



ANNUAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 26, 2026 (Rev. 09-22-26)

Board of Directors:

Col. Josefa Benjamin, Board Chair; Rebecca Brock, Vice Chair; Michael Lepera, Treasurer; Lois Marino, Secretary; Bill Reicherter, Carolina Raineau, Charles Hanna, Donna Korn, Dr. Heidi Schaeffer, Joseph Rogers, Karen Cabrera, Kerry Diaz, Maria Mezerhane, Michael DiBrizzi, Nancy W. Stamper, Paul Adams, Dr. Ronald Ford, Sabria McElroy, Stefanie Title, Dr. Victoria Thurston

Unable to Attend:

Bill Reicherter, Charles Hanna, Donna Korn, Heidi Schaeffer, Joe Rogers, Malala Mezerhane, Paul Adams, Victoria Thurston

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Neiko Shea, Donna Eprifania, Julie DeMar, Rebecca Lindstadt, Alcolya St. Juste, Shanny Tozzi, Tina Lewis, Freda Joseph, Lara Cunningham, Alisha Major, Michael Davis, Lisa Marsh, Julie Janello, *DCF:* Adrienne Reid

CALL TO ORDER – Col. Josefa Benjamin, Board Chair

- Col. Josefa Benjamin, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Lois Marino, Board Secretary

- Roll was taken, and quorum was established.

The May 29, 2026 meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion* was moved and seconded to approve both meeting minutes. *A vote was taken.* The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted.*

CHILDNET BOARD EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD – Tina Lewis, Human Resources Officer

- The ChildNet Board Employee Recognition Award was presented to the following deserving employees:
 - May 2026 – Alisha Major, Education Services Specialist (PB)
Freda Joseph, Dependency Case Manager – Unit H2 (BWD)

NEW BUSINESS

- **BOARD SERVICE – Alcolya St. Juste, CLO & CCO**
 - Approval of Resolutions #303 - #306 – Election of Officers – The following names were brought to the Board for vote for Officer Positions for a one (1) year appointment, ending June 2027:
 - *Chair* – Rebecca Brock
 - *Vice Chair* – Lois Marino
 - *Treasurer* – Karen Cabrera
 - *Secretary* – Nancy Stamper

A *motion* was moved and seconded to approve Resolutions #303-#306 for appointment of one (1) year, ending June 2027. A *vote was taken*. The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted*.

- Approval of Resolution #307 – Election of Directors – two-year reappointment – The following slate of Directors are up for reappointment of a two (2) year term ending June 2028:

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|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| ○ Bill Reicherter | ○ Dr. Heidi Schaeffer | ○ Maria Mezerhane |
| ○ Carolina Raineau | ○ Josefa Benjamin | ○ Michael Lepera |
| ○ Charles Hanna | ○ Joseph Rogers | ○ Sabria McElroy |
| ○ Donna Korn | ○ Kerry Diaz | ○ Stefanie Title |

A *motion* was moved and seconded to approve Resolution #307 for re-appointment of two (2) years, ending June 2028. A *vote was taken*. The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted*.

- Approval of Resolution #308 – Election of Directors – less than two-year reappointment – The following Directors are up for reappointment of less than a two (2) year term. The reappointment is noted as follows:

- Dr. Ronald Ford – 3 months – ending September 2026
- Michael DiBrizzi (Provider Representative) – 1 year – ending June 2027
- Paul Adams – 1 year, 5 months – ending November 2027
- Victoria Thurston – 1 year, 9 months – ending March 2028

A *motion* was moved and seconded to approve Resolution #308 for re-appointment of less than two (2) years as noted above. A *vote was taken*. The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted*.

• **ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR APPROVAL – Alcolya St. Juste, CLO & CCO**

- Approval of Resolution #309 – Compliance with License Requirements, Regulations and Decrees – Discussion was held by Alcolya St. Juste that this annual compliance check is to ensure that all ChildNet licenses are in place.

A *motion* was moved and seconded to approve Resolution #309. A *vote was taken*. The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted*.

- Approval of Resolution #310 – Signature Authorization for FY 2026-2027 – This resolution provides Larry Rein, CEO and President, Donna Eprifania, CFO, and Neiko Shea, Chief of Staff, signing authority for the fiscal year. This resolution is signed on a yearly basis.

A *motion* was moved and seconded to approve Resolution #310. A *vote was taken*. The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted*.

- Approval of Resolution #311 – 2026-2028 Strategic Plan – The new Strategic Plan has four (4) goals (noted below). The Strategic Plan is now by fiscal year instead of calendar year:

Goal One – Improve and sustain ChildNet's workforce by implementing proven and innovative practices, with a focus on dependency case management.

Goal Two – Expand and strengthen a comprehensive continuum of services and supports that responsively address the complex, evolving needs of adolescents at risk of, or involved in, the child welfare system.

Goal Three – Strengthen financial responsibility, resilience, and long-term sustainability through financial oversight and maximizing diverse revenue streams.

Goal Four – Increase the pool of qualified foster homes and level 1 licensed kinship caregiver family capacity to meet the unique needs of children in care.

A *motion* was moved and seconded to approve Resolution #311. A *vote was taken*. The ayes have it and *the motion was adopted*.



- ❖ **TRANSITION MEETING TO NEWLY APPROVED BOARD OFFICERS** - After the Election of Board Officers/Directors were approved, the Board meeting was turned over to the incoming Board Officers: Chair – Rebecca Brock, Vice Chair – Lois Marino, Treasurer – Karen Cabrera, Secretary – Nancy Stamper and Member at Large – Dr. Heidi Schaeffer.
- **ANNUAL UPDATE – Alcolya St. Juste, CLO & CCO**
 - Discussion of Sunshine Law – Alcolya St. Juste reminded the Board that under Florida's Sunshine Law, all meetings must be open to the public, minutes must be maintained and accessible, and no private discussions (including electronic communications) should occur during meetings. Any ChildNet business discussions must remain public and observable. Julie Janello will send a link/video to the Board from the Inspector General that discusses Sunshine Law.
 - FY 2026-2027 - Board/Committee Meeting Calendar, Board Roster/Contact List, Board Committee Structure and Membership, Summary of Board Committees and Board Bios – These documents were updated and provided to the Board. Ms. St. Juste noted that there will not be Board or Committee meetings in the months of July and December, unless otherwise requested by the Board Chair.
 - Annual Acknowledgement Form for Potential Conflict of Interest – Annually, each Board member is to complete the Acknowledgement Form to note any conflicts of interest. Julie Janello will email the form to the full Board for completion.
 - Presentation – Annual Board Survey Results – Larry Rein reported that the annual Board survey was very positive, with improvement in nearly all 22 engagement areas. Notable gains included Board members' understanding of financial statements and awareness of local and national trends. The primary area of decline was the Board-staff working relationship, potentially due to limited face-to-face interaction. This will be explored further, including opportunities for more in-person engagement. A few areas tied to strategic plan goals also reflected concerns that progress had not met expectations. The survey will be shared with the full Board, while individual comments and possible follow-up actions will be reviewed with Board leadership at a future meeting
 - Review Management of Operational Procedures (MOP) – Julie DeMar, CPO, outlined ChildNet's new, more structured process for reviewing operational policies and procedures after opting out of the previous COA process. Policies will undergo annual review by the appropriate committees, with Board approval and staff communication as needed. Each policy will have an assigned senior leader, review criteria, and scheduled review dates. The new tracking system, beginning next year, is expected to improve consistency, timeliness, and oversight.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **Community Engagement Committee – Lois Marino, and Shanny Tozzi, Director of Community Relations**
 - FY 2025-2026 Overview - Lois Marino provided an overview of FY 2025-2026, highlighting growth, innovation, fundraising, and increased community impact. ChildNet raised approximately \$1.2 million, including nearly \$250,000 from the inaugural Ripple Effect Gala, and received \$699,500 in grants, with an additional \$370,000 under review. Community support also included \$315,000 in in-kind contributions. Key accomplishments included a record 161 TIL graduates, distribution of more than 1,200 backpacks, Thanksgiving support for over 250 families, and delivery of more than 3,000 holiday gifts. The department also expanded community visibility, grant opportunities, volunteerism, and strategic partnerships. FY 2026–27 priorities include ChildNet's 25th anniversary, growing Ripple Effect Gala revenue beyond \$600,000, expanding Palm Beach donor engagement, increasing



foundation funding, strengthening corporate partnerships, expanding volunteer opportunities, and increasing support for Independent Living Programs and SafePlace.

- Community Relations Department – Larry Rein reported that this is the first time that we have identified a budget for this department. We are in the procurement process for a public relations firm and are in the last phase of selecting a new firm.

- **Finance Committee – Karen Cabrera, Committee Chair and Donna Eprifania, CFO**

- Donna Eprifania reported that the committee participated in a Budget Workshop in May with the Finance Committee members to identify fiscal-year priorities and items requiring further review. To balance both budgets, Palm Beach County will need to use \$500,000 in reserves and Broward County will need to use \$4.0 million in reserves for a total of \$4.5 million for fiscal year 26-27. It is expected that the legislature will approve a flat allocation with no increase once again for both contracts this upcoming year. Additionally, ChildNet also secured insurance coverage with an effective date of June 1, 2026, and executed the required performance bonds effective July 1, 2026. A July 2026 Finance Committee meeting is planned to review the final allocation from DCF/the legislature to allow for review and recommend the budgets for electronic approval from the board of directors prior to submission to DCF for final approval.

Larry Rein emphasized that the Board Survey showed 100% of directors understand ChildNet's finances, while noting that the financial challenges reflect a broader crisis in child welfare and community-based care. He stressed the need to improve the current funding model.

- Audit Committee – Donna Eprifania reported a need for additional members.

- **Governance/Executive Committee – Lois Marino, Committee Chair**

- Physical Location Discussion – It was noted that the Real Estate Committee is being reconvened and the next meeting is scheduled in July 2026.
- Accreditation – Larry Rein that the Department of Children & Families are in the midst of procuring an outside auditor to do operational, financial, and programmatic audits of community-based care lead agencies. Therefore, the need for outside accreditation is superfluous.
- Membership Recruitment - Larry Rein reported that Board membership recruitment is continuing, with a meeting planned with a potential Broward County candidate who is an educator and has strong credentials in education. Lois Marino suggested looking at other organization's chairs or board members who are terming out to see their interest in serving on ChildNet's board. Kerry Diaz recommended having a wish list of services needed to help the board directors determine additional potential candidates who could bring valuable expertise to the Board.

- **Program Quality Committee – Nancy W. Stamper, Committee Chair**

The committee reviewed four policies and procedures and reviewed the DCF Quality Data Review presentation.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT – Rebecca Brock

- Waves of Impact – Rebecca Brock briefly discussed a new theme, "Waves of Impact," for the Gala in 2027 to continue the momentum created by the successful theme of "The Ripple Effect".



CEO/PRESIDENT REPORT – Larry Rein

- **Statewide Issues:**

- **Florida Coalition for Children (FCC)** – Larry Rein reported that there is no new funding or updated funding model, and inequities among Community-Based Care lead agencies would continue to grow under the most recent model presented by DCF to the legislature. FCC hopes to work directly with the legislature to address the funding formula. A small FCC work group has been established to develop recommendations, with a focus on shifting from historical expenditures to funding based on actual costs and needs, and concentrating on the two largest drivers of lead agency costs – dependency case management and residential group care. This would be much simpler and easier to manage and understand than the increasingly complex model being developed by DCF and its contracted consultant, KPMG.

- **National Issues:**

- **National Center for Community Based Child Welfare** - Larry Rein shared that the National Center for Community-Based Child Welfare is looking to hire a national lobbyist to promote community-based care, help other states adopt the model, and strengthen programs already using it. They are also focused on getting flexible funding for high-acuity youth and addressing the growing liability insurance crisis, which is becoming very expensive and is putting child welfare programs across the country at risk.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There was no public comment.

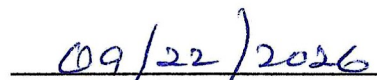
NEXT MEETING DATE

- No meeting in July 2026. Next Board Meeting is Friday, August 28, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. in person and via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

- Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.


Nancy W. Stamper
Board Secretary


Date

(Corporate Seal)