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# BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## February 25, 2022

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### **Board of Directors:**

Michael Lepera, Board Chair; Amy Black, Vice Chair; Victoria Thurston, Secretary, Joseph Rogers, Treasurer, Chelsea Bellew, David Prather, Josefa Benjamin, Meghan Russell, Melida Akiti, Nancy Gregoire Stamper, Paul Adams, Rebecca Brock, Ronald Ford, Tom Lukasik

### **Unable to Attend:**

Josefa Benjamin, Michael Lepera, Ronald Ford, Tom Lukasik

### **Other Attendees:**

*ChildNet Staff:* Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Jason Tracey, Julie DeMar, Rae Bullard, Susan Eby, Deena Ponto, Sheryl Williams, Andrea Cunningham, Tamaru Phillips, Julie Janello, Brittani Brooks, Tracy Smith, Kezia Stewart, *DCF:* Dawn Liberta, Teresa Janeczek

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### **CALL TO ORDER – Amy Black, Board Vice Chair**

- Amy Black, Vice Chair, on behalf of Michael Lepera, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Dr. Victoria Thurston, Board Secretary**

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The January 28, 2022, meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion* was moved and seconded to approve the minutes. *A vote was taken.* The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted.*

### **WELCOME – Amy Black, Board Vice Chair**

- Amy Black welcomed new Board Directors, Paul Adams and David Prather.

### **CHILDNET BOARD EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD – Rae Bullard, CHRO**

- The ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Award was presented to the following deserving employee:
  - January 2022 – Brittani Brooks, Intake & Placement Advocate

### **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

- Intake and Placement – Kezia Stewart, Director of Intake and Placement gave a brief summary of the Intake and Placement (I&P) department. As children are removed by BSO, BSO provides the case opening documents to I&P where they do several assessments on the children so they can match them with appropriate placement. The I&P staff work to keep and place siblings together. They also try to maintain placement stability by holding several staffings.



## **BOARD COMMITTEE OVERVIEW – Larry Rein, CEO and President**

- Summary of Board Committees – Larry Rein reported that looking at the next fiscal year and having a new infusion of board members, he wanted to fully inform the full Board of all board committees. Mr. Rein provided an in-depth overview of the Summary of Board Committees, a copy of which was provided to the Committee. ChildNet currently has the following committees: Audit, Finance, Fundraising, Governance/Executive, Legal/HR Committee, Palm Beach Advisory Board, Program Quality, and Adolescent Services Ad Hoc committee.
- Adolescent Services Ad Hoc Committee – Ad Hoc to Standing – Discussion was held on whether this committee should be moved to a standing committee or to make it a regular part of the Program Quality Committee. Currently, the Ad Hoc committee meets on a quarterly basis. After further discussion, it was determined that the work of this committee is sufficiently important to warrant it being a standing committee. Therefore, Mr. Rein noted that it will be brought back to the Governance/Executive Committee to be set-up as a standing committee and that we concentrate on having a robust and sufficient membership on the committee. Melida Akiti noted that she would be available to continue on this committee after terming from the Board.

## **FINANCE REPORT – Joe Rogers, Board Treasurer and Donna Eprifania, CFO**

- Donna Eprifania reported that both counties' financial posture is very healthy. Broward's month-to-date has a surplus of \$1.2 million. Overall, Broward is sitting with a surplus of approximately \$3 million. In Palm Beach, while we are showing, in relation to our budget, a healthy posture, we also budgeted a \$720,000 deficit. We are still projecting, overall, a deficit of \$400,000 in Palm Beach.
- Legislature – Larry Rein reported as far as budgets for funding of community-based care, the House and Senate each develop their own budgets and toward the end of Session they meet for finalization of the final budget that they present to the Governor for his approval.
  - The Senate Budget recommended an approximate \$20 million increase, statewide, in community-based care funding. However, they wanted that \$20 million to be directed to the 4 most in-need lead agencies. There is another \$15 million to allocate to DCF for child welfare, for DCF to allocate out in different ways.
  - The House Budget recommended an overall increase of \$127.5 million in new recurring funds to go to community-based care lead agencies according to the Florida Children's Funding Formula to bring all lead agencies up to 100%-125% of full funding, as defined by that formula.

The new calculation by DCF shows ChildNet Broward at 138% - two years ago we were at 96%. Citrus in Miami-Dade increased from 117% to 165%. Neither of us have received any more money in the last two years. Discussions with House staff and leadership indicates that the intention would be to reduce Citrus and ChildNet Broward down to 125%, according to the formula. This would be a \$5.9 million reduction for ChildNet Broward and a \$17 million reduction for Citrus. The House Speaker has said that we do not need new money, we can move money from CBCs who are "overfunded". Our strategy now is to work with Senate leadership. We are in the process of scheduling a meeting with the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee to explain the several reasons we think that this is not something that the Senate would not want to agree to with the House. It is our belief (ChildNet and Citrus) that the reason we increased in the evaluation of our funding is because we successfully reduced the number of children in care. We are preventing abuse, lowering removals, and moving children to permanency more timely. Six years ago, ChildNet Broward and Citrus were the most under-funded of CBCs. ChildNet



would not have kept its doors open without nearly \$23 million in emergency funds from the legislature. Today, fiscally, we are the healthiest of all the community-based care lead agencies. How? We have not received any additional money. We have reduced the number of kids in care. We have invested that money in evidence-based practices and invested in a model of care that serves dually dependent and delinquent teenagers. And we want to support the retention and recruitment of our staff.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE – Larry Rein, CEO and President**

- **COVID-19 Update** – Larry Rein reported that there has been a significant decrease in positive cases among employees, children, and caregivers. However, the numbers are still too significant statewide to make plans to return back to the offices.

### **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Advisory Board Committee** – Col. Josefa Benjamin, Committee Chair

Amy Black reported that the committee was provided an update on the case management workforce. ChildNet will be reinstating the \$3,000 sign-on bonus in Palm Beach and are expanding it to Broward where new case managers will receive \$1,500 at the beginning of employment and \$1,500 after one (1) year. In addition, we are planning a reward incentive for case management staff that have been employed with ChildNet more than one (1) year commensurate with the sign-on bonus of \$3,000. The DCF Accountability Report was also discussed.

- **Fundraising Committee** – Andrea Cunningham, Director of Community Relations

Andrea Cunningham reported on the following:

- **The Care For Kids Luncheon for Palm Beach** is on March 8, 2022, at Woodfield Country Club in Boca Raton. We are honoring Kathy & Paul Leone. To date, we have secured \$57,000 in sponsorships and ticket sales. In addition to our auction this year, we will also have Pop Up Shops. All guests will receive complimentary hand sanitizers courtesy of Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital and Memorial Healthcare System. In addition, masks will be available for anyone who wants/needs them.
- **The Broward Care For Kids Cocktail Reception** is on April 9, 2022, at Lauderdale Yacht Club starting at 6:00pm. We are honoring Sigrid McCawley. We currently have \$68,700 in sponsorships and ticket sales.

- **Governance Committee** – Amy Black, Committee Chair

- **Membership Recruitment** - Larry Rein reported that Catherine Coombs was sent a Board Candidate Application for completion. In addition, Mr. Rein reported that retired Judge Pucillo is still spending time with her family and is not yet ready to make a commitment to the Board. Sigrid McCawley has a board referral and Mr. Rein will meet with them and will discuss at the next meeting.

- **Legal/Human Resources Committee** – Rebecca Brock, Committee Chair

Committee met briefly and nothing new to report.



- **Program Quality Committee – Joe Rogers, Committee Chair**

Joe Rogers reported that the committee discussed the quarterly DCF Accountability Report and the quarterly Service Quality Team Contract Outcomes Report. Larry Rein noted that the DCF Accountability Report is DCF's new way of evaluating community-based care, created in response to legislation two sessions ago called the DCF Accountability Act. It is a process that is regional in nature and includes CBC lead agencies, Children's Legal Services and Protective Investigations. We, as a region, are at 59% of meeting all the indicator targets, but we are doing better than everyone else in the state. We have several concerns on this report including the data is three months old, which makes it hard to improve performance, and we do not understand how some items are actually computed.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Amy Black reported that on March 3, 2022, Larry Rein will be receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual 211 Non-Profit Awards at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel, Hollywood.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

- ChildNet's Anti-Racism Workgroup Update – Tamaru Phillips, Director of Intake & Placement, reported that ChildNet is celebrating Black History Month this month. One of the activities includes a weekly Black History Month Jeopardy. Discussion was held with staff who watched the movie of the month: "Remember the Titans". Today, we have a guest speaker, Joshua Byrd, who will lead a discussion on 'Critical Race Theory'.

### **CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein**

- Larry Rein reported that the Department of Children & Families is on the verge of doing a reorganization beginning March 1, 2022. The change will be more centralization of oversight of DCF by Tallahassee.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- There was no public comment.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

- The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 25, 2022, via Zoom.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Having no further business, a *motion* was moved to adjourn the meeting. A *vote was taken*. The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted*. The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

  
Dr. Victoria Thurston  
Board Secretary

3/25/2022  
Date

(Corporate Seal)