CHILDREN’S SERVICES COUNCIL OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, March 22, 2012 - 5:00 p.m.
2300 High Ridge Road, Boynton Beach, Florida

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Bowman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present:
Ronald V. Alvarez
Dari Bowman
Greg Langowski
Rod Macon
Dennis Miles
Willie A. Miller, Jr. (by phone)
Vincent Goodman

Excused: Frank A. Barbieri, Jr.; E. Wayne Gent; Shelley Vana

A. Invocation – led by Vince Goodman
B. Pledge of Allegiance – led by Chair Bowman
C. Presentations – N/A

Chair Bowman stated that Council Member Willie Miller was currently participating in the meeting by telephone.

2. Minutes

A. Minutes of February 23, 2012 Council Meeting

A motion by Goodman/Macon to approve the Minutes from the February 23, 2012 Council Meeting was approved by unanimous vote.

3. Individual Appearances – Agenda Items – none

4. Program Review Committee

Greg Langowski stated that the PRC Consent Agenda and Warrants list had been adopted at the PRC meeting.

A motion by PRC to approve the PRC Agenda in its entirety 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** – No items were pulled for discussion purposes.
3. **Adoption of the Consent Agenda, Walk-In Warrants List, and (unaudited) Financial Statements of February 29, 2012**

   A motion by Alvarez/Goodman to adopt the Consent Agenda, Walk-In Warrants List, and (unaudited) Financial Statements of February 29, 2012 was approved by unanimous vote.

B. **CSC Funded Programs – Current** – N/A

C. **CSC Funding Allocations – Future** – N/A

D. **Planning & Development** – N/A

E. **Personnel** – N/A

F. **Financial**

   1. **Warrants List** – Approved by Consent

G. **Administration**

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

7. **Walk-In Items** – N/A

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

   1. **Strategy Update – Learning and Development: Children Ready for School and Ready Readers at Third Grade** – Karen Brandi, Program Officer; Marsha Guthrie, Program Officer; Erin Gallagher, Program Officer

   Erin Gallagher, Program Officer stated that the strategy update report in February had focused on healthy births and the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and the current presentation would focus on school readiness and preparing children for school success. She stated that they would present the Quality Counts system, the afterschool Quality Improvement System (QIS), and the pilots and studies within: i) the quality counts system, ii) summer camp, and iii) the place-based strategy of Bridges.
Ms. Gallagher stated that quality experiences for children increased the likelihood for school readiness when there were:

- healthy and safe environments for children
- an educated workforce to work with the children
- targeted interventions and services
- family engagement in the children’s learning
- wrap around of community involvement and supports.

Karen Brandi, Program Officer stated that Quality Counts was a comprehensive voluntary early care and education quality improvement system which aimed to improve the quality of the childcare sites in Palm Beach County, serving children of ages birth to age 5. She stated that as of 3/22 they had 200 sites enrolled in the program, and they were serving 10,880 children. She stated that the program provided assistance to child care programs through assessment and feedback, continuous quality improvement, professional development and scholarships, technical assistance. She stated that research showed that a quality childcare experience, combined with quality training and education for teachers had a significant impact on children’s school readiness.

Ms. Brandi stated that 93% of the sites were 3 star or higher (on a five point scale), with 55% of the sites having achieved a 5 star designation. She stated that there were 1,097 practitioners across the 200 sites currently receiving the SEEK scholarships. She stated that another support was the WAGE$ supplement program, depending on a worker’s position in the education continuum, they were eligible to receive a supplement for continued education. She stated that child care practitioners were one of the lowest paid positions, and that statistics showed that turnover was greatly reduced (compared to national averages) in those participating in the program, with a 7% turnover compared to a national rate of 30 to 40%.

Ms. Brandi stated that if a practitioner achieved a CDA (Child Development Associate) designation they could receive an additional $200 per year. She stated that if they achieved a Bachelor’s degree they could receive an additional $3,000 per year.

Ms. Brandi stated that Prime Time was a non-profit agency serving after school programs and practitioners. She stated that it provided supports and resources to improve the quality of afterschool, increasing access to afterschool settings to positively impact the outcomes for school age children. She stated that other opportunities were available through networking, training, technical assistance, and professional development, in order to build more skills and a responsible workforce. She stated that they had developed a quality set of standards through their quality improvement system, as well as a system for assisting programs reach the quality benchmarks. She stated that this was again done through assessment, program improvement plans, professional development opportunities, scholarships, and a WAGE$ program. She stated that Prime Time served over 13,000 children.

Ms. Brandi stated that 92% of providers in the Prime Time QIS had achieved a score of 3.46 on their quality assessments, with 994 practitioners participating in training. She stated that 91 of
the practitioners had received the WAGE$ supplements. She stated that they were trying to align both the early childhood and the after school programs so that they provided similar services. She stated that they were encouraged by the practitioner support and involvement in the programs to meet the outcomes for the children.

Ms. Brandi stated that the current year was the first year they were conducting the child outcome study. She stated that the study had been undertaken by NIEER (National Institute for Early Education Research) from Rutgers University, a renowned research organization looking at child gains in the early years. She stated that they were considering gains in the areas of school readiness, voluntary pre-k, and Head Start, and the factors that were supportive of the child gains over time. She stated that the study would investigate child care centers, family child care homes, and teachers and classrooms to determine the ingredients to bring them towards the child outcomes. She stated that the study would also look at perspectives of directors, teachers, and families to determine what they were looking for, and what they needed in order to be successful. She stated that they would also look at CSC’s investments in all programs, and which investments would yield the greatest gains for children.

Ms. Brandi stated that in the coming year, through a partnership with the School District, they would access school records and conduct a post assessment on the children that had been assessed in pre-K. She stated that they could then determine whether there had been sustainability, and the results may also reveal how the programs could be modified, or new programs added in order to support the sustainability.

Ms. Brandi stated that due to the recent Legislative session there had been changes with the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) and how they contracted with school readiness providers. She stated that CSC currently contracted with ELC for the Child Outcomes Study and the Environmental Rating Scale assessment (for Quality Counts). She stated that beginning in July, 2012, CSC would take over those two assessments from ELC, due to the Legislation.

Erin Gallagher stated that they had a CLASS pilot ongoing which was a classroom scoring and assessment tool. She stated that it assessed not only the content that teachers taught, but how they taught it. She stated that research showed that an influencing factor in bringing children to school readiness was socio-emotional supports. She stated that the CLASS tool looked at aspects such as:

- behavior management – how it is handled in the classroom
- how instruction is carried out – how concepts are developed
- feedback – as children ask questions and give answers, what kind of dialog is created between adults and children

Ms. Gallagher stated that there was a lot of training involved in implementing CLASS because it was an abstract concept. She stated that there were 30 practitioners currently in training, together with system partners from Family Central, Inc., the ELC and the School District. She stated that they participated in three hours of training in-classroom per week, then returning
to their classrooms to implement the training, and then bringing lessons learned back to the in-classroom training the following week.

Ms. Gallagher stated that it was currently the third year of the Curriculum Study (DLM) and stated that they had conducted an intense amount of work around coaching and curriculum implementation. She stated that they were using year one and two results to determine what curriculum planning and assessment should look like. She stated that they were capturing classrooms on video, and were learning the benefits of small group activities.

Ms. Gallagher stated that the readiness assessments created a level playing field where every child should be upon entering Kindergarten. She stated that each early care site had its own culture and its own way of operating, so where they started could look vastly different. She stated that assessments needed to be in place for the sites to understand where their children were, and where they needed to build. She stated that they would conduct two types of assessment: i) an ongoing measure delivered by practitioners in the classroom to assess child progress through their early learning experiences, and ii) a population-based measure to provide data for group planning purposes. She stated that they were currently in the due diligence phase and were looking forward to moving it forward.

Karen Brandi stated that CSC had been collaborating with Head Start, encouraging them to work more closely with the Early Learning Coalition to unify the waiting list and to align the enrollment and eligibility process. She stated that they were considering a joint database, or two individual databases that could cross-reference with each other, and were in the beginning stages of these discussions. She stated that they had now been able to include the Head Start direct-operating sites (operated through the County) to participate in the Quality Counts professional development system. She stated that the County had given funding for the scholarship program, and they were able to braid funding to provide more professional development training to more practitioners.

Ms. Brandi stated that they had been working with the Village Academy in Delray Beach, and there were now 10 Head Start classes at that site. She stated that the Village Academy now served children from Kindergarten through 12th grade, in addition to the newly-added 3 year old classes. She stated that they would be adding Early Head Start into the Village Academy in 2013, so they would soon be serving prenatal moms all the way through to 12th grade, a rare continuum of care.

Vince Goodman asked what was taught in the Head Start classrooms. Ms. Brandi stated that they used the standard school district curriculum. Mr. Goodman asked whether there had been any measurement of the development of children participating in the program. Ms. Brandi stated that this was CSC’s first year with Head Start as part of Quality Counts, therefore assessments would be conducted at the appropriate intervals. Judge Alvarez stated that it was a restructuring and fine-tuning of the delivery system, Ms. Brandi concurred. Judge Alvarez asked whether parents were solicited for input. Ms. Brandi stated that one of the major strengths of the Head Start model was the parental engagement. Judge Alvarez asked
whether Head Start had resisted the changes. Ms. Brandi stated that Head Start had initiated the move. She stated that they had moved 10 Head Start programs from a building that needed to be closed down which had been close to Village Academy. She stated that there had been a whole wing of empty classrooms at Village Academy located adjacent to the Kindergarten area, by relocating the Head Start programs to these classrooms it could provide an almost seamless transition for those children into Kindergarten.

Vince Goodman asked Ms. Brandi to explain Quality Counts and how Head Start participated in that system. Ms. Brandi stated that as participants in Quality Counts the Head Start programs were now being assessed for quality, and the staff received coaching to ensure they provided the ultimate program for the children. She stated that staff also had the opportunity to participate in the professional development opportunities that were part of the Quality Counts package. Tana Ebbole stated that Quality Counts was the five-star rating system for child care centers and homes which has supports built-in to help the centers and homes move up in their rankings as they achieve higher quality. She stated that the supports included training for teachers helping them set up their classrooms, the provision of different curricula, the WAGE$ program which gave supports encouraging teachers to stay in the profession to reduce turnover. She stated that Head Start and the subsidized child care system also worked together insomuch as each system had the same type of star rating, therefore parents could compare child care programs universally.

Tana Ebbole stated that the example at Village Academy was important because it was a community school and the children attending it were from the surrounding neighborhood. She drew a comparison between the Highlands model (except that Highlands was a Bridges program which had moved into early care and education) and stated that the Village Academy was not a Bridges program. She stated that the Village Academy was creating the continuum working with not only the children in the school, but with the families and the community also. She stated that, as Ms. Brandi had mentioned, the Village Academy had a remarkable Principal with the vision and the willingness to undertake such work. Dari Bowman asked whether Village Academy was the only school in Palm Beach County going from Pre-K to 12th grade, Ms. Ebbole concurred. Karen Brandi stated that the Head Start program at Village Academy was currently serving 185 children, and that 16 more children would be added in 2013 with the addition of Early Head Start.

Erin Gallagher stated that CSC’s summer camp program had been developed to help keep children safe during the summer. She stated that summer camps currently remained outside of the current child care center licensing with regard to exemption from employee background screening. She stated that recent legislation to require background screening had not been passed, but CSC had still decided to make background checks a requirement for CSC funding for summer camps. She stated that language had been added to such effect in CSC’s contract with the County for 2011. She stated that further specification had been added in the contract for 2012 that preference should be given (with CSC funds) to summer camps conducted by year-round programs (these camps automatically fell under the licensing standards because they were year-round). She stated that all funded summer camp programs were notified in
January of this year that in 2013 only the programs that conducted year-round programs would receive funding next year. She stated that such notification gave the programs ample time to apply for licensing if they intended to apply for funding next year.

Vince Goodman stated that the Council had been concerned in previous years about the volume of children on the waiting list for summer camp, and asked how the waiting list looked for the coming summer. Ms. Gallagher stated that there was not a waiting list at the current time, but that the registration was a ‘rolling’ registration, and that it was ongoing. She stated that they gave priority each year to families serving foster children and working families, and that she would update the Council as registrations progressed. Mr. Goodman asked whether the scholarships were for low income families or for everybody. Ms. Gallagher stated that there were income guidelines in order to qualify. Tana Ebbole stated that the summer camps themselves were open to everybody therefore they had fee-paying attendees, but the summer camp scholarship program provided scholarships to low-income parents which allowed the parents to select a camp of their choice. Mr. Goodman stated that there were families from other countries that took advantage of the programs available and asked whether CSC identified parents that were non-citizens. Jeanne Brossell stated that the application form from the County required: i) social security cards for all family members, ii) photo ID (either driver’s license or U.S. passport, resident alien card, or work ID), iii) proof of Palm Beach County residency (paycheck stub, etc.) She stated that the income guidelines were 150% of the Federal poverty level. She stated that their first-served priority was homeless and foster children and they worked with the School District to identify the homeless children. She stated that the second priority was children of working parents, with the third priority being children of families with deployed service members and returned veterans.

Marsha Guthrie, Program Officer stated that the Bridges, a place-based strategy, helped to bridge the gap between how early learning experiences, the community, and the family environment worked hand-in-hand to achieve (the desired) child outcomes. She stated that CSC’s place-based strategy was launched in January, 2011 and that its comprehensive and holistic approach worked with the child, family, community, and organizations in targeted geographic areas in Palm Beach County to achieve outcomes. She stated that Bridges worked to promote and coordinate a localized system of care. She stated that it worked with the community organizations in those focused areas to ensure that they understood and were accountable for the services and interventions they provided.

Ms. Guthrie stated that the Bridges focused on small areas of Zip codes (using the Census tract), and they wanted to be able to see that they had community-level changes for their outcomes. She stated that the desired outcomes were to see children born healthy, safe from child abuse and neglect ages birth to five, ready for school, and successful readers by third grade. She stated that the intent was to saturate the community with the “good” information, helping parents and community members to understand the importance of child development, positive parenting practices, and ensuring that services worked optimally and efficiently.
Ms. Guthrie stated that one primary component of Bridges was to focus on community building, building on a community’s existing assets and strengths. She stated that instead of entering a community and trying to ‘start over’ with interventions and focus on the risk factors, the Bridges approach was to work with the investments that had been made and enhance the protective factors in evidence. She stated that instead of referring to their customers as ‘clients’ receiving ‘services’, Bridges sought to regard them as members of communities, and worked with those community members towards cohesion in their communities.

Ms. Guthrie stated that there were 10 Bridges neighborhood centers working to promote leadership and advocacy and meaningful community engagement. She stated that they worked with community advocates and respected community influencers of all ages. She stated that it was a two-way conversation in figuring out each community’s needs, and their role in helping raise their children.

Ms. Guthrie showed the service delivery model and stated that a place-based strategy needed to be anchored within one component, which, in the Bridges model was parenting education and support. She stated that in addition, there were interventions via Quality Counts and with afterschool providers, where CSC worked with those professionals who interacted with students directly. She stated that Bridges worked with parents and helped them to understand what quality comprised of, and ensured they had the parental skills to be able to interact effectively with their children. She stated that Bridges undertook this work by providing outreach to the community and engaging families with young children and pregnant women in order to coordinate services.

Ms. Guthrie stated that families in these communities came with complex issues, and Bridges provided navigation which were referrals and linkages to community resources and external systems. She stated that Bridges strove to partner with other institutions whether it was the medical community, the school system, the Court system, and law enforcement to name a few.

Ms. Guthrie stated that Bridges also sought to support CSC’s system of care – healthy beginnings, Quality Counts, and quality afterschool. She stated that their work in the communities had shown them that people did not have much of the information shared in today’s presentation, they didn’t understand the importance of prenatal care, parenting and child development. She stated that Bridges strove to provide that information, to inform them of what was happening in the community to help them address the community’s needs as concerned citizens.

Ms. Guthrie stated that Bridges supported the healthy beginnings program’s developmental screens - the ‘Ages and Stages’ questionnaire identified those children who may be at-risk developmentally. She stated that Bridges was able to provide monitoring activities for those children who may not screen at-risk but were in a gray area. She stated that Bridges educated parents what to look out for to help them help their children and make intervention services
unnecessary. She stated that Bridges also served as a referral source to CSC’s entry agencies, referring pregnant women and referring children aged birth to five for quality child care.

Ms. Guthrie stated that Bridges rested within the center of CSC’s work and supported CSC’s overall early childhood system of care as a sub-system. She stated that they were working with an evaluation firm to build a culture of learning in order to determine where to improve. She stated that they were undertaking a community level impact evaluation, as well as looking at CSC’s ongoing data collection. She stated that since January, 2011 they had been able to reach approximately 997 families. She stated that they had touched around 2,288 children in some capacity or another through the various supports. She stated that these figures held true for data collected from June, 2011 to the present time. She stated that 71% of the families they touched were in their target population with children of ages 0 to 5, with 84% of families with children aged 0 to 8. She stated that they sought to work not only with families with children but with other adults also, because they recognized that as a community, even adults not directly parenting children also had a role to play, she confirmed the family, friend, and neighbor approach. She stated that of the 97 pregnant women touched, 87% of those women were being served in some capacity. She stated that this data showed that when community outreach found the families they were seeking, they were being successfully engaged in the healthy beginnings program.

Ms. Guthrie outlined two other initiatives in which the Bridges program was engaged:

- TOP – Teen Outreach Program – an evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention program, 11 sites currently in operation in a variety of middle and high schools, and community based settings. Looking at expanding to add 22 more sites for FY 12/13.
- Parent education program similar to Harlem Children’s Zone’s “Baby College”. Intent of program to provide parent education on child development and practical advice to those parents raising small children.

Karen Brandi stated that they had been working on alignment and joint planning efforts between the birth to five quality child care and the afterschool systems. She stated that a priority had been to review how programs entered the systems and align those efforts. She stated that they had also been reviewing compliance, and professional development. She stated that they had made it a priority for incoming programs to be located within the Zip codes of the areas served by Bridges in order to build capacity for quality child care and quality afterschool, and meet the needs of the Bridges families. She stated that they were in the process of building a robust professional development system for both the child care and afterschool systems.

Erin Gallagher stated that the three year curriculum study would be moving into its fourth year and would be looking at sustainability. She stated that they would pull back on the support pieces and review child assessment and parent surveys. She stated that they would expand the class pilots, and the training would be fine-tuned and offered in the summer and fall to build more groups and more communities of practice. She stated that other groups around the State were discussing this work and how to grow it within other parts of Florida.
Ms. Gallagher stated that they had outlined various pieces of the work CSC undertook to help get children ready for school and to help them achieve school success, and that it took all the different pieces working together to reach Palm Beach County’s children.

Judge Alvarez asked about the other parts of the State being interested in the curriculum study. Erin Gallagher stated that there had been participants in the training from as far away as Washington State; other participants taking the ‘Train the Trainer’ model had not been ready with the infrastructure how to release it into their communities. Karen Brandi stated that many locales around the country had started their first roll-out with the assessment piece, without building their professional development system to support the teachers in the classroom. She stated that the CSC approach had been to support the teachers in the classroom long before an assessment had been introduced, therefore the teachers had been geared and ready for success.

Dari Bowman asked about the Quality Counts sites that may have entered the system with at a one-star level. Karen Brandi stated that they continued in the system and were given the supports they needed, they may have experienced a turnover of staff or a new director. She stated that they had found that working within the child care system needed supports to be provided with different levels of intensity, at varying intervals, and that it was an ongoing process. She stated that there were imminent plans to work with a nationally-renowned consultant in efficiency and resource maximization in Quality Counts.

Dennis Miles stated that the programs were outstanding, and the level of professionalism of CSC staff was impressive. He stated that the level of staff knowledge was impressive, but more importantly the passion of the staff was much appreciated. Tana Ebbole stated that staff that had spoken were passionate, and that there were many more behind the scenes that were equally as passionate, and that it was a team effort. Dari Bowman stated that she would like to hear more about the Bridges programs because they’d only really heard about Highlands Bridges so far. Tana Ebbole stated that they would give another update in approximately 6 months once they had been developed further.

2. **Vehicle Child Care Alarm Reimbursement**

Tana Ebbole stated that JBart (John Bartosek, Chief of Communications) had given a written update on the vehicle child care alarm reimbursements in the CEO Report, and that he’d be happy to answer any questions in that respect.

3. **Statistically Significant Lower Infant Mortality Rates – 2010 Child Outcomes**

Tana Ebbole stated that the CEO Report contained information from the Department of Health regarding infant mortality rates, and that Palm Beach County’s rate of infant mortality had been significantly lower than expected in 4 out of the past 5 years.
4. **Journal of Research in Childhood Education: Effects of Quality Improvement System for Child Care Centers**

Tana Ebbole stated that CSC staff members Xuejin (Kim) Lu, Ph.D., Karen Brandi, Jeff Goodman, and Grace Watson had an article published in a peer review journal – the Journal of Research in Childhood Education.

She stated that although it was touted with the moniker ‘Advances in Early Education and Day Care’ (she stated they hated the phrase ‘Day Care’), it was very impressive. Miss Ebbole distributed copies of the book.

9. **Legal Reports – N/A**

10. **Council Committees – N/A**

11. **Individual Appearances – Non-Agenda Items – N/A**

12. **Council Comments**

Judge Alvarez stated that they had begun a ‘Therapy Dog’ program at the Courthouse for the children coming for their judicial reviews. He stated that the program was already incredibly successful after only one month, and the reaction from the children was remarkable. He stated that in one case two children would not interact with each other whatsoever, but after a short time with the dog they were able to communicate with each other again. He stated that the therapy dog program took place in his courtroom every Wednesday morning, and invited Council and staff to see the interactions for themselves.

13. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

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Ronald V. Alvarez, Secretary                                Gaetana D. Ebbole, Chief Executive Officer