



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

October 22, 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:

Michael Lepera, Ronald Ford, Tom Lukasik

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Jason Tracey, Julie DeMar, Rae Bullard, Susan Eby, Sheryl Williams, Deena Ponto, Tamaru Phillips, Andrea Cunningham, Julie Janello, Brittany Burnette, Shakeyia Brown, Raquel Garcia, Chaska Rojas, Alison Irvin, Krystal Kenison, *DCF:* Dawn Liberta, Teresa Janeczek, Elisa Cramer

CALL TO ORDER – Amy Black, Vice Chair

- Amy Black, Vice Chair, on behalf of Michael Lepera, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Dr. Victoria Thurston, Board Secretary

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The September 24, 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:
 - September 2021 – Raquel Garcia, ICPC/OTI/TOJ Coordinator, a 17-year ChildNet employee

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

- Out of County Services (OCS), ICPC, Background Screening and Family Engagement Unit Overview – Alison Irvin, Director of Case Management, who has worked at ChildNet for 18 years, provided a brief overview of her units. These units serve as support for case managers both in-state and out-of-state. ICPC handles all of the incoming and outgoing requests for ICPC, which is out of state requests as well as out of county requests. The Out of County Services (OCS) Unit are assigned children and families placed in Broward who come from out of state or from other counties within Florida. The Background Screening Unit processes criminal background checks for all individuals requested by case management, adoptions, etc. The Family Engagement Unit are responsible for prevention cases as well as they are on the decision-support team calls with the Broward Sheriff's Office who speak about prospective removals to try to keep the families together.



The Family Engagement Unit also investigates closed cases. The Diligent Search Unit is responsible for trying to locate parents so that we can help kids get to permanency faster.

ITEM FOR BOARD REVIEW AND APPROVAL – Amy Black, Vice Chair

- **Board Candidate – Chelsea Bellew** - Larry Rein and Michael Lepera met with Ms. Bellew an attorney in Palm Beach County. Ms. Bellew was recommended by the Junior League of Palm Beach. They both feel that Ms. Bellew would be a great asset to the Board.

A motion was moved and seconded to approve Chelsea Bellew as the newest member of the Board of Directors. A vote was taken. The ayes have it and the motion was adopted.

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

- Joe Rogers reported that the Finance Committee meets next week. An update will be provided at the next Board meeting.

COVID-19 UPDATE – Larry Rein, CEO and President

- **COVID-19 Update** – Larry Rein reported that pre-service training is back on-site. Palm Beach renovations are complete, and we are in the midst of renovations in the Broward office. New case managers now meet face-to-face with supervisors on a weekly basis. Positive cases are relatively low. There were no positive numbers this month for staff.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

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

Col. Josefa Benjamin reported that the Advisory Board Committee meets next week. An update will be provided at the next Board meeting.

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

Shakeyia Brown, Director of Service Coordination and Brittany Burnette, Adolescent and Young Adult Specialist, gave a brief presentation on the Adolescent & Young Adult Project, of which a copy was provided to the Board. This project includes the top 22 youth, ages 13-17 (11 in each county) to receive the necessary skills and services in their natural environment so they are able to transition into young adulthood with more positive outcomes. The committee has identified three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate this top 22 group. These KPIs include 1) an increase in self-advocacy, 2) an increase in efficacy and 3) an increase in connectedness. Next steps are to ensure that our youth, ages 13-17, are linked to life coach services. The Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model is an evidence-based program for youth and young adults with emotional/behavioral difficulties demonstrating improvements in real-life functioning and outcomes. Another step is linking our youth to programs like Career Source and other certificate-based type education programs. The F.A.C.T.S. (Families and Cops Teaching Safety)-Piney Grove Program includes law enforcement and student interactions, life skills training, etiquette training, mental health support, leadership opportunities, and community involvement. Board Chair Michael Lepera and Andrea Cunningham, Director of Community Relations are working on identifying a list of motivational speakers, in various settings, to speak with the youth. The YSO (Youth System Organizers of Broward) is an organization funded by Children's Services Council comprised of 4 youth and 4 system professionals. The 4 youth sit at the FLITE Center to meet with other youth and gather feedback of any issues the youth are having. One of our goals is to link a youth to the YSO to act as a mentor to our youth as well.



- **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. To date we have secured \$37,500 in sponsorships.
- Broward Care for Kids Cocktail Reception – scheduled for April 9, 2022 at the Lauderdale Yacht Club honoring Sigrid McCawley. To date we have secured \$38,500 in sponsorships.
- National Adoption Day – Palm Beach – scheduled for Friday, November 19, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent to you in the next couple of weeks.
- National Adoption Day – Broward – scheduled for Saturday, November 20, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent to you in the next couple of weeks.
- Annual Toy Drive - We have an updated Toy Drive Flyer that now includes QR codes for Target, Amazon and Wal-Mart. With three easy steps you can shop using your phone:
 - Open your camera app on your phone
 - Point the camera to the QR code
 - Tap the Pop-Up Banner or the QR Icon in the bottom right corner of the app

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

- **Selection Process of Provider Representative** – Larry Rein reported that a question was raised on how ChildNet selects a provider representative to join the Board. It was discussed that a more well-defined process might need to be included in the Bylaws. Mr. Rein made a recommendation to the committee, for future selections of provider representatives, that a list of provider agencies that operate in both Broward and Palm Beach Counties be presented to the Committee for their review and selection of a candidate to move forward in the board provider representative selection process. As noted in the Bylaws, Article III, Section 5-Nominations: “The Governance Committee shall review all potential applicants/applications and shall present a written slate of nominations to the Board of Directors for voting purposes at the next calendared monthly meeting. This process applies as well to any non-voting, ex-officio member who is appointed from ChildNet’s provider community network”. It was suggested wording such as the following be included: “the provider representative is to be from an organization that operates in both Broward and Palm Beach counties.” Further discussion to be held with the full Board.
- **Quarterly Strategic Plan Update**
 - Goal 1 – Create a 1% total budget contingency fund through a combination of fundraising and revenue maximization. At the end of the 1st quarter of the third fiscal year, we have exceeded the goal of 1%. We are at 1.085% of the goal amount of \$1,402,190.
 - Goal 2 – Safely decrease the use of residential group care by 30%. At the end of the 1st quarter of the third fiscal year, the number of children in residential group care - Annual Mean for Broward is a 21% decrease from FY 18-19 and for Palm Beach is a 33% decrease from FY 18-19. The Monthly Mean for Broward is a 3% decrease from 06-19 and for Palm Beach is a 31% decrease from 06-19.

Broward continues to be higher than the state average in the use of residential group care and we want to bring the numbers down. ChildNet has convened a high-level group of



ChildNet administrators that meet every 2 weeks to address this issue. We believe that the key challenges in Broward in meeting the goal are two-fold: 1) we have seen a drop off of the use of relative/non-relative caregivers, and 2) we have seen a decrease in the timely movement to permanence within 12 months. We have put into place Kinship Navigation Services and a Family Finders program. We are going to expand and enhance those services as part of the implementation of recent state legislation and its accompanying allocation. We hope to increase those relative caregiver placements which will lead to less reliance on residential group care. We have also entered into subcontracts with several local providers who are providing evidence-based practices approved by the federal government as Title IV-E reimbursable to the State: Family Functional Therapy is being provided by Camelot Community Care, Multi-Systemic Therapy is being provided by Henderson Behavioral Health and JAFCO, and Home Builders is being provided by Kids in Distress and Henderson Behavioral Health. These programs are intended to prevent the removal of children by strengthening families at the front-end and/or facilitation more timely and stable reunifications.

In addition, large family foster homes with live-in staff that we contract with SOS Children's Villages for are now licensed as foster homes. Unfortunately, a couple of those large family foster homes lost their live-in staff and they have not yet relicensed their replacements. Once they are relicensed, it will assist us in reaching at least to a 20% reduction in group care in Broward.

- Goal 3 – Create a fully implemented new corporate structure with management company and two unique organizations with individual boards by May 2020. At the end of the 1st quarter of the third fiscal year, we are still working on the consolidation of both contracts. The DCF Chief of Staff wants ChildNet to engage the legislature and to be transparent with the members of the Broward and Palm Beach Delegations, if we move forward. The next step is that the Secretary wants DCF and ChildNet to develop a plan/strategy that we can present to members of the delegation that will hopefully engage them and get their support. Additionally, we have not heard anything more about the Auditor General investigation of the corporate structure of three other CBC lead agencies which may lead to recommendations that DCF more stringently review and restrict lead agency structures which involve multiple corporations, the model that ChildNet had previously vetted and planned to move forward with.

- **Membership Recruitment**

- Paul Adams – Larry Rein reported that we received the board candidate application and background screening for Paul Adams. The next step is to schedule a meeting between Paul Adams, Michael Lepera and Larry Rein. We hope to present Mr. Adams at the next Board meeting.
- David Prather – Mr. Prather is an attorney in Palm Beach County who was recommended by Judge Kroll. We will be sending Mr. Prather a Board Candidate Application Packet.
- Economic Council – Mr. Rein noted that we have two more Palm Beach vacancies to fill on the Board. A new member joined the Palm Beach Community Alliance representing the Economic Council. The Economic Council member will meet with Mr. Rein and the CEO of the Economic Council to identify candidates from the business community.



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

Julie DeMar noted that the committee reviewed the new DCF Accountability Metric System and discussed some of the changes we will be making internally as it relates to information that we report to the Committee. We reviewed the 38 measures that will make up each circuit's ranking (21 of which are case management measures). Some of the measures are new and some remain the same. Also discussed the use of the Life of Case Tool that has replaced the local DCF version of the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) tool.

NEW BUSINESS

- There was no new business.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- ChildNet's Anti-Racism Workgroup Update – Dr. Tamaru Phillips reported that the data collected by race, length of stay, race of caregiver, placement moves, psychotropic medication was provided to Senior Leadership. We are going to narrow it down to three categories that are mostly in need of change. We have separated all of the categories to sub-committees of the workgroup.

CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- Larry Rein reported that October 1, 2021 was the implementation of Family First Preservation Services Act (FFPSA) and the beginning of the implementation of Senate Bills 80 and 96. These bills change the way we practice child welfare. Both of these implementations are a work-in-progress. The Florida legislature places a lot of demands on us and on DCF in terms of conducting meetings, multi-disciplinary staffings, etc. all with good intent to increase family, caregiver, youth voice in decisions about the youth's placement, etc. This will require additional staff. The Department has identified 60% of the \$30 million received from the legislature to allocate to CBCs to help support these changes and improvements. ChildNet will need to hire 5-7 additional staff between the two counties.

PUBLIC COMMENT

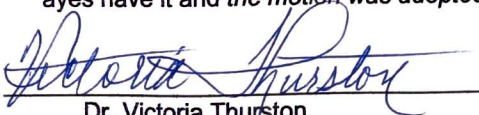
- There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 19, 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 9:08 a.m.



Dr. Victoria Thurston
Board Secretary



Date

(Corporate Seal)