



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 24, 2026

Board of Directors:

Col. Josefa Benjamin, Board Chair; Rebecca Brock, Vice Chair; Michael Lepera, Treasurer; Lois Marino, Secretary; Bill Reicherter, Carolina Raineau, Charles Hanna, Donna Korn, Dr. Heidi Schaeffer, Joseph Rogers, Karen Cabrera, Kerry Diaz, Maria Mezerhane, Michael DiBrizzi, Nancy W. Stamper, Paul Adams, Dr. Ronald Ford, Sabria McElroy, Stefanie Title, Dr. Victoria Thurston

Unable to Attend:

Michael Lepera, Victoria Thurston

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Neiko Shea, Donna Eprifania, Julie DeMar, Alcolya St. Juste, Rebecca Lindstadt, Shanny Tozzi, Tina Lewis, Deena Ponto, Sheryl Williams, Peter Santiago, Daffodil Otto, Alexis Kallwitz, Adriane Smith, Andrea Chenet, Dominique Carn, Andrew Wallick, Edelyne Guerrier, Shavon Rahming, Chettarra Thompson, *DCF:* Isis Williams, Traci Schweitzer, *Public:* Ayelet Faerman

CALL TO ORDER – Col. Josefa Benjamin, Board Chair

- Col. Josefa Benjamin, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Lois Marino, Board Secretary

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The March 27, 2027 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.*

CHILDNET BOARD EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD – Tina Lewis, HR Officer

- The ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Award was presented to the following deserving employees:
 - February 2025 – Alexis Kallwitz, Dependency Case Manager, Unit B3 (Bwd)
 - March 2025 – Adriane Smith, Dependency Case Manager, Unit 123 (PB)
Chettarra Thompson, Adolescent Care Coordinator (Bwd)

ITEM FOR BOARD REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- Policy & Procedures: Alcolya St. Juste, CLO, provided a summary of the revisions to the following policies and procedures as modification to the language ensures that we are in line with actual practices:
 1. CN 001.003 – Release of Child Case Record to Child, Child’s Guardian Ad Litem, Child’s Attorney, Child’s Caregiver
 2. CN 001.007 – Fee for Copying Records
 3. CN 001.008 – Access to Confidential Reports



A motion was moved and seconded to approve the above noted Policies and Procedures. A vote was taken. The ayes have it and the motion was adopted.

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

- **Process Quality Improvement (PQI) and Data Team** – Andrea Chenet, Director of Process Quality Improvement and Data, provided a brief overview of the PQI department, a copy of which was provided to the board. During the overview, Board members raised questions about cybersecurity and data privacy. Leadership emphasized that the IT department continuously monitors security risks, conducts assessments, and follows extensive cybersecurity practices. The Board proposed a future board presentation focused specifically on data security and cybersecurity protocols.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **Community Engagement Committee** – Lois Marino, Committee Chair and Shanny Tozzi, Director of Community Relations

Ripple Effect Gala - Lois Marino provided an update on the upcoming Ripple Effect Gala and shared that ChildNet is already operating at a profit prior to the gala due to strong sponsorship support and participation. Shanny Tozzi provided additional event logistics which included VIP registration beginning at 5:30 p.m., meet-and-greet with Nestor Torres at 6:00 p.m., the ballroom program beginning at 7:20 p.m., a concise 80-minute program, and an after-party beginning around 9:00 p.m.

Board Chair Report – Josefa Benjamin discussed the importance of achieving 100% participation in support of the Ripple Effect Gala, noting that only two board members had not yet committed. She emphasized that full participation reflects the board's strong commitment to ChildNet and the youth it serves, while also encouraging community members, donors, and sponsors to demonstrate similar support.

- **Finance Committee** – Michael Lepera, Committee Chair and Donna Eprifania, CFO

Donna Eprifania updated the board on Finance Committee activities, including review of pending property and casualty insurance renewal proposals ahead of the June 1 policy renewal date. She also outlined the upcoming budget workshop process, where the committee will review all budget line items and use current spending trends to develop projected budgets for the next fiscal year. She noted that the committee will meet again in June after the State of Florida finalizes its budget and funding allocations become clearer. Financially, Palm Beach County remains stable, while Broward County continues to experience financial strain and is awaiting legislative decisions regarding risk pool/back of the bill and supplemental funding.

- **Governance/Executive Committee** – Rebecca Brock, Committee Chair

- **Physical Location Discussion** – Larry Rein provided an update regarding discussions about the ChildNet's physical office locations and future lease planning. He explained that although the ad hoc real estate committee has been suspended, leadership intends to continue providing quarterly updates to keep the issue on the board's radar. While there are currently no major developments, ChildNet is beginning to evaluate future options as existing leases approach expiration, including the possibility of purchasing property or exploring alternative arrangements. Mr. Rein noted that he and Donna Eprifania recently met informally with the Fort Lauderdale landlord to discuss ChildNet's future plans, and leadership will continue assessing potential opportunities and reporting updates to the board as discussions progress.



- **2026-2028 Strategic Plan** – Neiko Shea reported that most performance metrics have been finalized, with only the financial sustainability metric still under development. Leadership is also working on associated action steps for the plan. Ms. Shea shared that ChildNet decided to align the strategic plan with the fiscal year rather than the calendar year to better coordinate quarterly and departmental reporting. The finalized strategic plan is expected to launch on July 1, with a completed version scheduled for presentation at the June annual board meeting.
- **Committee Selections** – Discussion was held on committee selections and participation, particularly for newer board members who are still determining which committees may be the best fit for their interests and skills. Larry Rein expressed satisfaction with current committee engagement, noting that board participation is stronger than ever and has been highly valuable to ChildNet.
- **Accreditation** – Discussion held that ChildNet chose not to pursue Council on Accreditation (COA) certification and instead is focusing on a comprehensive review of policies and procedures. Leadership described this review process as more meaningful and beneficial to operations. ChildNet also continues to explore other certifications and risk management tools, though a recently reviewed software platform was determined to be a better fit for residential care providers than for ChildNet.
- **Membership Recruitment** – Larry Rein reported that ChildNet is in its strongest position ever regarding board membership, quality, and participation. Although there is no immediate need for additional members, recent bylaw changes allow for expansion if exceptional candidates are identified, and board members were encouraged to recommend strong potential additions.

▪ **Program Quality Committee** – Nancy W. Stamper, Committee Chair

Nancy Stamper reported that the committee reviewed the previous three noted and approved policy and procedures and received a presentation on adolescent care quality and youth workforce engagement, a copy of which was provided to the Board. Neiko Shea also shared that ChildNet has applied for grants through the Community Foundation of Broward and Truist to help fund employment and peer coaching support for youth transitioning into adulthood.

CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- **Statewide Issues – CBC Inequities** – Larry Rein raised concerns about inequities in Florida’s child welfare funding system, noting that agencies serving similar numbers of children receive vastly different funding levels. Mr. Rein presented data, of which a copy was provided to the committee, demonstrating that agencies serving similar numbers of children receive significantly different funding levels per child, and criticized the current model for relying on historical spending rather than actual needs, which he said rewards overspending and penalizes efficient agencies like ChildNet Broward and Palm Beach. Mr. Rein expressed concerns about funding structures that discourage reducing the number of children in care. Donna Eprifania noted that ChildNet’s efficiencies are supported by shared staffing structures, while some agencies benefit from larger parent organizations that can absorb deficits. Overall, ChildNet plans to advocate for a fairer, needs-based funding model that better recognizes efficient operations.
- **National Issues – “A Home for Every Child” Initiative** - Larry Rein reported that DCF will participate in the federal “A Home for Every Child” initiative, replacing the traditional Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) PIP process. Mr. Rein joined a work group of agency leaders and DCF staff to begin considering Florida-specific performance measures for the program. Mr. Rein



advocated for including Child Protective Investigations (CPI) and Children's Legal Services (CLS) performance in evaluating child welfare outcomes, noting that both play key roles in reducing removals and achieving timely permanency for children. Mr. Rein also recommended tracking workforce stability as a performance measure, emphasizing that consistent, experienced staff improve decision-making and permanency outcomes. Overall, Mr. Rein viewed the initiative and DCF's openness to feedback as a positive step forward, while recognizing historic challenges in measuring workforce data accurately.

PUBLIC COMMENT

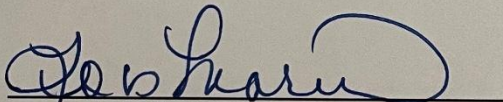
- Tina Lewis, Human Resources Officer, reminded the board about the upcoming Spring Celebration on May 28, 2026 at the Dr. Andre Fladell Civic Center in Delray Beach. This annual staff appreciation event will bring together employees from Palm Beach and Broward counties for lunch, games, team-building activities, and recognition of milestone service anniversaries. Board members are encouraged to attend.

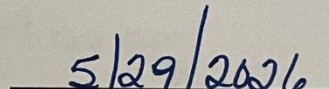
NEXT MEETING DATE

- May 29, 2026 @ 8:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

- Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:41 a.m.


Lois Marino
Board Secretary


Date

(Corporate Seal)