

Escambia Children’s Trust Board of Directors Meeting

December 13, 2022, at 5:30 PM

Open to the public at the Board of County Commissioners Chambers
Ernie Lee Magaha Bldg., 221 Palafox Place, Pensacola, FL 32502

MINUTES

Meeting Title:	Escambia Children’s Trust Board of Directors Meeting		
Date:	December 13, 2022	Time:	5:30 PM
Location:	221 Palafox Place, Pensacola, FL 32502		
Chair:	Stephanie White	Scribe:	Alma Ellis
Participants:	<p>Board Members: Stephanie White, Tori Woods, Dr. Tim Smith, David Peaden, Dr. Rex Northup, Judge Jennifer Frydrychowicz, Patty Hightower, Commissioner Lumon May, Ms. Melissa Sidoti</p> <p>Staff/advisors: Tammy Greer, Executive Director; Kimberly Krupa, Ph.D., Director of Programs and Performance; Meredith Bush, Esq., Legal Counsel; Ms. Alma Ellis, Board Liaison and Administrative Specialist; Mr. Richard Stone, Program and Research Coordinator</p>		
Not Present:	Pastor Lonnie Wesley		

- **Approval of Agenda (Stephanie White, Chair)**
 - Commissioner May motioned to approve the agenda, Dr. Northup seconded; no discussion, all in favor, motion passed unanimously.
- **Approval of Minutes**
 - Recommendation: Staff recommends the Board approve the minutes of the October 11, 2022 Board meeting as presented.
 - Commissioner May moved to approve the minutes. Dr. Northup seconded; no discussion, all in favor, motion passed unanimously.
- **Treasurer’s Report (Tim Smith, Treasurer)**
 - Dr. Tim Smith delivered a summary of ECT financial statements, see report on the ECT website.
 - Discussion on Treasurer’s Report: Ms. Hightower confirmed the RFPs for Ready Kids and Potential Church have been fully paid out and asked when the Board would receive the Close Out Reports. Ms. Krupa stated the reports were included in the October Board Packet.
 - Ms. White requested an accounting of all marketing materials that have been purchased be provided at next month’s meeting.
- **Public Comments Regarding Agenda Items**
 - Ms. Stephanie White invited public comments regarding the agenda items.
 - Ms. Melissa Pino voiced concern with regard to the Policy Committee recommending policy changes prior to agenda items the vote may affect. Ms. Hightower explained that the only item for discussion at this meeting from the Policy Committee was the Scholarships. Ms. Hightower further stated that one of the most important change was adding the Executive Committee into the evaluation and review process.

- There were multiple public comments regarding the grant funding and the grant approval process. All public comments can be viewed on the ECT website.

- **Action Items**

- Approval of Policy Changes (Scholarship Funding)**

- **Recommendation:** The Policy & Bylaws Committee recommends the Board approve the Scholarship Funding Policy as presented.
 - All were in favor with the exception of Mr. David Peaden. Recommendation passed.

- Consideration of Bylaws Change (Bi-Monthly Meetings)**

- **Recommendation:** The Policy & Bylaws Committee recommends the Board discuss holding bi-monthly Board Meetings, alternating with bi-monthly Standing Committee Meetings (opposite Board Meeting).
 - **Discussion:** All Board members present voiced concerns with moving to bi-monthly meetings. Mr. Peaden and Commissioner May suggested having some meetings during business hours. Ms. White suggested Ms. Greer send out a form to each Board member to check availability for day meetings. Ms. Hightower suggested the community also be able to weigh in on scheduling day meetings. Commissioner May suggested a combination of both day and evening meeting times.
 - With no further discussion, Board Meetings will continue on a monthly basis. Times yet to be determined.

- Evaluation of Executive Director (Contract Renewal)**

- **Public Comment:** Ms. Melissa Peno offered public comments with regard to this topic. See ECT website for all public comments.
 - **Recommendation:** The Personnel Committee recommends the Board approve the extension of the contract for the Executive Director, Tammy Greer for another year with no modifications to the contract.
 - With all in favor and no further discussion, this recommendation passed.

- Award of Contract in Response to ITB 2022-02 (Conflict Counsel)**

- **Recommendation:** Staff recommends the Board approve Resolution 2022-18 authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Bryant Miller Olive as conflict counsel, as presented.
 - **Discussion:** Ms. Greer shared that only one response was received on this ITB. Commissioner May asked the hourly rate of the proposal. Hourly rates were reviewed. Commissioner May requested confirmation that no local responses were received. Ms. Greer confirmed that the ITB has been sent out four times and Bryant Miller Olive was the only respondent. Ms. Hightower stated the rates were in line with the School Board's outside council rates. Ms. Hightower noted that she was made aware that Counsel had not reviewed the contract prior to it being brought before the Board. She reiterated the need for Counsel to review all contracts prior to any recommendations. Mr. May requested this contract be brought back to the Board for final approval after legal review and negotiations.

- Ms. Sidoti motioned to approve; Dr. Smith seconded. Commissioner May offered an amended motion for the contract to come back to the Board for approval after legal review and negotiations. Ms. Sidoti accepted the amended motion. Mr. Peaden seconded, all were in favor of the amended motion with the exception of Ms. Sidoti. Recommendation passed.

- **Program**

- **Award of Grants in Response to Out-of-School Time Solicitation**

- **Recommendation:** The Grants Committee recommends the Board approve Resolution 2022-19 authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the named providers for a total of \$4,348,473 to provide out-of-school time programming, as presented and to utilize the remaining \$1,496,527 allocated to this initiative to develop a new RFP targeting small organizations.
 - **Motion:** Ms. Woods motioned to postpone the vote on the grants pending further review from the Grants committee. Commissioner May seconded.
 - **Discussion:** The Board, as a whole, expressed the need for improvement with the grant process.
 - Ms. White thanked the public for their comments and suggested the following: The Grants Committee meet earlier in the day so that everyone is not so tired, the Committee allow proposers to answer clarifying questions, the Committee complete site visits, the Committee follow procedures to alleviate inconsistencies and for staff to plan a grants workshop for Board members to attend prior to another RFP.
 - Ms. Sidoti stated she carefully reviewed each proposal and stands by her scoring. She further stated the policy states the Committee “may” allow for public comment, not that it “shall” allow for public comment and perhaps that is something that needs to be taken back to the Policy Committee.
 - Commissioner May voiced his agreement with Ms. Woods and Ms. White and the need to send recommendation back to the Grants Committee for further review. He suggested opening the portal back up to re-evaluate those who have submitted proposals and to allow others who may not have gotten the information to apply. Commissioner May also suggested amending the motion for the Staff put on a workshop for Board members to look at policies and to re-align themselves with the mission and strategy of the Trust.
 - Dr. Northup thanked the visitors for attending the meeting and providing valuable feedback. Additionally, Dr. Northup invited everyone to visit the Trust’s website and sign up for volunteer opportunities to serve on review committees.
 - Ms. Hightower also thanked everyone for attending and suggested the need for standing operating procedures. Ms. Hightower stressed the importance of knowing what the Board expects to be accomplished when sending the recommendation back to the Committee. She further stressed the importance of needing to have clear direction for the Grants Committee prior to the close of the meeting. Judge Frydrychowicz agreed that clear direction must be outlined.

- Dr. Smith expressed the need to look carefully at the process to make sure it is designed properly. He further stated the Trust should keep in mind those programs that were initially recommended for funding as we go forward.
- Discussion took place regarding what technical reviews took place prior to funding recommendations. Ms. Greer explained that the review consisted of confirming everything was received on time and that there was a document for each required section of the proposal. Additionally, staff confirmed the proposal did not go over the number of pages allowed (excluding attachments). Ms. Greer stated the plan was to collect all the required documentation only on proposals approved for funding.
- Some discussion took place as to whether there was an amendment to the motion. Commissioner May was not present to clarify his suggested amendment. Ms. Woods stated the motion stands as originally stated.
- **Voting:** Ms. Woods restated her motion to postpone the vote on the grants pending further review from the Grants committee. Motion was previously seconded by Commissioner May. All were in favor, with the exception of Ms. Sidoti, motion passed.
- **Motion** made by Judge Frydrychowicz for the Grant Committee to review the top 29 previously scored proposals and to direct the staff to begin their due diligence between now and the reconsideration of the scoring and that public engagement be included when reconsidering (interviews to be conducted as aligned with policy). Ms. Hightower seconded.
- **Discussion:** Dr. Smith asked Executive Director Greer to discuss what the biggest push points were to make the grants process better. Ms. Greer listed the following items:
 - More attention when bringing RFPs to the Board as a draft
 - More involvement from the Board on the Grants Committee
 - Standing Committee meetings scheduled for the year so as not to have the logistical challenges that come along with scheduling one by one
 - Getting the Executive Committee going
 - More feedback from the Board
 - Work closer with Legal on contracts
- Judge Frydrychowicz asked Counsel if the outlined process/motion is a process she would recommend her client use.
- Ms. Bush confirmed that Judge Frydrychowicz was asking her opinion on the process based on her motion.
- Judge Frydrychowicz confirmed stating “As our attorney, do you think this is this a plan we should take?”
- Ms. Bush stated she believed the motion addresses concerns raised by members of the Board and members of the public, she believed that by doing due diligence and getting the documentation may eliminate some or at least alleviate some of the fears dealing with the sustainability of the programs allowing the back and forth with members from the organizations

would alleviate some of the confusion over the questions, lowering the scoring amount to include the 29 would alleviate some of the concerns raised of the unfairness when talking about the disparity between the scoring so it sounds like a sound path forward.

- Ms. Hightower commented that the Board should keep in mind that, in an attempt to keep staff costs down, the Board may have expected too much from them and that she would like to work together to make more realistic timelines. She further shared that she has reached out to Ms. Greer and offered to sit down and come up with a Standard Operating Procedure regarding RFPs to ensure the Trust is doing the same each time.
- Ms. Hightower asked for clarification from Counsel on whether the Board needs to continue to operate under the Cone of Silence during this review process. Ms. Bush confirmed the Cone of Silence would still be in effect for all Board members (with the exception of Grant committee members while participating in meetings which is considered an allowable exception).

Voting: With all in favor, this motion passed.

Award of Unsolicited Grants

Recommendation: The Program Committee recommends the Board approve Resolution #2022-20 authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the named providers for a total of \$1,049,535 of the \$4,175,382 allocated of which \$3,786,012 remains available for unsolicited/matching funding to provide the proposed services, as presented.

Public Comment: Representative from Legal Services of North Florida introduced herself and let the Board know she was present to answer any questions.

Ms. Melissa Peno offered public comment and echoed the need for a workshop for Grant Committee members; along with her support for the Sheriff's Department and Chief Chip Simmons. She voiced her agreement regarding collecting documentation prior to recommending funding, she questioned the technical equipment funding and how nearly anything the Sheriff's Department uses could be considered equipment for children. And finally, she commented that the unnecessary chaos needs to stop.

Discussion:

- Mr. Peaden asked the representative from Escambia County Sheriff's Office (ECSCO) to come forward. Mr. Peaden stated it had been floated around that the ECSCO was "begged" to submit a proposal for funding. Mr. Peaden asked if staff had approached ECSCO. He commented that Staff had met with ESCO to discuss funding opportunities but there was nothing specifically stated or discussed.
- Ms. Greer stated she has been meeting with a number of community leaders. Ms. Greer stated that in those meetings she discusses things happening in other communities and partnerships between Children's Services Councils (CSC) and other sheriff departments. Those meetings were called to introduce the CSC and the Escambia Children's Trust and that she discussed those topics with anyone that calls. Ms. Greer further stated that several people suggested she meet with the Sheriff because of the things they are doing and because of the article about the Blazer Academy. Ms. Greer stated her job is to make the community aware of what the Trust does. She commented she had also reached out to other organizations including, but not limited to, Legal Services of North Florida, Emerald Coast Legal Services, Pensacola Police Department, The Rotary and that

she never makes any promise of funding.

- Ms. White questioned how Real Time Crime Center and the virtual reality tied directly in with providing children's services. The ECSO representative stated the following:
 - Real Time Crime Center directly relates to school safety and the online package provides services to children that may be victimized online
 - Virtual Reality Training provides 3D images of all public schools for training purposes and the virtual role playing allows them to pull up virtual actors to interact with that they may not have had the opportunity to interact with before.
- Judge Frydrychowicz requested and received confirmation that it is the ECSO requesting funding and not the ECSO Foundation.
- Ms. Hightower questioned the wording of the recommendation stating she understood the funding requested was under "sole source" and not "unsolicited".
- Judge Frydrychowicz questioned why the two providers were listed on one recommendation. Ms. Woods stated she would be happy to amend her recommendation to list them separately.

Amended Recommendation: The Program Committee recommends the Board approve Resolution #2022-20 authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Legal Services of North Florida the amount of \$2,095,807 to provide proposed services, as presented. Dr. Northup seconded. There being no further discussion and all in favor (with the exception of Judge Frydrychowicz who abstained), this recommendation passed.

Amended Recommendation: The Program Committee recommends the Board approve Escambia County Sheriff's Office the amount of \$1,166,903.42 to provide proposed services, as presented. Dr. Northup seconded.

Discussion:

- Ms. Sidoti expressed concern that the County seems to be sending people to the Trust for funding programs they previously funded.
- Judge Frydrychowicz stated that she had confirmed with two separate attorneys that there is no conflict with her voting on this matter. She also stated the possibility of potential issues funding police equipment.
- Dr. Smith asked Counsel where the line is between what is acceptable funding and what is not.
- Ms. Bush stated there is no clear line but that the monies cannot be used to supplant other funds. She stated Counsel has had a conversation with the County as to what they are required to fund and what is discretionary. Ms. Bush stated it is ultimately up to the Board to decide if they are replacing funds otherwise available. If they are replacing funds otherwise available, the Board could vote not to fund. If they are not replacing funds they could be allowed to vote to fund, and it is ultimately at the Boards discretion.
- Ms. Hightower stated she would be open to consider partial funding
- Ms. White questioned who pays for the Blazer Academy. ECSO representative responded the Foundation pays for it. Ms. White stated it seems the Blazer Academy

would be more along the lines of services that target children directly. ECSO representative stated Blazer Academy is a statewide funded program and that they wish to keep it that way.

- Ms. Hightower questioned why the Virtual Reality portion and the Real Time Crime Center were not being paid for in the County budget. The ECSO stated he did not know why but that he did know it was not in the three-year budget.

Amended Recommendation: Ms. Sidoti offered an amended motion to fund the Movie Night portion and the PSA portion of the proposal. Ms. White seconded.

Discussion:

- Ms. White requested clarification on what ECSO Foundation funds pay for vs. ECSO. ECSO representative stated the Foundation is a non-profit in place to support things like engagement and employee wellness, and to offset loss income for injury.
- Ms. Hightower stated she felt these items would provide a positive impact in the community.
- Dr. Northup made mention that ECSO is the only organization that provides services from one end of the county to the other and noted the potential for positive outcomes with children.
- Judge Frydrychowicz asked Counsel if there could be any potential liability with the Trust funding this equipment. Ms. Bush stated she doesn't see it as a liability and that her only question would be if it is, in fact, providing children's services.
- Dr. Smith stated he is agreeable that PSA and Movie Night could be seen as directly effecting the children of Escambia County.
- Judge Frydrychowicz asked how PSA could be considered sole-source. ECSO representative stated law enforcement speaking uses the leverage of ESCO to further reach children.
- Ms. Hightower asked if putting the vote off until next month when Commissioner May could be here to have conversations as to whether there may be partnership opportunities or why the county isn't already funding. ECSO representative stated it would not be detrimental to wait.
- Dr. Northup asked if there was the possibility of funding for 2 years until the ECSO and County could have discussions about funding.
- Ms. Greer stated funding does not have to be direct provision of services (per statute)

Voting: With no further discussion, the Board voted on funding only the PSA and Movie Night portion of the proposal. Vote was two (2) for (Ms. Woods and Ms. Sidoti) and six (6) against (Judge Frydrychowicz, Mr. Peaden, Ms. White, Mr. Smith, Ms. Hightower and Dr. Northup). Vote failed.

Voting: With no further discussion, the Board voted on full funding of the ECSO proposal. Vote was four (4) for (Mr. Peaden, Ms. White, Ms. Hightower and Dr. Northup) and four (4) against (Ms. White, Ms. Sidoti, Dr. Smith and Judge Frydrychowicz). Vote failed.

It was noted that this proposal could be brought before the Board at a future date.

Executive Directors Report:

- Ms. Greer provided a brief Executive Director's Report. (Report can be viewed on ECT website)
- Ms. Greer introduced Richard Stone, Program and Research Coordinator
- Staff continues to execute the Strategic Plan and continues to work on the Family Resource Guide

Legal Report: No report from Legal

Board Comments: Ms. White thanked Staff for all of their hard work and thanked Judge Frydrychowicz and Dr. Northup for their service on the Board.

Motion to adjourn: There being no further business, Ms. Woods motioned to adjourn, Mr. Peaden seconded. All in favor, meeting adjourned at 9:01pm.

* The Escambia Children's Trust allows any member of the public to speak regarding an item on the Agenda prior to Board action or regarding any related matter not on the agenda following the Legal Report near the end of the meeting. **Anyone who wishes to address the Board is asked to complete a Public Comment Speaker Form. Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes**, unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson, to allow sufficient time for all speakers. Speakers shall refrain from abusive or profane remarks, disruptive outbursts, protests, or other conduct which interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting. Upon completion of the public comment period, discussion is limited to Board members and questions raised by the Board.

Minutes Approved

Stephanie White, Board Chair (signature)

Date: 1/10/2023