



ANNUAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 24, 2022

Board of Directors:

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

Unable to Attend:

Chelsea Bellew, Nancy Gregoire Stamper, Ronald Ford, Tom Lukasik

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Jason Tracey, Julie DeMar, Rae Bullard, Susan Eby, Deena Ponto, Andrea Cunningham, Tamaru Phillips, Julie Janello, *DCF:* Jeffrey Ferraro, Elisa Cramer, Dawn Liberta

CALL TO ORDER – Michael Lepera, Board Chair

- Michael Lepera, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Dr. Victoria Thurston, Board Secretary

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The May 20, 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 – Michael Lepera, Board Chair

- Michael Lepera welcomed new Board Director Lois Marino, Executive Director of the BBX Capital Foundation and BBX Capital.

CHILDNET BOARD EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD – Rae Bullard, CHRO

- Mr. Rein noted that the staff member being recognized for May 2022 was not able to attend today's meeting so his recognition will be at the August 2022 Board meeting:

BOARD SERVICE – Jason Tracey, CLO

- Approval of Resolutions #235 - #238 – Election of Officers – The following names were brought to the Board for vote for Officer Positions for a one (1) year term, ending June 2023:
 - *Chair* – Amy Black
 - *Vice Chair* – Dr. Victoria Thurston
 - *Treasurer* – Meghan Russell
 - *Secretary* – Rebecca Brock

A *motion* was moved and seconded to approve Resolutions #235-#238 for appointment of one (1) year, ending June 2023. A *vote was taken*. The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted*.

- Approval of Resolution #239 – Election of Directors – two-year reappointment – The following slate of Directors are up for reappointment of a two (2) year term ending June 2024:
 - Chelsea Bellew
 - David Prather
 - Col. Josefa Benjamin



- Lois Marino
- Michael Lepera
- Nancy Gregoire Stamper
- Paul Adams
- Dr. Ronald Ford

A motion was moved and seconded to approve Resolution #239 for re-appointment of two (2) years, ending June 2024. A vote was taken. The ayes have it and the motion was adopted.

- Approval of Resolution #240 – Election of Directors – less than two-year reappointment – The following Directors are up for reappointment of less than two (2) years. The reappointments are noted as follows:
 - Melida Akiti – 5 months – ending November 2022
 - Joseph Rogers – 10 months – ending April 2023
 - Thomas Lukasik – 10 months – ending April 2023

A motion was moved and seconded to approve Resolution #240 for re-appointment of less than two (2) years as noted above. A vote was taken. The ayes have it and the motion was adopted.

- **NOTE:** After the Election of Board Officers/Directors was approved, the Board meeting was turned over to the new Board Officers: Chair - Amy Black, Vice Chair - Dr. Victoria Thurston, Treasurer - Meghan Russell and Secretary - Rebecca Brock.

ADDITIONAL ITEM FOR APPROVAL – Jason Tracey, CLO and Joe Rogers, Program Quality Chair

- Approval of Resolution #241 – Compliance with License Requirements, Regulations and Decrees – Discussion was held by Jason Tracey that this annual compliance check is to ensure that all ChildNet licenses are in place.

A motion was moved and seconded to approve Resolution #241. A vote was taken. The ayes have it and the motion was adopted.

- Approval of P&P – CN 009.087 – Licensing Employees as Foster Parents – Discussion was held on this policy.

A motion was moved and seconded to approve Policy & Procedure CN 009.087. A vote was taken. The ayes have it and the motion was adopted.

FINANCIAL REPORT AND INSURANCE UPDATE – Donna Eprifania, CFO

- Financial Update – The Finance Committee met and reviewed the proposed FY 2022-2023 budget and the April 2022 and May 2022 financials. Donna Eprifania noted that we are right on track with how we expected to spend our resources. We are looking at a very healthy posture in both counties. We took our 9-month actual expenditures, annualized those, and used those as a basis to prepare the preliminary budget. We are still working from a preliminary budget as we have not yet received our actual allocation from DCF. The Finance Committee will meet in July to discuss the proposed budget and will bring it to the full board in August 2022 for ratification and approval. The preliminary budget in Palm Beach has a posture of a \$500,000 deficit. In Broward, we are going to try to expand any innovative processes or evidence-based practices, etc., so we are looking to approach Broward with an over-budgeted amount using the roll forward that we have created. We will still have a \$14.5 million rollover balance in Broward. We ensured that part of the DCF allocation was to support the workforce. Therefore, we are making a market adjustment for case management staff and a 3% C.O.L.A. for all other staff. We are going to move forward with merit-based performance evaluations in the fall in which all staff are eligible.

Rae Bullard reported that we were able to increase starting salaries for Dependency Case Managers from \$42,500 to \$50,000. In addition, current case managers will be moved to \$50,000 as well. If they are already receiving over \$50,000, they will receive the 3% C.O.L.A. increase. Because we made this adjustment in compensation, we will discontinue the \$3,000 sign-on incentive and discontinue the high-caseload incentive. The increase is effective July 9, 2022 and will be seen in the July 29, 2022 paycheck. All staff were notified



by email of the increase last week and the ones receiving the market increase will also receive notification by mail.

Larry Rein noted that in the last legislative session, the legislature chose to increase funding statewide for child welfare by \$150 million. ChildNet Broward is not receiving any of this funding, however, Palm Beach is receiving approximately \$2.75 million. However, some non-recurring funds that came down from federal government last year will not be appearing this year. Of the \$150 million, the largest portions are going to those CBCs that have been underfunded and are struggling, i.e., Pinellas/Pasco County, Hillsborough, and Sarasota.

- Insurance Update – Donna Eprifania reported that ChildNet had some significant losses over the last 3-5 years. Not just at ChildNet but statewide as well. Due diligence was done with regards to seeking out any other carrier that could potentially give us a better opportunity. It was decided to stay with Florida Insurance Trust but with having to make some decisions this year to avoid a potential \$1.1 million increase between professional and general liability and excess liability. We were looking at a \$700,000 increase in general and professional liability insurance and a \$300,000 increase for excess insurance. The Finance Committee's decision was to take a \$250,000 deductible with general and professional liability, which is an expense that is billable to the Department should we incur. We only have to pay the deductible when we have the actual expenditure. If we need to reserve or put aside any other resources for anticipated future expenses, we can do so. The Committee decided to opt-out of carrying excess liability coverage. The net change remained flat.

ANNUAL UPDATE – Jason Tracey, CLO

- Discussion of Sunshine Law – Jason Tracey noted that no changes have been made since last year. Mr. Tracey noted that per Sunshine Law, meetings must be open to the public and minutes are to be taken. No use of computers to conduct private discussions regarding board business. Julie Janello will send a link/video to the Board from the Inspector General that discusses Sunshine Law.
- Board Survey Presentation – Jason Tracey provided a brief overview of the board survey results. Discussion was held that “very good” responses increased in 7 out of 24 questions. The following 3 out of 24 questions decreased in the “very good” category: 1) ideas being heard and considered, 2) balance of information, and 3) funding sources. In addition, 13 out of 24 questions had relatively no change in “very good” responses. Dr. Thurston asked if there is a way to track why the numbers increased and/or decreased. Amy Black suggested adding the number of board members and length of service to the survey which would help address why some of the changes occur. Ms. Black also suggested having an overview of our funding services be presented at a future meeting. Discussion was also held on the personal assessment strengths results. Mr. Rein noted that we will look at the board committees and ensure everyone is assigned to a committee in which to use their expertise. Melida Akiti noted that we need to galvanize former Board members to keep the relationships moving forward.
- Board/Committee Meeting Calendar, Board Roster/Contact List and Committee Structure and Membership – These documents were updated and provided to the Board. Mr. Tracey noted that there will not be Board or Committee meetings in the months of July and December, unless otherwise requested by the Board Chair.
- Annual Acknowledgement Form – Annually, each Board member is to complete the Acknowledgement Form to note any conflicts of interest. Julie Janello will email the form to full Board for completion.

ANNUAL UPDATE – Julie DeMar, CPO

- Management of Operational Procedures (MOP) Presentation – Julie DeMar gave a brief overview of the MOP, which is the mechanism that demonstrates the review of policies and procedures, both internally and externally, in both counties. The MOP is also reviewed with the Program Quality Committee. External reviewers include the Department of Children and Families' Quality Assurance Department, their Licensing Department, and their Contract Oversight Unit, the Florida Certification Board, and the Community Based Care Integrated Health (CBCIH). As a result of the reviews, both internally and externally, there are times



when there are actions identified to improve compliance with the policies and procedures. Currently, there are no active Corrective Action Plans in either county.

COVID-19 Update – Larry Rein, CEO and President

- COVID-19 Update – Larry Rein reported that we shared with all staff that they all have a dedicated space in each building respectively, and as a soft return, they are now able to come into the office as they deem necessary. We are looking at a more permanent return in September once school resumes for the new year. Ms. Akiti asked if we had a written plan for which departments working more from home and hybrid. Mr. Rein noted that each leader is to determine what their department should look like. His one caveat is that everyone must have some presence in the offices.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

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

Col. Benjamin reported that the Committee had a brief meeting last evening. Col. Benjamin also stated that she, Dr. Victoria Thurston, and Lois Marino attended the TIL graduation. Both Donna Eprifania and Rae Bullard gave a summary of the finances and the strategy for increases, recruiting and retaining, as noted above.

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

Andrea Cunningham reported on the following.

- Truist – Ms. Cunningham thanked Board Director Michael Lepera for the \$10,000 donation from Truist to use as unrestricted funds
- Broward TIL Graduation – Over 100 people attended the graduation. NBC 6 was there so hopefully we will receive some good coverage from it.
- Boca Festival Days – Boca Festival Days was created to help bring awareness and business to the nonprofits for profits during the summer months when it is slow. This is a Boca Chamber sponsored event. This year we will be participating in an event called Boca's Got Talent, which is a talent show of musicians, artists, comedians that apply to compete in 2-minute competition in front of a crowd. There will be eight contestants with three winners. The event will be held at Crazy Uncle Mike's in Boca off Yamato Road. We do need a judge to participate.
- Back-to-School Drive - We are in the middle of our back-to-school drive and have already collected a few hundred.

- **Governance Committee – Larry Rein, CEO and President**

- Larry Rein noted that Donna Eprifania provided a brief preview of the budget and Jason Tracey provided a brief overview of the board survey.
- Membership Recruitment – Larry Rein reported that Tom McManus (Broward) has postponed joining the Board and Catherine Coombs (Palm Beach) has deferred joining the Board at this time.

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

Joe Rogers noted that the Committee reviewed the above approved Policy and Procedure.

NEW BUSINESS

- No new business to discuss.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- ChildNet's Anti-Racism Workgroup Update – Dr. Tamaru Phillips reported that the Workgroup distributed information to staff regarding activities for Juneteenth. The Workgroup is continuing to work on their current



project of reviewing the children in group care (black and brown children and teenagers) to ensure that they are getting their service needs met appropriately. They are ensuring that the services are appropriate for the level of care. In group settings, they are looking at how to support the youth, what is needed, and asking them questions on what we can do better to serve them.

CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- TIL Graduation - Larry Rein reported 109 current and former foster youth were recognized at the Broward Graduation. Of the 109 graduates, 56 received high school diplomas, 16 received GED, 20 received vocational/technical certificates, 11 received Associates degree, 6 received Bachelors, and 1 received a Juris Doctorate. This is a testament to their strength and resilience. While the number of 109 is great, there should be a focus going forward that there should be more than 109. The mission of our Adolescent Services standing committee is to focus on the services and the quality of the services these youth receive. The Palm Beach Graduation was equally as impressive. Melida Akiti asked if a position is being created at ChildNet to assist these youth developmentally in the workforce. Ms. Akiti also offered that if there is a funding issue for this position, she is willing to work on a grant and an award for ChildNet to create this position. Larry Rein noted that they had the first internal meeting of the larger expanded group that is looking at the teen and adolescent challenges and will incorporate Ms. Akiti's suggestion into this group.
- Legislature - Our theme continues to be trying to remind the legislature how important it is to maintain the quality of the community-based care model. From 20 years ago, we have created a system where local foster care systems are built that respond quickly and flexibly to the needs of their community, to the diversity of their community and acknowledge and take advantage of the resources in their community. The legislature needs to less and less go back and move to a centralized approach. Mr. Rein feels that our local delegation would be very receptive to that. Funding statewide is in a very good place. We need to be sure that the model for funding, going forward, treats Palm Beach more equitably. This will also be part of our attempt to continue to consolidate the two contracts.
- Harvard University School of Government (HUSG) – we had our first meeting with a team from HUSG. We are entering into a partnership with the Deluca Foundation and the Children's Services Council of Broward to bring in expert consultation from HUSG on how to do a better job of engaging relative/non-relative caregivers.
- New Board Director-Lois Marino - Ms. Marino attended the Broward graduation as well and stated that it set the tone for what ChildNet is about. Ms. Marino requested a breakdown of the number of children/youth in each age category. She feels that this information would be a way to help if we know that a majority is a certain age and what is their need. Ms. Marino asked if there is a certain group of individuals needed for the board. Larry Rein noted that we need more diversity and people with passion and influence (people who will spread the message). Joe Rogers recommended to look at recruiting foster parents and or/former foster youth.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 26, 2022.

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 9:40 a.m.

Rebecca Brock
Board Secretary

08-31-22

Date

(Corporate Seal)