

**EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SARASOTA COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

School Board of Sarasota County, Brown Awning Building  
The Landings, 1960 Landings Boulevard, Sarasota  
6:00 PM – June 17, 2009

**MINUTES**

**1. ATTENDANCE**

a. Voting Members Present:

Laura Bauman	Mike Breton	Tami Conetta
David Hicks	Jill Jacoby	Chris Kofler
Bill Little	Janice Mee	Lois Natiello
Kathryn Stuckey	Pauline Tracy	Amy Tuck-Farrington
Cheryle Williams		

b. Non-Voting Members Present:

Lisa Williams	Connie Snyder
Sonia Figaredo-Alberts	

c. Absent (Voting):

Steve Spangler	John Stump
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d. Absent (Non-Voting):

Hope Kinney	Lisa Williams
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e. Staff:

Janet Kahn	Mary Wolf	James Pawlak
Valerie Walton	Marjorie Fondacaro	Linda Mason

f. Visitors:

Raphael Gomez	Randee Tolbert	Eva Balcar
Laura Benson		

**2. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00. Tami Conetta welcomed everyone and stated that past Chair Laura Benson was asked to attend this meeting in order to say a thank you for her past leadership of the Board. Tami presented Laura with a Bonsai plant. Laura thanked everyone and stated that she has enjoyed the energy and passion of the Coalition Board.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

Tami asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. David Hicks made a motion to approve, Chris Kofler seconded. Motion passed.

**4. PRESENTATIONS:**

N/A for this meeting

**5. CHAIR REPORT**

Tami reported that she is finalizing her application for the Board Chair position.

Tami stated that staff had sent out post retreat survey results and she thought everyone's input was positive, great ideas came out of the sessions and everyone thought the retreat went well. Tami thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and stated that Janet will be working with specific Board members and organizing sessions for the follow up committees. Amy Farrington has volunteered to spear head the committee to develop an action plan for communications, specifically for

legislature issues. Janet commented that the post retreat survey had an area for reporting where additional information was needed and she will be looking at that carefully and developing materials or presentations around those areas.

## **6. ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Approval of Budget for fiscal year 2010**

Janet reported that everyone should have received two excel documents: one that shows income and one that shows expenses as well as detailed notes that go with them.

#### Income Overview:

Janet reported that the School Readiness core base allocation was reduced by \$234,000 on top of the \$89,000 reduction from last year due to legislative cuts, all of the thresholds are against that allocation; we do have temporary stimulus dollars to fill that reduction; VPK allocation was increased due to serving more children; we anticipate no longer receiving the VPK outreach and awareness funds (*note: subsequently this money was in fact received*); CCEP: our allocation allows us to serve the higher income of the working poor, we have and fully expect to receive the match dollars for this; we no longer will receive funds for the low performing VPK providers from DOE. Tami asked how confident we are of these numbers. Janet reported that we have received our notice from the state on this so they are set.

Janet then reviewed the County funds including the 6% required local match which the county has consistently provided for the last 6-7 years, CCEP match, child care training which may be cut, small grant for families that "incomed out"; however with the economy as it is we have not needed that money and we voluntarily did not apply for those funds this year, and the quality improvement system funding which Janet predicts will be slightly reduced as agencies were told to prepare for reductions. She also reviewed other county funding coming from the Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health for the challenging behavior program and the positive behavior support programs which are fairly certain about the amount we will receive. She also reviewed all private QIS funds with Gulf Coast as the primary funder as well as Jane's Trust, Selby and United Way. United Way has already reported there will be a 5-10 % reduction.

Private funds are the local projects: Leaf and hardship scholarships, Because it Matters and miscellaneous local funds. Janet reported that all private funds, including QIS are in a separate interest bearing account, which is reflected in the budget income as well.

#### Expenses:

Janet reviewed the expenses which were divided up in different areas including: child care payments, both VPK and SR. Janet noted that the SR child care expenses will end this year higher than budgeted due to higher than anticipated mandated referrals and lower attrition. The state does allow the transfer of funds among coalitions to cover these costs at year end to the extent possible; Any final deficit would have to carry over into next fiscal year; Unused stimulus funding for the immediate past year will carry over to new fiscal year, but Janet emphasized that these funds are only temporary and explained the challenges of managing funds and utilization particularly in this coming year.. These stimulus funds are on an 18 month allocation and the state will look at the funding patterns next June then see what will be left to allocate for the next 3 months of the fiscal year. This leaves the Coalition to operate on a 12 month basis and having parents served through the ARRA stimulus funds sign statements saying they are receiving funding on a temporary basis.

Bill asked for confirmation of what line items the stimulus money is filling the gaps. Janet reported that it designated to only be used for child care slots. The State did tell Coalitions that they will be allowed to max out their administration caps in the School Readiness funding to cover the additional staff that might be needed to cover the costs of staffing.

Gold Seal differential payments have been up and down in recent years due to sites having their Gold seal lapse and the number of children in Gold seal sites is still at 18% as it was several years ago and so a fairly low overall number of school readiness children are served in GS accredited sites. Any excess funds budgeted in this category will go into the school readiness child care provider payments.

Janet clearly explained in detail the personnel expenses as reflected in the hand outs and addressed what the differences were between projected from prior year, the actual expenses, which included staff turnover, not filling positions and there were some unexpected staff issues this year, and the current budgeted expenses for this year. She reviewed the rest of the budget looking at expenses and increasing where we think costs are going to increase. VPK personnel costs went up a little due to anticipation of serving more children.

Various contracts: notes are included. Minimal changes in contracted services this year. We will be reducing our screening and inclusion contract to set aside funds for a parent mentor which is really needed to assist those parents who do not follow through with necessary referrals. The only other change in contracts is the recommendation to put money in for health consultation for our providers and provide additional resources for those activities. We will be again contracting for the ERS assessments but we will not longer be contracting with Devereux for a number of reasons. Instead we were part of a procurement process with the ELC of Southwest Florida that also included ELC of Florida's Heartland FL, and therefore we will be contracting with the Children's Forum which has a long standing history in early care and education and additionally has expertise in assessments.

Tami stated that overall the general budget seems to be in line with what we've been working with the past years and asked if we are expecting any major decreases or increases. Janet stated that we would have had a significant decrease if not for the stimulus dollars and had a very large deficit which would have carried over into this year that we would have had to address due to the much higher than anticipated mandated referrals as mentioned above..

Janet also reported that we were on the list at the Glasser Shoenbaum Center for larger office space and our name has come up on the list for a 4500 square foot space that will be available in November, depending on when the CPC's new building is complete.. We will be taking that space, keeping the space we currently have there but we had to also renew the lease at Ringling given the timing issues. However Linda was able to negotiate with our current landlord and the cost at the Ringling offices was reduced from \$12.71 to \$7 sq foot to be comparable to the rate at the Glasser-Schoenbaum center.. Bill asked how many staff we currently have. Janet reported 23 staff all together and we are crowded everywhere. Having both the old and new space will allow us to move in stages. The administrative and quality staff will move first, then the fiscal staff will move and then we can plan for the move of the eligibility staff which will make things much less disruptive. We will not save money this year since we have to sign both leases but when everyone is moved it will save us approximately \$33k a year. Mike asked the length of the new lease at Ringling. Janet reported that it is one year only; July 1 to June 30. Janet also reported that the free space we have had at the Venice Jobs Etc will no longer be available to us and Linda is working on locating new space, we may have to move full time into the North Port Social Service Center where we are currently spending 2 days a week, and they find a location in Venice to go a few days a month..

Tami asked if the Budget is a referral from the Finance Committee but it is not as so she asked for a motion to approve. *Motion to approve the budget was made by Bill Little, seconded by Laura Bauman. No further discussion. Motion passed.*

## **B. Plan Amendments Approval**

Janet reported that she did not send a copy to everyone ahead of time, but had copies available at the meeting, and that the plan amendment action is really just a formality. There are three plan amendments: to update the board membership; to clarify in the plan specifically how we use the ERS assessments; and to clarify how often the CCRR files are updated, which is once a year now. There were no questions. *Motion to approve plan amendments made by David Hicks, seconded by Pauline Tracy. Motion passed.*

## **C. Approval Corporate resolution authorizing county grant application**

Janet reported that this is done yearly and that the county requires that the board approve the corporate resolution that allows us to enter into a contract with the county. The full Board approves and then Chair will need to sign with a notary. Motion to approve resolution was included in the packet for

board of directors and indicates approval to make an application with the county for an amount not to exceed \$619,000. *Motion made by Chris Kofler, seconded by Cheryl Johnson. (Bill, Jill and Pauline abstained due to being county employees). Motion passed.*

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None for this meeting

## **8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Janet had sent out the written report prior to the meeting but highlighted some items.

She reported that we are now part of the *Tapestry* system which is the county data system which is primarily used for disaster coordination but there are many other usages. Staff is currently entering all of the child care sites so that we can do mapping of all the child care sites in the county and this will allow us to also eventually track vacancies and it will allow us to see at a glance where capacity is missing.

Also new is the *Within A Mile* program which is a new volunteer program with the library systems for any agencies 'within a mile' from the library. Linda reported that we received 3 new volunteers as of today through this program.

The Young Professional Group will be assisting with making over Hansel & Gretel Child Care Center which is a site that has been in the community for many years and they have worked very hard this year on improving their quality. Their scores increased significantly this year and they have had consistent high interaction. They had been one of the sites under consideration a few years ago for the previous UW makeover event. YPG is coordinating with the Coalition on this for July 18<sup>th</sup>. Janet asked if anyone wants to come and volunteer that day all will be welcomed and needed.

Janet also reported that she is now the co-chair for the local Youth and Family Strike Team, part of the Sarasota disaster planning group, and she was also recruited to be the small coalition representative on the state Association of Early Learning Coalitions.

## **9. DISCUSSION ITEM/ NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Legislative/Communication Workgroup Plans:**

Tami reported that Amy Tuck will be chairing this work group that will meet over the summer. Vists with our local legislators will be planned.

### **b. Workgroup for executive director evaluation and salary review**

Chris Kofler had previously volunteered to chair this workgroup and it will be meeting after the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. This will be a short term group that will meet over the summer and bring back a report and recommendation to the full board in September.

## **10. OLD BUSINESS:**

AWI Monitoring Report and Response:

Janet reported that the AWI monitoring report is finally revised and notable achievements were added into our report. All other areas of concern were addressed with clarification of the CCRR comparison chart and modification of language regarding the one curriculum issue was made.. Janet reported that she and staff feel comfortable with the report now and it is an accurate reflection of who we are and our overall performance. It should be reposted to the AWI website this week..

Janet reported that she is now working on one issue from the fiscal audit regarding the PAR allocations. AWI is determining if it is to be an observation and not a finding.

Mike asked if the state is still talking about consolidation of coalitions. Janet and Tami reported that yes this periodically surfaces as a topic for discussion at the state level and that It will likely be a legislative issue again this year.

## **11. FINANCE Report.**

James reported he modified the one page report for the Board so that both programs are now on one sheet and he added a total actual projected column so that items can be tracked against those numbers more clearly.

James went through the SR administrative and non direct earmarks for the year and reported that we are well below these earmarks. Next year we will probably be a little higher due to decreases in the School Readiness funding. In the provider quality, gold seal and infant/toddler we are well above the minimum threshold. CCR&R also met it's threshold. Child care slots are over budgeted by \$460,000 due to high mandated referrals and much lower attrition than has been typical for year. But we did receive the AARA stimulus funds and this will make our projected deficit around \$212,000. This amount should be covered with the extra funds that we have already requested from the state and are expecting to receive by the end of the week. However there is a chance that we still have a year end deficit to carry into next year (covered by ARRA). AWI does "allow" a 1.5% surplus or deficit without penalty.

VPK administrative expenses are below what the allotment allows and VPK slots are over spent but the state is obligated to pay this amount and we are not responsible for the deficit as VPK is an entitlement program and all families must be served. In December the legislative reduced all VPK allocations and this impacted our year end numbers.

James reported that we should be able to submit for our new advance for the next fiscal year on June 26<sup>th</sup>. Tami asked about the number in the infant/toddler threshold and discussion ensued on how this is figured and how this shows on the forms. Janet reported that we do have surpluses in operations which are reflected, we are not spending all our money in personnel or operational costs and this helps to offset the deficit in child care slots. Tami reported that she would also like to see indicated on the forms where any surplus goes to fill slots.

James reported that procurement was completed for the annual single audit. Six firms responded and the firm of Burham, Hopkins, Wright & Laham CPS out of Winterpark, FL scored the most points and was chosen. They have worked with other Early Learning Coalitions and their engagement letter is being worked on to meet AWI requirements.

## **12. ANNOUNCEMENTS/ OTHER**

Bill Little commented about the recent retreat, he also stated and he was struck by the comment regarding how the work place in 2022 will look much differently than it does today. Linda reported that she sees this impacting how children are learning now. Bill sees this as changing how we do early learning now and he suggested thinking about the Public Policy group attached to USF and talking to them about putting on some kind of community forum where the focus is the workforce at 2022 and to include childcare and the coalition to make it not just business focus but system focused. Everyone agreed that this was a good idea. Discussion ensued regarding the impact of the workforce and looking into this.

Laura Bauman stated that when Hansel & Gretel was mentioned earlier she had a thought about having a few minutes at each meeting to highlight a specific program and wondered if anyone else would be interested in this. Discussion ensued with the consensus being this would be a good addition to the meetings.

Reminder that there are no official board meetings in July and August.

**13. ADJOURNMENT.** Meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.