



CHILDREN'S
SERVICES
FUND
OF JACKSON COUNTY

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 18, 2021 – 2:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present:

Jovanna Rohs, Ph. D (Chair)
Jessica Ramirez (Secretary)
Anthony Mondaine (Treasurer)
Rhonda Holman
Brian Kaberline

Board Members Absent:

Robert Bartman
Ann Mesle (Vice Chair)

Staff Present:

Rob Whitten, Executive Director
Seth Baker
Sue Richter (Recording)
Katherine Rivard
Moji Shogbamimu

Guest Panelists/Presenters:

Tahir Atwater, Jackson Co. CASA
Claire Terrebonne, Jackson Co. CASA

Guests, Affiliations:

Nancy Atwater, Preferred Family Healthcare
Brandi Bair, Hope House
Sara Barnes, Cornerstones of Care
Angie Blumel, Jackson County CASA
Rick Chambers, Center School District
Amy Couture, Rose Brooks
Terri Cunningham, CommCare
Damon Daniel, AdHoc Group Against Crime
Erin Eaton, The Salvation Army
Monica Nielsen-Parker, United Way of Greater KC
Susan Ray, Susan Ray Consulting

I. Call to Order

Jovanna Rohs

The Children's Services Fund of Jackson County (CSF) meeting was called to order at 2:33 p.m.

II. Roll Call and Guest Introductions

Jovanna Rohs

Roll call of the board members was taken, and guests were welcomed and invited to use the chat function to enter their name and organization.

III. Review and Approval of Minutes from January 21, 2021 Meeting

Dir. Holman requested that the section of the January 21, 2021 minutes regarding Budget Amendments be revised to include a statement that the deadline for these requests will be documented on the 3Q Report instead of on the application.

A motion was made to approve the minutes with the stated changes made to the January 21, 2021 meeting minutes as discussed.

First: Brian Kaberline Second: Jessica Ramirez Motion: Approved

Aye: 4 Opposition: 0

(Note: Dir. Mondaine was not available for this motion)

IV. Review and Approval of Proposed Agenda Jovanna Rohs

No changes were requested to the agenda circulated prior to the meeting.

V. Board Education Topic/Partner Presentation -Jackson County CASA
Presenters: Tahir Atwater, Director of Donor and Volunteer Engagement
 Claire Terrebonne, Director of Legal Services

Mr. Atwater discussed CASA's mission, and the desire to ensure that the larger community can connect to a sense of home. He emphasized the following are CASA's two main goals:

- To ensure every child finds security and stability in a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible, and
- To advocate for appropriate educational, medical, and therapeutic services for children while in care.

Mr. Atwater emphasized that Jackson County CASA does not remove children from the home. Instead, when children are dealing with abuse or neglect in the home and are removed, CASA is in partnership with the Jackson County Family Court to advocate on the child's behalf by taking their case.

CASA has been in Kansas City since 1983 and is a part of a National CASA organization of approximately 950 CASAs. There are 23 in Missouri, with Jackson County CASA being the largest branch in the state. The following outcomes in 2020 were reported as follows for Jackson County CASA:

- 1,140 children served.
- Roughly 41% of 317 court cases resulted in reunification.
- 29% resulted in an adoption.
- 14% resulted in a guardianship.

Service models differ between CASAs. The Jackson County CASA model differs from other models in the area. Jackson County CASA uses a multidisciplinary three-person approach consisting of an attorney, case supervisor and a CASA volunteer (advocate). There are roughly 350 CASA volunteers who reach out to kids each month. This has

been difficult during COVID. Together the CASA team serves as the voice for the child both with the courts and outside the court (i.e., schools, therapists, etc.). There are five pillars that are emphasized by Jackson County CASA. They are as follows:

- Learn
- Engage
- Recommend
- Collaborate
- Report

Because Jackson County CASA staff attorney's serve as Guardian ad Litem, they have ex parte status in these cases. The staff attorney works to ensure that the voice of the attorney does not supplant the voice of the child. There is an understanding of what the child's voice would be due to the relationship that is developed by the attorney. The attorney can file motions, call witnesses, make sure that things are happening according to the law and Supreme Court rules making this a highly effective model.

In 2018 Jackson County CASA applied and was awarded funding for Intervention and Advocacy for Abused and Neglected Children. This was to expand capacity to serve more children. Ms. Terrebonne stated that the organization started with the addition of one full-time (FTE) staff attorney position. In 2019 and 2020 CSF funding was used to add a case supervisor and the older youth specialist position. This older youth specialist position serves to educate, equip, and empower CASA's older youth with the knowledge and resources to live a resilient and self-sufficient life after release. This position carries a small case load and works with the CASA volunteers to coach in assessment and transition planning as well as life skills workshops.

Due to the pandemic a smaller number of children were able to be served during the past year. Ms. Terrebonne shared that the funded agency positions directly serve 299 children and youth in 2020, with a breakdown by age, gender identity, race and ethnicity and zip code as reported to CSF quarterly.

Ms. Terrebonne shared the following 2020 outcomes, primarily for case closures :

- 94.2% of children achieved permanency through reunification, adoption, or guardianship.
- 100% of children served had a clear permanency plan or were released from care within 18 months of appointment.
- 99% of children served were not involved in "hotline" incidents while in care.
- 52.3% of children exiting care achieved permanency within 24 months or less.
- 72% of youth aged 14 and older reported maintaining or increasing their life skill indicators for transition from care.

Ms. Terrebonne reported the following similar goals for 2021:

- The agency hopes to serve 1250+ children in 2021.
- Expect funded positions to serve between 250-300 children.
- 90% of children served will achieve a safe and permanent home.
- 85% of children will have a permanency goal of adoption or guardianship at 15 months if reunification is not yet achieved.

- 95% of children served will not suffer additional incidents of abuse or neglect in care.
- 70% of children served will achieve permanency within 24 months.
- 80% of older youth will maintain or increase life skill indicators for transition from care.

The second program that CSF funded was the Volunteer Attorney Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Intervention and Advocacy program. This program will expand the capacity to serve 150-200 more children through recruitment of 30-50 highly skilled, volunteer private attorneys to serve in a GAL capacity.

Ms. Terrebonne indicated that two full time employees have transitioned to support this program. They will recruit, train and support volunteer GALs, Case Supervisors and Staff Attorney's. There will be four Continuing Legal Education (CLE) events throughout the year. Attorneys will receive 8+ hours of CLE. Jackson County CASA intends to work with the 16th Circuit Court for other incentives. CASA is currently connecting with law firms for recruitment and outreach via short lunch and learn CLE programs and has plans to leverage the legal community in other ways, including supporting cases in collateral matters (i.e., divorce, orders of protection, etc.).

Dir. Holman asked about reunification and permanency placements statistics versus run-away or not achieved status. Dir. Holman questioned what defines which group a child falls into, and what are the circumstances that cause the other category? Ms. Terrebonne indicated that they base their reporting on how the child leaves care when the court case is closed (i.e., reunification, adoption, guardianship). The other group are those children (typically 17-18) who exit care without finding permanency through a family or on their own. There are numerous reasons for this (i.e., bad foster care experience, job, independent living, run-away, etc.).

Dir. Holman asked if more information could be provided about the total number of children who leave care without permanency with a family, to assist in determining impact. She questioned if this could be achieved by finding out how many kids are served with and without CASA. Dir. Holman would like to see those numbers. Ms. Terrebonne indicated that she could help find those numbers through Children's Division and the Courts. Dir. Holman in looking at the outcomes for CASA indicated that those numbers would not reflect 100% of the kids served. To determine if CSF is having an effect, are the children leaving better off, or is the number coming down for those kids leaving the program unsuccessfully? Ms. Terrebonne indicated that she understood the intent of the question.

Dir. Rohs extended her appreciation for the information and continued work that CASA is doing. CSF looks forward to the information that CASA will be able to share with their expanded GAL program in the coming year.

Current Assets (01.31.21)	\$22M
2021 Contract	\$16.1M
Ending Net Assets	\$5.3M

Dir. Holman asked for clarification of her understanding that if no additional revenue was received, and all 2021 obligations were paid out did the reported ending net asset of \$5.3M reflect that position? Ms. Shogbamimu indicated that any contractual obligations extended in 2020 contracts that would extend into 2021 are included. Mr. Whitten indicated that there are 2021 academic year contracts that do not begin until July of 2021 totaling \$4.6M. Once those contracts are fully executed the balance sheet will reflect the portion of those that is a liability for 2022.

Mr. Whitten reminded the Board that the 2021 Budget has some aggressive partner support. If investment in partners would extend to the level expected and if revenue is what Jackson County helped CSF to budget, there will be an anticipated reduction to the reserve by a little over \$3M, because CSF chose a deficit spend to provide additional support to partners.

Dir. Rohs asked when the investments reflected in the \$17M repurchase agreements come due. Mr. Whitten offered the following amounts and corresponding dates:

- \$5M – March 2021
- \$3M – June 2021
- \$3M - September 2021
- \$3M - December 2021
- \$3M - March 2022

Mr. Whitten also reminded that these investments were purchased in a way that they can be liquidated early and without penalty should the need arise.

3. Audit for Fiscal Year 2020
The CSF audit has been scheduled for the week of March 22, 2021. Ms. Shogbamimu should receive the list of schedules the firm will need to begin work shortly.

In addition to Dir. Rohs and Dir. Mondaine, Dir. Holman and Dir. Kaberline agreed to be appointed to the Audit Committee.

B. Children's Services Contracting

Rob Whitten

1. 2020 Project Utilization

The following updates were provided for calendar and academic funding:

Calendar Year Funding – January 1, 2020-December 31, 2020

- CSF released \$7.8M against the \$8M award. This represents a 97% utilization. The \$7.8M does not include the cash match that was released during COVID.

- 37 out of 55 programs had a 100% utilization rate.
- 14 programs had utilization rate above 90%
- the lowest utilization reported was 81%

The 97% utilization is up over 2019 (91%) and 2018 (85%). This is likely due in part to the way in which CSF released funds in the first half of the year and the decision not to recoup those unspent dollars as part of our response to COVID.

Academic Year Programming – July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020

- \$3.5M (excluding cash match release) against \$3.7M award. This represents a 96% utilization rate.
- 14 out of 25 programs had 100% utilization.
- Seven programs had utilization rates above 90%
- Lowest utilization was reported at 72%

Academic Year Programming – July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021

- \$1.7M released against \$4M allocation.
- This release reflects half of the contract period with utilization at 43%

Community Impact Report

The following information will be used in the CSF Community Impact Report currently under development:

- Number of children served by CSF reported at 53,321 across the county. With 164,000 children under 18 in the county this would represent roughly 32% of the children across the county, or one in three kids, being directly impacted by CSF funding.
- Number of families served was 22,263.

In response to a question from Dir. Rohs it was explained that in 2020 CSF partners were asked to report in the first quarter the number of clients served. For the following quarters, the reporting was then broken out to track current clients and new clients separately, resulting in a unique client count.

The final report will breakdown the number of children served, and the dollars invested in each of the ten service areas supported by CSF.

Dir. Holman offered that she found the numbers impressive and congratulated Mr. Whitten and the CSF team. She also asked about the report referenced and who's genesis this was? Mr. Whitten offered that this is a CSF initiative. It was originally planned as an annual report. However, upon further input from staff and the Fervor organization it was determined a Community Impact Report would be more meaningful.

2. Planning for Funding for 2022

Mr. Whitten suggested that the Funding Work Group should be reconvened in March. This committee previously included Dir. Rohs, Dir. Ramirez, Dir. Mesle

VI. Old Business

A. Financial Report

Moji Shogbamimu/Rob Whitten

1. 2020 Year End Financials (Revised)

There was no revision to the revenue number reported at last month's meeting and reflected in the financials distributed in the Board packet, prior to the meeting.

2020 YTD Revenue	\$12.8M
2020 Revenue Budget	\$13.0M
YTD Revenue Deficit	\$187k

2020 Expenses

The main adjustment to previous information in the expense category was related to Program Support. The major change was an adjustment of -\$345k based on Q4 reporting by partners, resulting in the following being reported:

2020 Program Support (Total)	\$14.7M
2020 Program Budget	\$12.2M

There were no other material changes to expenses that were reported.

A revised YTD deficit was reported initially as \$2.1M and was adjusted to a reported YTD deficit of \$1.7M.

Mr. Whitten reminded attendees that based on the CSF Board decision to do some unique funding around COVID the reserve was drawn down by approximately \$2.6M.

2. January 2021 Financial Activity

Revenue

January Tax Receipts	\$956k
January Interest	\$124
January Revenue	\$956k

Sales Tax Revenue Trend was reported as follows:

	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	\$932,444	\$911,602	\$910,564	\$955,702

Expense

No unusual expenses were reported for the month of January.

January Expense Total	\$52k
2021 Expense Budget	\$15.6M

A year-to-date surplus of \$903k was reported.

Financial Position

Cash	\$5M
Investment (Repurchase Agreements)	\$17M

and Dir. Holman. Mr. Whitten asked that an email be sent to him by any members who wish to continue or to be added to this work group.

The focus of this group would be to determine funding parameters and scope, as well as confirm timeline and processes. The 2022 Funding Plan would then be ready to seek Board approval at the April meeting.

Mr. Whitten shared a proposed 2022 Funding Timeline as follows:

- May 1, 2021 – Announce Funding Opportunity, with Information Sessions held in early May.
- May 17, 2021 – Letter of Intent Opens
- May 28, 2021 – Letter of Intent Closes
- June 25, 2021 – Invitation to Apply is extended
- July 30, 2021 – Application due

Mr. Whitten offered his thanks for the number of planning sessions and work sessions being requested of the Board during the coming month. He remains grateful for their dedication and support in serving the children of Jackson County.

3. Great Circle Discussion

To be transparent with partners and with respect to the Sunshine Law Mr. Whitten explained that the CSF Board has received several communications over the last two weeks from Great Circle. Great Circle is one of the CSF's funded partners here in Jackson County. The correspondence received indicated that Great Circle has been involved in some situations on the eastern side of the State that have resulted in some negative press for them. Great Circle has been forthcoming to the CSF. One situation was reported in their residential based program in Webster Groves, Missouri, which resulted in closure of that program. It has been reported that they are also involved in some federal queries by the Department of Health and Human Services through the subpoena process. Currently, it is unknown what is under investigation involving those subpoena requests. There is no specific action required today other than to inform the board.

Dir. Holman asked that it be noted that the program on the other side of the state that was closed in Webster Groves was in no way related to the Great Circle programs in Jackson County that CSF funds. Mr. Whitten confirmed and added that the two programs currently funded were home visitation and the behavioral health support to the Independence School District.

In response to questions from the Board because of this recent disclosure by Great Circle regarding residential care, Mr. Whitten has extended an invitation to Mr. Justin Horton from Cornerstones of Care (COC) and Terry Cunningham from the Children's Enhancement Project at CommCare to present during our next board meeting. Mr. Horton will talk about the shrinking of their residential footprint, why COC made that decision and the alternative care options for those

children who will no longer be in residential treatment. Ms. Cunningham will present treatment options that do not include residential treatment.

C. Executive Director's Report

Rob Whitten

1. Strategic Planning Update

Mr. Whitten reported that the Stakeholder Surveys have closed. Sixty-six partners, five CSF Board Members and seven local funders completed surveys. In addition, individual interviews were completed with eight CSFs throughout the state. Two of four Town Halls sessions have been conducted. The following topics are being discussed during the town halls:

- Reporting and reimbursement
- Proactive roles for CSF
- Thoughts on one-time and emergency funding
- Funding for prevention
- Incentivized collaboration
- Technology needs

Mr. Whitten also reminded that invitations for working strategic planning sessions for the Board have been scheduled as follows:

- March 4, 2021
- March 9, 2021
- March 25, 2021
- Early April, with a poll currently opened for Board Member response

Prior to the Board Sessions a summary of the survey results and town hall sessions will be circulated to the Board. Dir. Rohs asked if prior to receipt of this information themes would be pulled out, or is that the activity that the Board will undertake? Mr. Whitten responded that he did not know but would find out.

2. Nominating Committee Update

Two candidates were interviewed on February 5, 2021. One candidate could not move forward due to a conflict with another Board on which she served. The other candidate remains under consideration. Two candidates have been forwarded from the County Executive's Office, with resumes currently under review. Dir. Kaberline and Dir. Mesle have each identified candidates as well.

3. Missouri Legislative Session Update

Currently 76 different pieces of legislation have been filed that impact kids. Mr. Whitten highlighted the following:

- A fiscal year budget of \$34B has been presented by the Governor of Missouri. This includes \$10.5B in general revenue. Some items specific to children include:
 - the recommendation of fully funding the education foundation formula.
 - \$2M in new funding for developmental screening

- funding of Medicaid expansion
 - \$3.5M core cut to Children's Division, which will eliminate 80-100 full time employees.
 - \$5M in rural broadband
 - Encourages "Wayfair Act" which will tax on-line sales.
- Office of Childhood
The Governor of Missouri signed Executive Order 21-01. The Legislature has 60 days to reject (March 24, 2021). If it is not rejected there will be a phase two integration effort launched in April 2021, with the new office established by August 28, 2021. This effort impacts approximately 145 state employees at \$600M. No positions would be eliminated, and current funding would remain unchanged.

This effort has strong bi-partisan support. There has been some concern that placement of this office under the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education would cause the loss of focus on child welfare.

- House Bill 865 – Early Childhood Boards
This bill provides authorization for any county or city to levy a property tax to fund early childhood boards, like the CSF.

There has been conversation that should HB865 pass in a county where a CSF is already in place it would strongly encourage the two be merged to increase capacity.

Dir. Rohs indicated that this discussion will be interesting to follow around how it fits within other funds since it is a property tax base and where the mental health levies are coming in on the discussion.

- House Bill 557 and 560 – Child Residential Home Notification Act
This bill would require faith-based boarding schools to register with the state. It would also mandate federal criminal background checks on employees and volunteers, as well as adherence to fire, safety, and health regulations. This bill also contains language regarding compliance with investigations of abuse and neglect. There was compelling testimony presented.

VII. Other Items

All

Director and Guest Comments

Dir. Rohs asked for any comments from Directors. There were no comments offered.

Dir. Rohs asked for any guest comments. There were no comments offered.

Dir. Rohs reminded that the next CSF Board of Directors meeting would be held in April, and although there will not be a board meeting next month there are many items that would be worked on in March regarding the future of the fund.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:56 p.m.

First: Rhonda Holman

Second: Anthony Mondaine

Motion: Approved

Aye: 5

Respectfully submitted: Sue Richter



Jessica Ramirez, Secretary

Next Meeting: April 15, 2021 - 2:30-4:30 p.m.