

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 5TH FLOOR MANATEE ROOM
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
February 12, 2024**

Present were

Xtavia Bailey, Chairman
Jannon Pierce, Vice-Chairman
Hon. Scott Brownell
Barbara Byrne
Heather Felton
Carolann Garafola
Emily Gault
Patricia Miner
Connie Shingledecker
Rita Smith
Debbie Tapp

Absent were:

Constance Charles-Logan
Nina Romeu

Also present were:

Amanda Ballard, County Commissioner
Tracie Adams, Deputy Director, Community and Veteran's Services
Kristi Hagen, Children's Services Coordinator
Johanna Beville, Senior Human Services Analyst
Melissa Bomar, Human Services Analyst (Via Zoom)
Brenda Marquez Facio, Human Services Analyst
Vicki Tessmer, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Bailey called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

AGENDA and SIGN-IN SHEET

CS20250212DOC001

2. **ROLL CALL**

A quorum was declared.

3. **MINUTES**

A motion was made by Member Garafolo, seconded by Member Pierce, and carried 11-0, with Members Charles Logan and Romeu absent, to approve the minutes of January 15, 2025 with a change regarding Debbie Tapp being present at the meeting, not attending via Zoom.

4. **NEW PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS**

Parents for Parents - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Blake Neathery, Family Programs Supervisor, NAMI used a slide presentation to review the Parents for Parents program, including Family Peer Support Programs Team, Parent Partners, Dependency 101 Class, empowering parents to advocate for themselves, no legal advice is given, and helping parents to trust the system to help get children back. CS20250212DOC002

Sonya Johnston, Program Coordinator, shared information on the parent experience, HOPE (Helping Other Parents Evolve) support group, self-directed by the parent, based on their

needs, 80 parents enrolled, and why it is imperative to minimize a child's time away from their family.

Discussion ensued regarding children are taken away from their parents for safety reasons, parents develop coping skills, numbers for success, is there reunification, data attached to the application, main goal is to help the child, Parent Partners have successfully gone through the program, never tell someone what they should do, but support them going through the process, there is a capacity issue, parents reach out to the program, staff receives the same training as a case manager, ensure numbers are being pulled from Manatee County, program will not solve the parent's problem, but instead helps them navigate the system, bilingual peer in Manatee County is a staff member, not a volunteer, and information is in the application.

Adolescent Diversion and Assistance Program – Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS)
Abby Krause, JFCF, explained they get referrals from several agencies, teach various programs such as criminal mischief, anger management, HD substance abuse, success rate of 95 percent for the program, expanded to Manatee last year, served 73 clients in the previous quarter, psycho-education, individual family counseling, will continue to work with youth after the program is complete, licensed therapists, services are given in individual and group settings, and they meet the youth where they are.

Discussion ensued regarding currently being funded by a grant to expand, and want to continue to grow, they work with adjudicated youth, provide support, program is a bridge connecting them to services they need, access needs and set a plan to bridge services for a 90-day period, it is unknown if there are duplicate services being provided by another program, staff is licensed, and services are not provided during an emergent crisis.

Creative Arts Academy

Lane Ruise, Creative Arts Academy, explained they see students to provide a positive environment for students, through various schools, with an objective to show students how to cope through music. They receive referrals through Drug Court, and through talent, students can achieve their goals. Students are given a book and an instrument, taught proper posture, public speaking and presentation of themselves. There is a partnership with Educational Consultants Program. Their largest targets are in Palmetto, Ellenton, and Parrish, but transportation is an issue. Students also receive a meal at all rehearsals, and perform throughout the community. They work with parents to address needs.

Discussion ensued regarding Mr. Ruise's background, program started 15 years ago, and funding to this point has come from concerts and Manatee Community Foundation, there is need for a van to get instruments to shows, students not only perform, but also help set up production, and various genres of music are taught.

5. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Kristi Hagen, Children's Services Coordinator, addressed the review process, the links for the scoring guidance are online, and the review schedule was sent to Members. Staff tracks comments made at meetings to provide memory ticklers for Members once they get to the recommendation process, tiers, flow charts and if the program can receive an increase.

Discussion ensued regarding there are different scoring guides for different categories of programs, keep thresholds in mind and refer to guide to score appropriately, determine if funding amount is sufficient, special meeting with County Commission will be scheduled later to review recommendations, priorities and scoring, programs that are currently vested have a priority statement, inconsistencies need to be considered, milestones should show how the

program is played out and how they get to their results, partnership support v. commitment, a commitment example could be volunteers coming in, verification assists the milestones, programs that provide a similar program need to point out something they do differently, Members need to be organized and up to date and not fall behind when program is up for review, support justification, there is no dialogue during applicant presentation, better to have scores in rather than questions, Member cannot score if nepotism is involved, higher score if based in Manatee County, attendance is important, look at every application like it is new, and submit all questions, Members have different strengths, use all data provided, be objective, funding breakdown should be in the program budget, and the buffer meeting is in preparation for the recommendations.

Ms. Hagen reminded Members to note if they have an affiliation with any of the agencies. Conflicts only come to play if there is monetary gain.

6. STAFF UPDATES

Melissa Bomar, Human Services Analyst, noted compliance reviews are completed and there were no concerns.

Johanna Beville, Senior Human Services Analyst, performed two site visits, and there were no findings of concern.

Brenda Marquez Facio, Human Services Analyst, noted Centerstone observations are complete and there were no concerns. Children's Home Society, decided to not apply, and they are moving to three days of service due to staffing issues.

Kristi Hagen, Children's Services Coordinator, announced next week the meeting is at Lakewood Ranch Library, and Zoom may not be available. The summary packet for the recommendation meeting can be organized how the Committee prefers.

7. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

There were no comments.

8. NEW/OLD BUSINESS

There were no comments.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Brittany Guerra, Kids Personal Safety, noted there has been a decrease in attendance, and they have added two schools, and they concentrate on teaching safety to children, with three sessions per year for each student enrolled.

Susan Ford stressed the importance of getting questions in, so the agencies can respond as quickly as possible.

There being no further public comment, Chairman Bailey closed public comment.

10. MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting will occur February 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m., at the Lakewood Ranch Library, Meeting Room A, 16410 Rangeland Parkway, Bradenton.

11. ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairman Bailey adjourned the meeting at 5:02p.m.
Minutes Approved: 

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