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# BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## February 26, 2021

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**Board of Directors:**

Michael Lepera, Board Chair; Amy Black, Vice Chair; Victoria Thurston, Secretary, Armando Fana, Josefa Benjamin, Joseph Rogers, Meghan Russell, Melida Akiti, Rebecca Brock, Ronald Ford, Sigrid McCawley

**Unable to Attend:**

Josefa Benjamin, Michael Lepera, Sigrid McCawley

**Other Attendees:**

*ChildNet Staff:* Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Julie DeMar, Rae Bullard, Susan Eby, Deena Ponto, Sheryl Williams, Tamaru Phillips, Andrea Cunningham, Allyson Gaiser, Julie Janello, Simone Gibson, Daffodil Otto, Jenesa Branford, Nadine Cotterell, *DCF:* Teresa Janeczek, Dawn Liberta, *Marcum LLC:* Adam Firestein, Branden Lopez, Joey Epstein

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

- Amy Black, Board Vice Chair, on behalf of Michael Lepera, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Victoria Thurston, Board Secretary**

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The January 2021 meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion was moved to approve the minutes. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.*

**ITEM FOR BOARD REVIEW AND APPROVAL – Amy Black, Board Vice Chair**

- Resolution #214 – Election of Board Treasurer – The following name was brought to the Board for vote for Board Treasurer for a four (4) month appointment through June 30, 2021: Joseph Rogers.

*A motion was moved to approve Board Resolution #214. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.*

- Proposed Amended Bylaws - Larry Rein reported the DCF Contract Oversight Unit (COU) Monitoring Results provided findings that our Bylaws did not include the following items that empower the Board of Directors: 1) to approve the annual budget, 2) to set the operational policies and procedures, and 3) to hire the Executive Director. With input from ChildNet's In-House Legal Counsel, these three (3) responsibilities were included under Article IV - Operations and Committees, Section 1 - Powers and Responsibilities. Revisions were also made to Section 4 - Finance Committee and Section 6 - Program Quality Committee to encompass these changes as well. In addition, the title of Chairman was changed to Chair throughout the document.

*A motion was moved to approve the amended Bylaws with changes noted above. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.*



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

- The ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Award was presented to the following deserving employees:
  - January 2021 – Jenesa Branford, Child Advocate Unit B2 and Simone Gibson, Child Advocate Supervisor, Unit B2

## **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

- Case Management – Simone Gibson, Child Advocate Supervisor, Unit B2 provided a brief overview of the duties of a case management supervisor. Supervisors assign and review cases, review evaluations from providers to ensure family’s needs are addressed, review court order, ensure child advocates attend staffings and hearings, attend multi-disciplinary staffings, ensure child advocates are up-to-date and that tasks are handled timely. In addition, supervisors take over cases when child advocates are on leave, monitor permanency for children, monitor notes for safety concerns, and meet daily with foster parents.

## **AUDIT PRESENTATION – Adam Firestein and Branden Lopez, Marcum LLP**

- Joey Epstein, who serves as an AdHoc member on the Audit Committee, introduced Adam Firestein and Branden Lopez from Marcum LLP. They gave a brief presentation on ChildNet’s Audited Financials for FY 2019-2020. ChildNet again received a clean or “unmodified” opinion with zero findings. ChildNet ended the year with positive net assets. No issues identified as part of compliance. Marcum noted that accounting for leases will have an impact on ChildNet’s financial statements in the next year and half where any type of lease, in excess of 1 year, will be required to be put on the books. The audit of ChildNet’s 403(b) is 95% complete which is due 04-15-21. The audit of the 990 needs to be reviewed by the full Board which is due 05-15-21.

## **FINANCE REPORT – Donna Eprifania, CFO**

- Broward Lease – Donna Eprifania reported that we executed the Broward lease extension through 2029. Included in the lease extension were some options to terminate, which were not previously included. We have included another clause that allows us to have a general right to terminate (180-day notice).
- CBCIH Investment – Donna Eprifania reported that we executed the purchase of one (1) Class C share in CBCIH on 02-08-21 and are now shareholders in the CBCIH investment pool. ChildNet will be entitled to any disbursements that are generated after 02-08-21. Any gains or disbursements received will be put in our unrestricted funding pool.

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

- Larry Rein reported that there is nothing significant to report. There are no changes to the child welfare policy and practices. We continue to meet statewide bi-weekly. We continue to have supervised visitations with interns and the visitation program prioritizing families with younger children. There is no capacity or workforce challenge to serve our children.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- Advisory Board Committee – Armando Fana, Committee Chair

Armando Fana reported the committee met and discussed the census and scorecard. There is no real change in the census numbers. We are trending slowly in the right direction. Staff in both Broward and Palm Beach are helping with case management in Palm Beach until we are fully staffed in Palm Beach. Rae Bullard, CHRO is working on a recruitment campaign.



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

Andrea Cunningham reported the following.

- **Polo Match** – On Saturday, February 6, 2021, the Palm Beach International Equestrian Competition took place, in which ChildNet was selected to participate this year. ChildNet placed 4<sup>th</sup> which resulted in a \$75,000 win. From this event, a few people have communicated with Andrea to see how they can help our organization.

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

- **Membership Recruitment** – Larry Rein reported we have sent the Board candidate application packet to Karen Harrington who was recommended by Melida Akiti. We will be sending a Board candidate application packet to Tom Lukasik at 4Kids for completion. This would be to fill the vacancy of the provider representative on our board. In addition, Judge Kathleen Kroll who chairs the Palm Beach Community Alliance created an AdHoc committee to help ChildNet recruit Palm Beach board members.

- **Legal/Human Resources Committee – Sigrid McCawley, Committee Chair**

- Allyson Gaiser, In-House Legal Counsel, reported that the committee focused on Families First Preservation Services Act (FFPSA). ChildNet new Chief Legal Officer, Jason Tracey, will onboard on March 1, 2021.

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

- Julie DeMar reported that the Committee reviewed the Scorecard. The overall performance in both counties is good. There are only a couple of measures where ChildNet is slightly under the goal. Susan Eby reported on the Service Quality Outcomes which is trending positively. Actions are taken if any concerns are noted.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- There was no new business to report.

## **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

- **ChildNet's Anti-Racism Workgroup Update** – Tamaru Phillips noted that the Workgroup met on 02-25-21 and provided an update on trainings provided by ChildNet's training department. The Workgroup discussed the reactions and thoughts following the lunch and learn movie discussion on the documentary "13<sup>th</sup> Amendment". A dedicated mailbox will be set-up to receive questions and concerns from foster parents and case managers about black hair and skin care. The Workgroup sent a proposal to ChildNet leadership to have Juneteenth be recognized as a paid holiday. Dr. Phillips is excited to announce this was approved by ChildNet leadership. The next Workgroup meeting is 03-21-21. Larry Rein thanked Tamaru Phillips, Sheryl Williams and Rae Bullard for the many Black History Month activities.

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

- **New DCF Secretary** – Mr. Rein reported that Chad Poppell resigned as the DCF Secretary. The new Secretary, who began on 02-22-21, is Ms. Shevaun Harris. Ms. Harris comes from the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA), which is the agency in Florida that operates Medicaid. Ms. Harris has first-hand experience with child welfare and Medicaid.
- **Legislative Update** – Larry Rein reported that the legislative Session begins on 03-01-21. No mention has been made on budget cuts thus far for child welfare.



From a policy perspective, there is a lot of activity at the legislative level in terms of child welfare and community-based care. Mr. Rein feels it is in reaction to several things that have occurred in the last year or so:

- The scandal with the Domestic Violence Council. This Council was created in Statute to manage all of the State's public funding for domestic violence. The contract was sole-sourced and not competitive. It was given to an organization who had ties with the family of the then-governor. In the last year or so, it was discovered that the CEO's compensation was in excess of \$1 million and money was used to purchase homes.
- The Chief Inspector General is continuing to review the compensation of the CEOs of 300 Florida organizations that derived 50% or more of their income from the State. A Senate Bill has come down to change the compensation limit from 150% to 100% of the Secretary's salary for community-based care lead agencies and managing entities.
- USA Today Report – there were instances cited in that report where there were allegations against a foster parent involving abuse.
- There are other agencies around the state that have experienced financial challenges like we did in Broward and Palm Beach a few years ago. Currently, Pinellas County and Hillsborough County are experiencing sustained financial challenges. The current Senate President and current Speaker of the House each come from Pinellas and Hillsborough. They are looking to make some significant reforms in the way child welfare operates based on their concerns about the inability of the lead agency to turn things around where they are from.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- There was no public comment.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

- The next Board meeting is scheduled on Friday, March 26, 2021 via Zoom.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

- Having no further business, a motion was *moved* to adjourn the meeting. A *vote was taken*. The motion was *passed unanimously*. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

  
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Dr. Victoria Thurston  
Board Secretary

  
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Date

(Corporate Seal)