

## Children First Board meeting/retreat minutes

5-20-2021

In person at Charleston Board of Trade with Zoom option using meeting OWL

At 9:11 am the **workshop/retreat portion** of this meeting of the Children First board was called to order with the following present:

Board members: Carolyn Baker, Dr. Amanda Gerber, Mike Linnenbrink, Melissa Mahon, Kayla Schwartz, Amanda Swan, and Rich Harlow and Meagan Vogel attending via zoom. Quorum was met with 8 of 11 board members present.

Board members not present: Mark Meek, Kathy Osipowicz, and Ryan Wilson

Director: Ginger Knisley

Guests: James Knisley providing IT support

### **Introductions and expectations, current issues, questions**

Introductions took place around the table. Some thoughts that came up included:

\*Concern that the new release of mask mandates could be detrimental

\*Concern that COVID will become a disease of children as they won't be vaccinated

\*Questions around the governor's child care task force, when will the 100 days be done, what work are they doing, what direction are the recommendations headed? Ginger will provide a link to their work.

\*Desire on the part of the board to take a look at the RFP process and forms. Concerning that many programs are just doing the same thing for the same money with the same clients year after year. Concern that data is not consistent such as some reporting number of children and some reporting number of families. ECTF attendance not regularly reported in a consistent manner. The board is also interested in further clarity regarding evidence-based programming, allow room for learning new evidence and adapting to it, and clarification on what is considered indirect or administrative costs.

\*Discussion around the flood of one time or temporary funding tied to COVID relief and how it can be coordinated so as not to duplicate efforts as well as working toward some form of efficiency around blending and complimenting the funds. One item tied to the last round of stimulus is the reimbursement cards to families on free/reduced school meals in districts that missed in person days. Ginger will forward information on that program in order to expand on promotion of awareness of the program.

### **Director Report**

Ginger gave a brief Director report including updates on board business, legislation, statewide directors meeting, and board membership.

Bylaws language was discussed as the bylaws committee discussed via email some changes to the document. Most notably the elimination of limits on terms of service on the board. Ginger also made some minor clarifying changes and emailed the entire document to all board members prior to the meeting. No further changes were recommended during the discussion at

this meeting. The draft will be sent out again 11 days prior to the next board meeting for review prior to approval at the next meeting.

Ginger distributed Tool AA Board of Directors Self-Evaluation and asked board members to complete it either at the meeting or in the near future and return to Ginger for the purpose of board development. Ginger will review and summarize the responses and present to the board at a future meeting as well as using the responses to guide agenda items at future meetings.

The ECI structure was reviewed with an info-graph and detailed descriptions of the various components of the ECI structure. Ginger will provide additional information on the state ECI board and the Stakeholders Alliance.

### **Legislation and Budget Updates for FY21 & FY22 Funding**

FY21 funds appear to be safely under the 20% carry forward limit unless a program seriously underspends what they have projected they will spend by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ginger shared that although not signed by the governor yet, the legislative appropriations for FY22 were passed with EC having level funding which results in approximately a 6% reduction locally and SR being awarded a 2.4% increase as well as an increase of allowable administrative use of funds from 3% to 5%. The updated distributions have not been sent out from the state office yet but Ginger anticipates approximately \$8,000 more in SR from FY21.

### **Annual contract monitoring**

Ginger had emailed the entire set of contract monitoring forms including program responses prior to the meeting. There were no further questions regarding current practices that had not been addressed in the monitoring process.

### **Community Plan work**

Ginger provided the board with copies of the pages of the community plan regarding guiding principles, goals, and strategies. The two areas that appear to need more attention are mental health services for children and alternative child care options. Ginger is pleased the board is purchasing the Emotional Growth bundle books for all EC sites to assist in addressing mental health issues and she will continue to participate in the Children's Mental Health Workgroup in the region. Alternative child care issues rising to the top are sick child care, drop in care, evening and overnight care, and the fact that there are long waitlists for infant care. It was questioned if the area hospitals could possibly be engaged to help to address the situation.

### **FY22 Fund applications**

Each board member had a full set of copies of the applications for funding for FY22 prior to the meeting. Ginger provided a summary of the applications as well.

While the board understands there have been challenges over the past year due to COVID -19, they feel it is time for programs to move forward and come up with creative and innovative ways to serve the targeted client populations to meet benchmark expectations in order to

continue to receive funding. It is true that there are barriers to service such as transportation, Wi-Fi signal, and even cellular phone service, especially in Van Buren County.

\*For the amount of FTE staff being supported for VB PAT, the board needs to see improvement on the number of services being provided. Ginger will send a request with the FY22 contract for the VB PAT program to present an improvement plan to the Children First board (perhaps more outreach via a newsletter, Facebook, community events, etc.) within the first quarter of the fiscal year or they need to request assistance in developing one. Performance will be reviewed at the end of the first six months of the fiscal year.

\*The board would like to hear what HOPES has planned for increasing the number of children served and for them to document the additional efforts being made for recruitment.

There is some concern that child care providers do not know who is responsible to assist them with different issues such as CCRR, CCNC, DHS, etc. Ginger will work on a chart or info-graph of some kind to assist with this and promote it through the provider forum groups she hopes to restart in August of 2021.

There was discussion of the mileage reimbursement rate for the Children First Director as well as funded programs. Several board members feel 45 cents per mile is too low. Ginger shared that over the years, Children First has followed the reimbursement rate for Lee County employees as she is a county employee and Lee County is the fiscal agent for the board. Rich said he would address the issue with the board of supervisors and report back.

Lee County Head Start requesting a security system – it was clarified that it is a safety and ratio concern as well as being a system for the whole building, not just one door.

The Learning Tree preschool staff etc. – The board would like additional information from the Learning Tree on their plan to sustain a position over time. Traditionally the board would offer assistance for staffing for a certain number of years (anywhere from one to three years) with a plan to sunset the funds over time.

After deliberation the following budget plan was agreed upon:

Contracts to be issued in June 2021 and beginning July 1, 2021 pending sufficient allocations:

|                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Child Care Nurse Consultant | \$51,117.00                   |
| HOPES check in              | \$70,345.00                   |
| VB PAT conditions           | \$137,808.00                  |
| Dental program              | \$20,386.10                   |
| Lee County Head Start       | \$13,241.76 (security system) |
| RVAP                        | \$3,697.67                    |

Funds held in – house:

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Administrative expenses | \$84,000.00  |
| Summit                  | \$2,500.00   |
| Forums                  | \$2,000.00   |
| EC QI funds             | \$38,308.40  |
| SR QI funds             | \$103,145.47 |

Applications to be given consideration after more information is gathered

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| The Learning Tree preschool program | \$24,300.00 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|

The **business portion of the meeting** was called to order by Kayla Schwartz at 12:37 pm with a motion by Amanda and a second by Mike. All voted aye. Rich Harlow had joined the meeting in person at this time and Meagan Vogel had logged off. Quorum was met with 7 of 11 board members present in person.

There was a **motion** by Rich with a second by Carolyn to approve today's agenda and the minutes from the previous meeting. All voted aye.

**FY22 Funding decisions**

There was a motion by Melissa with a second by Mike to approve the budget as drafted during the retreat/workshop. All voted aye.

**Financial Report**

There was a **motion** by Melissa with a second by Carolyn to accept the April 2021 fiscal report. All voted aye.

**Fiscal Agent Agreement & contract with State ECI Board**

Ginger explained there were no changes to the terms of the fiscal agent agreement or the contract with the state ECI Board and designated departments of the state for FY22 except dates and dollar amounts.

There was a **motion** by Amanda with a second by Melissa to authorize the board chair to sign the FY22 Fiscal Agent Agreement with Lee County. All voted aye.

There was a **motion** by Carolyn and a second by Dr. Gerber to authorize the board chair to sign the FY22 contract with the ECI State Board. All voted aye.

**Bylaws amendment – first read**

There was a **motion** by Mike with a second by Melissa to accept the first reading of the amended bylaws as written. All voted aye.

**Board member report out of EC issues & Public Comment**

N/A

There was a **motion** by Carolyn with a second by Amanda S to adjourn the meeting at 12:56 pm. All voted aye.

The next **Children First board meeting** will be held via Zoom on Monday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm.  
Gk

Date approved \_\_\_\_\_ Board officer signature \_\_\_\_\_