



# BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 16, 2018 (Rev. 01-25-19)

**Board of Directors:**

Melida Akiti, Board Chair; Armando Fana, Vice Chairman; Michael Lepera, Treasurer; Joe Rogers, Secretary, Amy Black, Christopher Cade, Lisa McDermott, Nichole Anderson, Rebecca Brock, Rosha McCoy, Sigrid McCawley, Victoria Thurston

**Unable to Attend:**

Lisa McDermott, Michael Lepera, Nichole Anderson, Rosha McCoy

**Other Attendees:**

*ChildNet Staff:* Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Julie DeMar, Susan Eby, Dionne Wong, Deena Ponto, Sheryl Williams, Gillian Moxey, Kenneth Brighton, Julie Janello, *DCF:* Dawn Liberta, Raul Ocampo, Vern Melvin, *SOS:* Jillian Smath

**CALL TO ORDER – Melida Akiti, Board Chair**

- Melida Akiti, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Joe Rogers, Secretary**

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The October 26, 2018 meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion was moved to approve the meeting minutes. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.*

**ITEM FOR BOARD REVIEW AND APPROVAL – Melida Akiti, Board Chair**

- Approval of Board Candidate – Provider Representative – Jillian Smath – Ms. Smath is the Executive Director of SOS Children's Villages Florida and has worked closely with ChildNet since ChildNet began. This Board position is as a provider representative, which is a non-voting position. Both Ms. Smath and ChildNet believe it is important to build working relationships between providers and ChildNet.

*A motion was moved to approve Jillian Smath as the provider representative on the Board. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.*

**FINANCE REPORT – Michael Lepera, Treasurer and Donna Eprifania, CFO**

- Audit - Donna Eprifania reported that we are on target for the completion of the audit. The Audit and Finance Committees will meet the last week of November 2018 with the auditors. The Audit Committee is comprised of: Armando Fana, Chair, Amy Black and Joey Epstein (non-voting), and the Finance Committee is comprised of: Michael Lepera, Chair, Chris Cade and Joe Rogers. Once these committees meet, the audited financials will be ready for formal presentation to the Board. Chris Cade noted that last year, neither the Finance Committee nor the Board had a chance to review the audited financials prior to being submitted. The audit process was changed so that the Audit and Finance Committees meet with the auditors throughout the year to review and comment on the financials before they are submitted for Board review. The auditors were very receptive to ChildNet's needs and requirements. The Audited Financials will be sent to the Board electronically for vote.

- Palm Beach Caseload Action Plan – Due to the fact that Palm Beach showed a trend of increased caseloads, the Board instructed leadership to develop a caseload corrective action plan. Larry Rein noted this was all prior to receipt of the anonymous letter which will be discussed at length by the Board Chair later in the meeting. The Palm Beach Caseload Action Plan will be added as an agenda item to the Finance Committee meetings. Larry Rein noted that caseloads are also discussed at the Program Quality and the Governance/Executive Committee meetings.
- Budgeting Process - Donna Eprifania reported that as the Finance Department was going through the budgeting process, it was noted that there needed to be an opportunity for contingency funds to be factored in the budgeting process.
- New Regional Controller – Donna Eprifania reported that the new Regional Controller, Bobbi Combs, began on November 3, 2018. Ms. Combs was a Controller at another CBC agency.

## COMMITTEE UPDATES

### • Advisory Board Committee

Larry Rein reported that the Committee has changed the date and time of the meetings to the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m. The Palm Beach census trends were discussed at the committee meeting noting that we are slowly moving in the right direction as the number of removals have reduced. ChildNet's corporate structure was discussed and it was reported that Dionne Wong, Chief Human Resource & Legal Officer, is researching the best way for ChildNet to move forward.

### • Fundraising Committee – Nichole Anderson, Committee Chair

Kenneth Brighton, on behalf of Nichole Anderson, reported the following:

- Thanksgiving Baskets – A sponsor has generously donated 300 Thanksgiving dinners to our families. Any extra foods will be given to SafePlace.
- Holiday Gifts – So far, 61 donors have donated over 5,000 gifts to 1,578 children in care. In addition, 21 donors are providing general gifts.
- Foster Parent Recruitment – We are in the process executing a long-term foster parent recruitment campaign with Gold & Associates. Gold & Associates are currently interviewing foster parents in Broward and Palm Beach counties and will present the data to ChildNet. The goal is to start implementing this marketing campaign at the first of the year. ChildNet has funded the initial research component. We have been working with a number of potential donors to fund the implementation component of the campaign. One of the donors, a family, is committed to donating \$25,000/year for the next two (2) years for a total of \$50,000. The approximate budget of the campaign is between \$150,000 - \$250,000 for the two (2) year campaign.
- Palm Beach National Adoption Day – Friday, November 16, 2018, 11:30am, PB Courthouse
- Broward National Adoption Day – Saturday, November 17, 2018, 8:30am, Broward Courthouse

### • Governance Committee – Armando Fana, Committee Chair

- Workforce Engagement Committee – Armando Fana reported that the Workforce Engagement Committee was to be sunset in November 2018. However, the employee survey was not completed as Group Victory terminated their agreement with ChildNet. We are now in the process of contracting with a national company, Gallup, to provide the survey. After results are received from the new agency, the Workforce Engagement Committee will meet again to review the results of the survey.



- **Legal/Human Resource Committee – Sigrid McCawley, Committee Chair**

- Update on Protocols - Dionne Wong addressed the protocol ~~of~~ and the standard operating procedure to be established by ChildNet relating to the retention and remuneration of outside counsel. Further discussion to be held at the next committee meeting.
- Risk Management – The ChildNet Risk Committee was put on hold the past few months but is now being revisited. The Risk Committee meetings will once again be on a monthly basis and our insurance brokers are part of this committee as well.
- Civil Litigation Update – At the time of the Committee meeting, we had learned of a civil matter that was filed but not served on ChildNet. To date, it has been served to ChildNet and has been assigned to one of our defense counsel. Ms. Wong has met with them and they will start responding to that particular matter.

- **Program Quality Committee – Rosha McCoy, Chair**

Julie DeMar reported that the Committee did meet, however, quorum was not met. However, they did discuss how to begin trying to look at caseload size as it relates to performance outcomes on an individual worker level.

COA – Larry Rein reported that ChildNet had the COA Re-Accreditation Site Visit on November 4-6, 2018 and stated that it went incredibly well. The Lead Reviewer noted at the Exit Interview that this is the “best preparation ever seen in his more than 100 reviews”. ChildNet received “Expedited Re-Accreditation” meaning we received all 3’s and 4’s on a scale of 1 to 4 and there were no issues or deficiencies that would require correction or additional response. The Reviewer also noted that the agency is “clearly moving in a much more formal and corporate direction, which might be difficult for some, but is the right way to go”. He also commented that “your enhanced communication efforts within the agency over the last year are clearly starting to impact staff engagement, involvement and morale”.

## **BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Melida Akiti**

- December 2018 Board Meeting – Ms. Akiti asked the Board if okay with them to cancel the December Board Meeting.

*A motion was moved to cancel the December 2018 Board Meeting. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.*

- Strategic Plan Retreat – The Retreat is scheduled for Friday, January 25, 2019 at BB&T in Fort Lauderdale. A facilitator has been hired for this retreat.
- Review of Findings of Letter – A hard copy of the results of the investigation into the anonymous letter was distributed and the Chair, Melida Akiti, and CEO, Larry Rein, discussed the key points and highlights. Ms. Akiti noted that both ChildNet and the Board take all concerns seriously, and that a thorough investigation is made separate from emotions. We look at compliance and ensure there are no issues. Our goal is transparency. Inasmuch, Ms. Akiti noted she received an email from Cindy Arenberg Seltzer, President/CEO of Children’s Services Council of Broward and also spoke with her. Ms. Akiti also spoke with Vern Melvin, Southeast Regional Manager of the Department of Children and Families. Ms. Akiti noted that the findings of the investigation are to be shared with staff.



At the conclusion of the discussion, Vern Melvin, Southeast Regional Director of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), reported that ChildNet is on the right track on focusing on its employees. Mr. Melvin also reported that the recent Broward contract negotiations went very well. He stated that the ChildNet leadership team was very responsive to any concerns, and even though some of the leadership team were new either to their position or to ChildNet, everyone they spoke with had knowledge of what the expectations were and what the plan is going forward. The DCF Negotiation Team's recommendation is to enter into a new contract with ChildNet in Broward. Mr. Melvin noted that all indicators show that ChildNet is going in the right direction. The former and current DCF Secretary convey appreciation of ChildNet.

- Employee Council - It was noted that the Employee Council had its first inaugural meeting on November 14, 2018. The committee members are very engaged, which includes both Broward and Palm Beach staff. The committee will meet on a monthly basis.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- There was no new business to discuss.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- There was no old business to discuss.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- There was no public comment.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

- The next scheduled Board meeting is the Strategic Plan Retreat on Friday, January 25, 2019.

#### **CONCLUSION**

- Having no further business, a motion was *moved* to adjourn the meeting. *A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.* The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

  
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Joe Rogers  
Board Secretary

  
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Date

(Corporate Seal)