

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OCTOBER 25, 2012 BOARD MEETING
MINUTES

Board Members in Attendance: Mr. Stockton Whitten, Board Chair, Judge Kelly McKibben, Board Vice Chair, Ms. Samuel Gutierrez, Board Treasurer, Mr. Leo Roselip, Mr. William Ryder, Mr. Mel Broom, and Ms. Kathleen Rich-New, Ms. Christa Bailey, Officer Michael Cadore and Mr. Eric Smith.

Board Members Absent: Reverend Scott Elliott.

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. Jim Carlson, COO, Mr. Geo Ropert, Director of Communications, Ms. Kelly Swartz, Staff Attorney and Ms. Laurie-Anna Blackburn, Executive Assistant. Also in attendance were Judge Jeffrey Mahl, Dependency Court Judge, Mr. Alan Abramowitz, Guardian ad Litem Executive Director, Ms. Kim DelGaudio, Program Director, Brevard GAL, Ms. Regina Wassom, BFP, Ms. Valerie Holmes, Executive Director, Brevard C.A.R.E.S., Ms. Michele Scott, CHS, Ms. Diane Arnold, Devereux, and Ms. Debbie Morgan, DCF,

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

Mr. Whitten then indicated we would move forward with the agenda.

Mr. Whitten reminded members that if they had a conflict with any agenda item, to please complete the Conflict of Interest form (available at meeting) and provide to Ms. Randall. He indicated that this is an action item at each of our meetings.

Motion: Judge McKibben moved to approve the September 27, 2012 board meeting minutes. This was seconded by Officer Cadore and the motion was passed unanimously.

Judge McKibben then introduced Dependency Court Judge Jeffrey Mahl. She stated it was an honor and privilege to have the opportunity to introduce Judge Mahl and shared that in December 2009 she and Judge Mahl were considered for an appointment and that Judge Mahl had been appointed by Governor Crist. Judge McKibben provided some background of Judge Mahl which included his work in family and civil divisions and that previously he had also been in private practice. She also commented that Judge Mahl has personal experience as he had adopted his grand children and that he can speak to the evolution of the court system.

Judge Mahl addressed the board and indicated that it was an honor to have worked with Judge McKibben as well and commended her for her court and community work. He then provided a historical perspective of his background and the challenges in the dependency system. He began by discussing the historical two-hour hearings both then and now and that while there are many reasons for the length of these hearings that it has great impact on the dependency system and that it is also frustrating for all involved.

He then provided some background which includes over 11 years in the business sector and that he approaches his work from that perspective in terms of how he was trained in business; management by objectives. He spoke about his success in the business environment and that he feels that many of the MBO lessons he applied are equally applicable to his current work. He spoke about his appointment to dependency and that his approach was to evaluate the system that had been put in place to assess if this was effective and if not, what changes he would implement. He then shared how the number of days, from five (5) per week had been reduced due to other requirements and that at the same time, since May 2012 that dependency filings had increased by 50% over the year before.

He expressed that this resulted in having three (3) days a week for dependency with a 50% increase in the number of cases.

Judge Mahl stated that there were changes that had to occur: he shared that cases had to move faster, that increased opportunities to settle cases had to be created and that by eliminating the pre-trial phase all parties had to attend the case plan conference so that this will be completed in an effort to be able to return the children home. If a trial is required because consensus was not reached, this too would provide another opportunity to mediate.

Judge Mahl then commented that BFP is the largest cog in the dependency wheel. He stated that 30% of children are removed due to the sale of prescription narcotics, another 30% due to the sale of illegal narcotics and 40% are removed due to domestic violence. He further stated that BFP does a great job with offering a variety of services and that in court the agency manages to engage people who really care about the children and that it is a great improvement from pre-transition. He shared a situation with a child who required an IEP and he commented that there was 12 staff from the system of care who attended. He said it made a significant statement to the school. He further commented that every time he asks for help or for a solution he gets answers and people want to provide solutions. He also remarked on the Court Liaison and that she has been a great asset and quickly requests information or attends to needs sometimes before he even asks. He closed by saying that the dependency system is working because of BFP.

The board thanked Judge Mahl for his time and his words. Dr. Nellius commented that while Judge Mahl referred to BFP that the case managers who work tirelessly to care for our children are also critical partners in the system of care

Dr. Nellius then was asked to introduce Alan Abramowitz. She began by saying that Alan is a long standing friend of Brevard and that Alan served as the District Administrator for DCF in Brevard for a long time. She welcomed Alan to the meeting.

Mr. Abramowitz addressed the board and stated that he had the best CBC in the state when he was in Brevard. He commented that Secretary Butterworth had assigned Alan to areas of the state that needed attention and Mr. Abramowitz confessed that he had tried to recruit Dr. Nellius in these situations but that he was not successful.

He stated he had been appointed to lead the GAL program by Governor Crist and he referred to the new booklet entitled "A Voice Heard" that is a compilation of interviews that were conducted with youth in the system. He shared that when asked what the youth wanted from the GAL's they provided the following. They wanted the GAL to take a personal interest in them, they wanted advocacy (educationally, situational, normalcy.) The youth expressed they wanted good communication where they were "heard" and they wanted to be able to trust the volunteers.

Mr. Abramowitz also spoke about the issue of GAL's being able to transport the youth which was not permitted in 1997. He shared a story about a GAL who was able to learn valuable information about a youth because she had been allowed to serve as a transporter and that as a result considerable trust had been built.

Mr. Abramowitz then shared that the GAL program also has a scorecard and that it is on the website and that it is directly related to what the youth shared. He also stated that currently 73% of youth have a volunteer GAL on their cases and that he anticipates this will increase to 90% by June 2013. He also shared that the statewide GAL program had won an award for efficiency.

He then addressed the upcoming legislative session where there are two (2) agenda items; first is to change the standard to “best interest” of a child. He shared an example of a youth who was removed from a custodial parent and placed with the non-custodial parent and that the relationship and placement was working well. However, under the current statute when the custodial parent met the case requirements, the child is returned to this parent.

He shared that this is not necessarily in the “best interest” of the child and he is looking to make a change. He also indicated the statute of “normalcy” in the foster parent environment needs to be changed to a “reasonable, prudent parent” standard. The example he shared was a teen in foster care who wants to go to the mall and how under the current language that can be perceived as a danger to the child’s well being or safety versus what would happen to a child living at home whose parent’s would respond in a reasonable and prudent manner to the request. He stated the current language requires a balance between normalcy and safety versus the new approach which would be the application of prudent judgment.

Mr. Abramowitz thanked the board and introduced Ms. Kim DelGaudio who is the program director for the local GAL program.

Ms. DelGaudio thanked Mr. Abramowitz and then thanked BFP for the support received and for the wonderful working relationship. She provided an overview of the current 690 children and shared that of these 575 have volunteers working with them. She also stated that 636 of these are BFP children and the others are from out of county. Of the 260 current volunteers she reported that 193 are active and 25 are certified to transport youth. Ms. DelGaudio also shared that the child advocate coordinators supervise the volunteers who actually work with the youth and that this is a very efficient model. She also reported that a new part time trainer position has been added that will provide training for educational advocacy. Ms. DelGaudio concluded her remarks by providing information to the board members on the upcoming Super Hero Walk/Run for the local GAL program.

The board thanked Ms. DelGaudio for her presentation and Mr. Whitten asked if the members had any questions for either Mr. Abramowitz or Ms. DelGaudio.

Consent Agenda:

Mr. Whitten asked if there were questions or concerns on the Board Data Report. None were expressed and the next agenda item was discussed.

CEO Board Report:

Mr. Whitten then requested Dr. Nellius to provide the Board Report. Dr. Nellius shared that the response to the ITN had been submitted last Friday and that the oral presentation, which will represent 50% of the total agency score, will take place on November 6, 2012 at 10:00 AM. She shared that the response was reviewed on October 22, 2012 and that no flaws were noted. Dr. Nellius commented that on November 8, 2012 the Brevard Family Partnership total response, both the written and oral presentation, will be scored at 10:00 AM and that as she is required to be in Tallahassee that day, Jim Carlson will attend the meeting.

Dr. Nellius then spoke about the Attachment I which is provided on the board portal and that further discussion on that will take place on that document. She then spoke about the increased trajectory of the census and referred to two graphics that demonstrated this. She also pointed to specific points in time where budget cuts occurred immediately prior to the increase; July 2011 when the agency budget was reduced by \$732,000 and again in July 2012 when a reduction of \$232,000 was implemented. Dr. Nellius commented that in effect the agency realized a cut of approximately \$1M while the number of children entering the system was on an incline.

She observed that these events create a strain on the system in terms of case loads, time constraints as well as resources for the increased demand in services. Dr. Nellius then spoke about the interventions that had been employed to address these impacts. She indicated that two (2) Resource Coordinator positions were created and co-located with DCF PI staff in order to provide immediate triage to the families and the enhancement of the MRT program to include initial assessments and services to stabilize the family until the providers could meet with the family.

Dr. Nellius also commented on the statute which mandates a risk pool for the CBC's but noted that while mandated, it is not funded which creates considerable risk. She spoke about a recent meeting with DCF where 46 cases were reviewed to determine if some of these could have been safely handled without entry into the formal dependency system and that DCF had concluded that there was only one (1) such case.

Dr. Nellius then spoke about the Florida Safe Harbor Act which will become effective January 2013. She indicated that the law, while well intended has resulted in some challenges for the CBC's as a whole and that there are many aspects of the law which require expertise that is external to child welfare agencies. She shared that BFP has already had situations in this regard but that there are no resources to address the needs or mandates. She indicated that DCF is developing a subcommittee to work on these issues and that she is also working on a local level to develop a committee of key players and experts to help shape the protocols and to address the needs. Dr. Nellius gave one example of the requirement for "safe houses" but indicated that this is a challenge for the system state-wide.

Discussion took place on this topic with questions about "human trafficking" and the illegal groups and the "sexual exploitation" of youth. Dr. Nellius commented that currently we are seeing cases of "sexual exploitation" rather than "human trafficking". Ms. Goldfarb asked about including organizations that focus on women's issues and if we could engage these organizations in support of the committee work to address this problem. Dr. Nellius responded that we would welcome experts in this area to help develop the protocols and create processes to help us address the needs.

Dr. Nellius then referenced the transition plan for the Center for Innovation and Excellence and that it is moving forward. She stated the By Laws and Articles have been drafted and are being reviewed by outside counsel. Dr. Nellius indicated we are on track for an effective date of January 2013. She then spoke about the 10th anniversary of BFP and requested feedback from the board members on the type of event, location or other ideas they have to commemorate this milestone. Discussion ensued in terms of what was "appropriate" for our industry, if it should be upscale or not, if we should consider a local speaker or one with a national reputation, etc. Mr. Whitten indicated that as there was not a great deal of time to plan for this event that he requested members provide their feedback to Dr. Nellius as soon as possible.

Action Item: Dr. Nellius will send an e-mail to the members to solicit input for the BFP 10th anniversary event.

Dr. Nellius then spoke about the upcoming Annual Board Retreat/Business Meeting which is scheduled for January 24, 2012. She indicated that the COA recertification and strategic planning process will be addressed at this meeting and that tentatively it is scheduled to be held at the Doubletree Hotel in Indialantic. She also shared that at the next meeting, the Board Self Evaluation form will be distributed to members to complete and return to Ms. Randall. Dr. Nellius then reported on the upcoming Walk/Run for Love event and thanked Mr. Eric Smith for his support and that of the Melbourne Beach Rotary for this event. Judge McKibben commented that the Walk for Love is a wonderful event and encouraged members to attend if they were able. Dr. Nellius then spoke about the Mass Adoption event scheduled for November 13th and recognized Ms. Kelly Swartz for her work in securing adoptions for our children.

New Business:

Mr. Gutierrez then spoke about the financials. He shared that the September 30, 2012 Statement of Activities and the Statement of Financial Position are provided in the binders. He indicated that he had spoken with Ms. Hensler, Finance Director prior to the meeting and that no issues were raised. He indicated that at the November meeting, Ms. Hensler would review both sets of financials.

Mr. Ropert then addressed the board members and reviewed the 10-year revenue projection chart that was provided to the members. He commented that there are targets for each of the diversified revenue streams as shown in the chart and that the Community Foundation of Brevard may be able to manage foundation funds for a low administrative fee of 1%. He also recognized Ms. Christa Bailey for her outstanding work in the volunteer program and commented that Rita Elkins has provided great support and she is very well known in the community. He spoke about the intent to raise funds through qualified grants, building relationships and planned giving.

Officer Cadore left the meeting.

Next Ms. Randall provided copies of the Conflict of Interest Policy and form to the board members. In accordance with the Board policy all members complete the Conflict of Interest form on an annual basis. She requested that these be completed and returned to her at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Whitten asked if there were public comments. None were made.

Motion: Mr. Broom moved to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Ms. Rich New and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie M. Randall
Recording Secretary

Approved at Board of Directors Meeting November 29, 2012