



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES
November 20, 2008**

Meeting: Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting

Day/Date/Time: Thursday, November 20, 2008 – 8:30 a.m.

Location: Office of the Early Learning Coalition
15506 County Line Road
Spring Hill, FL 34610

Board of Director Members Present: Susan Arnett, Curt Bromund, Elizabeth Callaghan, James Cook, Steve Davis, Denise Gill, Lisa Hammond, Sonya Jackson, Dr. Steve Kanakis, Joe Mascaro, Dave Meglay, Nicole Miller, Lydia Pinkowski, Jean Rags, Beth Rawls, Mary Beth Wehnes, Patricia Wisman

Board of Director Members Excused: Sister Roberta Bailey, Dr. Burt Harres

Coalition Staff Present: Pattie Eacobacci, Jim Farrelly, Nicole Flechas, Ramute “Jak” Jakubauskas, Betsy Kier, Maryrose Wersan, Angela Westmoreland

Guests Present: Judi Maloy, MFCS Head Start; Tom Scheffey, CDS

I. Welcome and Call to Order - Ms. Lisa Hammond, Chair

Ms. Lisa Hammond, Chair welcomed all and stated today was the “Great American Smoke Out.” She informed the group that both she and Ms. Callaghan had a number of resources available for those wishing to stop smoking. She also congratulated Ms. Callaghan on receiving a resolution from the Citrus/Hernando Smoking Initiative stating all Citrus and Hernando county hospitals will be smoke free campuses as of January 1, 2009.

Ms. Hammond called the meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. Board of Directors to order at approximately 8:30 a.m. A quorum was present.

Introductions were made and new administrative assistant, Ramute “Jak” Jakubauskas was introduced to the Board.

II. Action Items

- **Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Hammond asked that the agenda be reviewed for adoption. Ms. Rags moved to accept this motion and Mr. Cook seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0708-70**)

- **Approval of Minutes, October 23, 2008 Board Meeting**

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the October 23, 2008 minutes. Ms. Rags moved to accept this motion and Dr. Kanakis seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0708-71**)

- **Treasurer’s Report - Ms. Jean Rags**

Monthly Statement of Financials – September 2008
Ms. Jean Rags, Coalition Treasurer/Board Member

Ms. Rags reviewed the Financials. There were no variances or changes to report. Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Dr. Kanakis moved to accept this motion and Ms. Miller seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried. (**Action Item #0708-69**)

III. Remarks from the Chair - Ms. Lisa Hammond and Executive Committee Report

Ms. Hammond stated the Executive Committee had met and discussed the items contained on the agenda that included policies, job descriptions, new hires, and the new lease for expansion upstairs. Ms. Hammond briefly discussed some of activities there were being offered as part of the Great American Smoke Out.

IV. Finance and Audit Committee – Mr. Jim Cook, Chairperson

A. Recommend Approval, Revised Contract with Childhood Development Services Inc., 2008-2009

Mr. Cook stated the Committee had met and, with a quorum present, had revised the PHELC Budget for 2008-2009. Ms. Wersan stated that the Finance Committee had requested revisions be made to the budget that had been emailed to the Board with their packets. She distributed the amended budget to the Board (attached).

She explained that in the Amended Budget Summary, CDS’ contract was amended which allowed the Coalition to hire two (2) additional staff members; a Training Specialist and a Curriculum Specialist. These funds will also assist the Coalition with the increased expense for the upstairs lease. Both School Readiness and Quality Initiative contracts were amended for a total of \$118,721 and slots were increased by

\$50,064.85 for a total budget increase of \$68,656.15. After amending the School Readiness budget in September for the State-mandated 4% reduction and placing these funds into an unallocated line-item, the Coalition had an approved budget total of \$1,112,160. The budget was amended to reflect an increase of \$72,956 which resulted from amending CDS' School Readiness contract. Line items were reviewed including the addition of the Screening and Training Specialist positions, office rental and renovations for the office upstairs.

Ms. Wersan informed the Board their packets contained a breakdown of the lease showing the CDS budget amendments. The financial implications are shown at the bottom of the page including the additional \$50,064.85 for slots to serve more children. Ms. Wersan stated the VPK Specialist was moved into the position of Screening Specialist because two (2) are needed to serve both counties.

Mr. Farrelly explained that the Coalition now has two (2) VPK staff and two (2) in the School Readiness program. Mr. Farrelly commented on the increased burden to VPK staff during the enrollment process at the beginning of the new school year. The VPK staff may require additional assistance at that time and that will be accomplished by shifting staff around. Workloads are being monitored and staff knows to report if their work load has become excessive. Ms. Kier is also finalizing a new monitoring tool for providers. Ms. Rags suggested investigating a federally funded program through Florida Innovative Work Force that assists organizations by paying the salary of an individual aged 55 or older.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the Revised Contract with Childhood Development Services, Inc. 2008-2009. Mr. Cook moved to accept this motion and Mr. Meglay seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

B. Recommend Approval, Revised PHELC Budget, 2008-2009

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the revised PHELC Budget, 2008-2009 with the changes presented above. Ms. Rags moved to accept this motion and Mr. Cook seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

C. Recommend Approval, Expenditures over \$5,000.00

Mr. Farrelly stated this will be a standard item on the agenda until, and if, Coalition staff has an amended finance policy that allows this type of standard expense to be approved automatically. Currently, expenditures over \$5,000 must be approved by the Board and must have dual signatures. The Coalition will continue to have the dual signature requirement but hopes to have some leeway to do standard, monthly invoices over \$5,000 without coming to the Board.

Mr. Farrelly presented two recommendations. The first is to approve an expenditure of \$7,586.75 to Realty Executives America for the lease of the Coalition's facility for the month of December. He asked if an amended motion could be made to include the same amount and payee for the rent due January 1, 2009 since the Board is not meeting in December.

At this time, Ms. Hammond asked the Board to return to the agenda and approve the Revised Budget. She also asked the Board to approve the lease before approving these expenditures.

Mr. Farrelly continued with the expenditures over \$5,000. Also included is an expense of \$6,069.40 also to Realty Executives for November.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the three (3) recommended expenditures over \$5,000.00 for November, December and January. Mr. Cook moved to accept this motion and Ms. Rags seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

D. Approval of Lease, Suite 203 (15506 County Line Road)

Mr. Farrelly asked the Board to refer to their copy of the Lease of Suite 203 in Westwood Park (attached). He briefly discussed the Coalition's plans for Suite 203 and explained the need for renovations as space is limited in the downstairs suites. Mr. Farrelly recommended the Board approve the lease.

Ms. Hammond requested a motion to approve the lease for Suite 203. Mr. Cook moved to accept this motion and Mr. Meglay seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

V. Executive Director Report – Mr. Jim Farrelly

Mr. Farrelly distributed copies of the Coalition's annual report for FY 2007-2008. He requested the Board share the report with other community members. Additional copies of the report are available upon request. He explained this is a great document to refer to for information on the Coalition. The success of the report can be attributed to the Board and to staff who all made a group effort to contribute information, quotes and statistics. Mr. Farrelly also requested feedback and suggestions for the 2008-2009 annual report. Ms. Rags suggested spelling out the acronyms.

There was further discussion on making a concentrated effort to get the annual report out into the community to help educate community members concerning the positive impact of the agency. Mr. Farrelly informed the Board that copies had been sent to Pasco/Hernando County Commissioners, Senator Fasano and a press release will also be prepared. Mr. Farrelly reported that he would be meeting with Dr. Yacht and would bring copies of the annual report to that meeting.

Ms. Rags suggested contacting Senator Fasano to discuss having Tallahassee designate a day to have the Coalition's work recognized through a Readiness or Early Learning Day, if one has not already been designated for Pasco/Hernando. Senator Fasano's office would have it placed on the Senate calendar and Coalition staff would be able to go to Tallahassee, with providers or others, to be recognized on the Senate and House floors as participants in the Pasco Hernando Early Learning Coalition Day. This would increase recognition of the Coalition's efforts.

A suggestion was made to distribute the Annual Report to providers in an effort to encourage more to join the Coalition.

1. Approval, Memorandum of Understanding/Memorandum of Agreement Pasco and Hernando Head Start Program

Mr. Farrelly stated these memoranda formalize the positive relationship the Coalition currently has with the two (2) Head Start programs. Ms. Rawls stated the school board supports the work of the Coalition and realizes it is working for the neediest children. This agreement puts more “teeth” into the Coalition’s work by adding language that is more specific.

There was some discussion on the different formatting between the Memorandum of Understanding and the Memorandum of Agreement as well as the language contained therein.

Ms. Rags asked for a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement. Ms. Hammond moved to accept this motion and Mr. Meglay seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

2. Provider Initiative Funding – Nicole Flechas, Quality Manager

Speaking on behalf of the ill Ms. Flechas, Mr. Farrelly stated that during his tenure, this has been one of the Coalition’s most exciting undertakings. The recent meeting of the Quality Committee had resulted in the approval and allocation of \$107,000 for provider incentives. Children are our number one (1) priority followed by trying to do something good for providers. Nearly one-third of the Quality budget for this year, \$107,000, has been allocated for quality incentives.

In the past, the Coalition has done a number of giveaways. We no longer have giveaways, but there are shared opportunities in several areas. We have required that providers adopt one (1) of eight (8) approved curricula. Providers may be under financial pressure to purchase them, and the Coalition is responding. One incentive would reimburse up to 50% of the purchase for one of the new curricula. The second initiative would provide up to 50% reimbursement for staff training.

The third incentive is accreditation. Mr. Farrelly reported that providers are “hurting.” This is one of the key topics he hears when he meets with providers, the need for dollars. As a result, some providers are going out of business. The Coalition would like to do everything it can to allow providers to do well. If we cannot accomplish rate increases, one of the things we can do is encourage centers to become accredited through the “Gold Seal” process which would mean significant additional dollars for the provider. Accreditation is an expensive process, but the incentive would reimburse up to 50% of the costs.

The fourth incentive would encourage centers to start up in “disaffected areas.” In both counties, there are a number of communities where there are few child care centers and, as a result, the percentage of children who would be eligible to participate is very low. The Coalition is interested in encouraging “start-ups” in those “disaffected areas.” We would like to encourage existing centers that have a good track record to expand. This incentive program would be a two (2) step process, first would be \$500 for initial start up for supplies and equipment followed by a secondary incentive of \$1,000.

Mr. Farrelly reported the incentive programs have been discussed at provider meetings over the last three (3) months. Ms. Flechas receives about ten (10) calls a day from providers about the program and Mr. Farrelly receives daily e-mails that ask when the programs will begin. He reported that Ms. Gonzalez posted the information on the Coalition website yesterday, e-mails had been sent to the providers, and a press release is being created. Mr. Farrelly stated all applications will be approved by the Quality Committee before reimbursing.

Asked if there would be no limits on the amount of incentives going to one provider, Mr. Farrelly responded that is correct; a provider could apply for each of the four (4) incentives and applications would be taken until the funds are exhausted.

3. Policies for Review/Adoption

- Payroll Policy, 2nd reading**
- Contract Management Policy, 2nd reading**
- Personnel Policy, 2nd reading**
- Fiscal and Accounting Policies, 3rd reading**

Mr. Farrelly stated the Payroll, Contract Management and Personnel policies are ready for adoption; however, there will be additional changes to the Fiscal policy. Unless the Board has changes to the first three (3) policies, Mr. Farrelly recommends adoption.

Ms. Rags had the following suggestion for the Payroll Policy. She stated that some businesses and county government requires that all new employees have direct deposit. She recommended that when new employees are hired they be required to participate in direct deposit. The State of Florida requires this but it only applies to new hires. Mr. Farrelly stated he would make the change. A discussion followed regarding employees who have no bank accounts. A suggestion was made that if the Coalition hires a staff person who does not have a bank account, Ms. Wersan spend a small amount of time with them instructing them on how to handle an account. Mr. Farrelly recommended the adoption of the Payroll, Contract Management and Personnel policies.

Ms. Rags made a motion to adopt the Payroll, Contract Management and Personnel policies and Mr. Cook seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

Mr. Farrelly reported the Coalition has been nominated as one of the “best non-profits in the area.” He asked for the Board to vote on the WEDU website daily. Voting will continue for the next 29 days. Mr. Farrelly stated that to win, the Coalition requires 1,000 votes per day. The Coalition nominated itself for two (2) other categories, our mobile outreach van service in the “Be More Brilliant Award.” The other category was the Coalition’s successful backpack giveaway in the “Be More Knowledgeable Award” category.

Mr. Farrelly thanked Angela for her efforts on behalf of the Coalition and re-introduced “Jak” as the new administrative assistant.

VI. Central Agency Utilization Reports – Tom Scheffey

Mr. Bromund stated that Mr. Scheffey would make the report but he wanted to announce that Linda Foy, CDS' CEO, has announced her retirement as of May 19, 2009.

Mr. Scheffey spoke to the wait list and that last month our focus was on placing the children on the wait list. He reported the Coalition was tasked with placing 275 children from Pasco County and 65 children from Hernando County. The good news was we placed 65 in Hernando County as of last Thursday and 277 children (2 over) were placed in Pasco County over the last three (3) weeks. A good effort by staff resulted in the Coalition meeting its numbers.

On the wait list as of yesterday, Pasco had 112 school-aged children with no 0-5 aged children on the wait list and Hernando had 203 children with 88 school-aged and 115 in the 0-5 age group. Additional numbers of children served were reviewed. VPK actually has 3,859 children enrolled but not all are attending.

Mr. Farrelly stated that CDS had done a good job on the wait list including bringing it in prior to the November 30th deadline. He stated the Board is now in another challenging position on where to go with this new wait list. While we have no children in Pasco on the wait list in 0-5 category and 115 children in Hernando, he wanted to caution the Board about "dis-enrollment." He explained the period of time from now until the next Board meeting is a crucial time for the Coalition budget.

The Coalition was told to hold back 4% of our budget which represents approximately \$160,000 and is currently in an unallocated account. But, the Coalition has not been directed to hold back any additional funds. Mr. Farrelly stated that if the Coalition is asked to hold back only another 10% it would mean returning approximately \$1.5 million. There was discussion on agencies expecting 10% cutbacks in January, if not sooner, and already putting these funds aside. Mr. Farrelly does not recommend spending more money that we may not have. When the Board meets again in January, Mr. Farrelly will be able to inform the Board if additional funds can be put aside for the anticipated cuts. He recommended starting a waiting list effective today otherwise "dis-enrollment" would be possible. A statement was made that the State of Florida does not have a special session scheduled, at this time, to discuss the budget. Ms. Callaghan shared that her agency had been informed to take the 10% and 4% out of its budget and Mr. Mascaro stated that there have been large increases in the number of individuals seeking financial assistance.

Ms. Rags asked for a motion to begin a waiting list. Ms. Hammond moved to accept this motion and Mr. Meglay seconded. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried with one caveat. Ms. Hammond stated she does not want to end this year and have to return funds to the State. She recommends being aggressive so the agency does not end up with excess funds.

Mr. Davis inquired where the Coalition was regarding the proposed creation of a foundation. The Board is in agreement to pursue the matter to increase fundraising and Mr. Farrelly is working on community collaborations as well as discussing the matter with the Coalition's attorney. In the spring, Mr. Farrelly will have the legal points

worked on and enlist ten (10) or more individuals who would form the nucleus of the foundation whose purpose is fundraising.

Ms. Rags shared a brochure from the Dolly Parton Foundation, a foundation established with the Governor of Tennessee, she discovered while on vacation. This foundation mails a book to each child in the county, aged 0-5 years, each month. Ms. Arnett stated the program is being done in some counties by United Way. Another agency in Manatee County is also participating in a similar program.

VII. New/Unfinished Business

Mr. Meglay stated he was a member of the Seven Springs Rotary Club and reported that the Rotary Club will be awarding the Coalition \$2,000.00. He gave a brief history of how the Rotary Club had denied funds to the Coalition in the past because they believed it was fiscally irresponsible due to the bad publicity the Coalition had received. The check will be presented to Mr. Farrelly on December 4, 2008.

Mr. Meglay recommended concentrating on the good things the Coalition does and stated the "Local News" section of the Sunday paper (*St. Petersburg Times*) would be a good place for the community to learn more about the Coalition. Ms. Arnett stated that it had been wonderful to be part of Mr. Farrelly's presentation to the West Pasco Chamber because the responses given indicated great interest and feedback from individuals within the community.

Ms. Arnett asked Board members representing providers if their families were signing up for assistance. Board members reported that families were signing up to receive items for the holidays from Toys for Tots, Salvation Army and United Way's 2-1-1. Ms. Arnett reported that food items are a huge item this year, even more so than gifts. She reported this year the older children, instead of asking for electronic gifts for themselves, are asking for gifts to give to their parents. Mr. Meglay stated that his family held holiday parties in the past for needy children and that the children asked for basic necessities such as socks. Head Start is trying to ensure that 730 families have enough food. A new dilemma is the families not being able to cook the food they are receiving because electricity has been disconnected.

Mr. Farrelly reported the Hudson chapter of AARP donated a number of board games to PHELC and The ToyMakers of East Lake donated two (2) boxes of handmade wooden toys. These items will be distributed to other organizations in time for the holidays as the Coalition has to be very careful about the types of items given to the child care centers. Mr. Meglay suggested collecting stuffed animals to donate to children.

Ms. Wehnes informed the Board that on Tuesday, December 9, 2008 there will be a public workshop in Tampa in regards to changing the statutes and codes for child care licensing.

Ms. Hammond reported on Monday, December 29, 2008 there will be a festival for children hosted by the Anti-Drug Coalition in Kennedy Park. Youth groups will be performing and non-profit providers will participate including the Coalition.

Ms. Hammond reminded the Board that Mr. Farrelly's review has been set up on Survey Monkey and had been emailed to them. She reminded the Board to complete the survey as the closing is Friday, November 28, 2008.

Ms. Hammond announced the Program Committee would meet immediately following the Board meeting.

VIII. Public Input

None

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn this meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. Board of Directors was made by Ms. Rags and seconded by Mr. Mascaro. With no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Ramute "Jak" Jakubauskas
Administrative Assistant