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# BOARD MEETING MINUTES STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

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**November 18, 2022**

**Board of Directors:**

Amy Black, Board Chair; Victoria Thurston, Vice Chair; Rebecca Brock, Secretary, Meghan Russell, Treasurer, Chelsea Bellew, David Prather, Josefa Benjamin, Joseph Rogers, Lois Marino, Michael Lepera, Nancy Gregoire Stamper, Paul Adams, Ronald Ford, Tom Lukasik

**Unable to Attend:**

Meghan Russell, Ronald Ford

**Other Attendees:**

*ChildNet Staff:* Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Jason Tracey, Julie DeMar, Susan Eby, Rae Bullard, Deena Ponto, Sheryl Williams, Julie Janello, *DCF:* Elisa Cramer, Teresa Janeczek, Dawn Liberta, Dennis Miles, *Consultant:* James Mueller

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

- Amy Black, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m.

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

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The October 28, 2022, 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.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 2022-2025 Board Strategic Planning Session – Amy Black, Board Chair, introduced James Mueller, with James Mueller and Associates, who previously assisted ChildNet with our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. Prior to this meeting, Mr. Mueller met with the ChildNet leadership team who provided Mr. Mueller a risks and opportunities list, which was then discussed with the Executive/Governance Committee earlier this week. Mr. Mueller once again provided an in-depth and thorough overview of the process of creating a Strategic Plan and the steps that were taken so that he could provide the below information:

Critical Organizational Issues:

- 1) Under the area of *children*, the risk is that the best placement does not exist for those with complex needs. The consequence is that children do not thrive and do not maximize their potential and thrive, especially those with complex needs. Remediation is to find resources and develop providers.
- 2) Under the area of *workforce*, the risk is that non-profit sector jobs are becoming more challenging to fill. The consequence is the lack of continuity in care and service. Remediation is



to build relationships with educational institutions, offer career growth, new opportunities, recognition, and increased compensation. Make retention everyone's responsibility.

- 3) Under the area of *politics*, the risk is of allocation uncertainty and legislators do not grasp efficacy of community-based care. The consequence is that future allocations are unpredictable and that the state is more controlling of what we do which reduces efficacy of agencies. Remediation is to advocate to get the resources we need and protect what we have. Also, to educate legislators and communities. Align ChildNet priorities with theirs. Longer term, consistent, non-contentious conversations based on facts.

#### Critical Children's Issues:

- 1) *Issue* - Lack of appropriate placement for children with complex needs. *Remediation* - Develop placements and people with skills, talents, and abilities to meet the specific challenges of the children they serve.
- 2) *Issue* - Maintaining connection to kinship caregivers. *Remediation* - Early, accurate, thorough, and ongoing, sustained, and enduring identification/assessment of what families need to serve/care for the child.
- 3) *Issue* - Ability to fully address trauma and mental wellness needs of children and families. *Remediation* - Early, accurate, thorough, and ongoing, sustained, and enduring identification/assessment of what families need to serve/care for the child. Tailor or modify approaches to meet unique needs.
- 4) *Issue* - Black children are more likely to enter the dependency system and less likely to achieve permanency. *Remediation* - Follow recommendations of anti-racism workgroup as we assess our policies and practices. Support workgroup through identifying funding opportunities and expertise.
- 5) *Issue* - Instability of workforce across the social service sector delays permanence and impedes access to services. *Remediation* – Support research-informed best practices.

ChildNet's Vision Statement – Children are in the setting that is right, best, and most appropriate for them and their well-being.

ChildNet's Visions' Impact Milestones in the next 3-5 Years – The lives of the children we serve will be improved, as indicated by:

- more children placed with family and relative caregivers,
- fewer children in shelter settings and reduced stays in shelter settings,
- more stability and continuity among the people who care for them,
- healthier, more productive children as they age,
- an increased number who experience a timely exit and a reduction in those who return.

Larry Rein noted that we will take these milestones broader, have intelligent discussion with staff, and do some research on what numbers really make sense, and then we will bring that to the full Board in the near future.

Value Proposition Statement – By listening to families, and through intelligent and thorough internal and external assessment, ChildNet ensures the highest quality of safety, permanency and the



wellbeing for the children and families it serves. Through its purpose, unique role, freedom to act, and flexibility, ChildNet dramatically improves outcomes for the children and families it serves.

Strategic Imperatives (Strategic Goals) – a strategic imperative is a clearly defined outcome that is essential in order for ChildNet to achieve its vision and aspirations. It is a “must have” achievement. Below are the three (3) strategic imperatives (goals) that the Executive/Governance Committee is presenting to the full Board:

- 1) Improve and sustain ChildNet’s workforce through employing proven practices.
- 2) Expand the array of appropriate placement and treatment options.
- 3) Improve identification and support of kinship caregivers.

Question was raised as to why an economic goal was not listed for the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan like it was in the 2019-2022 plan. Donna Eprifania noted that we will operationalize what has been started throughout the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. We needed to get to a place where we generated financial flexibility, which we did and now we need to maintain the availability of unrestricted funding at the same level on an ongoing basis. The ongoing status will be reported to the Finance Committee.

Amy Black also noted that we will have sub-bullets under each imperative/goal listed above. Ms. Black stated that we want to build in the flexibility that on an annual basis, the Board reviews the plan and approves any changes needed to the Strategic Plan, in order for it to grow.

Larry Rein reported that the next steps would be for staff to flesh out the metrics and the action steps and to present it to the full board for review and approval. Mr. Rein noted that Mr. Mueller is invaluable as a consultant.

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

- COA Site Visit – Amy Black thanked the board members who were able to attend the Board interview with the COA Advisor and to answer all their questions. Julie DeMar, CPO, reported that she did receive preliminary feedback from the Advisor and that they were extremely impressed with the Board member participation. COA looks at 502 standards and we only received feedback on two standards: 1) *Larry Rein’s succession planning for himself*, in which Mr. Rein provided some information about the goal of being more engaged in that process in the coming year, and 2) *Annual survey of clients*. ChildNet has an open survey on the website available everyday to clients, but COA felt that was not sufficient to be an annual targeted survey at a point in time. We do, however, do some bi-annual surveys specific to foster parents and to some other clients. We will submit some evidence around those surveys to see if that is sufficient. If not, we will make some plans to bring those into their compliance. It was noted, however, that these two standards do not impact our accreditation. Larry Rein noted that they were very impressed by our attention to risk, complimentary about our human resource process and compliance, and very much impressed with the passion, engagement, and commitment of staff. Accolades to Julie DeMar, as among her many responsibilities, i.e., running case management, running a shelter in Palm Beach for approximately two months, she managed the COA Accreditation process smoothly, efficiently, confidently and her leadership in getting everyone in the organization to do their part, shows how much of an ultimate pro she is.



**CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein**

- National Adoption Day – Larry Rein reported the following:
  - National Adoption Day – Palm Beach – today, Friday, November 18, 2022, 11:30am-2:00pm, Palm Beach County Courthouse, 205 N. Dixie Hwy., West Palm Beach.
  - National Adoption Day – Broward – Saturday, November 19, 2022 – 8:30am-1:00pm, Broward County Courthouse, 201 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Fort Lauderdale.
- Audit – Donna Eprifania, CFO, provided an update of our financial audit. Due to the delay with regards to the designation of how funds were aligned with federal and state criteria, we have prepared all schedules and documents back to the auditors as/of yesterday. The auditors are still in the field work process. We have delayed our Finance Committee meeting until 11-30-22 in hopes our documents will be ready or in draft form. They will then be presented to the Audit Committee and then sent to the full Board for an electronic vote in December, as historically done.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

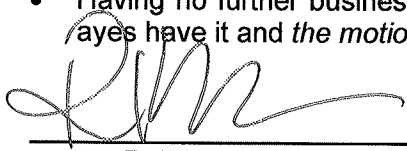
- There was no public comment.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

- The next Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 27, 2023 in person and 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 9:45 a.m.

  
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Rebecca Brock  
Board Secretary

2.8.23  
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Date

(Corporate Seal)