**Board Meeting Minutes**

**October 27, 2022**

**10am to 12 Noon EST**

**Meeting Participants**: Ronald Pickett, Kathy Milton, Gerald Waters, Reggie Johns, Keith Dean, Rep. Michelle Salzman, Teresa Roberts, Serena Armstrong, Mike Watkins, Courtney Stanford, Rae Kerr, Jeffrey Pic, Marcia Mathis, David Daniels, Ralph Haben, Michael Lee, Amy Cliburn, Connie Lyda, Angie Nichols, Kathy Donofro, Mark Stavros, MD, Lori Gulledge, Dr. Liz Holifield, Walter Sachs, Natalie Kelly

1. **Welcome and Chair’s Remarks Ronald Pickett**

Introductions and welcome

Natalie Kelly with Florida Managing Entities joined and complimented the ME’s in Florida for working together so well. She explained that NWF developed a system after Hurricane Michael which the other ME’s have emulated. ME’s were able to utilize this system during the recent Hurricane Ian. David Daniels worked with the Recovery Op Center (ROC) to develop a system to help victims. This system was used to help with mental health needs. Natalie thanked Mike Watkins and David Daniels for advising the other ME’s during their time of need.

1. **Consent Agenda Ronald Pickett**
   1. Review and Approval of Minutes
      1. Board
      2. Executive Committee
      3. Finance Committee
   2. Review Performance Child Welfare/Behavioral Health
   3. Media Coverage
   4. Policy Review

Rae Kerr announced that there was a slight change to the working budget summary. New reports have been updated.

Chair Pickett asked for a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Reggie Johns made a motion to accept and the motion was unanimously approved.

1. **Review and Approval of Finance Committee Report Rae Kerr**
   1. **21-22 FY**

Pg. 28 Budget Summary: This page shows the summary for CBC 2/14 and CBC C1 contracts annualized $80 million for the 2023/2024 year. The budget will exceed $250 million projected for our expenditures. The C1 funding category is mostly estimates. C1 will cost $8 million on an 8 month basis vs $10 million for an entire year for C2/C14. This estimate may change but updates will be given.

Pg. 23 Actual Expenditures. Currently sitting at $20k for Projected YTD surplus. If expenditures fluctuate during the month that will cause fluctuations. We had significant increases in IT costs due to the purchase of Cyber Security software which was required by our Insurance Company.

Pg. 24: Shows that we have only spent $20k on the Transitional C1 contract. This number will change in October and increase due to bringing on additional staff.

Pg. 25: Showing a surplus in ME. There is an anticipated $10 million in scheduled funds.

CBCIH: This is the contract with Sunshine Insurance. We are anticipating an increase in these funds. There will be a push for additional services to utilize this contract, which will increase the unrestricted dollars.

HSS Grant ended on 9/30 and is cost reimbursement funding. Any dollars that are not spent, must be reverted back to the State.

State Legislative policy allows us to roll forward up to 8%. This amount must be used for clients.

Rate Structure: NWF has a Management Agreement for the NWF Partnership. We have to adopt rates to cover costs for the Management. This includes HR to manage the employees, Accounting Staff, Admin Support, Admin Staff, Management Staff (CFO, COO, CEO); as well as the Facilities Staff which manage the 8 facilities that we own. These are the new rates for the current year. Rates have increased slightly due to the extra staff brought on to manage the dollars. We are still keeping Admin costs low but the additional staff was needed. Michael Lee and Ralph Haben will present the Management Agreement to the Board.

Pg. 24 is our expenditures to date 8/15 – 9/30 for C1. This may not include all of the expenditures that have been incurred. Corrections will be made. Once we have the full contract on November 1st, this financial statement will look like the others. We are also bringing on new Accounting Software.

The Subsidy payments will be issued as a hard check the first time, and EFT as subsequent payments. If addresses were not updated by the families, then the checks will be returned to NWF. There will be thousands of checks mailed in November. The most difficult addresses to update will be the Adoption parents because they receive checks until the child is 18. If they adopted the child at age 2, they may not have kept the address updated within the FFN system in the following years. If they did not update their addresses with FFN, they won’t receive the payment. We have planned ahead for this and have staff ready to field calls and notifications have been placed on the website to make families aware of this. As an agency we are not going to issue paper checks to new caregivers. If they do not have a banking account, then we will provide them with a payment card. The goal is to be paper check free by 2024.

C1 Adoption checks are released on the 16th of the month so we have changed C2/C14 to match. We have also changed our Foster Care payments to the 15th of the month.

Chair asked about the policy to find the new addresses of the returned to sender mail. The Post Adoptive Support Team and CHS is actively working to help find the families in order to update their information. We also have staff searching the database to find the information. Legally, we have to release payments to the last known address. Representative Salzman asked if we are logging the names of those recipients who gets returned. Yes, per Rae Kerr and Courtney Stanford.

Once we receive a request for an address change, this must be routed through FSFN before it becomes official.

* 1. **22-23 Budget & Spending Priorities**
  2. **Facility Updates**

Motion to accept the Financial Report was made by Gerald Waters. Dr. Stavros seconded the motion. Motion to accept passed.

1. **Review and Approval of new NWF Partnership Agreement Michael Lee**

There was an amendment to the NWP Partnership Agreement from 2018. This requires an annual amendment in writing with the updated rates. Reggie Johns is abstaining from the vote since he is on both the NWF Health Network Board and the Partnership Board. Serena Armstrong will not vote because she is on the Partnership Board. The rates are trued up at the end of the year.

Chair Pickett asked if there were any questions. There were none. He asked for a motion to approve the Service Agreement as presented. Teresa Roberts made a motion to approve the agreement. Gerald Waters seconded. Motion passed.

1. **Conduct Annual Board Actions**
   1. **Annual Report Connie Lyda**

Note that this is not the final copy, revisions are still being made. The Annual Report starts with an opening letter from Mike Watkins, CEO.

Financial Report: Rae Kerr explained that this gives a picture of how we ended fiscal year 2022. We ended with a $144 million Operating Budget. 63% of funds on ME side and 34% spent on CBC activities. About 3% was spent on Administration. We haven’t had any issues which resulted in our need to return dollars to the Federal Government.

Lori Gulledge stepped down as CFO but will remain on staff with a new role. In March, the First Lady helped “Continue the Mission” go statewide to recruit Veterans in Child Welfare roles. The Communications Team is promoting this to increase our staffing numbers as well as helping the military.

The Tess Chat box app is used to help middle and high school students. The chat bot listens, gives advice, and offers links for mental health well-being. Tess was created by someone who dealt with issues as a child. This is available for children in grades 7th-12th. Tess App was purchased with school Mental Health dollars. Trigger words will alert mobile response teams to the child in need. This is a year round program and free. Rep. Salzman asked to receive several hundred Tess cards to distribute in her middle schools: Santa Rosa and Escambia counties.

A question was posed asking what the process is with a trigger word: The app can read emojis and text. If a trigger word is sent, a message is sent to the Centralized Receiving Center at Apalachee Center which is open 24 hours. The situation would then be treated as any crisis call. Someone will reach out and determine if Law Enforcement is needed.

SMART Meth prevention project is aimed to stop meth use in the rural counties. These counties have a higher usage of met. The program is geared to middle schoolers to help with prevention. There are also resources for family members to get support. In-school curriculum has been distributed.

Gentracon: Training to educate people with generational trauma. This took place on June 7th and 8th at Mosley High School.

Youth Care Coordination: Youth Care Specialist was hired in November to help youth. 90 days intensive program for minors. The program offers mentoring, community support, and develops a care plan with the family.

Stories of Success: Three children were featured with their stories.

Community Action Teams section explains what they provide as well as the services.

Mental Health First Aid: Teaches to identify the signs of substance abuse and mental health disorders.

Independent Living Overview: This gives children tools for success. They enter the program at 16 and work with a Case Manager to transition into adulthood.

Christmas Adoptions in Bay County: Kathy Donofro was thanked for her efforts.

There are about 300 kids in C1 who need their forever homes. This is our focus to conquer.

Timeline: In 2002, the company formed BBCBC. In 2004, the first caseloads came. In 2005, Mike Watkins came on as CEO and took on C14. We developed one contract with 2 CBCs. In 2013 we became the Managing Entity. In 2015 we received the Governors Sterling Award for a CBC. In 2020 we began rebranding for the 18 counties to become NWF. In 2022, we were selected to be the Child Welfare Lead agency for C1.

* 1. **Board Policy Manual:** Policy will be emailed to everyone. There were no changes or updates to the policy.
  2. **Code of Ethics:** Michael Lee encourages everyone to read and follow the Code of Ethics policy.
  3. **Conflict Statement:** Board Members will review and sign.
  4. **Board Self Evaluation:** Board Members should review and complete; then submit to Angie Nichols or Michael Lee for the 2022/2023 year.

This is an accreditation standard. We received accreditation this year. Angie Nichols will email all Board Members not in attendance so they can complete the annual documents.

Chair asked if there were questions on the annual report. There were no questions. Walter Sachs, DCF, congratulated the agency on a successful 20 years.

1. **Strategic Discussions Mike Watkins**
2. **Annual Priorities**
   1. **C1 Transition Update Courtney Stanford**

We recently set up a peer hotline at the request of the Secretary. Secretary Harris contacted Mike Watkins to ask him to find peers to operate this line to support those who endured Hurricane Ian as survivors themselves from Hurricane Michael. There is a live dashboard for those calls. The Governor launched it 2 weeks ago.

ME group sent a Team to help with recovery efforts.

Natalie Kelly explained that they have been working with other MEs around the area that endured Hurricane Ian. There is great difficult due to traveling, working, and driving back because there are no hotels in the area.

Walter Sachs: D-Snap events will continue through October, November, and some in December. ME’s are supporting with crisis counselors onsite.

C1: Contract with FFN was signed this week along with the assignment agreements with the current Providers from the network. The draft of the contract with DCF is being reviewed. The full contract will be executed on November 1st. There will be a Welcome Breakfast on November 8th in C1.

We have been working on the placement array since October 1st. Licensed or relicensed 16 homes since October 1st for Caregivers. Two Foster Parent Training classes have occurred.

Kathy Donofro has been working with FFN on adoptions and placement.

Facilities: We have a lease in Pensacola on the LifeView campus (formerly Lakeview) and are working on adding more facilities in the future. Many new hires are working remotely.

Currently we are working on implementation and looking at the processes with the Team and the Provider. C1 has a wonderful community. There was a final DCF call this morning and the Department said this has been the smoothest transition thus far.

Gerald Waters shared that the Friday call occurs in C1 and these have been going well. These calls include Foster Parents, Molly Clore, and Courtney Stanford. The Foster Family Support Group has been wonderful and the Foster Parents in C1 are very excited about where things are going.

There will be a Community Alliance meeting in Pensacola with DCF. All are welcome to attend. It will be held at 10:00am CST.

Insurance rate premiums were received for the updated area of service.

* 1. **ME Update David Daniels**

We have received more funding. New projects include a contract with ABHC for telehealth Behavioral Health services. This will be strictly telehealth. FIT contract has doubled the capacity (Family Intensive Treatment). Substance abuse for families involved in the Child Welfare program. Bridge Program was developed due to the Opioid crisis. When a person goes to the hospital they are then “bridged” with someone in the community who offers help after the patient is released from the hospital. We signed a contract for the Bridge program in C14 and are developing two programs in C2. There was an expansion of neonatal exposed syndrome in C1 (CDAC). This will be expanding to C14 then later to C2. Care coordination for infants exposed to substances.

12 counties have been focused on the CORE program; including the Secretary, DCF, and others. Dr Stavros stated that Escambia leads the state in overdose deaths (raw #s not per capita). Fentanyl is the majority. It is important to start treatment in the ER and having peer support in the ER. The peer support will then help with handoff to the next step. EMS is being trained to follow up the next day with the patient to administer medication. This will help bridge into a treatment program. This is being funded by DOH.

There were no comments from the Board.

* 1. **Community Engagement Marcia Mathis**

The last page of the Board packet summarizes the highlights since the last meeting. Pg. 37-67 are the Communications in the news relating to us. Suicide Prevention Awareness month was in September and we had activities in Bay County. We are working with the ME team to offer support as well as with the Sheriff’s offices. One of our Community Staff solicited $60k to renovate the visitation rooms in Bay County. Kecia Crawford received $30k from St. Joe to help with the renovations.

November is National Adoption Month. There will be many events in the Circuits.

1. **Review Risk Management Mike Watkins**
   1. **Executive/Legislative**

Financial payments in the C1 adoption subsidy is a risk issue due to the mailing address issue. We have a formal risk policy to be executed on November 1. Our relationship with the Executive Branch is very positive.

There were 55-57 children from C1 who were not in a licensed placement over the past year. NWF has a zero tolerance policy for this and will be actively working to prevent future occurrences. Currently there is one child out of placement but that child is expected to be placed in a licensed home on November 3rd. NWF will notify the Board if a child becomes out of placement.

* 1. **Legal**  **Ralph Haben**

There are currently two cases at this time. We are in the process of negotiations so these cases will be gone soon.

* 1. **Other**

Last Sunday an Independent Living young adult sent texts threatening harm to Mike Watkins and to a Law Enforcement Officer. The young adult was arrested and will be extradited to Bay County. Upon release all NWF facilities will be notified for a visual and there will be protocol to follow with safety measures.

The Board was asked if they have identified any Risk Issues. No risk issues were noted.

1. **Review Governance Ronald Pickett**
   1. **Status of Directors**
      1. Reappointment of Member(s)

Currently we have 3 officers in rotation so time to change: Ronald Pickett will step down as Board President with Gerald Waters taking over. Kathy Milton and Pauline Patrick will continue in their roles. Gerald Waters will take the role as President at the December meeting. Vice Chair needs to be filled. And volunteers were called for. Ronald Pickett will take the Vice Chair position.

Nominations stand, motion to accept was made by Representative Salzman, Reggie Johns seconded. Motion passes.

The Chair asked for a motion to accept continuing on with 13 board members. Reggie made the motion and Dr. Holifield seconded the motion. Motion passes.

Note that we are taking a formal vote to recognize that Kathy Milton was indeed reappointed in 2021 and the reappointment lasting until 2023. Gerald Waters motioned to accept. Reggie Johns seconded and the motion passed.

Jeffrey Pic resigned from NWF Partnership Board.

* + 1. Proposed Member(s)

1. **Next Meeting: December 15th 10am CST, Panama City**
2. **Adjourn Ronald Pickett**