

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
May 26, 2011 BOARD MEETING
MINUTES

Board Members in Attendance: Mr. William Ryder, Board Chair, Judge Kelly McKibben, Board Treasurer, Ms. Irene Burnett, Ms. Brooke Deratany Goldfarb, and Mr. Mel Broom.

Board Members Absent: Mr. Stockton Whitten, Board Vice Chair, Mr. Leo Roselip, and Mr. Sam Gutierrez.

Others in Attendance: Dr. Patricia Nellius, Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Valerie M. Randall, Chief Personnel & Administrative Officer, Ms. Debbie Davidson-Cook, Chief Compliance & Utilization Officer, Mr. Chad Carnell, CFO, Mr. James Carlson, Chief Operations Officer, Mr. Geo Ropert, Director of Communications, Ms. Kelly Swartz, Staff Attorney, and Ms. Stephanie Strodman, Executive Assistant, Also in attendance were Ms. Carole Shaeffer, Youth Law Center, Ms. Gay Frizzell, DCF Tallahassee, Ms. Sharon Groover, President of Space Coast Foster Parent Association, Ms. Teresa Miles, CHS, Ms. Kim Bledsoe, Devereux, and Ms. Michelle Scott, CHS.

Mr. Ryder called the meeting to order and requested those present state their names for the record.

Mr. Ryder addressed the members and guests in recognition of the 7th anniversary of the CEO who has led the Agency from inception. Mr. Ryder made his remarks which included the many milestones reached through the leadership of Dr. Nellius and referenced several key appointments and activities in which she has participated on the state level in addressing the IVE Waiver, the workgroup which led to the creation of the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practices, her appointment to serve on the review team of the Sarasota YMCA and her numerous awards on a state and local level. He thanked Dr. Nellius for her tireless dedication and for ensuring an outstanding system of care for Brevard's children and families. The members all acknowledged Dr. Nellius for her commitment, dedication and achievements.

Motion: Judge McKibben moved to approve the agenda. This was seconded by Mr. Broom and the motion was passed unanimously.

Motion: Judge McKibben moved to approve the minutes from the April 26, 2011 Board meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Broom and the motion was passed unanimously.

In recognition of Foster Parent Appreciation, Mr. Carlson introduced the scheduled guests. He provided an introduction for Ms. Carol Shaeffer of the Youth Law Center, Ms. Gay Frizzell with DCF in Tallahassee and Ms. Sharon Groover, President of the Space Coast Foster Parent Association.

Mr. Carlson stated that approximately one year ago, he and Dr. Nellius met with Ms. Shaeffer and Ms. Frizzell to discuss the Quality Parenting Initiative. He indicated that this initiative was a very positive one which is a great benefit to Brevard in raising the expectations of foster parents in the system as well as to ensure inclusion and partnership of the foster parents within the system of care.

Ms. Shaeffer then addressed the board and provided the background that led to the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI). She indicated this is being employed in 15 of 19 CBC's and that Brevard County is doing an outstanding job. She recognized Lisa Nelson, Training Manager for her efforts in coordinating this initiative.

Ms. Shaeffer spoke about core elements of the initiative which she stated are linked in terms of increasing not just the number of foster homes, but the quality or "excellence" of these homes. She suggested that the "image" of foster homes is not what it needs to be which in her opinion contributes to not having the numbers needed.

She spoke about a series of three (3) meetings which included a diverse group, all of which were involved in the system of caring for foster youth. They discussed the expectations of “excellent” foster parents and indicated that all foster parents needed to be “excellent.” Mr. Carlson commented that these meetings included youth currently in the system as well as those who have exited the system. Other participants included the Dependency Judge, board members, CPA’s, CMA’s, child medical services, PI’s and PI Supervisors, representation from CBY25 and a representative from Brevard Public Schools. As a result of these meetings and the sharing of perspectives there was an enhanced understanding by all parties about some elements of the system that are driven by statute which are not understood by all. There was a concern expressed by CMA’s that perhaps if they demanded too much that there would not be an adequate number of foster parents.

Ms. Shaeffer suggested that in actuality good foster parents want to be involved and be excellent and do the types of activities they would for their biological children such as driving them to medical appointments, participating in the school activities, etc.

She went on to address the “brand” or how foster parents want to be seen as full and equal professional partners with the agencies with which they work. She indicated these foster parents expect to love these children and work with the biological parents when the goal is reunification. She indicated that in her experience that systems across the country and those involved as part of governmental entities do not support the foster parents, they are not inclusive and don’t tend to partner for excellence.

She noted that in Brevard County foster parents are provided badges, they have a page on the Agency website and there is much more dialogue with foster parents and CMA’s and there is a new and deeper understanding of both perspectives. She indicated that this team approach results in having respect for both partners.

Ms. Groover then spoke to the board. She spoke about the town hall meetings, of which there were three (3) and at the last one there were approximately 80 people in attendance. The Foster Parent Association was able to provide child care which helped foster parents and that at this meeting it was the first time that all the parties involved in the foster care system had a chance to speak, be heard and have good dialogue. She also commended Brevard Family Partnership for its support of the system and stated how wonderful the agency is to work with. She spoke about being a foster parent and that the core reason children are removed is due to poor parenting and therefore as foster parents their main goal is to provide good parenting. She expressed that she believes that good foster parents must work cooperatively with the biological parents for reunification and be inclusive with these parents as well as serve as a resource to them.

Ms. Shaeffer then commented that the first essential quality of an excellent foster parent is that they must love that child as if it were their own. She also identified an area of improvement regarding the transition of the child/ren for reunification or adoption. She indicated that an active transition plan is needed. It was also reported that CWLS is working to develop a model court order regarding transition.

Ms. Shaeffer commented that “normalcy” is also a state-wide issue. She provided the example that if foster parents have to or want to leave for a few days or a week or so that due to State law and requirements that their biological children may stay with a neighbor or family member, but that the foster children have to be placed elsewhere in a “licensed” home environment. She commented that this creates confusion for all the children involved and that the foster children “feel” that they are different.

Ms. Shaeffer also spoke about the revised pre-service training which includes more interactive and on line vignettes for new foster parents. She observed that the former pre-service training was very intense, 10 weeks long and very theoretical. She noted that once prospective foster parents complete this training it may be months before they actually have foster children to care for so much of what they learned may be lost. She again commended BFP for its timely response in achieving this training in a short time frame between August to November.

She then commented that the QPI has a facebook page at QPI families. Ms. Goldfarb commented that this is an excellent manner in which to raise awareness of fostering and the initiatives of this important work.

Ms. Shaeffer then indicated that the current bi-lateral agreement is being replaced with a partnership agreement which will also address the necessary and allowable sharing of information about a child and that foster parents will not release a child unless this is in the best interest of the child. She commented that the former bi-lateral agreement was very one-way with significant responsibilities on the foster parent and far fewer on the CMA's. She stated that the new agreement again is more of a partnership than in the past. She also stated that re-licensing will be based on an evaluation of the foster parent and CMA in terms of abiding by the new agreement.

Ms. Groover indicated that this is a positive step where the foster parent is part of the team. She commented that the QPI is more than just the foster parenting, but is inclusive of the child, the foster parent, the biological parent(s) and it is a great team approach. She again commended BFP for doing so much in the last year to support this initiative. She stated that this is about how everyone can do a better job in serving foster children. Ms. Goldfarb suggested that this is a very holistic approach and has a much improved image. Ms. Groover agreed and commented that the biological families should be included in birthday celebrations and school functions in order to create an improved relationship for the child.

Ms. Shaeffer commented that in her opinion the CBC's have a unique strength in having community boards and that she views the boards as positioned to be advocates for foster parent recruitment by approaching community leaders, restaurants, employers etc., to support foster parents in various ways. She suggested that board members and current foster parents could make presentations to these entities on fostering. She went on to suggest that these opportunities could create a vehicle for volunteer activities to generate more foster parents. She suggested that individuals, when they become more familiar with the process might want to start off mentoring, or serving in other ways.

Dr. Nellius commented that as a result of recent budget cuts that we are consolidating the current four (4) CPA's into one contract and that the RFP includes the requirement to embrace the QPI initiative.

The board thanked Ms. Shaeffer, Ms. Frizzell and Ms. Groover for their time and information.

The next item was the Staff Reports which included:

- The Board Report
- The Operations Data Report
- The Financial Statements
- A Legislative Update

Dr. Nellius then addressed the board members and reminded them of the upcoming relocation of the main office. She indicated that there will not be voice or e-mail access from June 2 – 6. She then updated the members on her recent visit to Pittsburgh where she attended a symposium of both National and International experts in the field of child welfare which was focused on the future of trends in child welfare. She discussed her meeting with Ms. Carol Emig, President of Child Trends who is excited about the national replication project of Brevard C.A.R.E.S. and who will seek to fund the evaluation of the first pilot site. Dr. Nellius shared that this is a win-win for the Agency in having the evaluation funded as well as for the replication site. She also reported that Brevard C.A.R.E.S. has passed the level 1 screening and in September it is anticipated that the second level evaluation will be conducted which would result in Brevard C.A.R.E.S. being listed on the Promising Practices website as an Evidenced-Based program. Dr. Nellius indicated that she expects to hear from the Eckerd Family Foundation in early June regarding the funding for the replication program. She also shared that she had been contacted by Suit Magazine and that she was going to have a telephone interview with them today for an article they are doing on her for an upcoming issue.

Dr. Nellius then spoke about the June 23, 2011 meeting and that it was critical that members were in attendance as the budget will be reviewed and must be approved for the new fiscal year. She indicated that Ms. Randall will send an e-mail for a quorum and that if necessary this meeting will have to be changed in order to ensure a quorum.

Dr. Nellius then spoke about the state budget that has yet to be signed. She indicated that this was expected to be addressed today and that the Governor's office had received many calls regarding SB-2146; both for and against the equity language. She also reported that over the last two (2) weeks there had been multiple communications among members of the FCFC regarding this issue and that it was a very passionate subject for all.

Dr. Nellius stated that she wanted to go on the record to state that she believes that the Florida CBC's are among the most innovative child welfare initiatives in the Country and that she has great respect for her colleagues and our system of care partners. She remarked that Florida child welfare is among the lowest funded in the country and that when discussions focus on agencies being penalized for performing that this is not in relation to other Florida CBC's, but rather in terms of the system itself. She indicated that it is flawed public policy to take funds from one CBC to provide to another. In terms of the "equity model" she stated that this results in spikes of funding depending on the number of children being served in the "dependency" system and that it is inherently disruptive to a system of care. She referred to a letter she sent to her peers indicating that the focus needs to be on policy decisions for all the children in Florida rather than on individual CBC's. She stated that with this "equity" model there are implications on both the Federal IVE Waiver and prevention programs and services. Dr. Nellius also commented that there is not consistency among the CBC's in terms of specifically which children are entered into FSFN in terms of VPS and prevention families. She reminded the board members that she has been making this point for years regarding which children are being entered into the system and the fact that prevention children are excluded.

Dr. Nellius then reported that the RFP for the CPA contract had been posted and responses are due by June 1, 2011. She stated that as a result of the outsourcing of two (2) functions that the Agency had also incurred three (3) layoffs and that there are natural concerns among staff members.

The next report was the Data Report. Mr. Carlson reviewed the Data Report and responded to Judge McKibben's question regarding the percentage of recidivism. Mr. Carlson indicated that the percentage shown is the annual cumulative total and that there is a workgroup addressing this specific area. He reported that Ms. Kim Bledsoe and Ms. Kelly Swartz, who are part of the workgroup, have a presentation with initiatives to implement to address these issues that will be scheduled soon.

The next report was on the Legislation and Mr. Ropert commented that MAS and IL were not impacted.

The next report included the financial reports. Mr. Carnell provided copies of the Statement of Financial Position as of April 30, 2011 to the members. Mr. Carnell stated there were no significant changes. He then provided copies of the Statement of Activities as of April 30, 2011. He remarked that the use of flexible funds from the PI's has slowed down and that he included the revenue from the Wrap conference. He stated that he will have the numbers from the recent CFO conference and will report this at the June meeting. Dr. Nellius commented that the CFO conference was a great event and that it has grown over the years and now includes four (4) tracks including a CEO roundtable, and venues for contract managers and IT. Nellius also reported that the DCF fiscal monitors have concluded their monitoring and no problems were identified.

Ms. Miles inquired of Mr. Carnell if the Agency had seen increases in the insurance costs. He responded that we increased some coverages, but that in terms of actual increases that the Agency had not incurred additional expenses but that a claim will significantly impact that. Ms. Miles reported that CHS's insurance had been cancelled due to a lawsuit in Florida and that the new coverage resulted in an increase of 48%.

The next agenda item was new business:

It was decided to have Mr. Carnell continue with his item in this section. He shared with the board that the responsibilities of managing the Master Trust will be transferred from DCF to BFP. He indicated that there are approximately 40 recipients who receive social security funds which the accounting department will have to manage and that the operational activities will be handled under the COO. He indicated that he would have to set up two (2) interest bearing accounts to accommodate this new responsibility and that per procedure the board needed to approve of this activity.

Motion: Ms. Burnett moved to set up two (2) separate bank accounts. This was seconded by Mr. Broom and the motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Carnell interjected that the applications that must be signed required the signature of the Board "Secretary" and that the board does not have this Officer position. He indicated that this had surfaced previously and that the Board Treasurer has signed after making the change in the title on the document.

Motion: Mr. Broom moved that the Treasurer may act as the "Secretary" for signatory purposes for board business. This was seconded by Ms. Goldfarb and the motion was passed unanimously.

Judge McKibben then addressed the board regarding two (2) potential board members. She indicated that the subcommittee had met diligently over the past several months and has two (2) candidates to present to the board. She stated that as had been previously agreed, that the candidates, if approved by the full board, would then complete the required background screening process as a final step in the process.

She presented Mr. Michael Cadore and indicated he was a lifelong Brevard resident and serves as the Community Services Coordinator for the Rockledge Police Department. She shared some of his background including his time as a law enforcement officer, his involvement with foster family recruitment and his previous activities providing training to both BFP and Brevard C.A.R.E.S. She reported that he is interested in serving children in the community and that he is very active in the community and in his church.

Motion: Mr. Broom moved that the board accept Mr. Cadore as a board member. This was seconded by Ms. Burnett and the motion was passed unanimously.

Judge McKibben then presented Reverend Scott Elliott who had been introduced to the board by Ms. Goldfarb. She reported that she and Mr. Ryder had met with Reverend Elliott. She reported that he has been in Brevard County for five (5) years and that he is the pastor of the United Church of Christ and that he has worked with children and families in this role and also leads a church theatre group. Judge McKibben stated he is a former attorney and that he has researched BFP and is impressed with the Agency and feels this would be an excellent way for him to help at risk youth. Reverend Elliott indicated he would be comfortable with public speaking and that he feels a strength of his is in researching and writing reports on statutes. Mr. Ryder commented that he felt that Reverend Elliott would also help foster relations with the Interfaith Coalition. Ms. Goldfarb interjected that he has five (5) children, he is positive with a high energy level and great initiative.

Motion: Ms. Goldfarb moved that the board accept Mr. Reverend Elliott as a board member. This was seconded by Ms. Burnett and the motion was passed unanimously.

Judge McKibben then inquired if Dr. Nellius would make contact with these two (2) individuals. Dr. Nellius indicated that Ms. Randall will make contact to arrange for the background screening and then a letter will follow up to these individuals from Dr. Nellius and the Board Chair officially offering them board membership and welcoming them to the Board. Dr. Nellius complimented the Judge and the committee members for the work and diligence that had been done to develop the board.

Dr. Nellius then shared that Mr. Gutierrez had been appointed to the vacant County seat.

The next agenda item was the Strategic Plan Goal: Goal Objective 3e:
Ensure system of care core values, philosophy and principles of practice are widely promulgated.

Strategies: * Require all network providers participate in the wraparound training program.

- Implement the use of a wraparound fidelity tool into the family team conferencing process to be used to identify where there are areas for improvement and to determine if lack of fidelity is related to poor outcomes.

Dr. Nellius indicated that the system of care is using the WOF (Wraparound Observation Tool) both within BFP and with our CMA partners. She reported that the Wrap/Fidelity Liaison has been serving in a dual role and will be an active participant in the transition of the dependency care coordinators to the CMA partners to ensure compliance with the Wraparound requirements. She reported that the WRAP 101 training has been completed and that WRAP 201 will be offered in the near future.

Judge McKibben observed that as the Dependency Court Summit will occur in September this year rather than August that there should not be a conflict with the August meeting.

Ms. Burnett stated that she had been contacted by a Legislative Aide inquiring about the expenses associated with the CBC's compared to costs when Ms. Burnett led HRS and that he did not understand why the CBC's were asking for so much more money. Ms. Burnett reported that she spent 45 minutes on the phone with this individual educating him on the differences between then and now. Ms. Burnett shared that she was dismayed and surprised that this individual really had no idea of how things had changed and she shared specifically that previously case workers had up to 65 cases compared to today's average below 20. Ms. Goldfarb thanked Ms. Burnett for taking the time to share this important information.

Mr. Ryder commented that we do our due diligence in legislator meetings here but that the problems surface in Tallahassee and that our local delegation has heard the same message for four (4) years. He also indicated that during this session he and Mr. Ropert were promised a meeting with a local legislator but that it did not happen. Mr. Ropert commented that there is some good news in that CBC's that achieve COA accreditation will have one consolidated contract monitoring which will occur every three (3) years.

Dr. Nellius indicated that the first of the board orientation meetings will take place following the August meeting.

Motion: Ms. Burnett moved to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Ms. Goldfarb and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie M. Randall
Recording Secretary

Approved at the June 23, 2011 Board of Directors Meeting