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# BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## October 27, 2023

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### **Board of Directors:**

Amy Black, Board Chair; Victoria Thurston, Vice Chair; Rebecca Brock, Secretary, Meghan Russell, Treasurer, Chelsea Bellew, David Prather, Donna Korn, Josefa Benjamin, Lois Marino, Mark Dhooge, Michael Lepera, Nancy Gregoire Stamper, Paul Adams, Ronald Ford, Sabria McElroy

### **Unable to Attend:**

Josefa Benjamin, Michael Lepera

### **Other Attendees:**

*ChildNet Staff:* Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Jason Tracey, Julie DeMar, Susan Eby, Rae Bullard, Deena Ponto, Nicole Slade, Shanny Tozzi, Tara Collins, Nichole Periu, Connie Lee, Shanelle Perry, Kaydion Watson, Melody Morris, Tonja Marshall, Roxann Williams Brown, Kari Garber, Christopher Swindler, Julie Janello, *DCF:* Teresa Janeczek, Traci Schweitzer, Isis Williams, *PB County Youth Services:* Elisa Cramer

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### **CALL TO ORDER – Amy Black, Board Chair**

- Amy Black, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Rebecca Brock, Board Secretary**

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The October 2, 2023 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:
  - August 2023 – Shanelle Perry, Missing Persons Specialist (PB) and Tonja Marshall, Lead CEN Specialist (Broward)
  - September 2023 – Nichole Periu, Lead Dependency Case Manager, Unit A1 (Broward) and Kari Garber, Dependency Case Manager, Division B (PB)

### **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

- **Foster Home Recruitment and Licensing Department** – Susan Eby, Chief Clinical Quality Officer gave a brief overview of the department, in which a copy of the presentation was provided to the board. The Foster Home Recruitment Team consists of a Director, a Lead Foster Home Recruitment Coordinator and a Foster Home Recruitment Coordinator. The roles of this team includes handling recruitment inquiries, licensing foster homes, and supporting foster parents. ChildNet provides an annual picnic and annual brunch to show foster parent appreciation. The Licensing Team consists of a Director, a Supervisor and five Licensing Specialists. The roles of this team include being a



subject matter expert on Florida Administrative Code 65C-45, maintaining data regarding timeliness of licensing files, assessing initial and relicensing files for foster parents and supporting child-placing agencies.

## **FINANCE REPORT – Meghan Russell, Board Treasurer and Donna Eprifania, CFO**

- Donna Eprifania, CFO reported that we received approval from DCF of the Broward Budget. On a quarterly basis, we will need to provide projections for the rest of the fiscal year. Based on the review of the September 2023 financials, we are at 25% spending, so we are still on target. With those approved budgets, we are still dependent upon \$439,000 contingency funds in Palm Beach and \$6.3 million in Broward. With the approval of the Broward budget, we will start implementing those items that we articulated in the spending plan that support the \$6.3 million. All items of the financial assessment audit, in which DCF hired an external company, was provided. ChildNet’s annual financial audit is moving forward. We anticipate an electronic vote of the audited financials to take place in December. The Contract Oversight Unit monitoring was focused on the subcontracting components to its service array. All of that documentation has been submitted as well.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Community Engagement Committee – Lois Marino, Committee Chair and Shanny Tozzi, Director of Community Relations**

Lois Marino reported that this committee is not a fundraising committee, it is an opportunity for us to identify individuals within the community that allow us to follow the “3C Component” – connections, conversations and collaborations. The current committee members are Lois Marino, Chair, Chelsea Bellew, Josefa Benjamin, Donna Korn, and Melissa McIntruff from South Florida Behavioral Health Network.

- 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Care for Kids Luncheon - “Embracing Smiles” – February 2, 2024 – Boca West Country Club.
  - Thanksgiving Drive – currently have 70 baskets promised and need 200 more. We are in need of gift cards to purchase turkeys.
  - Holiday Toy Drive – we are gearing up for the annual holiday toy drive. Again, gift cards for teenagers are needed.
  - Grants applied for:
    - Impact 100
    - Impact of the Palm Beaches
    - Great Charity Challenge
    - Citi Foundation Grant
- **Governance/Executive Committee – Dr. Victoria Thurston, Committee Chair**
    - **Quarterly Strategic Plan Update – Quarter 3** - Discussion was held on the third quarter of the Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2025, a copy of which was provided to the Committee members.
      - Goal 1 – Improve and sustain ChildNet’s workforce by implementing proven and innovative practices. *Evidence of goal progress in one year: ChildNet will reduce annual external voluntary turnover from 30% to 28%.*



Rae Bullard reported that we are on track with turnover. As of September 2023, ChildNet's annualized turnover is at 20% and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Year-Over-Year turnover is at 4.46%, down from 9.69% from last year.

- Goal 2 – Expand the array of appropriate placement and treatment options for children. *Evidence of goal progress in one year: ChildNet will reduce the percentage of children with stays over 14 days at SafePlace from 32% to 30%.*

Susan Eby reported that we are heading in the right direction as Palm Beach is @ 33.7%, Broward is @ 30.6% and both overall is @ 31.9%.

- Goal 3 – Improve identification and support of kinship caregivers. *Evidence of goal progress in one year: ChildNet will increase the percentage of children in kinship placements to 60%.*

Julie DeMar reported that Palm Beach is @ 51.72%, Broward is @ 49.01% with both overall @ 50.22%.

Amy Black, Board Chair, noted that the Board can adjust, accordingly, any of the goals as things change in our environment or the political environment. As we get to the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter update, Ms. Black asks the Staff Champions that if they have any recommendations to make adjustments to any of the goals, please bring them to that Board meeting.

- **Membership Recruitment** – Larry Rein reported that we have zero (0) vacancies in Broward and three (3) vacancies in Palm Beach. In addition to the below, Mr. Rein is in continued talks with retired Judge Pucillo and one other applicant in Palm Beach:

- Dr. Heidi Schaeffer – Larry Rein noted that Dr. Schaeffer is a constant supporter of ChildNet who was honored at this year's Palm Beach Care for Kids Luncheon. Mr. Rein believes that she would be a valuable asset to our Board.

*A motion was moved and seconded to have Mr. Rein provide Dr. Schaeffer a Board Candidate Application Packet. A vote was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.*

- Maria Alejandra “Malala” Mezerhane – Larry Rein and Shanny Tozzi met with Ms. Mezerhane. Ms. Mezerhane's brother was Board Chair of St. Jude, which is one of the biggest non-profit fundraising boards. Ms. Mezerhane has special needs' children of her own and has a definite affinity of wanting to help children. Mr. Rein believes that she would be a valuable asset to our Board.

*A motion was moved and seconded to have Mr. Rein provide Ms. Mezerhane a Board Candidate Application Packet. A vote was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.*

- **Program Quality Committee** – Nancy Gregoire Stamper, Committee Chair

The committee met and reviewed the Foster Home Recruitment Data presentation.

## CONTINUING BUSINESS

- ChildNet's Anti-Racism Workgroup Update – Nicole Slade, Program Officer of Case Management and Intake & Placement reported that the workgroup is working on some trainings or discussion groups. One of the topics is Black Mental Health and what those barriers have been and how those barriers contribute to the over representation of black people in systems such as child welfare or criminal justice. They are looking at a documentary they want to share and to do discussion groups agencywide. As we do have a large black population in the child welfare system, the workgroup has



reached out to the Service Coordination department to have some discussion with some of our providers on what they do in terms of cultural competency and recruitment of diverse therapists to serve this population. We started looking at some of our policies and procedures to see if there are any updates we can make in terms of cultural competency.

#### **BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Amy Black**

- Amy Black thanked the Board members who attended in person and encourages the full Board to try to attend in person.

#### **CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein**

- Child Welfare and Social Services in Florida – Larry Rein reported that there is increasing oversight and involvement of the legislature and the executive branch in social service operations. This is not specific to child welfare and extends to the managing entities for substance abuse and mental health and to agencies such as Area Agencies on Aging. A House Committee discussion about the results of the forensic audit of six CBC lead agencies has been postponed. We are hopeful that this might signify the legislature understanding that the findings were not as dire as some might have initially assumed.

One thing that may continue to come up in the media is that one of the lead agencies, Embrace Families in Orlando, had created multiple corporations including Community Based Care Integrated Health (CBCIH), the organization that was the go-between with the lead agencies and Sunshine Health. Sunshine Health operates the Medicaid specialty plan for children in foster care. As a result of that audit and its outcomes, Sunshine Health has chosen to terminate their relationship with CBCIH and to subcontract directly with CBC lead agencies. All CBC lead agencies are entering into negotiations for a new contract with Sunshine. The Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) had already issued an Invitation to Negotiate for all its managed care plans and Sunshine will eventually also have to reapply to AHCA to continue to provide services for children in foster care. They likely will have multiple competitors, some of whom we have spoken to. There is likely an opportunity going forward to enter into more favorable contracts for ChildNet and the children that we serve. ChildNet's investment with CBCIH has recouped more than we have invested. We are in discussions with CBCIH regarding their possible purchase of our share.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Donna Korn suggested that photos be taken of the Board Recognition Winners when they attend in person.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

- The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 17, at 8:00 a.m. in person and via Zoom.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

Rebecca Brock  
Board Secretary

Date

(Corporate Seal)