



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 28, 2020 (Rev. 08-19-20)

Board of Directors:

Sigrid McCawley, Board Chair; Michael Lepera, Vice Chairman; Christopher Cade, Treasurer; Amy Black, Secretary, Jillian Smath, Joe Rogers, **Josefa Benjamin**, Melida Akiti, Rebecca Brock, Sigrid McCawley, Tex Guignard, Victoria Thurston

Unable to Attend:

Armando Fana, Michael Lepera, Tex Guignard

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Dionne Wong, Julie DeMar, Susan Eby, Sheryl Williams, Deena Ponto, Andrea Cunningham, Maggie Jovanovich, Veronica Rodriguez, Ashley Kiernan, Joey Epstein, Julie Janello, *DCF:* Teresa Janeczek, *Marcum LLP:* Adam Firestein, Branden Lopez

CALL TO ORDER – Sigrid McCawley, Board Chair

- Sigrid McCawley, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Amy Black, Secretary

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The January 24, 2020 meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion was moved to approve the meeting minutes. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.*

CHILDNET BOARD EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD – Dionne Wong, CHRLO

- The Broward November 2019 and December 2019 and Palm Beach 4th Quarter ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Awards were presented to the following three deserving employees:
 - November 2019 (Bwd) – Ashley Kiernan, Child Advocate Supervisor
 - December 2019 (Bwd) – Veronica Rodriguez, Recruiter/MAPP Trainer
 - 4th Quarter (PB) – Heidi Griffis, Regional Quality Manager

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Department – Julie DeMar noted that we now have two quality departments: 1) Service Quality that is an external focus quality under Susan Eby's team, and 2) Continuous Quality Improvement under Julie DeMar's team, which is the internal case management quality in Broward and at CHS in Palm Beach. The CQI department in Palm Beach does the many reviews that DCF requires under the CFSR (Child & Family Services Review). Additionally, this team does a number of Rapid Safety Reviews and other reviews that DCF requires. This team's focus is to figure out how we are doing and how we might get better with those reviews by collaborating with other departments to help improve our outcomes. The CQI department in Broward works on the more innovative things we can do, i.e. ways to embrace technology and ways we can automate some of our processes. The Regional Quality Manager looks at census trends and manages all incident reports and ensures the incident reports get updated and completed.



AUDIT PRESENTATION – Adam Firestein and Branden Lopez, Marcum LLP

- Joey Epstein who serves 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 2018-2019. ChildNet again received a clean or “unmodified” opinion with zero findings. They proposed that this coming year they meet on a more formalized schedule with the Audit Committee and with the Board.

FINANCE REPORT – Chris Cade, Treasurer & Finance Chair and Donna Eprifania, CFO

- Auditors – Chris Cade reported that the Audit Committee will continue to use Marcum LLP as our auditors next year.
- Broward – Donna Eprifania reported that Broward has a year-to-date surplus of \$4 million. With the 2nd quarter projections, the current year projection is to have a \$6 million surplus on top of the \$3 million surplus from last year. We are working to improve the work environment to improve the workforce through training and with making one-time purchases for equipment. Budgeting of this is non-recurring. We do have the capacity to set aside revenue in a pseudo reserve line and have done so with \$2 million from the carry forward from last year.
- Palm Beach – Palm Beach has a year-to-date surplus of \$287,000. That would be offset by any adoption subsidy surplus. The overall projection for the year is a deficit of \$83,000. When we produce our quarterly projections to the Department, especially in December, they then can use that for opportunities to go to the legislature if there are projected unfunded expenditures. The process used was that we included our current year deficit projection of \$83,000, plus what we have accrued over time, which is \$429,000 (an amount that the Department can make us whole on as we have incurred allowable expenditures), should the resources be available through back of the bill. Risk pool is for current year projected deficits of which we did not submit an application this fiscal year. It is also important to note that Palm’s Beach’s current ability to remain sustainable is through community-based initiatives and other available funding sources; thus, from a purely Department-funded perspective on December 31, 2019, Palm Beach is projecting a \$980,000 deficit at the end of the fiscal year.

In addition to that, one of our subcontractors, Children’s Home Society (CHS) has approached Mr. Rein about their deficit. Mr. Rein reported that CHS, as part of their corrective action plan, overhired to ensure that they were fully staffed. With the census being around 1,700 in Palm Beach, they remained overhired to keep caseloads down and that has left them in a projected deficit position of approximately \$900,000.

Mr. Rein explained the methods the legislature uses to address lead agency deficits. The Risk Pool is described in Florida Statute. It is to help CBCs when they encounter factors beyond their control that put a financial strain on them. The legislature funds the Risk Pool prospectively and there is a formal process for applying for Risk Pool funds. This year’s application had to be submitted during the first quarter. The funding has already been distributed following recommendations of a committee on which Mr. Rein served as the CBC lead agency CEO representative as ChildNet had not applied. This session, the legislature may put in \$5 million into the Risk Pool which would help CBC lead agencies who, next fiscal year, encounter a challenge.

In the last couple of years, the legislature, at the behest of the Florida Coalition for Children (FCC), has also supported lead agencies with Back of the Bill funding. Back of the Bill Funding is when the legislature, this Session, allocates new money or under-utilized money from this year’s state budget to the Department of Children & Families for them to add to their budget for this year. Back of the



Bill Funding is not described in Florida Statute. It is an appropriation that the legislature makes to the Department and the Department then decides how to distribute it among the lead agencies based on their most recent deficit projections. In the past year or so, some of the service providers have spoken to the FCC about the providers requesting Back of the Bill funding. This year, CHS reported that they are looking at a \$900,000 deficit and requested ChildNet to provide that information to the Department for CHS to potentially be supported by the Back of the Bill funding. ChildNet is supporting CHS with the Back of the Bill request. ChildNet has provided the request to FCC to advocate for this funding. FCC has met with the Department who now has the Back of the Bill funding requests (ChildNet in the amount of \$980,000 and CHS in the amount of \$900,000). Should ChildNet receive any monies, we will then see what ChildNet's and CHS' actuals are as opposed to the projections, and then share equitably with CHS.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **Advisory Board Committee – Armando Fana, Committee Chair**

Larry Rein reported that the Committee met and discussed CBC Lead Agency Scorecard. Performance on the Scorecard in Palm Beach last quarter was excellent. They reviewed the progress on the financial viability plan. They also discussed the Foster Home Marketing Campaign. The marketing is going great with respect to generating referrals and name recognition. It is not, however, resulting in the desired increase in foster home inventory. ChildNet, for the next three months, with the referrals generated by the campaign, will itself provide training and support to those potential families in an attempt to identify and resolve the sources of the problem. There also was discussion of a recent positive trend with the number of children removed in December and January showing a 43% decrease compared to the same months of the prior year.

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

Andrea Cunningham noted the following:

- Palm Beach Care for Kids Luncheon – Tuesday, April 7, 2020, Woodfield Country Club, Boca Raton.

- **Governance Committee – Michael Lepera, Committee Chair**

- Larry Rein reported, on behalf of Michael Lepera, that the committee briefly discussed the caseload plan update with CHS where caseloads are at the lowest they have been in five years at 1:19. Also discussed membership recruitment. Andrea Cunningham is in the process of setting up meetings with potential Board candidates and/or donors. New Board Director, Lt. Colonel Josefa Benjamin was welcomed to the Board.

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

- Dionne Wong reported that there are no new attorney engagements. The Risk Management Committee emphasis will continue to be on data and facilities safety and security. Significant projects dedicated to automating many processes are moving forward to further support data security and efficiencies. Discussion held on the adoption of the public records request policy. Update given on the Chapter 119 request from the media that was served to what appeared to be all CBCs and some providers. Since ChildNet's initial response and estimate of costs to produce the records, there has been no further activity.



- **Program Quality Committee**

- Julie DeMar reported the committee reviewed the Scorecard and the contract monitorings that happened in the 2nd quarter. Scorecard performance in both counties was very positive having met 10 of the 12 measures in each county. Palm Beach challenges this past quarter were the re-entries into care, with the most challenging being placing all siblings together. Broward challenges this past quarter were the abuse during out-of-home care, permanency under 12 months, and the most challenging being Human Trafficking children who often run and engage in dangerous behaviors.

NEW BUSINESS

- Racial Equity Update – As requested by the Board at the last meeting, racial equity updates have been added to the agenda. Sheryl Williams, Program Officer of Case Management and Adoptions, reported that ChildNet meets monthly with the Urban League and several other community stakeholders. This workgroup talks about racial disparities in the 33311 and 33313 zip codes. These are the two of the largest zip codes where a significant number of black children are being removed. ChildNet, in partnership with BSO, have each identified a squad that focuses solely on those children in those 2 zip codes. A teleconference is held weekly with the Attorney General's office, **Broward Sheriff's Office** (BSO), **Florida Atlantic University** (FAU), Casey and **other community stakeholders** to discuss what we are doing. We have a Parent Advisory Board that includes two parents that has had some involvement with the dependency system and who also reside in the 33311/13 community. We receive feedback from them on their experience within the dependency system. ChildNet's leadership team have received the 2-day workshop on Undoing Racism, provided by the County. All ChildNet staff have attended the workshop on racism in Broward County, provided by Children's Services Council of Broward County.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Sigrid McCawley

- Audit – Donna Eprifania reported that the Audit Committee will meet with the auditors in April 2020.
- Rally in Tally – Ms. McCawley reported that she was unable to attend Rally in Tally; however, Melida Akiti, Victoria Thurston and Larry Rein did attend and met with numerous legislators to request funding for ChildNet's two special appropriation requests.
- Coronavirus – ChildNet needs to have a plan in place in dealing with the coronavirus, i.e. working remotely, services for children in care, etc.

CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- Appropriation Requests – Mr. Rein reported that the two special appropriation requests are moving forward.
- Equity Model – This session the legislature has a chance to change the funding formula for child welfare and to move it to a model originally developed by the FCC, and subsequently updated in partnership with the Department last summer. It now appears unclear if this will occur this session. According to this model, Broward would not get additional funding as Broward is at 100% of what the model says it should receive. Palm Beach is at around 91%. It is possible, however, that the model, instead of going into Statute, would be included in the proviso language of this year's Appropriation Bill. The House has recommended, in appropriations, an increase of \$16.5 million for CBC core funding. In its draft proviso language, instead of the whole model getting adopted at least the part about case management and caseloads would be referenced. The House's draft proviso



language would direct the \$16.5 million increase to the reduction of CBC caseloads to 17 children per case manager.

OLD BUSINESS

- There was no old business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next scheduled Board meeting is Friday, March 27, 2020 to be held at Boies, Schiller & Flexner, LLP, 401 E. Las Olas Blvd., Suite 1200, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301.

CONCLUSION

- 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.

Amy Black
Board Secretary

Date

(Corporate Seal)