

**Board Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2024
10am to 12 Noon CST**

Meeting Participants: Ralph Haben, Angie Nichols, Kelly Faircloth, Gerald Waters, Brandi Griffiss, Teresa Roberts, Terrence Watts, Courtney Stanford, Rae Kerr, Michael Lee, Denise Myers, April Hargrove, Serena Armstrong, Lyn Masslieno, Reggie Johns, George Baston, Amy Cliburn, Marcia Mathis, Liz Holifield, Keith Dean, Charles McDonald, Christy Bertera, Jeremy Scanlon, Arthur Cullen, Rendy Lovelady, Charlie Strickland, Michelle Salzman

I. Welcome and Chair's Remarks Gerald Waters

Meeting was called to order and guests were welcomed. It was noted that we have a quorum of the Board.

II. Consent Agenda Gerald Waters

- A. Review and Approval of Minutes
 - 1. Board of Directors
 - 2. Executive Committee
 - 3. Finance Committee
- B. Review Performance Child Welfare/Behavioral Health
- C. Media Coverage
- D. Policy Review

Reggie Johns made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Teresa Roberts seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

III. Review and Approval of Finance Committee Report Rae Kerr

A. 23-24 FY

AJ500: Working Budget to Actual through March 31, 2024 shows budgeted expenses vs year to date spend. Currently Fiscal Year to Date through March 31, 2024, there is an approximate \$615,000 surplus. Based on trends, NWFHN is anticipating ending the year with an estimated \$5.5 million surplus.

BJ102: BJ102 is projecting a year to end the year with a deficit. NWFHN has frozen in excess of 29 positions there has been postponement of installing a new records management software system. The driving factor of deficit is out of home care. This out of home care increase is not simply due to number of children, but due to the acuity of care required for children in care.. NWFHN has hired a new Project Director, Charles Scherer. One of his projects is a hard focus on out of home care from entry to exit from system.His focus will be on rates as well as ensuring all children are at the right placement at the right cost.

CBCs are meeting with the Secretary in May as a group to continue discussions on out of home care and out of home care rising costs because the State of Florida is at a historical low with kids in care. There are 18,300 kids in the state foster system in out of home care, most are in unpaid placements. Lowest in at least last 23 years. In addition, in 2002, when this company was formed, there were 8 million fewer people in Florida. However, the cost of care is rising and is not going to go down. For us, the price is being raised, but the money in the account has not kept up with increases..

In C2/C14 there is a projected deficit at the end of the fiscal year and NWFHN management team is working with DCF to develop a solution. There are also other complicating factors including the fact that Independent Living has not been funded adequately. NWFHN is expecting additional funds through pass-through dollars, but also working to get the department to make us whole.

DCF Secretary has been asked directly about the CBC's that have not been made whole for 23/24. The answer was that DCF will be addressing each CBC separately. NWFHN team will be meeting with Kate Williams and CFO tomorrow morning around BJ102 shortfall and the allocation differences between the two contracts for CBC. NWFHN has been incredibly fiscally responsible and has consistently told the department that we can solve it if allowed to transfer funds and hope to have that discussion with the Department tomorrow. Terrence Watts was made aware of meeting tomorrow.

BJ102 Budget to Actual through March 31, 2024 is currently showing a surplus of \$232,845, however the budget is spread across the whole year so NWFHN will move to a deficit position as year-end approaches. NWFHN currently is anticipating to have to pay Level I subsidies back if the Department doesn't make any changes, as that is not considered core funding, but subsidy funding. Level I Licensed home received a \$3 million funding allocation, which there is no way to spend. NWFHN asked the Department to move that to Core funding instead of pass-through. NWFHN anticipates additional funding in adoption subsidies. NWFHN is projecting a year end deficit of approximately \$2.8 million deficit.

There were no questions on the CBC C2/14 Budget to Actual.

ME: Budget to Actual surplus through March 31, 2024 is approximately \$18 million. NWFHN received Opioid settlement money that there is a heavy effort to distribute to providers and counties prior to 6/30/2024.. NWFHN has deadlines of April 30th to get contracts pushed executed with Counties before DCF moves to a penalty phase. Operating expenses for ME is under budget and the ME contract is moving along. NWFHN has to submit the updated response to the ITN on 4/29/2024. DCF did not receive more than one bid for each circuit and they are required to put the bid back out. The current contract goes through December 31, 2024.

There were no questions regarding the ME Budget.

CBCIH: CBCIH is now called Sunshine Health as of 4/1/2024. There are no expected changes in service. NWFHN is currently in a surplus position in the CBCIH contract through March 31, 2024. Sunshine Health was explained to the Board. They are a privatized company who won 1/3 of a state contract to provide Medicaid. They, in turn, pay us to coordinate care for the children in state care. Our Care Coordination team is in place to manage the dollars, make sure things are billed correctly and that we have providers and services.

There were no questions regarding the CBCIH budget.

Fatherhood Grant: The Fatherhood Grant is in a surplus position through March 31, 2024. NWFHN has had a slow down in hiring, due to Fatherhood employees needing to have lived experience, which creates an issue with background checks. This is a three year grant so NWFHN is hoping to carry the dollars forward.

Independence Village: No significant changes in Independence Village as we move into the repayment phase of the updated loan agreement with Florida Housing Finance. At some point NWFHN has to go back to the table to work out additional deal. The new agreement gave us some breathing room.

Reggie Johns made a motion to approve the Finance Report as presented. All were in favor and motion passed unanimously.

B, Facility Updates: NWFHN continues to lease in Pensacola and are currently looking for training space. There is not a lot of inventory in Pensacola so the lease in Escambia will be extended. Adding to the challenge are the high interest rates, purchasing doesn't make sense. There were no questions from the Board.

IV. Strategic Discussions

Mike Watkins

A. Annual Priorities

1. C14 Update

Kelly Faircloth

C14 is second in state for achieving permanency in 12 months, third for achieving in 12-24 months, and second for achieving permanency in 24+ months. Adoptions goal this year is 100. As of March 30, we were at 91. Projection will be 126 to put us over goal. For Behavioral Health we have been successful in increasing utilization of care coordination, connecting youth and adults to services earlier. In February, we had a resource expo at RCC Church. We had over 46 providers and was a huge success. We are teaming with Tyndall AFB for an expo on May 23rd, and two of our network providers are speaking. This will be an opportunity for outside providers to come on base.

Expos will become annual events. We had one in Bay County in the fall and northern counties in the spring. People were excited to network and make connections and they are advertised on social media and shared in the community meetings. Two years ago C14 was the lowest in the state in permanency so that is a huge system change. In the last 12 months, C14 has had more children exit out of home care than come in.

Mike Watkins and Chair Waters commended and thanked Kelly Faircloth for doing a great job in her role.

2. BHME Update & Opioid Settlement

Courtney Stanford

The BHME ITN response is due April 29th. The Department was required to open it back up with only one bidder and we will resubmit.

Bay County has come on board with CORE and we have executed the contract. A storm delayed Okaloosa County's ability to get CORE on their board agenda and was moved to May 7. Eventually, all of our 18 counties will have CORE.

\$51 million in Opioid funding will be pushed out over the next 18 years. All of our counties chose different routes of spending. Bay County will use theirs in their Lifeline program. NWF already funds the Lifeline program. With these funds, they will create a Lifeline dorm to expand this program. There are over 30 business agreements with the counties. In August of every year the counties can update/change their plans.

3. Faith Liaison

Marcia Mathis

We continue to speak with the Governor's faith initiative office. Met with counties where the Governor's office wanted to get more churches engaged in our care portal. All of our counties now have at least one care portal church on board.

Behavioral Health Faith Grants: Teen Meth Prevention Grant went to 16 churches and half have conducted the curriculum programs and report things went well, it has been well-received and they are asking to do it again. There are more churches that would like to participate and hope to get more teens involved.

General Behavioral Health Grants awarded to five faith organizations. Those organizations have reported that we have over 661 clients and families who have received services that probably otherwise would not have been received. One organization conducted an event at Bay Correctional

Facility where over 100 participants completed a treatment plan and graduated. In C1 there were 84 families that attended TBRI programs.

A grant was awarded to First City Church in Pensacola and they are now our new safety management service provider. When children are in danger they will check on families and be our eyes in homes. First City Outreach is the name of the program, and they have worked to get up to speed on roles and responsibilities.

In C1, Deliverance Tabernacle Christian Center will hold a May 11th event with the Foster Family Support team to have an event for foster family recruitment. The faith community continues to make a big impact on the children and families we serve.

4. Criminal Justice

Christy Bertera

There are more outreach workers coming in. There is an additional one for approved for Jackson County, so one will focus on substance abuse and one for mental health. We got a new endorsement for certified law enforcement peers, which will be first in the state. Lyn Masslieno did re-entry with DOC and working on getting peers certified with DOC when they enter back into society.

5. Fatherhood Initiative

Lyn Masslieno

We have screened in over 35 fathers into the program and we have fathers over our entire area in all circuits. Our focus is on the children by impacting the lives of the fathers. We have made over 75 contacts with our peers. Some of the fathers are incarcerated or in open child welfare cases. We have a meeting with Jackson County Jail and Liberty County Jail on May 2nd and Santa Rosa county Jail on May 4th to make a presentation to inmates and talk about the program, in hopes to add more fathers. All peers are now certified Peer Recovery Specialists. They have completed the 40 hours of coursework and passed the test and are now working on completing the hours.

A case worker in C1 wrote an email to commend Tyrone Downs, the Fatherhood Peer Specialist in C1, and to thank the Fatherhood Program. She stated he made contact with two fathers she has been working with, and they have told her since meeting with him they have gained a tremendous amount of information from him and have apologized for their behavior in the past and have made changes in their living situations.

Justin Perse, the Fatherhood Peer Specialist in the northern counties, is working with fathers in the jails and they are experiencing a change in mindset.

Mike Watkins commended Lyn Masslieno's work on this program. Terrence Watts asked to send up our fatherhood team for commendation.

President Waters thanked Lyn for the successes and shared that he is thankful for help for fathers. Liz Holified advised that she found the Fatherhood Program and initiative very inspiring and would like to feature the program on her talk show on NPR.

V. **Review Risk Management**

Mike Watkins

A. **Executive/Legislative**

The Governor is expected to sign House Bill 79 anytime. The latest CBC contract that got signed included language that the Governor shall determine the board members of the CBC. Despite voicing concerns, the CBC signed it. From a risk standpoint, the idea that the state governor is going to determine who the board members are is not acceptable. It violates the independent contractor status.

B. **Legal**

Ralph Haben/Michael Lee

Legal provided update on all outstanding and anticipated litigation. One recent matter has been dismissed and we are currently tracking one active matter and one noticed pending matter. In addition, DCF has received multiple notices of intent regarding actions that we may assist with on discovery. Of note, DCF's recent desire to include language in their contract regarding appointment of approval of lead agency senior leadership may erode separation between DCF and NWFHN in terms of risk matters and allow us to be collectively sued in previously separate issues.

C. **Other**

Reggie Johns discussed the fundraiser and said it was an awesome opportunity for NWFHN. The idea was to generate revenue, but an extra benefit is that it has supported relationships in the community. Believes this year has set the groundwork for future events. Thanked Rendy Lovelady as the promotor, who provided merchandise for auction. Attendees included State Representatives, judges, clerk of court, commissioners, and sheriffs.

Rendy Lovelady told the board for the first event it was hugely successful.

D. **Risk Items from the Board**

None added.

VI. **Review Governance**

Gerald Waters

A. **Status of Directors**

1. Reappointment of Member(s) – Rep. Michelle Salzman
Reggie Johns made a motion for reappointment. Teresa Roberts seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

President Waters thanked Angie Nichols for her time at NWFHN. Rae Kerr thanked her for her involvement in fundraisers and introduced Brandi Griffiss to the Board as her replacement.

- VII. **Next Meeting: June 27th CST, Pensacola**
FCC Conference, July 21-23, Marriott Sawgrass Resort & Spa, Ponte Vedra Beach
Florida Children & Families Summit, September 4-6, JW Marriott Orlando

President Waters also mentioned to the Board the Florida Foster and Adoptive Family Conference on June 21, 22, and 23rd and requested a list of all employees attending.

- VIII. **Adjourn**

Gerald Waters

Reggie Johns made a motion to adjourn. Teresa Roberts seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.