

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES COUNCIL OF PALM BEACH COUNTY**  
**COUNCIL MEETING**  
**September 24, 2015, 5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Langowski called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Present:

Thomas Bean

Vince Goodman

Kathleen Kroll

Greg Langowski

Dennis Miles

Debra Robinson, M.D.

Thomas P. Weber

Excused: Robert M. Avossa, Ed.D.; Thomas E. Lynch, Shelley Vana

- A. Invocation – led by Vince Goodman
- B. Pledge of Allegiance – led by Chair Langowski
- C. Presentations

1. Healthy Families – Vashti Rutledge, Program Officer

Vashti Rutledge, Program Officer, stated that Families First of Palm Beach County had provided services to children and families in Palm Beach County for over twenty years. She stated that CSC had partnered with Families First since 2008 to implement the Healthy Families Florida program. She stated that the family-centered approach and collaborative nature of Families First highlighted them as a trusted partner in the community. She stated that the agency had successfully made inroads in the western communities, and as CSC had changed as an organization and grown the system, Families First had continued to partner with CSC to meet the needs of families in the most appropriate and responsible manner possible.

Ms. Rutledge introduced staff from Healthy Families: Kathy Tancig, Program Manager; Tonya Ware, Supervisor; and Gloria Perez, Family Support Worker. She introduced the Healthy Families clients Tim Bober, Cecilia Parra, and Ariella.

Kathy Tancig stated that 46,319 Florida children had suffered from abuse and neglect in 2014, and nearly half of that number had been under the age of 5. She stated that children needed stable, nurturing families in order to reach their fullest potential. She stated that parents could learn to overcome the factors that put their children at risk of abuse and neglect and could learn to provide safe and nurturing homes in order for their children to thrive. She stated that the key to preventing abuse was to work with families early during

pregnancy, and shortly after the baby's birth. She stated that this was the time when most parents were eager to learn and wanted to do the best for their baby. She stated that by working with families early it helped parents build skills necessary for navigating the challenges of parenting from the start, before negative behavior patterns developed which would be detrimental for the children.

Ms. Tancig stated that research showed that the first few years of life was the time when the brain was most responsive and could grow if there was a positive relationship in that child's life. She stated that early social emotional experiences were as important to the wiring of the brain as intellectual experiences. She stated that research showed that experiencing abuse and neglect, especially during the early years, derailed healthy brain development which had costly long-term consequences. She showed an image from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, and stated that the image illustrated how the stress of child abuse and neglect resulted in changes to the brain's architecture. She stated that a baby's brain was built when connections between neurons occurred as a result of interactions with its caregivers. She stated that when a brain was subjected to chronic stress such as child abuse there were under-developed connections, most critical for success in school, work, and behavior. She stated that early development depended upon nurturing and dependable relationships, and because the brain circuits consolidated over time making changes more difficult. She stated that supporting healthy development in the early years of life was essential.

Ms. Tancig stated that Healthy Families was a proven solution. She stated that it was an evidence-based system of home visiting programs, nationally accredited by Healthy Families America, and was proven to prevent child abuse in high-risk families. She stated that the program's goals were to prevent child abuse and neglect and develop positive relationships with the children, improving a family's stability and self-sufficiency. She stated that they promoted health and development, which enhanced a parent's ability to create a safe, stable, and nurturing home, and they also ensured that the family's socio and medical needs were met.

Ms. Tancig stated that to be eligible for the program the client must be expecting a baby, or have a new baby under three months of age. She stated that they must be resident in certain Zip code areas, areas in which Healthy Families had determined had the highest rates of abuse and neglect. She stated that a family was eligible if it had had prior involvement with child protective services, but their case must be closed at the time of assessment. She stated that if they had an open investigation, with a final assessment they could still be brought into the program. She stated that there were 43 research-based risk factors identified on the validated assessment tool, and a family needed to "score in" to be accepted into the program.

Ms. Tancig stated that some of the common risk factors were poverty; limited awareness of non-violent discipline options; multiple children under the age of five; lack of a high school education; being a single parent; having experienced domestic violence, domestic abuse, or mental health issues (such as depression); prior involvement in the child protections system;

and having experienced abuse and neglect as a child. She stated that the Healthy Families program was a hand-up not a handout. She stated that the home visitors did an amazing job of building trusting relationships with their clients, and overcoming the challenges that placed the children at-risk. She stated that the parents are helped to build the knowledge and skills needed to be the best parents they could be; parents are provided the latest information in child development and what to expect as a baby grew. She stated that they undertook parent activities that promoted bonding, stimulated brain development, and helped support healthy child development. She stated that they taught non-violent discipline techniques, and that all children were screened for developmental delays. She stated that they helped parents how to reduce every day stress, and how to keep their babies safe. She stated that helping parents set and achieve goals led to a parent's self-sufficiency, and by teaching coping and problem-solving skills, including how to build a network allowed them to rely on others in times of need.

Ms. Tancig stated that Healthy Families conducted a home safety checklist, that clients were screened for maternal depression, and that children were screened developmentally at regular intervals. She stated that Healthy Families connected the families to community resources such as child care, housing, transportation, workforce development, mental health and addiction recovery services, and domestic violence shelters. She stated that they provided support groups in English, Spanish, and Creole.

Ms. Tancig stated that the Healthy Families program had measurable outcomes. She stated that the latest outcome measure she had available was from April 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015 and was for verified instances of child abuse and neglect. She stated that they were looking to ensure that at least 95% of those families who had been in the program more than 12 months and no later than 24 months previously had no verified findings of child maltreatment. She stated that the figure of the local Healthy Families program exceeded the 95% goal and it was at 100%. She stated that during the 12 months prior to the end of the report period, families participating in Healthy Families Florida for six months were at 95%, and Palm Beach was at 99%.

Ms. Tancig stated that other local numbers included 97% of mothers not having a subsequent pregnancy within 2 years of the target child's birth; 99% of the children were connected to a primary health care provider; and 93% of children in the program were immunized by age 2, exceeding the rate of the State of Florida, and the national average. She stated that 97% of families received age-appropriate screenings, and 91% were screened for pre- and post-natal depression.

Ms. Tancig stated that 84% of families improved self-sufficiency by the time they graduated from Healthy Families, and 80% of participants who completed the program and were unemployed at the time of enrollment were employed by graduation time.

Ms. Tancig stated that the average cost per child in child welfare, hospitalization, special education and juvenile justice is \$72,709 per child, whereas the Healthy Families program averaged about \$1,900 to \$2,000 per child. She showed a family who had recently

graduated the program and stated that they were very proud of this Belle Glade family because the mother was getting her Bachelors degree in Social Work in December. Tonya Ware stated that she had been with the Healthy Families program for six years as a program supervisor. She stated that it was her job to be a support to the family support workers and families by providing guidance and insight regarding various services that would help the families become self-sufficient. She stated that she met with the family support workers on a weekly basis and they strategized on the need for professional staff development, and ongoing resources.

Gloria Perez stated that she was a Family Support Worker and had been with Healthy Families for approximately one year. She stated that she had seen immense growth with the visiting family present. She stated that completing visits was always difficult for families, but Cecilia and Ryan had made their Healthy Families visits a priority.

Tim (Ryan) Bober introduced himself, his wife Cecilia, and daughter Ariella. He thanked the Council for allowing his family to be a part of the Healthy Families program and stated that it had been a blessing to be a part of the program. He stated that he and his wife had met with their family support worker prenatally, and upon giving birth had met with her weekly. He stated that they were taught things to expect with a newborn, and he was very grateful to have had Ms. Perez by their side. He stated that he had attended all the Healthy Families meetings, and they considered Ms. Perez as a family aunt. He stated that Ms. Perez had engaged his family and had gently delivered her curriculum in a calm manner, not in a stressful way with demands that they needed to fulfill certain milestones. He stated that he would be graduating at the end of the Semester with a Bachelors in Accounting, and Cecilia had begun college that semester. He stated that Ms. Perez had been by their side and had helped them set up goals such as a house purchase, and planning for their future. He thanked Ms. Perez.

Cecilia Parra stated that she was 22 and had come from a family that was unhealthy with regular domestic violence. She stated that she had moved with her aunt to Florida five years previously to avoid that situation. She stated that despite her move she found herself in a similar domestic violence situation so she had moved out to live with Ryan. She stated that within a year they were pregnant. She stated that she did not have insurance or any family support as a first-time parent. She stated that she had conducted her own research and had come across the Healthy Families program. She stated that she had been hesitant at first, but upon learning that the program helped not only the mother but the whole family, she had reached out for a consultation. She stated that she had been approximately 2 or 3 months pregnant at the time, and they had learned many things, including how to take care of herself while she was pregnant, and how to take care of the baby when it arrived. She stated that Ms. Perez had been extremely helpful to her and her family, and had been instrumental in helping them make reachable goals, such as delivering a healthy baby. She stated that another goal had been to go back to school, which she was now doing. She stated that they were doing wonderfully as a family, and they continued to meet with Ms. Perez. She stated that Ms. Perez advised her whether Ariella was meeting developmental

milestones and that Ms. Perez was like a mother to her. She stated that the Healthy Families program had really helped her family.

Vashti Rutledge thanked the family for attending and asked whether Council members had questions. Tom Weber thanked everyone for attending and stated that it had been very insightful with regard to how well the program was working for the family.

Debra Robinson, M.D. stated that the PowerPoint stated "no verified findings of child maltreatment" and asked why it was presented this way. Tonya Ware stated that there could be a call in on a family, and an investigation was underway but it was not yet determined whether it was verified or not. She stated that the numbers did not count the amount of calls in on any one family. Vashti Rutledge stated that the quotation marks around the word "verified" did **not** serve as a disclaimer that there was a finding but it was not officially recognized as such.

Dennis Miles clarified that in any investigation there were three possible findings: verified, non-substantiated, or no indicators whereby it probably didn't happen at all. Ms. Rutledge stated that a finding of unsubstantiated may indicate that it could have happened, but there was no evidence to verify it. Mr. Miles stated that they used to call it "some indicators" but several years ago the Legislature had changed it to "not substantiated." He stated that about half of all investigations conducted by DCF resulted in a "no indicators" result, with many being false reports because a neighbor may be mad at another neighbor. He stated that many resources were wasted in following up on these types of allegations.

## 2. Minutes

### A. September 10, 2015 Council Meeting

**A motion by Goodman/Weber to approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2015 Council meeting as presented was approved by unanimous vote.**

### B. September 10, 2015 TRIM Public Hearing Minutes

**A motion by Bean/Robinson to approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2015 Council meeting as presented was approved by unanimous vote.**

## 3. Individual Appearances – Agenda Items – N/A

## 4. Council Committees:

### Program Review Committee

Tom Weber stated that the Program Review Committee had met prior to the Council meeting and recommended approval of the Minutes from the August 6, 2015 PRC Meeting, the Consent Agenda, and the Walk-In Warrants List.

**A motion by Bean/Goodman to approve the PRC Agenda in its entirety as outlined was approved by unanimous vote.**

Finance Committee

Thomas Bean stated that the Finance Committee had met prior to the Council meeting and had approved the Minutes from the Finance Committee meeting of August 24, 2015, in addition to approving the August 31, 2015 Financial Statements.

**A motion by Goodman/Robinson to approve the Finance Committee report including Financial Statements ending August 31, 2015 was approved by unanimous vote.**

**5. Business/Consent Agenda**

A. Consent Agenda Management

1. Additions, Deletions, Substitutions - none
2. Items to be Pulled for Discussion – Agenda Item 5C(1) (Reference #3) was pulled for discussion purposes.
3. Adoption of the Consent Agenda and Walk-in Warrants List

**A motion by Robinson/Kroll to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Agenda Item 5C(1), and approve the Walk-in Warrants list was approved by unanimous vote.**

B. CSC Funded Programs – Current – N/A

C. CSC Funded Programs – Future

1. Resolution #15-031 and Exhibit “A” – 2015/2016 CSC Funding Allocations

Chair Langowski stated that he had pulled the agenda item to abstain from the vote.

**A motion by Bean/Goodman to approve Resolution #15-031 and Exhibit “A” for CSC program funding, pending the final approval of the 2015-2016 CSC Millage Rate and Budget, was approved by majority vote. Chair Langowski abstained from voting.**

D. Planning & Development – N/A

E. Personnel – N/A

F. Financial

1. Warrants List – Approved by Consent

**G. Administration**

1. Resolution #15-032 Accepting Revised CSC Procurement Policy – Approved by Consent
2. Resolution #15-033 Authorizing Changes to Council's Bylaws – Approved by Consent
3. Proclamation Declaring October, 2015 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month – Approved by Consent
4. Resolution #15-036 Re-Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement with Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners for IT Services – Approved by Consent

**6. Business/Non Consent Items – N/A**

**7. Walk-In Items – N/A**

**8. Chief Executive Officer's Report**

1. Follow-Up from Planning Session

Lisa Williams-Taylor, Ph.D. stated that discussion at the April Planning Session had resulted in a request to look at the Early Care and Education System and its focus around math. She stated that the CEO Report contained background research, CSC's efforts in this area, and best practices and trends. She stated that by having conducted this research, CSC had found that it was already doing a lot to integrate math into its early childhood system.

Dr. Williams-Taylor stated that the photographs playing on the screens upon entry into the room had been of children in the Strong Minds network, specifically participating in math activities as part of the curriculum.

2. CSC Achieves Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting

Dr. Williams-Taylor stated that CSC had achieved the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for the third consecutive year.

3. Strong Minds Expo Kick-Off

Dr. Williams-Taylor stated that the Strong Minds Expo kick-off event had occurred the prior weekend. She stated that Melissa McKinlay had attended the event and had talked about the importance of early childhood education. She stated that there had been approximately 150 attendees.

4. Community Voice Graduation

Dr. Williams-Taylor stated that there had been a Community Voice graduation in September.

5. What Works! Evidence-Based Summit

Dr. Williams-Taylor stated that the What Works! Evidence-Based Summit was scheduled for September 30, 2015 and that they were expecting almost 400 people in attendance.

6. First 1,000 Days Summit

Dr. Williams-Taylor stated that the First 1,000 Days Summit was scheduled in October, 2015, and that there were over 600 people registered.

7. "Paper Tigers" Event

Dr. Williams-Taylor stated that they were currently planning an event regarding a film looking at adolescence and trauma entitled "Paper Tigers". She stated that they would show the documentary film and have a panel discussion following. She stated that she would send Council members the trailer of "Paper Tigers" and more information.

8. Communications Update

The Council meeting was recessed at 5:59 p.m. and reconvened at 6:04 p.m.

- **Strong Minds Book Distribution**

John Bartosek, Chief of Communications stated that CSC had contracted with Scholastic to provide more than 17,000 books for children enrolled in the Strong Minds network. He stated that they were in the process of delivering the books to the 270 Strong Minds child care sites together with a letter explaining the Strong Minds system and the importance of reading.

- **Little Free Libraries**

Mr. Bartosek stated that Council members had received a write-up as a CEO Report Walk-In item regarding the Little Free Libraries project in Palm Beach County. He stated that they intended to install up to 100 Little Free Libraries in Palm Beach County as a service to the community. He displayed a Little Free Library and stated that they would be installed with an emphasis on communities where books may not be readily available in homes.

- **New Billboards**

Mr. Bartosek stated that there were new billboards up, with a message about the importance of child development. He stated that future billboards would include messages regarding:

- Embrace Each Day (parenting campaign)
- Strong Minds Child Care
- Happily Ever After Begins with Reading

9. **Legal Reports**



Tom Sheehan, General Counsel, stated that there would be a brief Prevention Partnerships for Children, Inc. Board meeting directly upon conclusion of the Council meeting.

2. Council Meeting Moves to 4:30 p.m. and New Agenda Format in October

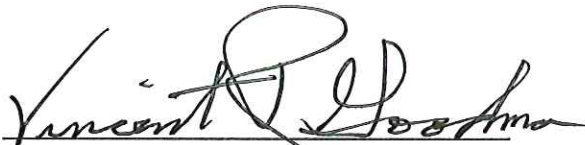
Mr. Sheehan reminded Council members that CSC would move to its new agenda format in October and that the Program Review Committee meetings would no longer take place. He stated that, starting in October, the Council meetings would begin at 4:30 p.m.

10. Individual Appearances – Non-Agenda Items – N/A

11. Council Comments – N/A

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.



Vincent Goodman, Secretary



Lisa Williams-Taylor, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer