



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COUNCIL
Of Highlands County
Champion for Children Advocacy Center
1968 Sebring Parkway, Sebring, FL 33870

MINUTES

March 21, 2018

Members Present: Aisha Alayande; Melissa Blackman; Judge Angela Cowden; Marcia Davis, Charlene Edwards, Ruth Handley, Willie Hills; Greg Pearlman; Anavatti Raghuveera, MD; April Rolle; Carly Wohl; Jeff Taylor; Teri Saunders; Amanda Tyner, Luzed Cruz

Others Present: Gail Escobar, Cynthia Acevedo, Kathie Southern, Karen Boglarsky, Marisa Stam

The meeting was called to order by Chair Carly Wohl, at 7:40 a.m.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome/Introductions

Carly Wohl welcomed all present. Self -introductions given by all present.

Agenda Item 2: Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

- a. Melissa Blackman made a motion and April Rolle seconded the motion to approve the minutes of February 21, 2018 Board Meeting with date corrections as noted. Upon roll call, all members voted yes. The motion carried.
- b. April Rolle made a motion and Melissa Blackman seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2018 Agenda Planning with the corrections of dates as noted. Upon roll call, all members voted yes. The motion carried.

Agenda Item 3: Committee Reports/Status Updates

a. By-Laws amendment / New Subcommittee Implementation

Chairman Carly Wohl stated that the BOCC approved changes to the By-Laws with the addition of item **V. F. – Standing Committees of the Council** on March 20, 2018. The new subcommittees with responsibilities will be implemented at the next Council meeting. Each voting member is encouraged to review the committee descriptions that were provided in today's meeting packet in order to determine the place he/she would like to serve. Also provided is the Report Card and the narrative that had previously been compiled last year by the Council.

b. Healthy Families Highlands Advisory Board

HFH Manager Cynthia Acevedo updated the Council on the status of the HFH Advisory Board. In the past there were active Council members who were involved as members of the HFH Advisory Board, but currently there is not a connection to the Council. HFH is an evidence-based voluntary home visitation program with the mission to prevent child abuse, therefore it is important for the Council to be engaged. This Board meets quarterly and Cynthia Acevedo will report to the Council on a regular basis.

c. CAC Advisory Board

CSC Executive Director/CAC Manager Luzed Cruz updated the Council on the recent CAC Advisory Board meeting. Previous areas of concern were addressed such as the need for a mental health trauma therapist, which has been achieved through a linkage agreement with SCARF (Serving Children & Reaching Families); the need for local CPT medical services remains a great need; and lastly, providing the documentation to the NCA (National Children's Alliance) to reflect the fulfillment of the one standard that was not met at earlier accreditation. This Board meets quarterly and Luzed Cruz will report to the Council on a regular basis.

d. Nominating Sub-Committee

Carly Wohl reported that this committee has reconvened due to the vacancy of the position previously held by Chief Fansler. It will meet again before the next Council meeting in order to place a recommendation before the Council. Applications are currently being accepted. The current vacancy will be accepting applications through April 17, 2018.

Agenda Item 4: Aunt Bertha Training

Kathie Southern with Heartland for Children gave a presentation to the Council on Aunt Bertha, an electronic database of free or reduced goods and services for citizens. The resources are searched by typing in the zip code of the area and then by clicking on the type of service for which one is seeking. Some features of the website are the ability to organize searches by creating favorites and folders to simplify future searches once registered with the website, claim a resource, and email or text message a resource to seekers, change the language of the website/information provided. There is also a means to suggest resources not in the database and to edit those already contained there. The website is www.heartland.auntbertha.com.

Agenda Item 5: Child Abuse Prevention & Permanency (CAAP) Task Force Update

a. Child Abuse Awareness Month - Luzed Cruz and Kathie Southern

HIGHLANDS - April 3rd Kick-off event on the Court House Steps at 8am with a Proclamation to be presented at the BOCC commission meeting that begins at 9am. Assistance is needed to set out the pinwheels on the Courthouse lawn the evening before. April 10th – proclamation will be presented at Highlands County School Board Meeting
POLK – April 14th Pinwheels in the Park , Lakeland – proceeds benefit Highlands, Hardee, and Polk.

RESILIENCE movie date – showing is scheduled for Tuesday, April 24, 2018. This documentary is a follow up to PAPER TIGERS that was shown last year.

b. Task Force Update - Kathie Southern

Highlands County maltreatment rate continues to increase with current rate at 14.6 which is above the state rate of 10.7. Incoming reports have increased as well as verified reports. The Task Force will be addressing/researching this matter with the assistance of DCF.

Agenda Item 5: Upcoming Events

- a. Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month Kick-off Tuesday, April 3, 2018 at 8am

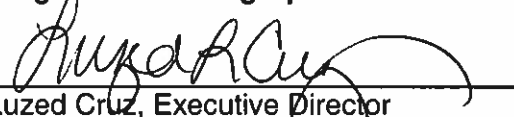
Agenda Item 6: Agency Announcements

- a. **Drug Free Highlands (Aisha Alayande)** – Reading Rounds on Tuesdays to include the Child Abuse Awareness month.
SAMHSA – representing DFH Coalition as a guest speaker for webinar on the topic of Preventing Tragedies after a Disaster
BACKCHAT – with Next Generation Village on April 19 at Sebring Civic Center at 5pm. Topic will be prevention and recovery with Law Enforcement also attending.
- b. **School Board (Melissa Blackman)** – Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) is conducting a symposium to evaluate most effective way to address mental health issues in the schools.
School Board (Superintendent Longshore) – additional state funding will enable additional resource officers to cover all schools. Also, looking at safety features that will be added with assessments being conducted at each school campus.
- c. **Highlands County Sheriff's Office – (Lt. Pearlman)** - DARE Celebration at SFSC on April 13th.
- d. **Sebring Rotarians (Judge Cowden)** – Are You Smarter Than a Rotarian Event– March 29th with middle schoolers from Sebring Middle schools - benefit academics – at SFSC.
- e. **Highlands County Circuit Judges (Judge Cowden)** - Highlands County is losing the adult Baker Act facility, which was located at Florida Hospital – Lake Placid. Citizens already do not have local services for minors who need Baker Act services or substance abuse treatment, among others, and this will be an additional hardship for families and a roadblock to recovery and change. This reflects a regression in services for our county and its citizens.

Agenda Item 7: Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:20am.

Next CSC general meeting April 18th – 7:30 AM - location TBD



Luzed Cruz, Executive Director
Children's Services Council of Highlands County

Respectfully submitted: Gail Escobar

