

**JOINT COMMUNITY COUNCILS/
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 18, 2010, 3:30 – 5:10pm

JWB, Conference Room 185

Council Attendees: Dr. Judy Hall, Elder Martin Rainey, Ray Neri, Harold Paxton, Nadine Nickeson, John White, Carrie Hepburn, and Deputy Skipper.

Staff Attendees: Marcie Biddleman, Delquanda Turner, Yaridis Garcia, and Danielle Ricciardi.

Welcome & Purpose: *Marcie Biddleman, Director of JWB Children's Neighborhood Services Department.*

Marcie opened the meeting in which self-introductions were given. Marcie asked the attendees to engage in dialogue today on the Community Councils' (CC) purpose and significance to Pinellas County. This meeting is an open forum on how the CC, along with their connections, are used to dialogue with the community. The CC should be the bridge to the community. Since there are no new dollars, what else can the CC do?

Community Councils:

South County (SCCC) by Judy Hall, Ph.D., Chairperson

Judy reported that the SCCC is finishing up data on connecting caring adults to kids. JWB has been looking into the Children's Initiatives and the two should be paired. Advocacy will be next with the CC and an asset to Children's Initiatives and SCCC would like to be a part of that team.

North County (NCCC) by John White, Chairperson

John stated that the NCCC has decided to move away from special projects and focus on advocacy: aging out foster care, Hispanics, gang involvement, and Neighborhood Family Center (NFC) support. Their next step is to have a council meeting at a NFC to learn, know, and support its services.

Mid County (MCCC) by Ray Neri, Chairperson

Ray requested to hear from JWB funded agencies in mid county in order to learn of what they do. How effective are the funds being used due to the decline in dollars. There is a need to know. The last meeting was with Ben and the Branding Committee in which business cards were requested in order to spread knowledge to the community...magnetic badges were given. There are issues and problems, efficiency is needed, and MCCC will be inviting agencies to ask them questions. This will educate CC on what JWB and the agency does.

CC Dialogue

Judy commented that SCCC hears from community agencies every meeting to learn more of the community and good questions are asked. It may be a good idea for CC to come together more often opposed to recreating the wheel or ideas.

Ray requested more dialogue with the JWB Board during the meetings and more often. Carrie noted that the last Joint CC meeting was a lack of discussion. A lot of presentation work is done in advance, however, there is a lack of opportunity to discuss the best way to have a true two-way dialogue. John noted we could pull together more, and maybe increase connections with some of the Board members. Judy suggested having questions ready to ask and answer of the CC, and vice versa with the JWB Board—it's important that we have

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less script and more of an opportunity to sit down and talk. This would allow the CC to be more prepared and come ready to discuss.

Marcie answered that there is a need to meet with the JWB Board and the next agenda will be created by the CC to allow more exchange in dialogue. Marcie asked if this structure, set-up for the meeting/forum, would be okay. This forum would also plan the format of the Joint CC meeting.

Nadine asked what the JWB Board's expectations were for the CC. John mentioned the value of having recipients of JWB services serve on the CC- for example, parents, foster families, etc. It is impressive that the Pinellas County School (PCS) Board is now a partner as a resource to the community.

Elder Rainey asked this question as well and suggested it be put in a policy document so new members will understand the purpose of the CC and their relationship with the Board. There is a need to communicate JWB to the communities in general. How do we do that...let's pull together and learn the communication strategies that are measurable and provide feedback. Also, there are new JWB Board officers that need to be shared, with pictures, so the community knows. A strategy is to use local newspapers (like the Weekly Challenger) and local radio stations to promote JWB and the work of the CC. Relating to the Children's Initiative, he suggested that we get input from the community before bringing in an initiative, program or service. The community wants to be consulted from the beginning and not told. For example, SCCC chose to ask community about FBO initiatives; pastors were found and brainstormed; pastors came up with the plan, reported, and were funded by JWB to this day. SCCC asked FBO first opposed to taking it to them; a good concept. We want to be advocates for anything JWB does. Business cards are needed; the brochures are lovely. Elder Rainey is a part of the PCS Community Advisory Council in order for the school system to communicate with the community.

Responses, Updates & Discussion:

Marcie noted that the internal JWB Children's Initiative (CI) team meets every other Monday for two hours to ensure JWB is clear about models. There is a fine line between substance and putting it out. There is still more to do and JWB needs strategic partners (PCSB, City) to be the funding floor of Children's Initiative. The Children's Initiative is what we are already doing...how do we connect everything? A new initiative may be a model preschool for quality programming for about 40 students. This will be a teaching opportunity for families and staff. A diverse group of 35 is meeting to do this. Kindergarten (18 students), 1st grade (18 students), and 2nd grade (18 students) from Fairmont Elementary School will have a model with selected teachers, a grade level social worker, teacher assistance, and parent liaison giving literacy, engagement, etc. JWB will wrap services around these families and determine what works and determine if FCAT scores are dramatically improved in a short period of time. The goal is to improve the school/family relationship and improve test scores.

Elder Rainey asked and urged for parents that have struggling students to be involved. We need to talk about strategies that will help that parent get and stay involved. The SCCC Focus Group Report gives ideas of what parents say. It is a good idea to pull from the group of parents to be the Parent Outreach Specialists because they relate to and not talk down to them. SCCC can help support and partner, once we all are sure that we understand the model and direction.

Marcie continued by saying that the 1st group of students selected is diverse and parents will sign off to participate. There will be more time to develop the 2nd group. Elder Rainey requested to let SCCC know so they can advocate and help. Marcie noted that members are welcome to attend meetings. There is nothing new, just connections being made. The value is to apply for a federal grant for the Promise Neighborhood Initiative by writing a collaborative grant in Florida with six areas; additional funds would help. JWB has the AmeriCorps planning grant in preparation to apply for an operational grant and use AmeriCorps volunteers in the NFC's, schools, recreation centers, etc. These volunteers can knock on doors, get parents to meetings, and work on the ground level, similar to the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) model; volunteers will be in North, Mid, and South County.



JWB Children's Services Council of Pinellas County

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Ray commented on the Mid County programs. What CC does best is see the needs in the community and campaign to JWB for funding. There is a good opportunity for NFCs to occupy closed school buildings.

Carrie noted a need to find out the key connections in the communities and build around it to fill the gaps. John asked if JWB or USF going to do the evaluation? Marcie answered that there will be a collaborative evaluation effort.

Communication is a big issue. Another staff person will be contracted to attend community events and be available to speak to groups about JWB, Children's Initiative, and hear about community needs. This will start in the North, then Mid, and the South County Focus Group results will be used. Planners will start talking to civic groups to share information.

JWB created a list of funded programs to the Pinellas County Schools Community Advisory Committee and gave a presentation to assist the pastors when they go out to homes and talk to parents. Performance measures have been developed with the NFC and Planners to develop ways to report impact, what makes a difference, and what was done, along with Dr. Barbara Morrison-Rodriguez. A report will be created and made available. Also, the JWB web site is updated with all information. The suggestion to use local newspapers, radio, etc. to get the word out was reiterated.

Next Steps:

Marcie suggested that CC keep meeting in this format, keeping a list of things that need to be done. There are no secrets, and transparency is key to determine what can be done. Be your own spokesperson between the CC and JWB, Planners should not be messengers. CC are the bridge to the community. What does the CC want to do as opposed to what JWB wants? Put that together and connect! There can be a countywide CC site to share resources. There should be a good loud answer.

Ray suggested meeting every month for awhile until we are comfortable and then meet every other month or quarterly. It was decided that meetings will be the last Monday before the Council meetings, at 3:30pm. The next meeting will be Monday, June 28, 2010 at 3:30 – 5:00 pm at JWB. Meetings will be publically noticed with minutes. Minutes can then be shared with the Community Councils through the chairs. The JWB Community Council website will be used to post information. JWB Conference Room 185 will be used. The meeting concluded at 5:10pm.

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