



**COLORADO**  
**Division of Criminal Justice**  
Department of Public Safety  
Division of Criminal Justice  
700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000  
Lakewood, CO 80215

## Office of the Liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (OMMIR) Meeting Notes

Community Volunteer Advisory Board (CVAB) Quarterly Meeting  
Friday, July 11th, 10:00am - 12:00pm

### In attendance:

Chief Mike Barrow  
Lynette Grey Bull  
Lydia Lerma  
Jenifer Lewis  
Melissa McGaw  
Raven Payment  
Monycka Snowbird  
Daniel Steuer  
Finnuala Tessier

Adam Tunnell  
Rick Waters  
Amy Barcenas  
David Adams  
Delilah Marie Lopez  
LaRenda Morgan  
Reycita Billie  
Rosie Small

### Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) Staff in attendance:

Melody Delmar, OMMIR Director  
Matt Lunn, DCJ Director  
Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky, DCJ Deputy Director  
Ben Nichols, DCJ Director of Operations  
Shay Arcella-Bohman, OMMIR Community Support Coordinator  
Jessica Manrique, OMMIR Data Analyst  
Leah Swenson, OMMIR Program Assistant

**Meeting Convened:** 10:00 am

### Invocation | *Lynette Grey Bull*

Lynette Grey Bull (Húnkphapña Lakǫ́ta/Northern Arapaho, [Not Our Native Daughters](#)) opened the meeting with an opening prayer and invocation.

### Welcome and DCJ Updates | *Matt Lunn*

[DCJ Director Matt Lunn](#) stated that the Strategic Plan for the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) has been finalized and is now public. The Plan will be sent to the Advisory Board, and Director Lunn welcomed any feedback on it.

Director Lunn shared that DCJ has begun a podcast series to highlight the work of offices within the Division, and the first episode featured the OMMIR and OMMIR Director Melody Delmar.

- Link to the podcast episode: [Understanding Missing & Murdered Indigenous Relatives](#)

## Overview of the Previous CVAB Meeting | Leah Swenson

OMMIR Program Assistant Leah Swenson shared a brief recap of the previous Advisory Board meeting, which was held on April 11, 2025. The full minutes for the meeting can be found on the OMMIR website, or by following this link: [OMMIR CVAB Meeting Minutes from April 11, 2025](#)

## OMMIR Office Updates | Melody Delmar

OMMIR Director Melody Delmar introduced two OMMIR staff:

- Shay Arcella-Bohman (Cherokee Nation & Shawnee Tribes of Oklahoma), who is returning to the role of Community Support Coordinator within the OMMIR office. Shay had been away on extended leave following a serious accident, and is thrilled to be back at work. Shay can be reached at [shay.arcellabohman@state.co.us](mailto:shay.arcellabohman@state.co.us).
- Jessica Manrique, who recently joined the OMMIR team as the new Program Researcher & Statistical Analyst. Jessica brings experience as a Victim Advocate, experience supporting survivors of human trafficking, and public safety research. Jessica can be reached at [jessica.manrique@state.co.us](mailto:jessica.manrique@state.co.us).

Director Delmar shared the following OMMIR updates with the group:

- The OMMIR has nearly finalized an office-specific strategic three-year plan, and is refining metrics to measure success with DCJ Operations Manager Ben Nichols.
- The CVAB is full, and working groups will be established in the coming weeks to begin implementing elements of the strategic plan.
- MMIR POST (Peace Officer Standards Training) discussions are ongoing; OMMIR and Mark Pooley, Jared Torsney, and Chief Mike Barrow have been collaborating and sharing expertise in this area.
- The Missing and Endangered Persons (MEP) event code is set to be launched in September 2025, and the MEP Working Group has been sharing recommendations for state and federal guidelines. The MEP Event Code is a huge step in national awareness.
- Director Delmar facilitated a training at the recent 2025 Summit in the Rockies on Domestic Violence and Sex Offender Management (DVSOM) Conference, along with [DCJ Deputy Director Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky](#), about culturally informed practices in the field.
  - Deputy Director Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky gave details about the training, highlighting that the audience consisted of about 450 professionals working with interpersonal violence. Audience members asked questions about how to be culturally responsive in working with Native clients.

## Protecting & Pursuing Our Missing Relatives Presentation | David Adams

David Adams (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians) of [Parnall & Adams Law](#) presented about the legal perspective of MMIR work and how the legal history of the crisis has impacted communities. The presentation included:

- A detailed history of key federal Indian law that impacts MMIR cases to this day, outlining opportunity for Tribes to pass laws allowing them to have jurisdiction over felony-level cases involving violence against women and children

- A breakdown of the ways that generational trauma (historical, intergenerational, and systemic) affect MMIR cases and how they are handled, and how the mishandling of MMIR cases perpetuates trauma
- An exploration of the complexity of cases that transcend jurisdictions and identities
- Discussion of the concept that whenever a case happens that involves an Indigenous person, an advocate from that person's community should be designated to follow the case and act as a point of contact for the community; the Tribal Advocate-type role has helped with healing and relationship building in the MMIR process
- Emphasis on the importance of multi-disciplinary support for the entire family of the MMIR individual (example: accessible counseling the children in the family if there are any)
- An overview of important actions families can take during stages of the MMIR process to assist in the case (example: biometric information, careful use of social media, etc.)
- Discussion of a specific case, and how it had not been properly investigated - stressing the importance of following policies, procedures, and SOPs already in place for law enforcement, even when the case is complicated like MMIR cases often are
- An exploration of the difficult and complex situation of needing to file suit against Tribes or Tribal Chairmen that arises at times; after repeated outreach this approach is sometimes needed to enact changes

David fielded questions and discussion from the group:

- Raven Payment (Ojibwe/Kanien'keha:ka, MMIR Task Force of Colorado member) raised the importance of recognizing the intersectionality of MMIR work, citing the example of Larry Nassar, who was mentioned in the presentation, and the Childhood Sexual Abuse Accountability Amendment ([SCR24-001](#)) his survivors inspired. While not explicitly focused on MMIR work, bills like these affect MMIR work tremendously
- Delilah Lopez (Chippewa Cree) posed the question of Tribal enrollment, and whether Indigenous people who are not enrolled members are especially vulnerable without that layer of protection, citing ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) as just one example
- Monycka Snowbird (Ojibwe, MMIR Task Force of Colorado member) pointed out that the Recognition of Tribal Court Orders bill ([SB25-009](#)) now states that Colorado will honor all Tribal court orders for all 574 Tribes, meaning that non-tribal members with court orders within tribes can be extradited to any other state for any offense under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Additionally, Colorado passed [HB21-1151](#) allowing federally recognized Tribes to certify their own foster homes; and [HB24-1100](#) requiring coroners to be certified by the Board of medicolegal death investigators or the Board of forensic pathology

David Adams can be reached at [david@parnelladams.com](mailto:david@parnelladams.com) or by phone at 505-600-1417.

### **Advisory Board Bylaws Overview | Finnuala Tessier**

Attorney for the Department of Public Safety with the Colorado Attorney General's office Finnuala Tessier spoke about supporting committees and boards within the Department as the OMMIR CVAB moves toward writing its bylaws. Finnuala, along with Leah Pitcher and Kelly Jedjek, act as counsel for advisory boards. Finnuala shared the following information:

- The three attorneys can answer legal questions from the advisory board
- They ensure that advisory boards are in compliance with statutory obligations
- Having written bylaws / policies is a statutory requirement; Finnulala will be working with Director Delmar to help frame those for the CVAB now that the board is full
- Examples of things to be included in the bylaws: definition of a quorum, voting protocols, frequency and location of meetings, etc.

Finnulala Tessier can be reached at [Finnulala.Tessier@coag.gov](mailto:Finnulala.Tessier@coag.gov)

### **Community Announcements & Closing | *Melody Delmar***

- Director Delmar shared that the OMMIR is participating, in partnership with Not Our Native Daughters, in a memorial ceremony for Clarinda Blackburn, who went missing from the Wind River Reservation last year and was discovered in the Denver Metro area in a case that has been ruled a homicide
- Monycka Snowbird shared that 25 years after Odell Vest went missing in Towaoc, the Task Force has a new lead in the case; since the last meeting, the Task Force held two events for MMIR Awareness Day- one in Ignacio and one in Colorado Springs; they have also begun working closely with City of Denver, and had the opportunity to have lunch with [Deb Haaland](#). The Task Force is looking for volunteers for a list of tasks, [reach out here](#).
- Mike Barrow shared details about recent efforts around creating a potential Four Corners MMIR Communications Network. The OMMIR, various law enforcement and attorneys general offices, the Task Force, and other partners have met and begun communications regarding this. The next meeting will be in the beginning of August tentatively. Those on the call interested in joining the conversation can contact Southern Ute Police Department Chief of Police Mike Barrow at [mbarrow@southernute-nsn.gov](mailto:mbarrow@southernute-nsn.gov).
- Melissa McGaw, Investigative Analyst for the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI), offered the clarification that there is no waiting period to report someone missing, despite common belief that there's a 24 hour or 3-day waiting period. When you suspect a loved one is missing, you may report them missing at any time, without any waiting period.
- The next quarterly meeting will be held on Friday, October 11th, 2025 at 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. To sign up and receive meeting materials and updates, [please fill out the short meeting request form using this link](#).

This meeting's content was difficult and may bring up a personal elevated response. Director Delmar shared the following resources for additional support if needed:

- [988 Life Line](#) (call or text 988)
- [Strong Hearts Native Helpline](#)
- [All Nations Hotline](#)

With no further questions or updates, Director Delmar closed the meeting with gratitude.

**Meeting Adjourned: 12:02 pm**