

MEETING MINUTES

February 19, 2026

Council Members Present: Cheko Carter, Brenda Carvalho, Angel Addison, Julianne Pérez, Harold M. Paxton Jr., Fidel Johnson, Jeanne Lafler, Caterina Tassara, Deputy Anthony Borbonio, Alicia Ponds

Council Members Absent: Carlos Mercado, Carol Weidman, Christine Britt, Keith Sabiel, Fred Green

Guests: Arellys Escalera, Camille Hebting

JWB Staff: Yaridis L. Garcia, Jomar López, Lianys Olmeda

I. Call to Order - Fidel Johnson, Vice-Chair

- Fidel Johnson, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm and welcomed all members and guests to the meeting.
- Approval of Council Minutes – Council member Harold Paxton moved to approve both sets of meeting minutes for October and January. Council member Cheko Carter seconded the approval for both October and January. The Minutes were approved as submitted.

II. Open Agenda-Community Partners Updates

- Yaridis Garcia introduced new Council Member and community partner Dr. Alicia Ponds. Dr. Ponds is a resident of mid-county and has a long history of advocacy on behalf of children and families. She shared her background as a teacher specializing in STEM and certification, qualitative research, and grant writing. She was also instrumental in helping to start the Neighborhood Family Centers years ago. Welcome Dr. Ponds.
- Angel Addison reported that Evera Health Institute has now started to implement virtual information sessions for students with transportation barriers to access. They currently have 165 students enrolled. Once students are enrolled, there are payment plans

and they receive bus transportation via their student badge. Once students graduate, they can work for Evera or move on.

- Deputy Anthony Barbonio announced that AMI Kids (YPI and AMI) are hosting a summer camp for teens between the ages of 12 and 18 this Spring Break. Camp will run from 10:30 am - 1 pm M-F. Pinellas Co. Sheriff is a partner in this venture. Please share this information. More information to be distributed via flyers.

- NAMI is sponsoring Family to Family Classes for caregivers with kids struggling with mental health. Classes are free and virtual. NAMI Youth Initiatives focused on Education and Advocacy. NAMI Walk is coming up in May and serves as a fundraiser for the organization. Flyers were handed out by Ms. Camille Hebling from NAMI.

- The High Point Center has a teen program in need of space to accommodate twenty or so teens. Pinellas Co. Sheriff is looking for a place to partner for the teen program in the summer. If anyone knows a place in the High Point area, please let Deputy Anthony or Cheko know.

III. Council Business

- Combined Bylaws are ready for review and discussion. This has been moved to be reviewed at the March meeting.
- Grand Families Event is set for Saturday, May 30th. Planning is underway and on schedule.

IV. JWB Updates

- This February meeting includes a Strategic Planning Focus Group that will be facilitated by JWB staff member Jomar López. The meeting will be handed over to JWB for facilitation of the focus group.

Future Meetings/Notices

A motion to adjourn the meeting was called at 6:30 pm by Chair Julianne Pérez and was handed over to JWB staff member Mr. Jomar López.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Council Secretary, Caterina Tassara