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# BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## November 20, 2020

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**Board of Directors:**

Michael Lepera, Board Chair; Amy Black, Vice Chairman; Victoria Thurston, Secretary, Armando Fana, Jillian Smath, Josefa Benjamin, Joseph Rogers, Melida Akiti, Rebecca Brock, Ronald Ford, Sigrid McCawley

**Unable to Attend:**

Amy Black, Armando Fana, Sigrid McCawley

**Other Attendees:**

*ChildNet Staff:* Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Julie DeMar, Susan Eby, Deena Ponto, Andrea Cunningham, Sheryl Williams, Tamaru Phillips, Allyson Gaiser, Stacy-Ann King, Julie Janello, Mona Omar-Ali, Nathalie Pennington, Kezia Stewart, *DCF:* Dawn Liberta, Teresa Janeczek, Elisa Cramer

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**CALL TO ORDER – Michael Lepera, Board Chair**

- Michael Lepera, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Victoria Thurston, Board Secretary**

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The October 23, 2020 meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion was moved to approve the minutes. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.*

**ITEM FOR BOARD REVIEW AND APPROVAL – Michael Lepera, Board Chair**

- **Board Candidate – Meghan Russell** – Ms. Russell is CFO at Concrete Reinforcing Products and has great financial expertise. Ms. Russell is also a former foster parent. Ms. Russell would be a great asset to the Board.

*A motion was moved to approve Meghan Russell as the newest member of the Board. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unanimously.*

As Ms. Russell has been approved as a new Board member, Mr. Lepera will speak with Ms. Russell about serving on the Finance Committee.

**CHILDNET BOARD EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD – Stacy-Ann King, Director of HR**

- The Broward October 2020 ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Award was presented to the following deserving employee:
  - October 2020 (Bwd) – Nathalie Pennington, Kinship Licensing Specialist

**DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

- Kinship Unit – Kezia Stewart, Director of Intake & Placement, gave an overview of the Kinship Unit. In 2019, in preparation for the ending of the Title IV-E waiver, the Department and Children and Families wanted to begin doing Level 1 licensure for relative/non-relative caregivers so that they could get Board payment monthly to help them financially to care for our children. It would give the caregivers more support as our Kinship Specialists could go into the homes and do quarterly visits, provide referrals, and help to ensure they are



meeting licensing standards. If the case did not close with reunification, adoption or permanent guardianship by the time the following year was coming up, we would have to relicense those families.

It also allowed us to do the Guardianship Assistance Program. If a case does close with permanent guardianship, this Program would allow them to continue to get the Board rate payment even after the case is closed. The Kinship Unit consists of one Director, one Supervisor and five Kinship Support Specialists. As of this date, we have licensed 221 children out of 572 children who are in licensed care.

Since the pandemic began, we have processed 58 COVID-funding requests to support our relative/non-relative caregivers while in the process of licensing them. It typically takes 30-60 days to complete the entire licensing process. We assist them in finding beds for children, buying car seats and strollers, getting laptops and computer, and assisting with transportation. We advocate for the children and sometimes go to court. Our large priority is keeping siblings together.

### **FINANCE REPORT – Donna Eprifania, CFO**

- Donna Eprifania reported that for the need for resources for the items that were given to families to support them that Kezia Stewart talked about in the Kinship Unit overview noted above, these are allowable costs to the DCF contract. The reason for no barrier currently is because of our healthy posture in Broward County. We continue to do the same thing in Palm Beach County. This is a very important initiative that the Department has taken since 2019 when the waiver sunset. The relatives used to get some support from DCF through the Relative Caregiver Program. As the waiver sunset, this gave us the opportunity to draw down funds from the Feds as we licensed our relatives as Level 1. Level 1 means that it is a client-specific licensure rather than a generic foster home that can take any child.

The Finance Committee meets next week. We are in a very healthy financial posture in both counties. We submitted our 1<sup>st</sup> quarter projections to DCF. In Palm Beach County, as we look at our expenditure trend, we are still projecting a \$300,000 deficit. We may be able to manage this as we become more stable in the case management transition, as children are able to be reunified in a timelier manner and hopefully the overcall census will come down. Dennis Miles, DCF Regional Managing Director, reported at yesterday's Palm Beach Advisory Board meeting that the removal rate is the lowest that it has been in ten years in Palm Beach County. We were presented the opportunity to apply for Risk Pool Funding and decided that we are not applying for the Risk Pool as the projections for Broward County are still positively projecting an additional \$5 million surplus this fiscal year.

The audit is moving along well. We received the post award notices from DCF. The Audit Committee will send the audit to the full board for electronic vote in order to submit to the Auditors prior to the due date of 12-31-20.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE – Larry Rein, CEO and President**

- Larry Rein reported that there is no change at the State level and no change with the guidance and direction from DCF. We are continuing doing in-home face-to-face visits once every 90 days and we back that up with video visits every other week. If there are noted safety concerns, in-home face-to-face visits are done every 30 days. The rate and incidence of infections with staff and clients are relatively low. In the months of October and November, there were a total of 5 children and 11 caregivers in Palm Beach and a total of 7 children and 9 caregivers in Broward that tested positive.

### **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

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

Larry Rein reported that the transition is moving in a positive direction. We originally transitioned 52 case-carrying case managers. Today, we now have 74 case-carrying case managers. We have received tremendous support from other certified ChildNet staff in both Broward and Palm Beach to assist with caseloads until we are fully staffed. There are currently 5 staff in preservice training and the next class, begins



in January 2021. The census remains the same. However, Mr. Rein feels that as case management stabilizes, we will be able to drive that number down.

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

Andrea Cunningham reported the following.

- Toy Drive – we currently we have over 45 organizations that are either hosting a drive or purchasing gifts through our Amazon Link.
- The Broward Sheriff's Office and Calvary Chapel partnered to provide Thanksgiving meals to families in our community. Lt. Col. Benjamin invited some of the families we serve to participate, and we are happy to share that 20 families have accepted.
- Circle of Supporters - One of the fundraising initiatives that is the focus for this year is the Circle of Supporters. It is membership based and supports everything teen related including sports and music camps, conferences, school trips, and other pro-social activities. The membership is \$83.33 per month or \$1,000 per year. We currently have 4 members and our goal this year is to reach 8 members. Some of the benefits include being listed as a founding member on our website, virtual networking events/mixers and special invite only events.

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

- **Quarterly Strategic Plan Update –**

- Goal 1 – Create a 1% total budget contingency fund through a combination of fundraising and revenue maximization. We now can track this accurately and show an unrestricted rolling balance of \$803,000 as of 06-30-20, which is .06% of our budget. Our target goal of 1% at the end of three (3) years is \$1.3 million.
- Goal 2 – Safely decrease the use of residential group care by 30%. Number of children in residential group care - Annual Mean at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter for Broward at a 15% decrease from FY 18-19 and for Palm Beach at a 16% decrease from FY 18-19. The Monthly Mean at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter for Broward is a 13% decrease from 06-19 and for Palm Beach is a 7% decrease from 06-19.
- Goal 3 – Create a fully implemented new corporate structure with management company and two unique organizations with individual boards by May 2020. We are still waiting to hear back from the Department of Children & Families' Deputy Secretary for Administration about our inquiry of consolidating the two CBC contracts.

- **Legal and Human Resources Committee – Sigrid McCawley, Committee Chair**

- Allyson Gaiser, In-House Legal Counsel, reported that ChildNet did not retain any additional outside counsel and that we hired a new In-House Legal Counsel, Nola Seekie to fill the vacancy that occurred in May 2020. In the Risk Management Committee, it was reported that IT has made great strides in identifying challenges and in streamlining our remote workforce. The Committee also focused on the measures of service quality and continuous quality improvement. In the October 2020 Risk Management Committee meeting, ChildNet received high praise from our risk advisor as to all of the committee members and the efforts they have made to address the challenges that faced ChildNet.

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

- Julie DeMar reported that the Committee reviewed the FY 20-21 Quarter 1 Scorecard, a copy of which was provided to the Board. Both Broward and Palm Beach scored well. Palm Beach met or exceeded 9 out of the 12 measures and Broward met or exceeded 10 out of the 12 measures. One area of focus is Measure 7 “re-entries into care once leaving care”. In the last two quarters, Broward has achieved the goal for Measure 12 in “siblings placed together” while Palm Beach is just shy of achieving the goal.



## NEW BUSINESS

- There was no new business to report.

## CONTINUING BUSINESS

- ChildNet's Anti-Racism Workgroup Update – Sheryl Williams reported that she and Dr. Phillips met with the Workgroup last month and spoke about identifying and examining practices that would reduce racism within our agency and within the community. There were three breakout sessions that focused on three questions: 1) how to identify different biases and practices that the group felt that we need to engage and approach within our organization, 2) how do we expand these practices within our providers and stakeholders, and 3) how/what can we participate in, within the community, to allow ChildNet to be more visible as it relates to dismantling racism within the community.

## BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Michael Lepera

- Michael Lepera noted that Melida Akiti is hosting a holiday party at Harbor House and he also encourages participation in the Circle of Supporters. Regarding recruitment, we need to add someone with fundraising expertise, find someone to work on the fundraising committee or someone who can connect us to other donors.

## CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- Board Member Recognition – Mr. Rein thanked Jillian Smath for serving a two-year term as a ChildNet's first non-voting member from the provider community. Ms. Smath commended the Board and leadership with the great partnership they have with the provider community. Mr. Rein will look for a successor provider who serves in both counties.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

- There was no public comment.

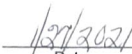
## NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next Board meeting is scheduled on Friday, January 22, 2021 via Zoom.

## NEXT MEETING DATE

- 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 9:21 a.m.

  
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Dr. Victoria Thurston  
Board Secretary

  
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Date

(Corporate Seal)