



# BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**May 15, 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, Sigrid McCawley

## **Other Attendees:**

*ChildNet Staff:* Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Dionne Wong, Julie DeMar, Susan Eby, Sheryl Williams, Deena Ponto, Andrea Cunningham, Julie Janello, Ashley Kiernan, Dedrick Reaves, Kaydion Watson, Stephanie Gooden, Kim Thai, Myles Flynn, Jahmielia Gale, Claudene Stetzer, Ted Ponto, Lanecia Radcliff, Annie Walker, Maggie Jovanovich, Nancy Petit-Frere, Samantha Ramsaran, *DCF:* Dawn Liberta, Teresa Janeczek

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## **CALL TO ORDER – Sigrid McCawley, Board Chair**

- Michael Lepera, Vice Chair, on behalf of 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 April 24, 2020 meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion was moved to approve the minutes. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.*

## **CHILDNET BOARD EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD – Dionne Wong, CHRLO**

- The Broward January 2020 through April 2020 and Palm Beach 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2020 ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Awards were presented to the following deserving employees:
  - January 2020 (Bwd) – Stephanie Gooden, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter
  - February 2020 (Bwd) – Nancy Petit-Frere, Adoption Advocate
  - March 2020 (Bwd) – Jahmielia Gale, Independent Living/Extended Foster Care Advocate
  - April 2020 (Bwd) – Annie Walker, Lead Child Advocate, Unit C1
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (PB) – Myles Flynn, Kinship Licensing Specialist

## **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

- Independent Living – Kaydion Watson, Director of Youth Services, gave a brief overview of the Independent Living (IL) Unit that focuses on the 18 and over population. This Unit is currently serving over 201 clients, of which there are 92 in extended foster care, 91 in Post-secondary Education Services and Support (PESS) and 18 receiving aftercare services. We have weekly remote visits with each youth to ensure they are being provided with needed services, i.e. ongoing financial



assistance, food items, etc. We have acquired funding from AT&T to provide additional funds of \$200. We also received 57 laptops from the Florida Coalition for Children (FCC) for those youth and young adults who did not have one in order for them to continue their education. We currently have a total of 95 graduates of which 1 obtained his Juris Doctorate, 1 Masters, 13 Bachelors, 10 Vocational Technical Certification, 2 Associate in Arts, 15 GED, 48 High School diploma and 5 Middle school. We are in the process of finalizing the date of the virtual Transitional Independent Living (TIL) graduation.

### **FINANCE REPORT – Chris Cade, Treasurer/Finance Chair and Donna Eprifania, CFO**

- Chris Cade noted that there is no formal finance report as the committee meeting is scheduled for May 27, 2020. However, Mr. Cade reported that he did meet with Donna Eprifania and noted that we have made progress on all of our insurance renewals. For our health insurance, we have received some friendly enhancements from the perspective of copays and prescription coverage with only a modest increase over the prior year. In addition, we were successful in renewing our General Liability policy. Ms. Eprifania noted that the predominate increase is only around General Liability. Our last four out of five years have had a loss ratio of over 100%. While looking back all the way to 2014, while we have had a \$200,000 increase this year over last year, we still are paying less than we did back at that time. Ms. Eprifania noted that they will be presenting the draft budget at the May 27<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee meeting.

### **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

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

Larry Rein reported that the committee meeting is scheduled later in the month. Mr. Rein noted that things continue to trend in the same way in terms of census in Palm Beach. Removals continue to be down significantly and not completely as a result of the pandemic. The decreases in removals are consistent with what they have been for the last five-six months. Therefore, group care numbers are down to the lowest they have ever been. Foster home numbers, however, are the highest they have ever been. We are utilizing foster homes better than we ever had. The only thing of concern in Palm Beach currently is that we continue to see a challenge with Children's Home Society's (CHS) case management program in terms of their turnover (more than 50%). We are again going to meet with them to work on their turnover problem.

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

Andrea Cunningham reported that due to COVID, all of her efforts right now are focused on fundraising. Currently, a lot of family foundations have refocused their funding to assist with COVID emergencies. This has given Ms. Cunningham an opportunity to reach out to some of the foundations that we already know to see if they have redirected their foundations to support COVID funding. Ms. Cunningham is researching the cost of purchasing a mailing list of targeted populations that have an interest in child welfare. She is also reaching out to Donor Search to help identify some national and local foundations that focus on funding child welfare organizations.

- Grants – We have a couple of grants in which we did not use all of the monies as our finance department found more efficient ways get the projects done for less money. Ms. Cunningham is reaching out to them to see if we could repurpose some of the money to use for COVID.
- Media and Public Relations – Working with Kip Hunter Marketing to identify media opportunities for foster parents, adoptive parents, and young adults over 18. Boca Chamber is going to highlight ChildNet in their next newsletter.



- Launched Foster Care Awareness Month Campaign - #FosterCareImpact - We have asked employees, volunteers, foster and adoptive parents to post videos of the impact ChildNet has had on them or vice versa and to tag ChildNet. This directs people to our website.
- NBC 6 – May 16, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m. in Broward – Larry Rein will be part of a special entitled “Foster and Hope during COVID-19”.
- **Governance Committee – Michael Lepera, Committee Chair**
  - COVID-19 Update – Larry Rein reported that operations remain very smooth in both counties. The leadership team is planning very carefully for the safe return of staff to the offices but with an abundance of caution. We continue to have weekly communication with all staff, DCF and other community partners. Mr. Rein noted that the sentiment among staff is that they feel they are well supported by their supervisors and leadership team.
  - Caseload Plan Update/CHS Update – Nothing additional to report.
- **Legal/Human Resource Committee – Sigrid McCawley, Committee Chair**
  - Dionne Wong reported that we have had one new counsel assigned through our insurance carrier to address an employment matter.
  - The Risk Management Committee met on April 22, 2020 with the focus of the meeting on COVID-19. This Committee reported that ChildNet’s pivot during this time has been incredibly responsive to the children, families, the communities that we are serving and our staff. The committee expressed that ChildNet’s performance during this time is a direct result of the priorities and strategies that are in place. Information Technology (IT) reported that the measures on safety and security has proven effective despite the increase in phishing, spam, etc. Facilities went over various actions to maintain compliance with OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) as well as CDC guidelines. In addition, ChildNet has secured Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for employees which are readily available. Contracts spoke about the increased communication and support they are providing to our providers to ensure that ChildNet, in collaboration with the providers, continues to provide support and resource without service interruption. Human Resources reported on the recent federal law, ‘Families First Corona Virus Response Act’ which allows for paid sick leave and extended FMLA benefits for eligible employees. ChildNet is in compliance in ensuring that employees are made aware of these rights and have created a process to ensure employees are able to access these benefits.
- **Program Quality Committee**
  - Julie DeMar reported that the Committee reviewed the Management of Operational Procedures (MOP) and discussed the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter Scorecard results for both counties, which were positive overall. Ms. DeMar noted that Susan Eby presented on the contract monitorings that the Service Quality department is doing. Joe Rogers noted that the Board should be proud of how our agency is moving in the right direction and performing overall statewide. Larry Rein noted that on a Florida Coalition for Children meeting with the DCF Secretary recently, the agenda provided by the DCF Secretary included a discussion of the federal Child & Family Service Reviews (CFSR). government across the nation. Every state is always on a performance improvement plan, as is Florida, as it has always been. However, under that agenda item, the Secretary included “Kudos to ChildNet for its performance on the CFSR.” Mr. Rein is extremely proud of



ChildNet's performance and noted that while we do really well on the scorecard and on things that are quantitative, now we are much more focused on the qualitative.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- There was no new business to report.

## **BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Sigrid McCawley**

- There was no Board Chair Report

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

- Legislative/State Budget Update – Mr. Rein reported that there remains a lack of clarity about what will happen to the state budget as a result of the current emergency. We know that the legislature still has not forwarded its budget from the last session to Governor DeSantis. After speaking with our lobbyist, we believe that the legislature is waiting for the sales tax information from the month of April before providing the budget to the Governor, who then either needs to approve it in its entirety or veto line items. To reiterate, the budget that was passed by the legislature was very friendly to child welfare and to ChildNet. In Palm Beach, in particular, we were anticipating an increase in core funding, back of the bill funding to address our current budget deficit, and a special appropriation to replicate our Oak Street project. At this point, those gains are in a precarious position. The current position expressed by the Governor and the Senate President is that they do not want to convene a Special Session of the legislature until after the November 2020 elections. At that time, they will look at making cuts if they are needed. Overall, for the moment, we are worried that the gains we might have gotten in funding we may not get, we are hopeful that we will not see any cuts immediately, and if there are cuts, it will be in the next fiscal year or the next calendar year.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- There was no old business.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- There was no public comment.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE**

- The next scheduled Board meeting is the Annual Board Meeting on Friday, June 19, 2020 via Zoom Conference.
- 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 8:59 a.m.

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Amy Black  
Board Secretary

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Date

(Corporate Seal)