



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

October 25, 2019

Board of Directors:

Sigrid McCawley, Board Chair; Michael Lepera, Vice Chairman; Christopher Cade, Treasurer; Amy Black, Secretary, Jillian Smath, Joe Rogers, Melida Akiti, Rebecca Brock, Sigrid McCawley, Tex Guignard, Victoria Thurston

Unable to Attend:

Armando Fana, Chris Cade, Michael Lepera, Tex Guignard

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Dionne Wong, Julie DeMar, Susan Eby, Deena Ponto, Sheryl Williams, Andrea Cunningham, Claudene Stetzer, Ted Ponto, Jacquisa Jarrell Dunbar, Julie Janello, *DCF:* Dawn Liberta

CALL TO ORDER – Sigrid McCawley, Board Chair

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

CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- Committee Week - Tallahassee – Mr. Rein reported that Committee Week began in Tallahassee this week. Secretary Poppell presented to several committees a 4-year plan to totally fund foster care and related services in Florida by the model and formula that was originally developed by the Florida Coalition for Children (FCC) several years ago. ChildNet Broward is shown as currently funded to the level that the formula would recommend. ChildNet Palm Beach is slightly below the recommended formula at 91%. The 4-year plan is to bring all CBCs up to 90-110% of what the formula states is adequately funded. The only concern Mr. Rein has is that even though the plan is to bring Palm Beach up to 100%, the increase for Palm Beach will not occur until the fourth year of the plan. There are multiple CBCs that are so severely underfunded that they need to be brought up to where they need to be first. There is one CBC in Miami-Dade County that the Secretary is considering a reduction of approximately \$11 million over the 4 years.
- Risk Pool Peer Review Committee – Mr. Rein reported that he serves on this committee. Through this committee, you can see that there are several CBCs that are struggling like ChildNet did several years ago.
- Holiday Events – ChildNet has developed and distributed to staff a calendar of several festive holiday events and activities.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Amy Black, Secretary

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.
The September 27, 2019 meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion was moved to approve the meeting minutes. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.*



CHILDNET BOARD EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD – Larry Rein

- The October 2019 ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Award was presented to Jacquisa Jarrell Dunbar, Adoption Home Finder (Broward). Ms. Jarrell Dunbar received five (5) Tokens of Appreciation from both her peers and from members of the community. She received a gift card and award for her outstanding service to ChildNet's mission.

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

- Adoptions – Per the Board's request, department overviews are now provided at each Board Meeting. Sheryl Williams, Program Officer of Case Management and Adoptions, reported on the Adoptions Unit. The Adoptions Unit, consisting of 4 Adoption Home Finders, 12 Adoption Advocates, 3 Supervisors and 1 Director, are responsible for finding forever families for youth whose parents' parental rights have been terminated. The Adoption Home Finder seeks homes for youth who do not have relatives or non-relatives in which to be placed. Adoptions provides MAPP classes and adoption home studies to recruit. ChildNet teams with Family Match to help find various families interested in adoption throughout the nation. The Heart Gallery works very closely with the Adoption Unit. They take photos of the available youth, have events to raise money, and have different activities in the community for potential families to meet the youth. November is Adoption Month in which several activities are held. In the last two years, ChildNet has exceeded DCF's adoption goal. November is one of the biggest months in which we have finalized the most adoptions within the 12-month period. In 2017, we finalized 61 adoptions in November and in 2018, we finalized 54 adoptions. ChildNet has finalized the most adoptions throughout the State, in which we have been recognized. Question raised as to the greatest barrier in completing an adoption. It was noted that not clearing background screenings is the greatest barrier. Melida Akiti asked what role the Board can have to be more effective with getting the word out about adopting. She requested a packet for the Board to include talking points and how to operationalize the Board's role.

FINANCE REPORT – Chris Cade, Treasurer & Finance Chair and Donna Eprifania, CFO

- Joe Rogers reported on behalf of Chris Cade, Committee Chair and Donna Eprifania, CFO.
 - Broward - ended the month of August 2019 with \$6.3 million in revenue and total expenditures of \$6.9 million, for a deficit of \$575,000, bringing the year-to-date deficit to \$317,000. The deficit is driven in large part by the fact that our payroll system is budgeted at 1/12 of payroll each month; however, there is twice a year when 3 payrolls go through and August is one of those months. Drug Screenings had a deficit of \$139,000. It was noted that ChildNet should check with other drug screen providers. Discussion held that some barriers with using other providers is that we need a provider that has several locations, the vendors would need to communicate directly with ChildNet and would need to provide results to ChildNet, as well as the client, and some providers do not accept referrals directly from ChildNet. Suggestion was made to send out an RFI (Request for Information).
 - Palm Beach - ended the month of August 2019 with \$3.9 million in revenue and total expenditures of \$4.2 million for a deficit of \$364,000. Again, the deficit is driven by the payroll system budgeted at 1/12 of payroll.
 - Audit – the FY 2018-2019 Audit is underway.
 - IRS Penalties – Joe Rogers and Dionne Wong reported that in 2017, the Affordable Care Act - Form 1095 was not sent in a timely fashion, resulting in a proposed penalty of \$140,000. We brought ChildNet in compliance and requested an abatement. We have 45 days from the date



of receipt to appeal the fine, and we plan to appeal by next week. Under the 1095 requirement of the Affordable Care Act, the employer has a two-fold responsibility - to timely file the 1095 and to ensure forms are distributed to every employee. We failed to do both at the time. We have since remediated the issue. The proposed penalty is solely for the failure to file with the IRS. In February 2019, we informed the IRS that because we are a fully ensured organization, our insurance carrier must also provide a 1095-B form to all employees in a timely manner, which was, in fact, done. We will also make the argument that our failure to distribute did not prejudice the employees in any way with their timely filing. The proposed fine of \$140,000 was for the failure to timely file, and a second fine is for the non-distribution. The total amount of the two fines is approximately \$280,000.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

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

Julie DeMar reported that the committee discussed the first quarter census. There is an uptick in number of children being removed. The Committee reviewed the Financial Viability Plan that DCF requires each CBC to have. Performance is trending positive in Palm Beach. Caseloads continue to be a challenge because of the volume of children that continue to enter the system.

We are focusing our efforts on what we can do to assist Protective Investigators. Next week in Palm Beach, we are going to embark upon the implementation of a similar process that exists in Broward (Decision Support Teams (DST), for staffing cases where Investigators can call a ChildNet employee who will help them to understand how to access anything that might be out there to help manage danger threats. ChildNet is going to monitor how much utilization comes from that because it has had a significant impact on the removal rate in Broward. The removal rate in Palm Beach is almost double the removal rate in Broward. There are services in Palm Beach that are not being utilized. Our hope is that through these conference calls and staffings we have regarding these cases, we can remind Investigators about the many resources available to help them while they are assessing each case.

Dawn Liberta, DCF, reported that the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) is putting some additional training dollars into some extra trainings, and Casey is also funding some of the trainings. BSO has implemented some new Units to focus on the two zip codes in Broward County where it is our highest rate of removals. That is making a significant difference in Broward County in those two zip codes. Ms. Liberta noted that DCF in Palm Beach started the roll-out of the DST approximately two years ago, and it is finally being implemented this month.

Melida Akiti noted that ChildNet does not want to be targeted in Palm Beach like we were in Broward regarding high removal rates. Ms. Akiti noted that due to the delay in implementing the DST by DCF leadership in Palm Beach, that it now needs to be escalated to DCF Tallahassee. Ms. Akiti recommended that by the end of the calendar year, if we do not see a tremendous decline in removals in Palm Beach, then ChildNet needs to memorialize our concerns in a formal letter to the Secretary and Palm Beach DCF leadership.

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

Andrea Cunningham reported the following:

- Luncheon Committee – Rebecca Brock is now the Chair of the luncheon committee.
- Mom's of Parkland – They are raising monies to help build-out the kitchenette area in the Broward cafeteria into a Donation Room.

- Visitation Area – We are in the process of renovating the space that the FLITE Center occupied in the Broward office, into a Visitation area. This area has its own entrance and would reduce the amount of traffic in the main lobby. We are in need of a financial investment of \$100,000 to build out this space. Melida Akiti noted that since this is a capital request, she had recommended meeting with the County. Board member, Victoria Thurston, has reached out to Vice Mayor Holness and Bertha Henry and they are amenable to meeting with her, Melida Akiti, Sigrid McCawley and Larry Rein.
- November 9, 2019 – Adoption Picnic @ Tradewinds Park, Coconut Creek.
- November 22, 2019 – Palm Beach National Adoption Day @ Palm Beach County Courthouse.
- November 23, 2019 – Broward National Adoption Day @ Broward County Courthouse.
- Toy Drive – holiday toy drive is going well. FPL has five locations where they are hosting a toy drive for our children.

- **Governance Committee – Michael Lepera, Committee Chair**

Sigrid McCawley, on behalf of Michael Lepera, Committee Chair, reported the following:

- Committee Appointments
 - Governance/Executive Committee – Reported that Dr. Victoria Thurston will replace Dr. Rosha McCoy as a member-at-large on this committee.
 - Program Quality Committee – Noted that Joe Rogers will replace Dr. Rosha McCoy as Chair of this committee.
 - New Government Relations Committee – Dionne Wong will be contacting Stephanie Toothaker to see her availability to serve on this committee.
- Caseload Plan Update/CHS Update – Julie DeMar reported that in Broward, caseloads are now 1:15.26 with the majority of case managers having under 20 children. Palm Beach is now at 1:18.77, the lowest it has been in five years. CHS has overhired as directed. CHS is trending in right direction in terms of their corrective action plan.
- Membership Recruitment – Dionne Wong is targeting potential candidates. Ms. McCawley encouraged Board to provide names of potential candidates in both counties.

- **Program Quality Committee**

- Julie DeMar reported that in the DCF Financial Viability Plan in both counties, one of the goals that we set was that 20% of children available for adoption, and not in identified placements, at the beginning of this fiscal year, will be adoptively-placed during the year, and in both counties, we have exceeded this goal. She then shared a couple of stories of children recently adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

- There was no new business.



BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Sigrid McCawley

- Adoption Month (November) - Ms. McCawley encouraged Board members to attend any adoption events they could as they are very heartwarming events.

OLD BUSINESS

- There was no old business.

PUBLIC COMMENT


- There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next scheduled Board meeting is Friday, November 22, 2019 to be held at Boise, Schiller & Flexner, LLP, 401 E. Las Olas Blvd., Suite 1200, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301.

CONCLUSION

- 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 9:27 a.m.



Amy Black
Board Secretary



Date

(Corporate Seal)