



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 24, 2021

Board of Directors:

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

Unable to Attend:

N/A

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Jason Tracey, Julie DeMar, Rae Bullard, Susan Eby, Tamaru Phillips, Andrea Cunningham, Julie Janello, Tammie Delvilla, Chavonna Murphy, Kenia Allen, *DCF:* Dawn Liberta, Teresa Janeczek, Elisa Cramer

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 August 27, 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 employee:
 - August 2021 – Tammie Delvilla, Dependency Case Manager, Unit C3

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

- Contracts Department – Denesee Rankine-Palmer, Director of Contracts, provided a brief overview of the Contracts Department. The Contracts team is responsible for the entire life cycle of the contract management process from procurement through contract administration. We are responsible for the research and writing of the solicitation for any service that is needed, such as therapeutic services, services to facilitate case plans, residential and foster care programs, or any other service needs that the agency may have. We also ensure that we are incorporating any new provisions that is in our DCF contract into our subcontracts as well. We are also responsible for assisting providers with interpretation of those new requirements. We support providers with technical assistance, if needed, conduct on-site visits and/or coordinate or provide trainings depending on the need. We are working with several agencies to roll out three evidence-based programs. These are Multi-Systemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy and Home Builders.

The Contracts Department consists of 4 staff who manage 87 contracts in both counties. On a monthly basis, the Contracts team works very closely with the Finance team to ensure payments are processed through the FSFN database for kids in foster and group home placements, as well



as process all other invoices from the providers in a timely manner, which is approximately 230 invoices monthly. The Contacts team ensures that funds received by DCF is being allocated according to the guidelines provided. On an annual basis, the Team is responsible for reviewing every program budget and conducting a cost analysis, in addition to any other subcontractor report that is due or required by DCF. Recently, Ms. Rankine-Palmer developed a risk assessment for ChildNet that we began using this fiscal year to determine the term of each contract. This provides us with a standardized process to explain how long a contract term will be – either a single year or multi-year term. The Contracts team participated in many meetings regarding FFPSA (Family First Preservation Services Act) with both local DCF and DCF headquarters. Ms. Rankine-Palmer is an active member on the Statewide Foster Care Subcommittee. DCF has been trying to roll out a foster care payment matrix, which looks very much like the one that ChildNet has in-house. DCF has copied a good amount of ChildNet’s document to build their statewide matrix. The DCF document is expected to roll out by 10-01-21. Ms. Rankine-Palmer has been with ChildNet for 17 years.

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

- Joe Rogers reported that the Finance Committee is presenting the FY 2021-2022 budgets to the board for review and approval. The Finance Committee had multiple meetings to review this year’s budget, which has an increase over last year’s budget due additional funding come our way and carry forward funding. As we are building a larger budget for this year, there is some strategic direction to that. There are some strategic investments that ChildNet will be making over the next year or so that should have long-term impact both on cost-efficiency going forward and meeting new federal guidelines.

- Approval of FY 2021-2022 Broward Budget – Resolution #226 – The Broward budget for FY 2021-2022 is \$91,990,639, which is an increase of \$7 million from last year (\$3.7 million in carry-forward funds and the rest in additional resources provided by DCF).

A motion was moved and seconded to approve FY 2021-2022 Broward Budget in the amount of \$91,990,639. A vote was taken. The ayes have it and the motion was adopted.

- Approval of FY 2021-2022 Palm Beach Budget – Resolution #227 – The Palm Beach budget for FY 2021-2022 is \$54,160,574. We are reinvesting \$1.9 million in case management services. \$1 million is being redirected from what we had paid for subcontracted services at the top of last fiscal year (Children’s Home Society) and the other \$900,000 is for us to implement the cost-of-living adjustment and to add positions that will now provide transportation support to case managers, centralized filing and an expanded visitation approach. We are ending the year with a \$720,000 deficit.

A motion was moved and seconded to approve FY 2021-2022 Palm Beach Budget in the amount of \$54,160,574. A vote was taken. The ayes have it and the motion was adopted.

COVID-19 UPDATE – Larry Rein, CEO and President

- **COVID-19 Update** – Larry Rein reported that the total number of affected employees remains low; however, the biggest challenge is children testing positive. We are facing a challenge of getting children vaccination, due to their reluctance to get vaccinated, and facing issues getting parental consent.

We launched our vaccination incentive on 09-01-21, to run through 10-31-21, in which staff can provide proof of full vaccination to receive a \$25 gift card and entry into a raffle of 10 individual \$1,000 gift card prizes. The raffle is to take place prior to Thanksgiving.



COMMITTEE UPDATES

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

Col. Benjamin reported that the committee met on 09-23-21. Col. Benjamin noted that Susan Eby, CCQO reported on the new initiative with the Palm Beach County court liaisons to enhance communication in order to be more effective. There is also a monthly education coalition that works together so that we can more effectively ensure that children have their educational needs met. Currently, Palm Beach has 8 open positions with 10 people in background. The census continues to slowly decrease which is down in the low 1,400's.

- **Adolescent Services AdHoc Committee – Melida Akiti, Committee Chair**

Report deferred to next month as meeting had to be rescheduled due to scheduling conflicts.

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

Andrea Cunningham reported on the following.

- 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.
- Broward Care for Kids Cocktail Reception – scheduled for April 9, 2022 at the Lauderdale Yacht Club honoring Sigrid McCawley.
- Thank-A-Thon - We are in the midst of our Thank-A-Thon, which is part of our strategy for our year-end fundraising efforts. Throughout the year, many of you have participated in thanking our donors via email and sending thank you notes. Recently, Dr. Victoria Thurston has made several phone calls and has received favorable feedback. Ms. Cunningham encouraged the Board to continue to participate in this effort.
- Annual Toy Drive - is in the planning stages. Ms. Cunningham noted that if anyone is interested in participating or involving their company, please let her know.

- **Governance Committee – Amy Black, Committee Chair**

- **Membership Recruitment** - Larry Rein reported we received the Board Candidate Applications from both Chelsea Bellew and Paul Adams and will work in scheduling the next steps for them. In addition, Mr. Rein is meeting with a potential candidate in early October.

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

Julie DeMar noted that the committee discussed the 4th quarter results of CFSR (Child and Family Services Review), which are the last results we will see that way as DCF is shifting towards the use of the Life of Case tool. ChildNet ended the year positively in both counties. Susan Eby presented on the CBCIH Key Performance Indicators and also the Contract Monitoring Results for the fiscal year.

NEW BUSINESS

- There was no new business.



CONTINUING BUSINESS

- ChildNet's Anti-Racism Workgroup Update – Dr. Tamaru Phillips reported that the workgroup is continuing to collect data by race, length of stay, race of caregiver, placement moves, psychotropic medication and in both counties. The next Workgroup Update meeting is 10-30-21.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Michael Lepera

- Vacancy of Audit Committee Chair – Mr. Lepera reported that Nancy Gregoire Stamper joined the Audit Committee and will serve as the committee's new Chair. The committee also includes Amy Black and Joey Epstein, non-board member.
- Donor Thank-A-Thon – Mr. Lepera added to Andrea Cunningham's summary of the Thank-A-Thon and noted that all monies received from donors go to unrestricted funds, which allows us to use that money for items that are not mandated by contract requirements. Mr. Lepera encouraged the Board to assist Ms. Cunningham.
- Short-Term "Marketing Committee" – Mr. Lepera noted that this short-term committee is to discuss tribute ideas for ChildNet's 20 years of service in Broward County in April 2022. We hope to have the first committee meeting in mid-October 2021. Melida Akiti has offered to join this committee and if anyone else is interested, please contact Michael Lepera, Larry Rein and/or Andrea Cunningham.

CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- Federal Legislation - Family First Preservation Services Act (FFPSA) - Larry Rein reported that 10-01-21 is the date for Florida's implementation of the federal Family First Preservation Services Act (FFPSA). The key point of this legislation is that the federal government is changing the way they will be reimbursing states for child welfare services. The federal government provides reimbursement by providing Title IV-E match to states for children and families who qualify under Title IV-E. There are some grandfathering in provisions so that children currently placed in traditional residential group care settings, that under FFPSA would not draw down federal Title IV-E match, can still receive Title IV-E match from the feds, as long as they stay in their current placements. In order for the state to receive Title IV-E match, when the children move out of that placement, they will have to move to a placement that meets the federal criteria. The Title IV-E reimbursement is made by the feds to the State of Florida. It is not made directly to CBC lead agencies, service providers or residential group care providers. ChildNet will continue to place children in traditional group care if that is what is appropriate for them. We will be able to pay for it with our general revenue that we receive from DCF. The challenge for the state will come in the future when there is the possibility of a decrease in the total amount of federal IV-E reimbursement to the state. States can potentially make up for the decreased draw down of federal money by investing in evidence-based prevention services which will now receive federal match. The State of Florida has identified 9 evidence-based practices that have been approved by the feds, and ChildNet is contracting for several of those practices.

Prevention is broad, as noted by the feds, so it will include families that are in the dependency system but whose children either remain with them under protective supervision of ChildNet and the court or families where there has been a removal but now to support the reunification those services can be put in place. The feds will reimburse the State to the extent that we use these evidence-based prevention services for families that we serve. The feds still have not approved Florida's prevention plan nor has the state finalized how they will go about drawing down the IV-E match.



- Senate Bills 80 & 96 – October 1st is also the date for implementation of Senate Bills 80 & 96 which dramatically change child welfare practices. However, the State has not yet developed the policies and procedures nor the administrative codes and rules to implement the statutory changes created by these two Senate bills. The legislature did allocate \$30 million to DCF to support implementation of best practices described in the legislation. The Department is in the process of figuring out how they will use that money. As of this week, Mr. Rein heard that a substantial portion, 60% of the \$30 million, should be coming to the CBCs to help them do some of the things that are described in that legislation, such as creating Kinship Navigation Programs, Family Finders Programs, perhaps convening some staffings, etc. Details remain unclear as we still have not seen the amendments, so we do not know how much money exactly or how that money should be used.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING DATE

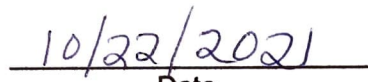
- The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 22, 2021, via Zoom.

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 9:24 a.m.



Dr. Victoria Thurston
Board Secretary



Date

(Corporate Seal)