

MINUTES

January 9, 2025

Council Members Present: Julianne Pérez, Harold Paxton, Caterina Tassara, Carol Weideman, Cheko Carter, Deputy C. Studt, Carlos Mercado, Jeanne Lafler, Fidel Johnson, Brenda Carvalho, Fred Green, Dianelys Ruiz

Council members Absent: Carol Bumiller, Keith Sabiel, Cheko Carter, Christine Britt, Richard Rock, Deputy Studt, Fred Green, Angel Addison

Guests: Arellys Escalera (Pinellas County Communications); Viridiana López-Lugo (St. Petersburg); Wanda McCawthan (Friends of Ridgecrest)

JWB Staff: Yaridis L. Garcia

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:11 pm by Chair Julianne Pérez. Welcome members & Guests. Minutes approved - September & November minutes were motioned to be approved by Harold Paxton and seconded by Fred Green.

II. Open Agenda – Community Partners Updates

- Ridgecrest MLK day of service – On Monday there will be a parade that is open to the community at 8:30 am. At 10 am there will be the MLK Community Servant of the Year ceremony and then there will be a Fish Fry from 11 am – 1 pm. Everyone is invited!
- MLK parade in Tarpon Springs - JWB staff in North County will participate in the MLK parade in Tarpon Springs.
- St. Petersburg MLK Breakfast - There will be a Breakfast at 7:30 am and a parade. Yaridis will represent and send out the information to Council Members.
- Rotary Club of Clearwater East has opportunities for partnerships. Boys and Girls Club will be invited to the next meeting.
- Carlos celebrates 2 yrs at HOC and is now the Health Coordinator. Please keep the HOC in mind as everyone engages the community.
- BayCare will be offering Spanish language maternity education classes, and they would like to partner with HOC. There are gaps in trying to reach the Latino community.
- SPC is offering a grant writing workshop tomorrow online from 11 am to 12 pm.

- High Point Neighborhood Family Center partnering with Keep Pinellas Beautiful beautifying the NFC to put in native plants to make the family center more family friendly.
- The Lealman and Asian Neighborhood Family Center has a VITA partnership with United Way and through that partnership LANFC brought back approximately \$230,000+ back into the pockets of families in tax returns last year. They begin taking reservations on January 15th with filings beginning on January 30th – April. HOC also has a similar partnership, and they will begin filing taxes soon.
- Pinellas County reported that the hurricanes caused a shift in Pinellas County with families moving out of the County or their neighborhoods due to the damage to their homes. We will begin to see these shifts in future census data. Many families moved out of their homes due to flooding. The FEMA deadline was January the 7th but families are encouraged to still apply even if they receive a denial letter to apply for other Pinellas County funding.
- District application closes on the 17th for Magnet and Fundamental programs. Please encourage families to apply.

III. Council Business

Celebrating our Families Event Feedback – The event was well received, and some described it as magical. JWB staff are very supportive of the work that the Councils do. We celebrated the diversity of families from Lealman, Pinellas Park, Largo, St. Petersburg, and the hard of hearing and Spanish speaking families. Shout out to the Pinellas Park team for their support, Rock, the food was delicious, the youth volunteers did a great job. Cheko suggested that the Councils should mingle again together across the County to include the leadership and the larger group as well. JWB will add this to the work plan for next quarter. Next year, Council members will sponsor one child or family and bring gifts the day before. Cardinal Financial will be a part of the event as a Sponsor. Books and the activities for the tables were a hit. The decorations were a hit too. The Family Center on Deafness will also continue to be engaged as a bridge for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

Work Plan – Yaridis distributed the Council’s work plan. The plan covers 2 years of action items. Jomar Lopez is the evaluator assigned to our Council. Once the outcome measurements are done, we will bring it back to the Council. Carol said that through SPC there may be young adults who want to be on the Council, especially some who are interested in Human Services or Social Work as professionals. JWB used to give an award to companies who give workers an opportunity to volunteer, and they may support the Council.

Grand Families Event 2025 – The sub-committee met before this meeting. The event will be on May 10th, 2025, at Pinellas Park Performing Arts Center from 10 am – 1 pm. The event will be structured based on the feedback from last year's survey and the needs identified from grand families: each family will be given a box to take home. Clothing – Clothes for Kids will be a vendor and link families. Mental Health and Legal Services and Academic support will also be available. The DJ will be a part of the event again. Kona Ice will be there again, and lunch will

be provided. The theme was about heroes last year and this year the theme may be around gratitude due to Mother's Day. Each person will receive a rose/flower. Marketing will begin this month. Emergency disaster kits will also be a part of the event. Resources will be in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and through the Center on Deafness. The emergency kits will also include information on helping children during times of stress and disasters. Hygiene items will be added. SPC may also have information on academic support. Power Plug at SPC gives laptops away and classes on computer use and the SPC wants to sign up to be at the event. The next planning meeting will be announced soon. A big thank you to the City of Pinellas Park for all their support with this event. Their impact is significant!

Youth Leadership Committee – There are 12 members with their own work plan. They started in 2017 so youth could have a separate voice. They work on projects throughout the year such as the Grand Families event. On February the 8th they will have a Mindfully Unwinding pop-up event on Saturday from 10-12 pm where fun activities for youth including rock painting, crafts, music, and giveaways and explore ways to relax and nurture wellbeing. They will come in March to present to the mid-County Council. Maybe consider having something similar at the Grand Families event.

IV. JWB Updates

MLK Breakfasts & Parade – See updates above.

JWB Children Summit – February the 14th from 8 – 10 am. The Council's Executive Leadership will be attended at the Seminal Campus at SPC. The Summit is a yearly report highlighting all the work accomplished and highlighting the challenges faced by the community.

Community Events Funding – It was revised to make it easier to report with a presentation for February. This year we were able to secure \$50,000 limited to one time a year from October to September to provide an event to bring resources to the community up to \$3,000.

Future Meeting / Notices

- Mid-County Community Council: Thursday February 6th, 6-7:30 PM at the Public Works Building

- JWB Board Meeting: Thursday January 16th, 9:00 AM at JWB 14155 58th Street N, Clearwater, FL 33760 and YouTube

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Julianne Pérez at 7:25 pm

Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by Caterina Tassara, Council Secretary