

**PINELLAS COUNTY LICENSE BOARD FOR CHILDREN'S CENTERS
AND FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES
Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting
January 24, 2013, 6:30 p.m.**

Our mission is to protect and promote the health, safety and mental development of children cared for in children's centers and family child care homes in Pinellas County.

APPROVED MINUTES

The Regular Board Meeting of the Pinellas County License Board for Children's Centers and Family Day Care Homes was scheduled and properly noticed for Thursday, January 24, 2013, at 8751 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL, to begin at 6:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Elise Minkoff, Board Chair; Lourdes Benedict, Susan Weber, and Anne Brooks

Board Members Absent: Commissioner Roche, Kathleen Young, and Judith Vitucci

Ex-Officio Member Present: Charles Minor

Advisory Members Present: Lynn Bittner, Nina Meyers, Ann Hofmeister, and DaVee Henderlong

Advisory Members Absent: Elizabeth Krakowski and Merlita Jones

Attorney: Colleen Flynn, Esq.

Staff Members Present: Patsy Buker, Executive Director; Jorie Massarsky, Supervisor, Children's Centers; Julie Oliver, Supervisor, Family Child Care Homes; Pervinder Birk, Director of Administrative Services, Pinellas County Health Department; and Lynn Abbott, Administrative Secretary

I. Call to order: Elise Minkoff, Board Chair, called the Pinellas County License Board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

A. Announcements

Ms. Minkoff announced a quorum and reiterated to Board members that all members must be present to vote and that votes cannot be counted via telephone. Voting and Advisory Board members are encouraged to phone in and listen if attendance is not possible.

The PCLB Board welcomed Susan Weber as a new Pinellas County License Board member representing the Pinellas County preschool associations, formerly a member of the Advisory Committee.

B. Approval of the Agenda

Motion:

Lourdes Benedict made a motion to approve the agenda. Susan Weber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

II. Report from Auditors

A. RECOMMENDATION: Acceptance of Audit Report

Dana Powell, senior manager, Law, Redd, Crona & Munroe, P.A., presented the Pinellas County License Board Financial Statements of September 30, 2012, and the Management Letter, dated January 11, 2013. Ms. Powell reported the findings of the audit of the Pinellas County License Board and explained that the audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States and in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

Pervinder Birk, Director of Administrative Services, Pinellas County Health Department, stated that the Board does file its audit with the Department of Economic Affairs and the Auditor General within 45 days of approval. Ms. Buker added that the staff also provides a copy of the audit to our contractual funders.

Motion:

Lourdes Benedict made a motion to approve the Auditor's Report. Susan Weber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

III. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes from October 1, 2012

Lourdes Benedict proposed a correction in the October minutes that Patsy Buker had congratulated Judith Bruckner for her advocacy award. Elise Minkoff, Board Chair, accepted Ms. Benedict's change to the minutes.

Motion:

Lourdes Benedict made a motion to approve the Minutes from October 1, 2012. Susan Weber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. Action Items

A. RECOMMENDATION: Approve Licenses for Two New Children's Centers

Staff recommended that the Board approve two licenses for Children's Centers, as listed in the Board packet.

Ms. Massarsky shared the licensing history of the centers.

When asked what the "MVB" stands for in the ownership column for Curlew Learning Center, Ms. Massarsky responded that MVB might be the initials of the owners, or may even belong to previous

owners who have invested in the new corporation. When asked about the prior history of the children's center before the change of ownership, and whether the previous center had issues, Ms. Massarsky responded that the previous center had an exemplary licensing history.

Motion:

Lourdes Benedict made a motion to approve issuing licenses for the two new children's centers. Susan Weber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B. RECOMMENDATION: Approve Licenses for 4 Family Child Care Homes

Staff recommended that the Board approve four licenses for new Family Child Care Homes, as listed in the Board packet.

Ms. Oliver shared the licensing history of the four homes.

When asked how many children Yolanda Johnson had enrolled in her first two visits, Ms. Oliver responded that during the first two visits Ms. Johnson did have children enrolled, but she had no children enrolled at the time of the third visit. When asked to explain how the number of visits during the Temporary Permit period is determined, Ms. Oliver shared that there may be a variety of factors, including but not limited to the Licensing Specialists' schedules, the timing in a quarter, whether children are enrolled and if there are concerns about the provider's understanding and/or compliance with the regulations.

Motion:

Lourdes Benedict made a motion to approve issuing licenses for the four new Family Child Care Homes. Susan Weber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

C. RECOMMENDATION: Approve License for One Large Family Child Care Home

Staff recommended that the Board approve one license for a new Large Family Child Care Home, as outlined in the Board packet. Ms. Oliver outlined the licensing history of the home.

Motion:

Susan Weber made a motion to approve issuing a license for the one new Large Family Child Care Home. Lourdes Benedict seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

V. Informational Items

A. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Buker reviewed the Executive Director's Report, which was included in the Board packet, and responded to questions. Her information included the following:

There are currently no significant legislative bills filed for Child Care that are of concern.

Ms. Buker spoke about unlicensed childcare, which has been an important issue for quite some time.

When the Child Care Licensing Program receives reports of unlicensed childcare, staff carefully analyzes each report to consider the facts and to determine if it appears that unlicensed care is actually being provided. If the report is of concern and it contains any form of contact information, staff investigates the report. Law enforcement assists CCLP staff if it is determined that there is the potential for a dangerous situation.

The Federal Head Start Office is still considering the two applicants to provide Head Start services for Pinellas County. The Pinellas County School Boards and Lutheran Family Services applied to be the provider. The contract announcement is expected in the spring.

State law requires that Child Care Resource and Referral services are available to help parents explore various childcare settings. CCLP staff members have heard concerns that parents are sometimes not receiving a full list of providers that match their requests and that the list is sometimes not current and/or up to date. Ms. Buker has shared these concerns with Micki Thompson, the Executive Director of 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares Inc., as her agency is the recipient of the subcontract for Childcare Resource and Referral from the Early Learning Coalition. Ms. Thompson has requested that we ask childcare providers and parents to express their concerns directly to her so she can research each situation.

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) maintains the list of childcare providers, and 2-1-1 utilizes the ELC database exclusively. The list includes all licensed providers, not just those who contract with the ELC. The ELC originally took this service over from Coordinated Child Care but subsequently decided to stop providing the service, and they put the contract up for bid. 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares Inc. won the bid. ELC is also looking into the concerns regarding the database; they realize that the process may need some adjustments. The Board suggested that CCLP staff create a new brochure about local licensed childcare and then ask Dr. Dharamraj of the Pinellas County Health Department if those brochures could be distributed at new birth screenings through the Healthy Families and the Nurse Family Partnership programs.

The JWB awarded the Quality Child Care Initiative contract to the United Methodist Cooperative Ministries, whose Director is our own former employee, Dorothy Williams. The contract deliverable is to open five children's centers in the five priority areas in Pinellas County to create high-quality learning environments for up to 200 children whose overburdened families have great need.

The Lew Williams Project, set up to honor Lew Williams, a past area superintendent and child advocate, is going to open a children's center at the PTEC Center in August for a high-quality learning environment in the near future.

The Early Learning Coalition has enrolled 583 children from their wait list to now have a total of 5,038 children enrolled in School Readiness-funded care.

Ms. Buker also distributed a chart showing Children's Centers Inspections at 100 Percent Compliance by month, which staff created at the request of the Juvenile Welfare Board. Staff will create a similar chart of inspections of Family Child Care Homes and try to have that by the next Board meeting.

Susan Weber suggested that we create a consumer survey with input from the preschool associations, local colleges and/ or the JWB to gather current perceptions about the Pinellas County License Board and the Child Care Licensing Program. The goal would be to seek information about the CCLP's strengths, weaknesses and about how we can improve our services.

B. Statistical Report Regarding Licensing Activity

The report was included in the Board packet, and there were no additional comments.

C. Compliance Reports

Ms. Massarsky responded to a question regarding Tiny Treasures Preschool's executed change of ownership. She stated that the new center has a new Director and new staff. The former corporation does not have any relationship with that children's center anymore, and if they ever choose to enter the childcare industry again in Pinellas County, they would have to pay the fines from when they owned Tiny Treasures before the PCLB could grant them a new license.

Ms. Buker added that there have been some system changes in how childcare providers access their DCF training transcripts. There has been some initial confusion, but DCF is working to get correct data onto the transcripts pages and to educate providers on what they will need to do to access transcripts in the future.

Ms. Buker added that the CCLP is working with Outliers Technology, the parent company of the SansWrite software, to try to get additional information about what kind of Crystal Reports we can pull beyond those that we now use.

D. Monthly Financial Report

The Monthly Financial Report was included in the Board packet as an informational item.

A question was asked about whether we will experience a reduction in budgets if we show a surplus. Ms. Buker responded that we will not automatically lose any surplus. However, she added that we expect to expend all funds. She also explained that the Juvenile Welfare Board has very closely examined all of the programs that it funds. Their available funds have shrunk significantly over the last several years because property values have been going down and their funds come from ad valorem taxes on property.

VI. Public Comment

Public Comment: June Moody, 7224 118th Terrace North, Largo, FL 33773
Ms. Moody commented on the requirements to call the Child Abuse Hotline and suggested that we need to reevaluate the reasons for calling the Hotline. She requested that providers not be required to call the Hotline regarding children's accidents while in childcare. Ms. Moody explained that a child fell in her home, in her presence, and she was required to call the Child Abuse Hotline. The Hotline accepted the report for an investigation. However, the assigned Child Protective Investigator later informed her that he wondered why she called the Hotline because he felt it was an accident, not abuse. The CPI advised her to not to call the Hotline for an accident and to call the Investigator. Ms. Moody did not want to be noncompliant with PCLB regulations. Ms. Buker asked to speak to Ms. Benedict after the meeting to clarify procedures on reporting to the Hotline, as it is unclear at present.

Public Comment: Lynn Gibson, 8697 78th Avenue North, Seminole, FL 33777
Ms. Gibson commented on in-service training hours and the requirement for a notarized Emergency Medical Release form. Ms. Gibson would like the Board to consider changing the periods for in-service hours to be the calendar year rather than the State fiscal year. She also requested that the Emergency Medical Release only require a notarized signature one time while a child is in care, rather than annually. Ms. Gibson also stated that she believes that the database that 2-1-1 currently uses for Child Care Resource and Referral needs to be updated to include zip codes for providers because the criteria is not working for parents' choices for child care. She stated that the PCLB website link for Inspection Reports is helpful for parents and should include zip codes. She shared that she believes that the PCLB and the Child Care Licensing Program are doing a great job and CCLP is always offering help.

Public Comment: Pamela Moore Shear, 6780 34th Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL 33710
Ms. Moore Shear commented on Decreasing County-Level Regulations and the rights of parents. Ms. Moore Shear stated that she had sent an email to Board members outlining her belief that a parent should be able to choose where he or she can send their children, licensed or nonlicensed, period. She stated that Pinellas County has some of the most rigid, strict and harsh regulations of all of the counties. She said that she believes that the program should give more leeway to people who are giving a good sign of faith that they are going to complete everything they need to within the timeframe in order to upgrade their license. She believes that it is counterproductive to get rid of a good provider or to decrease their rights as a provider simply because of a misunderstanding of some laws or regulations. She stated that she came to the meeting to support her provider, Stefani Pavese, who is having that exact issue, and she stated her intention to keep her child with Ms. Pavese with or without a license, she is that important as a provider. There should be exceptions to every law.

Public Comment: Stefani Pavese, 2590 64th Way North, St. Petersburg, FL 33710
Ms. Pavese commented on capacity and household members. She stated that she believes that household members should be able to watch household children and that the household children would, therefore, not count in capacity for childcare licensing. She believes that the laws and regulations need to be changed to reflect that concept. She also stated that the rules and regulations do not prohibit two providers being licensed to provide childcare in the same residence where there is plenty of room. She would like the opportunity to start a change to that regulation.

VII. Next Meeting

The next Pinellas County License Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2013, at 1:30 p.m. The date listed on the January 24, 2013, agenda is corrected to state April 25, 2013.

VIII. Adjournment

Anne Brooks motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Susan Weber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Dr. Judi Vitucci, Board Secretary