

**Advisory Council to the Office of the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate  
July 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Location: 1:00-3:00pm via Zoom

Website: [Child, Youth, and Family Advisory Council | Agency of Administration](#)

Members Present: Ariel Beaulac, Council Member, Lyndon Center  
Matthew Bernstein, Office of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate  
Celine Davis, Council Member, Montpelier  
Lauren Higbee, Office of the Child, Youth and Family Deputy Advocate  
Melanie Hudson, Council Member, Brattleboro  
Mercedes King, Council Member, Montpelier  
Angel Mason, Council Member, Calais  
Ashley Nutbrown, Council Member, Barre

Members Absent: Mike Farnham, Council Member, Winooski

Public Members: None

Minutes by: Laura Schaller, Vermont Judiciary/OCYFA Commission Member

---

Matthew opened the meeting by explaining that there are currently seven council members and six are present today, constituting a quorum. The meeting is not being recorded but is open to the public, under Vermont's open meeting law. This was the initial Advisory Council meeting so there were no previous meeting notes to approve.

#### Introductions

Discussion about Zoom etiquette, open meeting law (agenda and meetings are public, refrain from using email to discuss council business).

Reviewed agenda for today's meeting – no additions were recommended.

Discussion about preferred means of communication, compensation, group agreements.

Review of Statute: Office of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate, Advisory Council

(33 V.S.A. § 3205 *et seq.*)

Direction of Council – looking for two additional members (areas needing representation include Rutland, Windham, Windsor counties and NE Kingdom).

Meetings to be held the third Thursday of each month (for 2023: Aug 17, Sept 21, Oct 19, Nov 16 and Dec 21) from 1pm-3pm and will be hybrid (combination of Zoom and in person). Hope to hold August meeting in Montpelier – location currently TBD.

Discussion regarding the election of a Chair. Several council members expressed interest in the role. Matthew made a motion to table the selection of a Chair in order to define the role more clearly and further discuss/hold election at the August meeting. Seconded by Arial. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Public comment offered. No public comments were requested or made.

Motion was made by Matthew at 3:02pm to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Lauren. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 17, 2023, 1pm-3pm, on zoom as well as in person, location TBA.