



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 27, 2021

Board of Directors:

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

Unable to Attend:

Melida Akiti

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Jason Tracey, Julie DeMar, Rae Bullard, Susan Eby, Deena Ponto, Sheryl Williams, Tamaru Phillips, Andrea Cunningham, Julie Janello, Ian Hutchings, Katie Vella, Argentina Moore, Lorry Bowles, Martin Ortiz, *DCF:* Dawn Liberta, Jeffrey Ferraro, Teresa Janeczek

CALL TO ORDER – Michael Lepera, Board Chair

- Michael Lepera, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Dr. Victoria Thurston, Board Secretary

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The June 25, 2021, 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 – Rae Bullard, CHRO

- The ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Award was presented to the following deserving employees:
 - June 2021 – Lorry Bowles, Lead Dependency Case Manager, Unit 121
 - July 2021 – Ian Hutchings, Family Support Worker, Transportation Department

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

- Transportation Department – Martin Ortiz, Director of Administrative Services, gave a brief presentation of the Transportation Department. This department provides much needed assistance to case management as well as assists families to complete their case plans. In both counties, the transportation staff transport youth to and from school, to court hearings, to medical and dental appointments, to family visitations and change of placement. Staff from this department also, at times, travel with youth to placement out-of-state. In Broward, the department began in 2004-2005 and is brand new in Palm Beach. Currently in Broward, they have 14 positions and 14 vehicles and in Palm Beach they have 12 positions, with 3 vacancies, and 5 vehicles. Most specifically, Palm Beach is faced with challenges where the demand of requests from case management cannot be supported by the resources the department has.



FINANCE REPORT – Joe Rogers, Board Treasurer and Donna Eprifania, CFO

- Joe Rogers reported that at the Finance Committee meeting on 08-25-21, the draft budget of FY 2021-2022 was presented. It was decided at the committee meeting to have Donna Eprifania prep a discussion to be more transparent and for everyone to more fully understand the increase in the budget over last fiscal year. The Committee did, however, move forward with a cost-of-living (COLA) increase which is embedded in the budget. Donna Eprifania reported that the external audit will start during the weeks of September 20-October 4, 2021. We are hopeful that we will be able to have the audit finalized and brought back to the Board in December 2021. In the June 2021 financials, both counties at year-end are in a healthy financial posture. Broward has continued to have a surplus month over month and at year-end we have approximately a \$3.5 million surplus. In Palm Beach, we had some gains due to two specific areas. One is that we received \$500,000 in back of the bill funding as well as an anomaly with where expenditures for last July's group care was captured. Those June expenditures were captured in the prior year instead of on a rolling 12-month approach, which allowed us to end the year in Palm Beach with a \$1 million surplus. As we prepare the budgets for both counties, we are trying to be strategic and stand up some evidence-based practices that will be needed to be utilized as of October 1st with the implementation of Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). At the next meeting, Ms. Eprifania will bring greater visibility to the increased budgets, showing the increased resources provided to us by the State of Florida due to the Cares Act funding and additional adoption subsidy money.

COVID-19 UPDATE – Larry Rein, CEO and President

- **COVID-19 Update** – Larry Rein reported that there was a tremendous increase in the number of positive cases beginning the third week of July. In August, number of children testing positive in Palm Beach was 40 and in Broward was 66. Our previous goal to gradually return to the offices in some fashion was by August 30th. However, the return date is on hold given the increase in the number of positive cases again. However, changes to both offices are continuing and should be completed soon.

Due to challenges in retaining case management staff, we are requiring that all directors, supervisors and program officers have regular on-site interactions with new and current case managers. The next pre-service training that commences September 7th will be held face-to-face instead of virtually as we feel the trainees do not get fully engaged when taking the training virtually.

ChildNet is increasing our efforts to incentivize vaccinations organization-wide. In September, we are launching an incentive campaign to those who show they have been fully vaccinated. Those names will then be entered into a raffle in November.

We are identifying those children in out-of-home care that have not been vaccinated. We will then work on the appropriate granting of consent. ChildNet can give consent if parental rights have been terminated. If parental rights are still intact, we must get consent from the parent.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **New Committee Chair Appointments**

Advisory Board Committee - Due to the resignation of Armando Fana from the Board on 06-30-21, and as he served as chair of this committee, a new committee chair is needed. Josefa Benjamin was appointed as the new committee chair.



Legal/Human Resource Committee – Due to Sigrid McCawley terming out from the Board on 06-25-21, and as she served as chair of this committee, a new committee chair is needed. Rebecca Brock was appointed as the new committee chair.

Audit Committee - Due to the resignation of Armando Fana from the Board on 06-30-21, and as he served as chair of this committee, a new committee chair is needed. New chair cannot be anyone already serving on the Finance Committee. Amy Black currently serves along with Joey Epstein, non-board member. Further discussion to be had by Board Chair and CEO on appointing new committee chair.

- **Advisory Board Committee – Josefa Benjamin, Interim Committee Chair**

Larry Rein reported that the committee received a year-end update of the census. The number of children served dropped off by 8%. Out-of-home care decreased 14%. Removals continue to decrease. The current number of children is 1,450. The challenge is stabilizing the case management workforce. Job Fair was held in Palm Beach. New pre-service class beginning in September with 5 trainees.

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

Andrea Cunningham reported on the following.

- Save the Date – Palm Beach Care for Kids Luncheon - scheduled for March 8, 2022, at the Woodfield Country Club in Boca Raton honoring Kathy & Paul Leon. Sponsorships are available.
- Save the Date – Broward Cocktail Reception – In years past, we have held a luncheon, but this year we are holding a cocktail reception and will be honoring Sigrid McCawley for her ten years of dedicated service to the board. The reception will be held on April 9, 2022, from 6:00-8:00pm at the Lauderdale Yacht Club. Sponsorship and ticket information will be forwarded in the coming weeks.
- Fundraising Committee - We are now recruiting members for the Fundraising Committee. Melida Akiti has graciously committed to lead the charge, but we need additional members. In addition, former Board member Chris Cade has agreed to join the committee. This committee plays a crucial role in the fundraising efforts of the organization. Raising unrestricted funds enables ChildNet to prioritize different needs as they arise. Needs of children and their caregivers, as well as respond to unforeseen circumstances, such as COVID-related expenses. As a committee member, you will have the opportunity to make introductions to individuals, foundations, and corporations. We will also need members to express our gratitude to our donors by writing, emailing, or calling them.
- Appointment of Larry Rein - Governor Ron DeSantis announced the appointment of Larry Rein to the Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse.
- Hispanic Women of Distinction is honoring Melida Akiti on 09-10-21 at the Signature Grand, Davie.



- **Governance Committee – Amy Black, Committee Chair**
 - **Quarterly Strategic Plan Update** – we completed the 2nd year of the 3-year plan.
 - Goal 1 – Create a 1% total budget contingency fund through a combination of fundraising and revenue maximization. At the end of the 4th quarter of the second fiscal year, we have exceeded the goal of 1% at 1.03%.
 - Goal 2 – Safely decrease the use of residential group care by 30%. At the end of the 4th quarter of the second fiscal year, the number of children in residential group care - Annual Mean for Broward is a 31% decrease from FY 18-19 and for Palm Beach is a 25% decrease from FY 18-19. Things are fluid and change regularly.
 - Goal 3 – Create a fully implemented new corporate structure with management company and two unique organizations with individual boards by May 2020. 1) Put hold on the corporate restructure. As we want to consolidate two county contracts, we are meeting with the DCF Chief of Staff in the next week to discuss proposed consolidation in more detail. 2) Preliminary report of Auditor General investigation of CBC lead agency related contracts may impact original corporate restructure plan. The Auditor General did not look favorably on two other CBC's that did corporate restructure that ChildNet was looking to copy. The Auditor General felt they had some conflicts of interest.
 - **FY 2020-2021 CEO Scorecard** – Amy Black reported that the Governance/Executive Committee provided Mr. Rein with his annual scorecard. Mr. Rein scored 3.85 out of 4 points. Ms. Black noted that under Mr. Rein's leadership this past year, we are in a positive financial position, we have improved employee engagement, we managed through COVID very effectively, we had a lot of legislative and community involvement, and he managed a great leadership team. There are quantitative measures that ChildNet must meet as an organization. These scores are included in the total score of 3.85 out of 4 points.
 - **Membership Recruitment**

Debbie Pucillo - Larry Rein reported that Debbie Pucillo, a retired judge from Palm Beach, is very interested in becoming a ChildNet board member. After further discussion with Ms. Pucillo, who is out of state for the next few months, Mr. Rein would like to defer sending the Board Candidate Application to her until early next year.
 - Mr. Rein will be sending Board Candidate Application Packets to: Paul Adams an attorney in Palm Beach County who was referred by board member Rebecca Brock. Mr. Adams has substantial contacts in the community and is very interested in fundraising and to: Chelsea Bellew an attorney in Palm Beach County who was referred by the Junior League of the Palm Beaches.
- **Legal/Human Resources Committee – Sigrid McCawley, Committee Chair**

Rebecca Brock reported that the committee met on August 9, 2021, and it was noted that no new outside counsel had been retained. In addition, Jason Tracey had provided a brief summary of the Risk Management Committee meeting. ChildNet is going to be the pilot to implement some things to help combat some ransomware, and we also going to continue to provide phishing training to staff. The next meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2021.



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

Quarterly Scorecard Report - Julie DeMar reported that the committee discussed the quarterly scorecard report. Both counties scored well. Broward met 10 of the 12 measures while Palm Beach met 11 of the 12 measures. Our score exceeded in the measures on dental visits and on keeping sibling groups together. Both counties struggle with the measure of returning to care. We are slightly shy of the target of this measure in both counties.

Quarterly Service Quality Report – Julie DeMar noted that Susan Eby presented the Service Quality Report and that most of our providers are meeting their targets.

NEW BUSINESS

- There was no new business.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- ChildNet's Anti-Racism Workgroup Update – Dr. Tamaru Phillips reported that the workgroup is collecting data to see the breakdown of children in care, so that we can assess the need of the agency and the community. By doing this, we hope to create goals and plans that will aid us as an agency to create and demonstrate change. Some of the areas we are pulling from: race, length of stay, race of caregiver, placement moves, psychotropic medication and delinquencies.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Michael Lepera

- Michael Lepera congratulated Mr. Rein on a great CEO Scorecard which represents how much passion Mr. Rein gives to the organization. Mr. Lepera noted that he hopes we have Board meetings in person in the near future. In addition, he encouraged the board to support ChildNet's fundraising and other events.

CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- Mr. Rein noted that he is thrilled to get the support of the Board and all of their involvement. He noted that this Board makes him a better leader and has made ChildNet a much stronger organization.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 24, 2021, via Zoom.

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 9:20 a.m.



Dr. Victoria Thurston
Board Secretary

9/24/2021

Date

(Corporate Seal)