

**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
JOINT WORK SESSION WITH CHILDREN'S SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD  
BRADENTON AREA CONVENTION CENTER, LONGBOAT KEY ROOM  
One Haben Boulevard  
Palmetto, Florida  
November 5, 2019**

Meeting video link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUlqjuGhS-qV966RU2Z7AtA>  
(NOTE: Due to technical difficulties, there is no audio recording for this meeting)

Present were Manatee County Commissioners:  
Stephen R. Jonsson, Chairman  
Betsy Benac, First Vice-Chairman  
Misty Servia, Second Vice-Chairman  
Carol Whitmore, Third Vice-Chairman  
Vanessa Baugh  
Reggie Bellamy  
Priscilla Whisenant Trace

Present were CSAB Members:  
Xtavia Bailey, Chair  
Sandra Stone, Vice-Chair  
Kimberly Kutch  
Debbie Tapp  
Amy Diss  
George Van Buren, M.D.  
Gina Messenger  
Karen Hansen  
Gail Wynne

Absent were: CSAB members Kelly Hunt and Connie Shingledecker

Also present were:

Cheri Coryea, County Administrator  
Mitchell O. Palmer, County Attorney  
Robin Toth, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Chairman Jonsson called the Joint Work Session to order at 1:30 p.m.

**REVISED AGENDA**

BC20191105DOC004

**WELCOME**

Stephen R. Jonsson, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners, welcomed Children's Services Advisory Board Members.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Members of the Board of County Commissioners and Children's Services Advisory Board introduced themselves.

1. **CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEDICATED MILLAGE PRIORITIES**

Ava Ehde, Neighborhood Services Director, stated this joint work session with the Children's Services Advisory Board (CSAB) was requested by the Board of County Commissioners (9/10/19), to discuss priorities for the use of the Children's Services Dedicated Millage.

Xtavia Bailey, CSAB Board Chair, acknowledged the efforts of CSAB members for investing volunteer time into research, application system training, monthly meetings, funding cycle meetings, review of funding applications, and follow-up to funding applications/questions.

Susan Ford, County Human Services Manager, reviewed the history of the CSAB and adoption of Ordinance 91-42 (7/9/91) to implement and provide for the dedicated millage to fund children's services for abused, neglected, at-risk, and economically disadvantaged children under 18. Ordinance 91-42 authorized the expenditure and procedures for allocation of the Children's Services Funds and outlined the general terms and conditions under which the County should fund, develop, and provide operation of programs, including enhancement and expansion of existing programs, as well as implementation of new and innovative programs.

Ordinance 91-42 also paved the way for the establishment of the 13-member CSAB, commissioned with the purpose of making recommendations on the use/expenditure of the Children's Services Funds, to consult with various agencies involved in the delivery of children's services, to minimize the duplication of services, and to complete other duties assigned by the Board of County Commissioners.

In the beginning, the Fund was approximately \$300,000 and funded seven programs. Today, the millage enhances the services, providing a wide variety of different programs costing approximately \$12 million for 52 programs. All of these programs are required to document measurable results that benefit Manatee County's children and their families.

While utilizing a slide presentation, Ms. Ford stated that each year, the CSAB submits the Children's Services Annual Plan and Report, to the County Commission, which is comprised of information covering three fiscal years, reflecting the past, present and future work of the Advisory Board and Children's Services staff. The CSAB reviews program performance from the previous fiscal year and conducts reviews of programs funded during the current fiscal year, to develop the Annual Plan for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Ford provided an overview of the Florida Children's Council 2020 Public Policy Agenda and Public Policy Priorities 2020, FY 2019/2020 Children's Services Annual Plan and Report, and FY 2019/2020 Investment Goals and Priorities Plan.

James Slusser, County Human Services Analyst, presented the State of the Community portion of the FY 2019/2020 Children's Services Annual Plan and Report, to share County statistics regarding child welfare, family strengthening and support, grade level reading and mathematics, kindergarten readiness, childhood obesity, mental health, bullying, school suspensions, and the ATOS (Alternative Time Out of School) Program implemented by the School District for high school students.

Ms. Bailey explained the FY 2020/2021 Investment Goals and Priorities Plan, using a categorized breakdown of current fiscal year investments approved for children's programs and services, and the largest number of programs recommended for investment.

She reviewed FY 2020/2021 Priority/Result Data regarding the present situation, assumption and target of the overall, desired results regarding the four investment goals regarding (1) children in foster care, (2) children in their homes free of abuse and neglect, (3) funders, systems, policies, and practice aligned to ensure that children read on grade level by 4th grade, and (4) stable social, behavioral, and emotional well-being for children.

In conclusion, Ms. Bailey stated the overall, desired results for children in Manatee County are not achievable with an unfocused approach to investment, nor are they attainable with the amount of available funds. To make a difference with the available funds, the CSAB set the priorities outlined in this Plan. The results-focused investments can be tracked and measured in terms of moving the needle toward a set target of improvements for specific indicators of child well-being. The CSAB will make recommendations to the County Commission for the investment of the FY 2020/2021 Children's Services Dedicated Millage Funds once all submitted applications have been reviewed.

Discussion ensued on the low percentage of Manatee County students that are able to read on grade level by 4th grade, grade-level reading has become a high priority being tackled by the CSAB, and the CSAB is merging with other organizations to share information.

Kristi Hagen, County Human Services Analyst, reported on the shift from outcome measures to targeted results.

Cheri Coryea, Manatee County Administrator, explained the main reason the CSAB is focusing on the same four investment goals for a second year, is because of the behavioral changes that are required. The CSAB is measuring the results on four investment goals to determine progress. This does not mean that other programs are not being funded.

Discussion continued that some programs are not going to fit into these priorities, specific agencies that request funding, agencies that do not have the expertise to determine results-first data, making sure children are being cared for, foster care is number one, involvement by The Patterson Foundation in grade-level reading programs, increased focus has been placed on out-of-school programs, and other concepts the County Commission may have.

Ms. Coryea stated the County transitioned years ago, from being a funder of a provided service to an investor of a service that utilizes the results-first approach.

There was further discussion that agencies have been asked to present their specific priorities and which of those priorities is being addressed first, primary community concerns are poverty, food and insecurity and the stress being placed upon children, the effects of social media, this is a never-ending situation to improve results first, everyone must continue to press forward to help, issues identified in elementary school-age children, nutritional concerns of children, third grade reading program, sharing success stories, what incentives are impacting youth, trying success strategies in other schools, collaborate with the elementary school level, accessibility of after-school programs, how to make the connectivity, identifying and improving negative social behavior, a mentoring program for both male and female students, commitment to mentoring individual students, the need to be innovative, the need to focus on character development and compassion, and whatever can be done to bring more mentoring programs into the community.

Gina Messenger, member of the CSAB and School Board, stated there are 50,000± students in the Manatee County School System. The School District has become communicative with all parties involved; however, the smaller groups need to join the communication circle. Her priority goal is grade-level reading in schools. A mentoring program lasted several years, but did not conform to the method in which data was collected.

Ms. Coryea stated there has not been any child that was denied service.

Ms. Bailey stated the Take Stock in Children Program did not meet the funding requirements of the Children's Service Ordinance; specifically, the scholarship element.

Debbie Tapp, CSAB Member, stated that in the past year, it was determined there are ten schools in the central corridor that are behind on grade-level reading. The CSAB is focusing on these schools.

Commissioner Bellamy spoke of success stories and questioned the practices being implemented to achieve countywide success.

Gail Wynne, CSAB Member, stated that many people in the community have a desire to conceptualize a solution and implement a not-for-profit. The CSAB does not conceptualize the direction of a not-for-profit, but instead evaluates using the same guidelines for all not-for-profits. She observed staff assisting organizations on how to make the transition from

outcomes to results first. Every problem may not be solved, but she encouraged a teamwork approach with groups on initiatives, ideas and with the expertise to make evaluations based on priorities identified at this meeting. She encouraged the County Commissioners to attend CSAB meetings to gain a better understanding on how the CSAB is trying to achieve consistency, integrity, and focus to address the problems in the community.

Kimberly Kutch, CSAB Member and speaking on behalf of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), thanked the County Commission for their investment of time and funding into the community-based project for the foster care program.

Commissioner Benac commented on the success of mentoring programs, the need for better partnerships between the schools and the community, and the need to share more success stories to learn what other communities are doing. She stated Representative Wingate Newton talked about pending legislation to restrict Children's Services Taxes and questioned if there was more information at this time.

Ms. Coryea stated the formal writing of the legislation has not been officially presented.

Dr. George Van Buren, CSAB Member, stated there are so many different priorities; however, there is a finite amount of funds that limit what can be done. The four priorities identified by the CSAB make up a strategic plan that should be viewed as a long-term project. His priorities are adult and child dental care and foster care, but the priorities identified by the CSAB must take precedence.

Commissioner Whitmore stated The Patterson Foundation was to implement a fluoride dental program in Manatee County. Ms. Coryea stated that Rural Health organized the program.

Sandra Stone, CSAB Member, thanked Commissioner Bellamy for commenting on the different methods used in schools. Focus is being placed on child behavior, abuse and prevention.

Ms. Bailey suggested that the mentoring approach may be something that can be done as a Board. The CSAB will make sure to share with the County Commission, success stories from the currently funded agencies that have one-on-one mentoring programs.

Commissioner Bellamy suggested reaching out to Thomas Mantz (President of Feeding Tampa Bay), as a potential opportunity to assist with nutritional support in schools and combine resources to bridge the gap.

There being no public comment, Chairman Jonsson closed public comment.

Ms. Kutch stated the DCF plans to close the Manatee County branch in June 2020, but DCF is willing to be a part of any initiative to assist those that may be eligible for food stamps.

Amy Diss, CSAB Member, spoke on the issue of food insecurity. People sell food stamps to pay for housing and child care. This food insecurity issue should be acknowledged as both a child care and housing crisis.

Upon question as to the plan of action following this meeting, Ms. Coryea stated that an Annual Plan would be presented to the County Commission in December (12/10/19), along with an announcement of funding appropriations in January, for formal action. BC20191105DOC005 (Depart Chairman Jonsson; First Vice-Chairman Benac presiding)

**STORMWATER FEE UPDATE**

Cheri Coryea, County Administrator, read a written message regarding the 2020 Stormwater Fee. To date, six public work sessions have been completed on the current stormwater program and to propose an enhanced stormwater program that would include a new dedicated stormwater fee.

The Board directed staff (9/24/19) to take the concept of the stormwater fee to a public information campaign. Three, public community meetings have been held to date; staff has responded to countless stormwater fee inquiries, provided marketing and resource handouts; responded to frequently asked questions; and published an on-line property calendar and social media posts to the County's detailed website.

Staff has been listening to comments and questions from the public. This matter was scheduled to come back to the County Commission on December 10 for formal action. However, as a result of various concerns raised after the three meetings held to date, staff has concern that residents, who see minimal flooding, do not understand the responsibility of the County to accept, treat, handle, and dispose of stormwater per regulations, and that those repeatedly impacted by flooding need some immediate improvements. Additionally, entities such as schools, universities, the airport and businesses, which will not be exempt from the stormwater fee, need more time to prepare their budgets.

Because of these concerns, staff has decided to cancel the remaining five, public meetings and take steps toward a more detailed report. An announcement will be shared with all media outlets, cancelling the five remaining public meetings planned for the remainder of this month.

By February 2020, staff will bring to the Board recommendations for immediate steps to address the most severely impacted areas, to ensure that the County is doing all they can to avoid flooding and enhance water quality. At that time, staff would also present to the Board a data-gathering plan and report completion for 2020, to fully address the common concern heard so far. By the first quarter of 2021, the Board will have a comprehensive, stormwater report and a list of appropriate projects to make a strong decision on the most appropriate stormwater rate.

The Board commended Ms. Coryea for her efforts on making sure the citizens understand the process and carrying this process to the next step.

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**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Benac adjourned the Joint Work Session at 3:32 p.m.

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_