

## MINUTES

**I. Call to Order and Introductions.** The January 8, 2026 meeting of the North County Community Council, Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, was called to order by Kids First Representative Maria Amado at 6:35 p.m.

In attendance were Council Members Maria Amado, Mary Sharrow, Dawn Handley, Adriana Palacio, Thomas Payne, Nadine Nickeson and Niko Stergiotis.

Absent were: Council Members Beth Hovind, Carmen Lake, Michael Arendall, and a deputy with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

Guests: David Hale of the Mattie Williams Center, Mike Mikurak and Joanne Reich of JWB, Stephanie Espier Pinellas County Housing Authority, Dorothy Shipe of R'Club, Paula Latkovich of Speak Up for Mental Health, Linda Sauter of Help Me Grow, and Gabbi Tomaselli with Boley Youth Empowerment Program.

A quorum of the Council was present.

Introductions: Council Members and guests introduced themselves briefly.

## **II. Council Business**

Due to illness we won't be receiving an update on minutes, Bylaws, and Data Committee. Discussion about preparations for Grandfamilies Event to be held on January 24<sup>th</sup> at First Presbyterian Church in Safety Harbor. Council members are asked to volunteer. We hope to have a great turnout with many vendors, health screenings, book and school supply give aways and children's crafts.

## **III. JWB Updates**

- A. Interim JWB CEO Mike Mikurak discussed with the council the JWB Ceo Search process in which they hope to have a CEO selected by end of March if not sooner. Mr. Mikurak also discussed the JWB strategic plan of which the council will have a focus group coming up in February. Mr. Mikurak also talked about the important new initiative of Parent Protech and the support that we are getting from legislators, school system, law enforcement about this new program where JWB is offering a free one-year subscription to all adults in Pinellas County to assist them in keeping their children safe in a virtual environment.

- B. The Council passed on its Bylaws discussion item and hope to vote on new Bylaws at the March meeting.

#### **IV. Community Announcements**

- A. Maria Amado discussed the upcoming conference in Clearwater – Embracing our Changing Community which will be February 27<sup>th</sup> more details  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/embracing-our-changing-community-advancing-education-through-unity-tickets-1693779101889>
- B. Mattie Williams and Speak Up for Mental Health are key sponsors of January 24<sup>th</sup> Grandfamilies event and Mattie Williams has additional kindness benches in the works around the north county area. If you know of a great location or sponsor of additional benches please see Dawn.
- C. The Pinellas County Housing Authority had a recent ribbon cutting ceremony and is already at capacity for their new low income senior facility Heritage Oaks in Largo.

The **Community Council and Guest Survey** was distributed and completed by council members and guests either through the QR code or paper copy and will be picked up by Joanne on the way out of meeting.

There being no further business, on a motion by Adriana that was seconded by Maria, the Council adjourned without objection at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Reich  
Community Engagement Advocate JWB