Attending

Board Attendees: Angela Arenas (late) Alan Gunzburg (with Kili), Steve Gross, Abbott Jones, Barbara Nolan, Lauren Rabin and Winston Robinson

Staff Attendees: Alan Barry, Monica Bruning, George O’Loughlin and Martha Reyes

Other Attendees: Patricia Burns (Commission on Aging), Darian Jones (Family Centers) Rodney Moore (Department of Children and Families/Student), Elisa Oliphant (Family Centers) Michael Sandifer (Resident) and Donna Spellman (Family Centers)

Call to Order

Chairman Ms. Nolan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Hayton Conference Room at Town Hall.

Action/Follow-up Items

Approved Minutes of December 9 2014 Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes of the Board’s Regular Meeting of December 9, 2014. Second: Mr. Gross.

APPROVED 6-0.

Committee/Working Group Updates

1) Operations and Technical Support Working Group Update - Ms. Rabin provided an update for the Management Information Software replacement. The Client Track purchase agreement was approved. An implementation kickoff meeting will take place on February 18, with several members of the department representing all areas, to act as “power users” in order to decentralize knowledge of the system. An implementation timeline is also a topic for discussion during the meeting. At some point in the near future, the entire board will like to see a demo of the new software.

2) Communications Working Group Update - Mr. Jones provided an update on department communication channels; all channels are covered with the exception of social media. The working group discussed the opportunity to create a Facebook account or explore using the town’s account. There was a suggestion to include the new online news, the Greenwich Free Press. Discussion regarding use of email in addition to telephone calling to notify clients of department closing – this currently occurs via the town’s communication channels; but if a department specific event gets canceled, clients are also notified. Mr. Jones also reported there
are no major voids in the communication Plan.

3) Strategic Planning Working Group Update – Mr. Robinson reported the outcome of the recent working group meeting, where goals of the group and plan outcomes were discussed. The working group will focus the plan on where the department should be in the future as well as confirm the image we want to project. The working group identified education as a high-priority need and one focus area could be to collaborate more with the Greenwich Public Schools to address the social and economic barriers to closing the student achievement gap.

4) Community Partnerships Committee Update – Mr. Gunzburg reported that the FY’16 Community Partnership budget as part of the department budget was presented to the BET Budget Committee. As previously reported FY’16 will have 1 new partner and 1 new program. A quarterly review occurred with The Family Centers Rite program (details on some of the outcomes were presented later in the meeting) and the next scheduled review is with Jenny Bixby the Youth Services Council Coordinator.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Operating Statement & Dashboard Update - Dr. Barry reviewed the January 2015 Operating Statement and Year to Date Dashboard Report. As presented in prior months the major variance is due to underage on personnel services for transportation, admissions and homemaker services – with the line item coming in at 9% under budget.

FY’16 Budget Update – Dr. Barry reported the department budget was presented to the BET Budget Overview committee and it received favorable feedback as it represents a modest 1.9% increase over FY’15. In addition, the expansion of Kids in Crisis to Eastern Middle Schools was also presented. Dr. Barry also reported that activity has picked up quickly for Kids In Crisis at Central Middle School and both Central and Western Middle School programs continue to receive positive feedback.

Workforce Development Group Update – Mr. O’Loughlin and Ms. Spellman reiterated for the board the positive partnership Family Centers has with the GDSS, as well as the impact seen due to Darian Jones being onsite. Part of the program includes identifying
barriers to employment (transportation, mental health, childcare, English as a second language etc.) and working to eliminate these barriers to serve the chronically unemployed. These clients also need help with interviewing skills, resume writing, etc. and the recent job fairs held are one of the tools to address these needs.

As previously noted the GDSS board has concerns over the effectiveness of job fairs. Ms. Spellman reported that the job fairs should viewed more as workshops on “job readiness” where clients get to practice the skills needed to apply and interview for a job. These events contribute to improved client confidence and belief that they can obtain a job. Unlike the initial job fairs held with other community partners, all employers exhibiting must have jobs that our clients are suited. During the November job fair, over 25 clients returned with specific skills that they were going to improve upon. The board discussed the mismatch on expectations for the job fair, whereas the board expected jobs to be obtained, not just milestone to employment achieved. The board was pleased to hear firsthand one of the client success stories; and reiterated future activities such as “job fairs’ need clearly outlined and agreed upon measures of success.

**ADJOURNED**

**MOTION:** Mr. Gross motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 PM. Second: Ms. Arenas. **APPROVED 7-0.**

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Board Meeting will be held on March 17, 2015 in the Hayton Room at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Lauren Rabin**

Lauren Rabin, Secretary