
* A regular or ad hoc proxy who separates from an entity can no longer represent the entity.
* 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.
* All members of the Board serve at the pleasure of the Commissioner of the FDLE, and may be removed at any time as the Commissioner deems appropriate.
* In an effort to avoid any conflicts of interest, members of the Board shall not also serve on the Florida Missing Children’s Day Foundation. Members shall immediately notify the Board’s officers and FDLE staff of any potential conflicts of interest.
* Officers of the Board shall include a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman elected by the board’s regular members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will serve for a term of two years. After completion of the two-year term, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman may be re-elected to serve in that capacity. The Chairman shall preside over Board meetings, or if the Chairman is unavailable the Vice-Chairman shall preside.
	+ Proxy members seeking the Chairman and Vice-Chairman position must provide written approval from their designated regular member prior to an election.
* In the absence of elected officers at a Board meeting, FDLE will facilitate the election of a Chairman Pro Tem. The Chairman Pro Tem will chair the meeting until an elected member joins the meeting or the meeting ends, whichever comes first.
* Elections are to be held 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. However, proxy members holding an elected Board position will not remain in office when they have separated from the entity.
* Once per year, the Board will vote on awards to be handed out at the annual Florida Missing Children’s Day. Regular members with any conflicts of interest will recuse themselves from voting for event awards.
	+ Board members may utilize nominations submitted within the solicited award categories as recommendations for the three (3) Florida Missing Children’s Day awards selected by the Commissioner.
* The Board may vote electronically via email or voting software such as surveymonkey when needed while still complying with other Board bylaws.
* Any questions or concerns regarding conflicts of interest will be directed to FDLE staff for guidance and clarification.

*Meetings and Records*

* 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 in person, by telephone or via virtual conferencing software.
* All Board meetings shall be properly noticed to the public and held in compliance with state sunshine requirements. Board members shall refrain from engaging in any communications about the business of the Board when not in an open Board meeting. Any questions or matters of concern between open Board meetings should be directed to FDLE staff serving as aids to the Board.
* Minutes and documentation of all Board meetings shall be preserved for public records purposes by FDLE staff serving as aids to the Board. All documents maintained by FDLE shall be held and purged in accordance with Florida Department of State records retention requirements.
* The presiding officer shall call for a vote over any matters as needed for the Board. Votes shall only be called for and counted when there is a quorum present of voting members, and the matter has been properly discussed in the sunshine prior to vote.
* All meetings shall be held in an open venue available to the public.
* The presiding officer of any meeting shall determine the manner and timing available to members of the public to speak at meetings. In any event, members of the public shall be given an opportunity to speak at meetings prior to the closing of the meeting.
* Regular Board members are eligible to receive reimbursement for travel, lodging, and per diem expenses as allowed by the Florida Department of Financial Services. Ad hoc members are responsible for any expenses they may incur while traveling to and from Board meetings.
* Regular Board members who miss three meetings, without designating a proxy who attends the meetings, within a two-year period are subject to replacement by the Commissioner of the FDLE.
* Board members should replace proxy members who miss three meetings within a two- year period, or the board member becomes subject to replacement by the Commissioner of the FDLE. If a proxy is designated; however, to ensure continuity, the same person should be selected. A proxy must be designated in writing to FDLE.

Revised 11/16/2023