

## MINUTES

November 7, 2024

**Council Members Present:** Julianne Pérez, Harold Paxton, Caterina Tassara, Christine Britt, Jeanne Lafler, Fidel Johnson, Brenda Carvalho

**Council members Absent:** Carol Bumiller, Keith Sabiel, Cheko Carter, Carol Weideman, Carlos Mercado, Richard Rock, Deputy Studt, Fred Green, Angel Addison, Dianelys Ruiz

**Guests:** Jessica Conway (Learning Empowered), Jillian Rose (City of Pinellas Park)

**JWB Staff:** Yaridis L. Garcia

**I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Julianne Perez. Minutes could not be approved due to a lack of a quorum.

### II. Open Agenda – Community Partners Updates

In the aftermath of recent events, Yaridis check-in with members and created space for us to connect with each other as a Council. As such, the Open Agenda part of the meeting created this space.

Yaridis acknowledged that many Council Members were affected personally by Hurricanes Helene and Milton and that many of our partner organizations were also affected. JWB has been trying to be responsive to emerging needs. In Pinellas Park at the Performance Arts Center a huge food distribution occurred. Outreach was also completed in Lealman at a mobile home park and at the Standard building. Demand exceeded supply. Families showed up and shared that many lost their jobs working in the service industry. Others were challenged by transportation and others shared that they were fearful of accessing services due to immigration status. Children and families are hurting at every level. Council members acknowledged that they appreciated JWB being more flexible with client needs and community partners.

Emerging concerns presented by the Council: Mental health - the mental health of everyone is being tested. The number of requests for support from Navigators is overwhelming. The county still needs better coordination in times of crisis, as well as better collaboration among our network of community partners. There were concerns shared with Council members about families not wanting to access shelters due to the safety of the shelters, not having funds to leave, when evacuating - having to show an ID to return to your community.

Tomorrow at JWB there will be a car seat distribution event. These types of resources are more meaningful than ever as families may have lost many of these essential items. It was also suggested that JWB or the Council put together a family/parent education flyer regarding what

adults can do to protect the mental health of children during a crisis. Suggestions included a more in-depth flyer or booklet with helpful tips like the importance of limiting television news watching for kids (this can be terrifying) and hurricane preparedness ideas like backpacks with comfort and distractions items for kids. It was suggested that maybe the Council or JWB create a little book about hurricane preparedness and the Grand Families event be focused on hurricane preparedness and protecting children's mental health in times of crisis.

### **III. Council Business**

- Celebrating our Families Event – We will explore the following dates: December 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> from 6 – 8 pm. Members are asked to nominate families with a maximum of 5 families to be nominated by a member. This year, we will select 10 families. The focus will be on kids 17 and under. Members are asked to suggest families on a spreadsheet that Julianne will send to everyone. Members should consider families in Largo, Lealman, Indian Rocks, Madeira Beach, Pinellas Park, etc. The Community Council adopts the families.
- Grand Families Event 2025 – to be discussed.
- Picture in December at the Celebrating our Families Event. Please bring your shirt!

### **IV. JWB Updates**

- JWB Strategic Plan - Postponed
- Hurricanes – Community Respond Efforts discussed above.
- Community Events Funding – Not discussed.
- Youth leadership Committee – Not discussed.

### **Future Meeting / Notices**

- Mid-County Community Council – The Celebrating our Families Holiday Event will replace the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Date to be announced.
- Announcements: Learning empowered distributed informational folders. The Lealman and Asian Neighborhood Family Center invited Members to this year's family friendly Thomas Chance Thanksgiving Dinner on Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5 – 7 pm in Lealman. Thanksgiving Giveback will also be held at 11 am on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November in Pinellas Park. The City of Pinellas Park also has a life skills program where 13–19-year-old students meet to focus on working to resumes, healthy cooking, how to change a tire, they do a mock city council meeting and run for office and introduce students to summer intern positions at the City. The program runs January – March and meets from 5:30 – 8:00 pm every Weds in different areas across the community.

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Julianne Pérez at 7:27 pm

*Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by Caterina Tassara, Council Secretary*